The Future of Bradford District Libraries

Consultation - A new library service model

Monday 10 February - Sunday 15 March 2020

Information Pack

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Executive Summary

We are very proud of our library service across the Bradford District, however Bradford Council like many other local authorities across the country are having to consider changes to how library services are delivered as a result of significant financial challenges.

We want to develop the service in a way that builds on the great work we already do with a focus on unlocking the huge potential that libraries have to improve on individuals 'lives' while at the same time, delivering local and national priorities.

When we began our review over 12 months ago, not only were we were faced with agreed saving target of £1.05m to achieve in 2020-21, we recognised the local and national picture showing a declining use of libraries..

To meet this challenge we have had to think about libraries in a different way and not just from a position of achieving savings. It is clear that continuing to do things the way we do, at the moment, would inevitably result in a further declining position.

In recognition of the importance libraries have in our communities and the value our residents get from using libraries, we wanted our review to focus on achieving outcomes that are District wide and based on local needs, As part of this review, over the last 12 months we have undertaken a detailed **needs analysis** and district wide **engagement,** and this has played a central role in informing the proposals in this consultation..

The Council received thousands of responses from our research which demonstrates how much people in Bradford care about libraries and the evidence shows that the Council currently provides a comprehensive district-wide offer that delivers a valuable service for the district's localities. However, the current model on its own is not financially sustainable in the long term and the feedback indicates that residents expect to see libraries evolving and being more connected to communities.

Bradford District libraries already provide more than a traditional book lending service, important as that role is. Out libraries now offer a range of services covering literacy, early years support, health and wellbeing, digital access, and a range of creative and cultural opportunities.

In recognition of this wider impact, in particular in improving health outcomes, tackling poverty, addressing social isolation, assisting people back into employment and helping with school readiness, we have been exploring wider funding opportunities that would support our ambition to deliver a sustainable library service which meets local needs.

We have re-assessed our budget considerations and savings of £1.05m required for 2020-21 are now being partly met by a base budget of £700k from Public Health, subject to approval by full Council on 20 February 2020. The funding will be on-going and used to support a change in how we deliver libraries. This additional investment and the potential to secure further funding mean's that we will be approaching our re-shaping programme differently.

It means that we can develop plans for the future without needing to achieve immediate savings which will allow us to retain our existing network of 29 libraries in current localities, although this might mean that we have to consider using different buildings which are more suitable for our aspirations and enhancement of services. It provides the opportunity to consult further with the people of Bradford District about how this investment will be used at both a district and local level which will result in us achieving the best possible outcomes for residents.

Our network of 29 libraries also included 17 libraries that are delivered by our communities who rely on funding from the Council and we are now able to continue to support funding our Community Managed Libraries for the next 12 months whilst we are re-negotiating on future delivery arrangements.

To support our strategic ambitions, and using all of the information captured through our review, including listening to our residents, staff and wider stakeholders, we have developed a new vision for the service which is underpinned by some principles for what our future library service should be.

Using this vision and principles we have also developed a new "library service model" which builds on the positive work that we already do, and gives the framework which will allow us to evolve beyond 2021. It will also provide clarity on what our library users can expect to receive across our library network as a "core" offer, whilst maximising the potential for further funding through our "tailored" offer focused on local needs at each individual library.

We now want to know what you think about our "vision" and "library services model" which is the purpose of this consultation exercise.

At this stage, we will not be consulting on what each library will look like as we need to make sure that we have set the right strategic direction. After this consultation on the proposed library model and when we know we have the right model, we will use it to support the design of libraries at an individual local level. This will include discussions with partners and residents in the locality and any changes arising will be subject to further public consultation at a locality level.

This current consultation on this proposed model will run until Friday 13th March 2020 and there are many ways that you can get involved including coming to one or our public consultation sessions and by completing our survey.

Your view matters and we want you to continue to help us reshape the Bradford District Library Service to achieve the best possible outcomes for residents.

Introduction

Background

The library service across the Bradford District has a strong history of being able to respond to the challenges it has faced over the last decade, through embracing change and recognising the valuable impact that libraries have within communities.

What the service looked like in 2014 and what it looks like now is fundamentally different. In 2014 the library service was delivered through a network of 29 libraries with the majority (24) being delivered under council managed arrangements and staffed by a paid workforce and the remainder (5) being delivered under community managed arrangements and staffed by volunteers and a district wide home library service delivered by paid staff.

