

# Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Executive to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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## **Subject:**

**Library Service Review**

## **Summary statement:**

**This report provides an update on progress with the Library Service Review and key facts and figures, which provide context for the needs analysis work that will form the next stage of the Review.**

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out for this proposed Review. At this stage the assessment is a neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, as the outcomes of the Review are unknown. However, it is recognised that, as specific proposals are developed, a number of communities that share a protected characteristic could be affected. This will include consideration of people on low incomes. It is expected that public, staff and union consultation will be carried out on any changes proposed as an outcome of the Review, and the EIA will be kept updated as the Review progresses. Consultees will be encouraged to comment on the proposals and any impacts they believe might be felt by particular groups of people (in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty). Where possible arrangements will be made to reduce any negative impacts of the proposals; these mitigations will be set out in the EIA.

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Regeneration and Environment**

## 1. SUMMARY

Further to the February Executive report - which set out the proposed scope, methodology and timescales for the Library Service Review - this report provides an update on progress and key facts and figures, which provide context for the needs analysis work that will form the next stage of the Review.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As has been reported many times, the challenges facing local government are unprecedented. All representative bodies such as the LGA, CCN, SIGOMA et al report significant gaps in the funding available if councils' are to continue to meet their statutory duties, much less the aspirations of their residents who tend to recognise and value non-statutory services such as those that maintain and improve the public realm and those that contribute to the sense of place and community, such as culture and leisure.

It would be an unrealistic expectation that sufficient money will be made available for local government in general and for Bradford to continue to deliver the current level of service provision. The Council has already exhausted its reserves meaning that it is unable to balance the budget for next year without Exceptional Financial Support from Government.

The Council's 2024-25 budget will be the most difficult that the Council has experienced to date and even harder than those in the earliest stages of austerity because there is a structural budget gap of c£120m in 2023-24. It is imperative for the Council to develop and realise a plan to attain financial sustainability. The emergency response work carried out since then has identified that this will require significant transformation to all aspects of the Council's activities.

Effectively the Council will require re-shaping to become affordable within the resources that are available. Therefore, there will be a reduction in the level of services provided and the number of staff employed by the Council.

- 2.2 As a result, whilst the Council is fully aware of the savings that have already been made to Library Services previously, and would not wish to reduce services further, the financial situation outlined above means that further reductions are – regrettably – necessary and required over the next five years.

At the 5 February meeting of the Council's Executive Committee, it was resolved that a strategic Review of the Library Service be undertaken that will deliver £175k savings in 2025/6, pending the outcome of the public consultation on the Council's budget proposals. The proposed approach to conducting the Review as set out in sections 3 - 6 of the February report was also agreed.

- 2.3 An initial meeting of the Review Board has now taken place at which an overview of the Library Service and its budget position was provided. In the table below is an overview of how Bradford's statutory library service is currently delivered:

10 Council run libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bingley</li> <li>• City</li> <li>• Eccleshill</li> <li>• Ilkley</li> <li>• Keighley</li> <li>• Laisterdyke</li> <li>• Manningham</li> <li>• Shipley</li> <li>• Wibsey</li> <li>• Wyke</li> </ul>
2 'Hybrid' community supported libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baildon</li> <li>• Clayton</li> </ul>
2 Local Studies libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradford Local Studies</li> <li>• Keighley Local Studies &amp; Archives</li> </ul>
24/7 digital library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online access to individual membership account (register, renew, catalogue)</li> <li>• e-resources: newspapers, magazines, e-books, e-audio, reference works</li> </ul>
Home Library Service Van delivery service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving housebound customers and residential care homes</li> <li>• Moving and delivering stock around the district</li> </ul>
Stock Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 460,000 books, 8000 AV items, 2,365 e-books.</li> <li>• 65.67 FTE staff (8.2 FTE 'professional').</li> </ul>

The outcome of the Review is likely to impact on how the statutory service is delivered across the district in future and redefining this will be a key outcome from the work.

The statutory service is supported by 15 non-statutory Community Managed Libraries which are entirely volunteer run:

- Addingham
- Allerton
- Bolling
- Burley
- Denholme
- Great Horton
- Heaton
- Holme Wood
- Idle
- Menston
- Queensbury
- Silsden
- Thornbury
- Thornton
- Wilsden

These provide added value to the library offer: altogether there are 329 volunteers providing 9,000 volunteer hours per annum.