In 2020 and despite delivering savings in excess of £1.4m over the previous 6 years, through innovation, further alignment/reduction of revenue budgets, and a greater focus on community partnerships, we have managed to retain our network of 29 libraries across the district with 3 core categories of library as follows:

1. **10 x Council managed Libraries -** with paid Council employees. Cumulatively this category of library delivers services over 590 hours per week. These are typically large and busy libraries in key locations, and provide the base for the professional expertise to support and advise the remaining libraries across the district. These are best described as "hub" or "central" libraries where there is a statutory obligation to provide a library service based on local needs.

2. **2 x Hybrid Libraries** - with a combination of council paid staff and community volunteers. Cumulatively this category of library delivers services over 70 hours per week. These are typically medium size and busy libraries located in villages or smaller communities and have some professional expertise based on the range of activities they deliver. These are typically libraries where there is a statutory requirement to provide a library service but where the Council has agreed shared responsibilities with communities. These can best be described as "branch" libraries.

3. **17 x Community Managed Libraries (CML's**) - which are staffed wholly by over 360 community volunteers under an "community accountable body" arrangement. Cumulatively they deliver services over 300 hours per week. These libraries are typically smaller libraries situated in areas where there is a desire to retain the library in a particular locality. These libraries receive regular on-going and professional support and some funding from the Council. These are also best described as " "branch" libraries.

You can obtain a hard copy of the full list of all our library profiles which include details of how they perform, what activities they carry out and what they cost to deliver at your local library or you can access them online at www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries.

Libraries form part of the district's Cultural strategy and contribute to four of the five Council priorities: Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy; a great start and

good schools for all our children, Better health, and better lives, Safe, clean and active communities.

A mostly free offer, the library service contribution to the Council priorities is evidenced via the following:-

- Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy
  Libraries contribute and support access to literature and information for all ages which improves literacy which contributes to understanding, communication and therefore makes for more able employees and a greater contribution to the community as a whole. Job clubs, English courses, maths courses, ESOL and adult literacy support, online resources for setting up your own business, access and signposting to government online information etc.

- A great start and good schools for all our children
  Libraries support the work that schools do by providing literature and reading material and activities for children of all ages. Libraries support parents' literacy and numeracy by providing access to courses, events and workshops that help them embed reading into family life and improve their own literacy. E.g. Book start, summer reading challenge, school visits, teen reading groups, work with child refugees etc.

- Better health, better lives
  Creating "reading well" self-help reading lists and book collections in libraries covering key areas of health and wellbeing such as mental health, dementia and long term conditions. Signposting to information and local services who can provide advice and support, together with the provision of creative and social reading activities for a range of targeted groups such as dementia sufferers, teenagers and older people.

- Safe, clean and active communities
  Libraries support other Council departments in providing information and literature. Libraries host events and activities working with other outside organisations – the police, Bradford College, the NHS. Libraries are seen as a free safe space in which to provide these activities and information.

We are incredibly proud of the services that our libraries already deliver and believe we have solid foundations to build upon which will help us enhance this offer further to achieve better outcomes for our residents. We do however recognise that there is inconsistency in how we meet this offer across all our library service. For example, some of our smaller community libraries are not able to deliver the wider range of activities that our Council managed libraries do due to constraints such as having available space, or the right number of willing volunteers.

The national picture and what the law says about public libraries

Over the last decade, many public libraries have either been closed or radically changed across the country due to the severity of financial cuts and a declining use of libraries. As part of this change process, many authorities have faced legal challenge by the

Department for Digital, Culture, Media, & Sport (DCMS). Therefore, it is very important for the Council to consider these statutory responsibilities when planning any changes to the Bradford District library service.

Library authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who live, work or study in the area. Although the guidance is not as clear in terms of the definition of what a "comprehensive and efficient library service" is. What is clear is that in providing this service, councils must, amongst other things, encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and; lend books and other printed materials free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

In drawing up and delivering library strategies and plans, library authorities should also consider a number of other legal obligations including:-

- The Equality Act 2010
- Best Value Duty 2011
- Localism Act 2011
- The Human Rights Act 1998

In responding to the potential legal challenge, DCMS have provided useful guidance in terms of a framework that library authorities need to consider when making changes. In simple terms this means we must determine our service need through a rational assessment linked to local needs and undertake meaningful public consultation where changes are proposed.

The proposals for this consultation are supported by an **Equality Impact Assessment**, you can find out more by clicking the link above or visiting us @ www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries

In addition to the statutory responsibility, the library service works to "The Universal Offers". The offers were launched in 2013 by an organisation called "Libraries Connected" with an aim to demonstrate the power of public libraries to enrich the lives of individuals and their communities. The "offers" are nationally recognised and cover key areas of service which our customers and stakeholders see as essential to a 21st century library service. They are a promise to our customers and a commitment to quality provision across four core areas of our service set out on the next page.

Universal offers:

The Bradford District library service fully embraces the national universal offers and aims to delver library services that do the following:-

Reading Offer: Free books and reading resources, accessible community space reading groups, author events, targeted audiences such as blind/visually impaired, families and special activities aimed at pre-school children.

Health Offer: Using libraries to support health professionals and promote health and well being activities. E.g. GP's prescribing books on prescription for patients or specific self-help books

Digital & Information Offer: This underpins all the offers, recognising the importance of digital services, skills and access including careers advice and job seeking.

Culture & Creativity: working with cultural providers to spark curiosity, imagination and fun.

All the universal offers are also underpinned by the "**six steps promise**" which has a goal: That the almost two million blind and partially sighted people in the UK can visit a fully accessible library service, that has a local collection of accessible reading materials and information in physical or digital forms

And also a "**children's promise**" which has a goal: that every child and young person in libraries is inspired to read for pleasure, has access to a range of materials, can engage in a variety of digital activities and can take part in activities that improve their well being.

The current picture for the library service

In 2019 we faced some big challenges including a saving target of £1.05m to achieve in 2020-21. This was against a backdrop of national and local evidence showing an overall declining use of libraries. The advice provided nationally, is that that libraries needed to evolve if they are to survive in the 21st century.

To help us with our thinking, being mindful of the legal position, and in recognition of the importance our libraries have in our communities, we have over the last 12 months been undertaking a comprehensive review of the library service which included some wider district level outreach activities.

Our outreach activities have included undertaking a **"library needs assessment"** and a district wide **"public engagement"** exercise which has been central to informing the proposal in this consultation. You can find out more about the outcomes of those activities through clicking the links above or by visiting us at www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries. If you require a hard copy of any of the information we have used you can request this at your local library.

The key outcomes from this review gave us more information about how our library services are performing, how they are used and how the people of Bradford District want them to be used in the future.

How are our libraries across the district currently used?

Using the information captured in the library needs assessment we were able to identify some key facts about the use of our libraries:-

97% of the districts population live within **2 miles of a library**

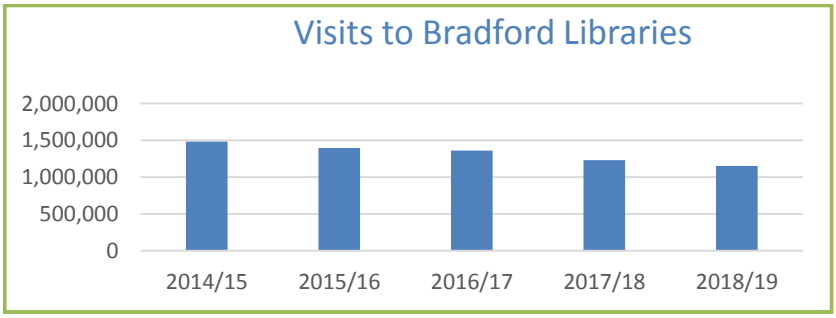
Under 7% of **Bradford population** are **active borrowers and children are the biggest user group**

67% of library users do so for **reading** and **14%** for **information**

Membership rates are higher in the north of the District, which tends to be more afluent

20% are fewer visits to libraries than in 2014, although this varies from library to library

1.5m library visits in 2018/19 – an average decrease of 6% each year since 2014/15



How do the people of Bradford District want them to be used in the future?