Appendix 2 shows a distribution map of all the libraries across the district and Appendix 3 gives initial profiles for the 10 Council and 2 Hybrid libraries, containing cost and performance data.

All libraries provide a range of stock for adults and children and in alternative formats such as audio and large print for people with vision impairments, and reference information. They all provide public PCs and printing facilities, free wifi, space for reading and study and – where possible – space for meetings, activities and events.

- 2.4 The table below provides an overview of Library Service Key Performance Indicators since 2019/20, showing the impact of the pandemic, financial savings and the new vision and model for the Library Service, introduced in March 2020 (see Appendix 1).

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/4*</b>
<b>Visits</b>	1,006,712	384,442	734,859	805,000
<b>Loans</b>	982,967	547,782	646,190	658,000
<b>PC sessions</b>	182,117	28,911	64,008	72,000
<b>New members</b>	15,585	8,396	15,026	15,000
<b>Children's activity attendees</b>	18,748	6,696	21,583	29,000
<b>Adult's activity attendees</b>	15,446	8,314	20,193	25,000

\*Estimates based on 10 months' figures April 2023 – January 2024

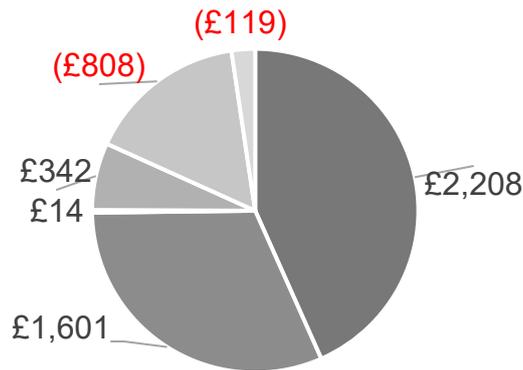
As reported previously, there has been a 73% reduction in the book fund from £621,675 in 2010/11 to £167,400 in 2020/21, which has inevitably had an impact on the quality and range of stock on offer and the numbers of loans. Efforts are being made to identify ways in which this provision can be enhanced. This may involve innovative ways to offset revenue costs by maximising co-location opportunities, for example with banks, building societies, and community centres etc.

There is clearly scope to reduce the number of public PCs, in view of the decrease in demand for PC sessions – a process that is already underway – whilst more customers 'bring their own device' to use in the library.

The marked increase in engagement in library activities is indicative of the drive to provide access to a wider range of services available in libraries, in line with the Council's vision for the Service. The Council remains committed to the principles of this vision but acknowledges that, given the current financial situation, some adjustments to this will need to be made and this will form part of this Service Review.

- 2.5 Below is a summary of the Council's outturn for the Library Service in 2022/3 showing expenditure and income (in £'000s):

### Income & Expenditure 2022/3 £'000



- Employees
- Premises
- Transport
- Supplies & Services
- Third Party Payments
- Income

These figures are based on the 2022/3 financial year outturn to show the Council's full expenditure and income on the Library Service of £3.238m.

Third party payments mainly consist of internal contributions from Public Health (£700k) and Adult Social Care (£100k), in recognition of the work of the Library Service in supporting health, wellbeing and information to support independent living.

Nearly half (£54,500) of the income figure of £119k is from grants, including £45k from the Early Help & Prevention Service to support the Book Start scheme for babies and young children.

As previously stated, the Library Service has seen a c68% reduction in its budget since 2010. Nationally, benchmarking statistics from CIPFA for 2021/2 show the average expenditure on libraries was £9,982 per 1000 population (a drop of 17% from the previous year), giving an average budget of £5.202m. This compares with expenditure of just £6,444 per 1000 population in Bradford, with expenditure of £3.358m that year.

- 2.6 A recent article by the Local Government Chronicle cited libraries as “the clearest example of successful local government transformation”. It said that, in total, councils across England budgeted almost £500m less on library and cultural services in 2023-24 compared to 2010-11, and on average have seen a 30% reduction in library and cultural spend over that period. It acknowledged that, as funding from Central Government has reduced, and demand for social care services increased, Councils have had little choice but to prioritise spend on care services and there will continue to be huge pressure on the budgets to run libraries and cultural services.

The article goes on to say: “It wouldn't be remiss to say libraries are more community centres these days, and in the breadth of services they offer they can help improve the wider health and economic outlook for an area. This is a transformation that is very visible: a library in 2024 is a lot different to a library in 2010 where book borrowing was the main focus. If you go to your local library now, you could take part in baby and toddler classes. Or drop in to a business start-up support service.”