Recent public engagement gathered views from **over 3000 local people** about libraries and there were some mixed views on the extent of how we use technology, location of libraries, use of volunteers and appetite for more community involvement, however we were able to identify some common views and these are represented by some key findings as follows:-

44% of respondents valued **open access to all.** The top 3 priorities were that libraries should provide support for younger and older people, areas of high deprivation and for people with disabilities

43% agreed that communtiies should support libraries. **200 respondents** said they would **consider volunteering** which would greatly boost capacity

66% did not agree that it is reaso nable to use proximity to other libraries when developing proposals

55% were happy for opening hours to be tailored to the services required at a local level

83% felt that technology should be used in service provision

47% of non library users and **36%** of users said that libraries should share buildings with other services

58% of non users said that increased promotion of what is available at the libary might encourage them to visit a library

We have used all of the information captured through our review to develop a new vision for the library service.

The Vision

The vision for Bradford District library services for 2020 to 2025 is to:-

"***develop a 21st century library service that continues to provide a core library service, that is flexible and enables us to enhance the quality of life of people and communities, is inclusive and vibrant, , supports wider district priorities, enables all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities, and is outcomes focused at a local level.***

In developing this vision, as well as using local information, we have researched models of best practice and looked to align this to the national vision for public libraries set by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's **Libraries Deliver:- Ambition for libraries in England 2016-2021.**

The vision is underpinned by an ambition to retain our current library network with a focus on "re-inventing" and more focused on community needs. It also recognises the wider impact that libraries have on achieving outcomes at District level with a focus on achieving Public Health outcomes and achieving the best possible outcomes for our residents.

If agreed following this consultation, this will set the strategic direction for our future library service from 2020-2025. Mindful of our wider Council ambitions, including our City of Culture Bid 2025, we will continually review our vision over the next 5 years.

To help us achieve this vision and address the challenges set out earlier in this document we have developed a set of core principles for what we think the future Bradford District library service should be.

Key design principles for delivering the Bradford District Library Service

Using the national libraries “universal offers” as a guide and information from our outreach activities we have developed a set of principles for what our library service should be for Bradford People and these are set out below.

Inclusive

- Welcoming
- Open to all
- Free to all
- A safe space
- A place to meet

Heart of the community

- Reflects the need and interest of the community
- Reflects culture
- Supports improved outcomes at a local level

Core function

- Reading
- Health & Wellbeing
- Digital literacy
- Enrichment
- Learning

Creative

- A venue for artistic delivery
- Supporting greater cultural diversity across Bradford District
- Supporting the City of Culture Bid 2025

Connects with other services

- Access to information and advice, signposting, fact checking
- Making every contact count

Partnership approach

- Brings together a range of partner organisations – VCS, local groups, and education institutions
- Working better together for greater outcomes

If agreed following consultation, we will use these principles to deliver a new library services model.

New Library Service Model

The proposed new library service model is made up of 6 key components, and each is described in more detail under headings with the same corresponding colour as the overall library model diagram shown below

1 – Library Service as a whole

The library service as a whole will be underpinned by a number of ambitions for the service which includes libraries acting as community hubs offering a wider range of services than just the statutory requirements and contributing to wider district priorities.

We are committed to maintaining 29 libraries in existing localities with a focus on libraries being seen as services rather than buildings . We will do this via a mix of approaches based on a hub and spoke model which recognises that not all libraries will have the same level of offer. An area may be served by a library hub which provides a full range of core services, plus additional services, and is open for more hours. Around this library hub there will be a number of spoke libraries with a more limited offer, but one that is tailored to local needs.

We will continue to deliver the service via a mixed approach including libraries that are directly managed by the Council, libraries that are managed under a shared arrangement with the Council and the community and those that are managed wholly by communities.

When considering service availability at any location, we will not only consider the nearest library, but what is available within an acceptable travel time or distance.

The library service will be an interconnected service echo-system and not a series of isolated libraries at 29 locations. It will be underpinned by some key characterises that will support future design including:-

A professional and well trained workforce: in order to provide a compliant and valuable library service, it is recognised that an experienced and well trained workforce is a key element. However in keeping with the current approach some libraries will continue to be supported by trained volunteers

Maximise inclusivity and use: the library service needs to promote its use in the community as a whole and be inclusive to subgroups; potentially specifically targeting sub groups who currently use the service little but may benefit from it.

A service that meets local needs: each library must provide services based on an analysis of needs of the locality it serves, both to maximise outcomes for residents and to ensure it remains

Technology and innovation: the use of appropriate technology and innovation in service provision are features of the library now and must continue to be so in the future. In addition we will maintain our provision of "virtual" services including e-books etc. which residents can access on-line.

Delivers key outcomes in Public Health and Social Care: to maximise the benefit of the library service, libraries need to service a wider range of needs including, supporting health and social care outcomes. This will increase their value for the community and also enable the service to attract funding to support the provision of the service.

An expanded offer involving wider partners: to further support their communities libraries will need to increasingly act as hubs for those communities where a wider range of services are made available by both the public sector and wider partners.

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A service that remains financially sustainable: whilst the whole Council remains under budgetary pressure the library service will find alternative funding options in addition to core budget. For example this will depend on the service evidencing how it meets specific public health outcomes through robust performance evaluation.

A statutorily compliant library service: the service must comply with the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, as well as relevant universal legislation such as the Equality Act and the Localism Act. Along with all UK libraries, comply and deliver on the Universal Offers

2. Core library Offer

There will be a core offer that residents can expect to see as a minimum in our Council run libraries, with an ambition that all our libraries including those delivered by communities will sign up to a commitment to delivering the core service in the future.

The core offer will drive consistency in the range of services that our residents receive and support our ambition of operating a single library network across all libraries. This means that regardless of which library you visit you will receive the same core offer.

Our core offer will include the following features:-

- **Reading Offer –** lending books, printed materials, information and access to other media.

- **A safe space –** provision of a safe neutral space for residents to use, a good space to read, study and learn and which is flexible for use by community groups and other council services and partners.

- **Additional facilities –** will include:-
    - Access to Wi-Fi , computers, and printing (printing may be charged for)
    - Provision of engaging health and wellbeing activities e.g. reading groups, chatting tables, hydration station and books on social prescription

- **Cultural activities** including exhibitions and arts and other creative activities.

- **Local promotion** will encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and an intergeneration offer and will target specific groups who currently make little use of the libraries such as particular ethnicities through outreach work, guided by local needs analysis.

- **Promote health and wellbeing outcomes –** by working actively with public health and social care to develop a wider range of activities.

- **Information and support** – having staff on site who can provide information and support which will include assistance in accessing materials, help with reading, and providing signposting and guidance to other public and community services

3. Tailored library offer

In addition to the core offer, there will be a tailored element at each library where additional services will be provided based on the size of the library, local need. However there are some great examples of what additional activities could be included in the tailored offer and these are set out below. However, we expect it to expand the current boundaries of what the service delivers and are an opportunity to reflect the innovation, creativity, and skills found in communities across Bradford District.

Example additional services:-

- **Health and wellbeing –** may include health services (full and part-time) e.g. GP access, community nursing, clinics for specific conditions, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. A base for social prescribing, and therapy sessions e.g. art therapy, mindfulness.

- **Social care services** – may include using the library as a local base for teams, touchdown spaces for social workers, community social work hubs, providing enablement and independent living skills and day care provision.

- **Additional council services** – including information on a wider range of council services, e.g. housing benefits, employment, recycling, debt advice, neighbourhood wardens.

- **Co-located partners** – libraries could host a range of council partners including the voluntary and community services, such as, Age Concern, Carers UK and, VoiceAbility Bradford, and citizens' advice services.

- **Traded Services** – this could include hosting a range of services that generate money for the library service, including cafes, in-library concessions for businesses, book media sales, room hire, holiday clubs etc.

- **Local needs and strengths -** consideration will also be given to specific activities to address local need e.g. adult literacy classes, language support, a volunteering hub and community cafes to tackle social isolation.

4. Staffing

There is currently a mix of Council staffed, community staffed and hybrid staffed libraries and we will continue to use these approaches in future delivery, with the best approach being assessed on a library by library basis.

There will be a focus on retaining existing professional staff and volunteers through tailored training and development programmes and by giving people the tools to carry out the range of services that a 21st century library service will rely on.

Using the mixed approach we will determine on an individual library basis what compliment of staff and volunteers will be required at each library.

Volunteers will be used to compliment the existing paid workforce and will be supported by a central volunteer co-ordinator post that is now located in our central structure through a revised volunteering framework which will be developed using models of best practice .