This is certainly true of Bradford Libraries, which delivered 4500 activities and events during 2022/3, ranging from rhyme times and story times to creative writing, crafts, author events, mini theatre performances, talks, health and wellbeing checks, social worker drop ins, open mic poetry, business start-up advice, ESOL classes, basic IT skills courses, exercise classes, and bereavement 'death café' sessions.

2.7 It is worth noting the recent investment that has been made in Bradford Libraries including:

- £200k capital funding to support pilot work on the new vision and model for the Library Service, which resulted in the complete refurbishment of Wibsey Library and the introduction of meeting pods in Keighley Library
- £200k capital funding to improve Library Service IT infrastructure, which resulted in the adoption of a new Library Management (cataloguing and circulation) System in 2021, and new self-service kiosks in the 10 Council libraries in January 2024
- £200k grant funding from Arts Council England under their *Libraries Improvement Fund* to support adaptations to a number of library buildings across the district to make them more flexible and able to accommodate community and partner meetings, activities and events
- Over £190k of Community Infrastructure Levy funding allocated to libraries over 3 years, which will be used to enhance access to and provision of library services

### 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 In order to deliver the savings proposals we will use a data driven and evidence-based approach. The Council will review a range of demographic data relating to community need as well as library performance and costs. This will help to determine the priorities for delivery in line with the role the Library Service can play in reducing social and health inequalities, for example. Senior officers have already engaged with Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) colleagues to seek their advice on the Review.

3.2 As well as using the DCMS toolkit for library services planning change, we will adopt and adapt good practice examples from elsewhere of library service needs assessments, such as Appendix 3 of Hampshire's: [libraries-info-booklet.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/libraries-info-booklet.pdf).

In line with the DCMS toolkit, we will need to take consideration of a range of factors including the accessibility and availability of provision, the Council's Equality Duty and Best Value duty. When planning a Strategic Review of Libraries, DCMS advises the following considerations:

- how well the strategy meets local needs, now and in the future, using documented evidence held locally, as well as members and officers' local knowledge
- an assessment of the equality impact on all 'protected groups' as specified in the Equality Act 2010
- a careful consideration of feedback received before making a definitive decision

- a demonstration of how steps have been taken to mitigate the impact
- an openness to new options
- another consultation before implementing changes
- an investment in working with communities and other partners to put new solutions in place, drawing on learning from elsewhere

3.3 This fits with our proposed timetable for the Review as follows:

**March - April:** data and needs analysis work

**May - June:** identify options for savings that would continue to enable a sustainable statutory library service

**July – August:** public, staff and union engagement on options for savings proposals

**September:** report on the outcome of engagement and make proposals for savings

**October – November:** public, staff and union consultation on savings proposals

**December:** report on the outcome of consultation and final decision on savings proposals

**January – March:** implementation of final agreed proposals

#### 4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The Library Service net revenue budget is £2.3m for 2023/4 financial year, including an income target of £177k.

#### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

As set out above, care will be taken to follow the guidance published by DCMS on how to make changes to library services, in order to mitigate the risk of the Council failing to comply with its legal duties and thus being vulnerable to legal challenge or action by the Secretary of State. Governance arrangements are set out in paragraph 6 of this report.

#### 6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There is a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 on local authorities to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service”. The detailed statutory duty is set out below.

**Section 7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides as follows:— General duty of library authorities.**

(1) It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof, Provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.

(2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability—

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and

(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

Under the same Act, section 10 provides that the Secretary of State has certain default powers when satisfied that a library authority has failed to carry out its duties under the Act.

In considering its Library Service Review, it will be necessary for the Council to have regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

No significant implications have been identified.

### **7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

No significant implications have been identified.

### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

No significant implications have been identified.

### **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

No significant implications have been identified.

## **7.5 TRADE UNION**

Trade Unions will be consulted on any staffing impact of proposals.

## **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

No significant implications have been identified at this stage.

## **7.7 AREA COMMITTEE LOCALITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

No significant implications have been identified at this stage.

## **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

No significant implications have been identified at this stage.

## **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

No significant implications have been identified.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members agree to the methodology and timescales for the Strategic Review of Libraries as outlined in section 3 of this report, and delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director of Place to bring a further report with the results of the data assessment work and initial options for savings at the appropriate time.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Appendix 1: Summary of Vision and Model for Bradford Libraries

Appendix 2: Distribution map of Bradford Libraries

Appendix 3: Library profiles for Council and Hybrid libraries