5. Funding

The model required to fund libraries will be different, for example, it will rely on the council being able to allocate funds from Public Health and Social Care to libraries to support their outcomes. As local government funding remains hard to predict, making the service financially sustainable through other sources will be the best protection in the future.

There are wide ranges of funding streams that are available and some key examples include:-

- **Maximising funding –** given the uncertainty of future funding, the best way to build long term resilience will be to minimise the services reliance on dedicated council funds and all approaches should be considered.

- **Public Health funding –** Public Health will provide some funding for the support of four health outcomes including tackling poverty, addressing social isolation, assisting people back into employment, and helping school readiness.

- **Social Care funding** – may also be provided to support funding for supporting their outcomes e.g. day care provision, employment including back to work programmes.

- **Partner funding** – we will explore opportunities for Council partners to make use of the library premises in return for funding. These may include, health partners, employment services, police, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

- **Traded income** – there are many potential sources of traded income, and examples include: venue hire, sale of refreshments, wider retail, vending machines, Amazon pick up points, in library concessions for businesses like coffee shops and book sales, filming locations, and holiday clubs. We will explore whether these can be implemented without impacting the quality of the service our library provide.

- **Grant funding** – Identifying and securing grant funding from a range of sources, including through the Arts Council.

6. Buildings

Our strategy is primarily about the service, not the buildings that libraries occupy, however we recognise that some library buildings have an important role in the community and this will only increase through their evolving role as community hubs.

Some libraries may easily lend themselves to these uses, however for others it may be necessary to either make property alterations or consider alternative premises. Principles relating to this will include:-

- **Maintaining current locations** – whilst there is a commitment to retain libraries at 29 local areas, this does not mean that libraries have to remain n the existing premises. Potential alternative premises within the vicinity could be used if more appropriate to the new service model, although there is a commitment to certain well-established libraries.
- **A range of options for each location** – at an individual library level there are a range of options which could be considered in relation to library premises including:-

- Retaining existing property, as is
- Retain existing property, but carry out alterations to allow additional uses
- Identify opportunities to re-locate or co-locate in other council premises
- Identify new premises to buy (subject to available funding)
- Develop new premises (subject to additional funding

A further alternative is to sell or repurpose the existing property, and find new premises (as above) but jointly with a partner or department which also needs accommodation.

Finally we will commit to thinking innovatively. The building that houses the library need not primarily be a library e.g. co-location in a fitness centre. The library is a service and not a building.

The consultation and how can you get involved?

The public consultation period will run from Monday 10 February to Sunday13 March 2020 and we want to hear your views on our proposed vision and operating model as this will underpin our reshaping programme. We want to know if we have got this right and we also want to make sure that we have captured everything that you told us through our recent reviews.

Public consultation sessions

We will be holding a series of public "drop in" consultation sessions across the district where you can come and meet the senior management team and officers supporting the reshaping programme. Here you can share your ideas and feedback and ask us more detail on the vision and how our operating model might work. You can obtain a hard copy list of all the planned public sessions including times and locations from your local library or can access them directly **here**

Online consultation

If you are unable to attend one of our public consultation sessions you can give us your views by completing a short survey which asks questions on your views on our vision and the library service model. You can obtain a hard copy of the survey at your local library or you can access and complete it **here**

Alternatively you can email us your comments or questions at Libraries.consutlation@bradford.gov.uk or you can drop your written feedback in at one of your local libraries and our staff will make sure it reaches us.

If you would like to receive a copy of our consultation documents in an alternative language or in easy read or braille format, please email us at the above address or ask a member of our staff at your local library who will be happy to arrange this for you.

We hope that you have found this consultation information pack useful and look forward to reviewing your responses over the coming weeks and before we make any final decisions.

What Next?

At the end of the consultation period we will gather all of your feedback and make any final changes we think are needed from listening to your views and will then take a final report which will include any revisions made as a result of consultation, to our Executive to ask them to approve the new library services model.

If the new model is agreed, we will then use this as a framework for designing what each individual library will look like.

Our design plans will be underpinned by the needs based evidence we have collected and will also include more conversations with our residents, staff and wider stakeholders in the different localities.

Where changes to the existing offer are required to any of our libraries, these will be subject to formal public consultation at a locality level.