



Oxfordshire County Council
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Tuesday, February 08, 2011

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The Friends of Sonning Common Library have not been able to find any information on the Council's website about the detailed criteria (and the possible weighting of each criterion) used by the Council to inform its proposal to close selected libraries, including the Sonning Common library. We should be grateful for this detailed information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

We anticipate that this information would include but would not be limited to any report and paper prepared for consideration by the Council in connection with budgetary cuts to the Council's library service and/or the proposed closures, minutes of any meeting during which the library budgetary cuts and/or the proposed closures were discussed, information relating to the alternatives to closure which were considered by the Council and any internal correspondence relating to library closure.

It is proposed that over the next 4 years, the library service achieves revenue expenditure savings of £2m from a gross budget of £8.7m. This is 23% of gross expenditure and it is a proportionate saving.

Under the library proposals funding would continue for 23 (out of the existing 43) libraries and funding would cease for 20 libraries. Static library provision in Oxfordshire is based on historical patterns, largely determined in the 1950s and 1960s and as a consequence it is extremely uneven; some localities have five libraries, others have only one.

The Henley/Goring locality has four libraries; Goring, Henley, Sonning Common, and Woodcote. The current proposals would see the retention of two; namely Goring and Henley.

In adopting the current proposals, the county council is seeking to modernise the service for the 21st century and in doing so it has started from the following principles:

- Library provision is focused on centres of population and evenly spread geographically
- Library provision reflects regular shopping and travel patterns from local communities
- Library provision reflects key patterns of current use

- Access to library services (via mobiles, community initiatives etc.) is targeted in areas of socio-economic need
- The physical library network is supported and complimented by virtual provision, including e books and e audio
- The core library offer continues to include both universal and targeted services

Weightings were not assigned to these principles.

We will be seeking to develop Big Society solutions as part of a county-wide initiative to work with communities to explore alternative ways of providing services that residents want and need. In addition to supporting community initiatives, our proposals also include plans to extend Home Library Services and plans to review mobile services; under these proposals, we anticipate that mobiles could serve sizable communities, such as Sonning Common, act as a hub for these communities and provide opportunities to bring partner services into the community, (eg. consumer advice, well being advice), alongside conventional mobile library services.

We will be consulting with the public about all these proposals over the coming months and look forward to your comments. Our final decision will be informed by the outcome of this consultation and is likely to be made in the summer.

Please find below extracts from both the first and second Community Services Star Chamber meetings, at which proposals for Oxfordshire's libraries were discussed. The action note from the first Community Services Star Chamber is also included. These documents provide further information on the rationale behind Oxfordshire County Council's proposals for libraries.

Further information will also be made available on the council's website, as part of the formal Future Libraries consultation process, which will begin later this month.

- a. The following extract from the Community Services Star Chamber, held on Wednesday 13 October 2010, provides information on the early proposals for the future of Oxfordshire's libraries:



Business Strategy

2011/12 – 2014/15

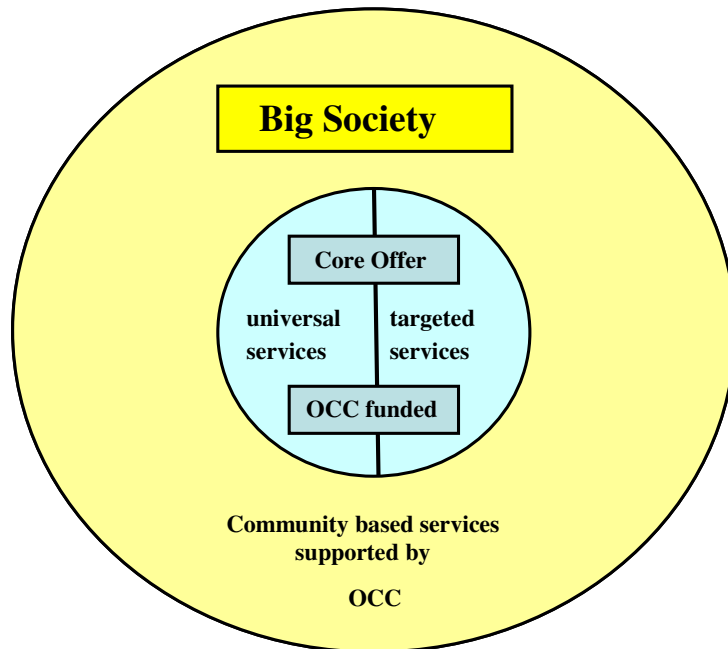
Social and Community Services - Community Services

Library Service

Oxfordshire Libraries is leading one of the Future Libraries Programme projects working with Kent Libraries. The project which runs until December 2010 aims to develop, define and appraise a model for county public library services based on a comprehensive needs analysis and clear criteria which enable resources to be matched to need in a “best fit” approach. An agreed strategy for the shape of future library services will be informed by this work but some key elements of future service provision can be identified.

Revenue savings of 25 - 40% mean that library services will need to be re-modelled for the long term, substantially and permanently reducing the cost of provision, while retaining those features which are valuable to customers (good stock, good opening hours, access to information, community spaces and knowledgeable staff) and those which materially contribute to the achievement of priorities of the County Council and its partners.

The diagram below illustrates how elements of a future service model for Oxfordshire Libraries could fit together.



Core Offer

The Core Offer represents a highly professional, Council funded, core service. Within the resources available, this service would be designed to meet statutory and local needs – delivering a “comprehensive and efficient library service” – including both universal and targeted services.

Universal core services

Universal core services will comprise:

- a smaller network of library buildings, located in town centres that are accessible to most people in Oxfordshire and which meets the majority of demand for conventional library use, (c70% of issues and visits respectively). These centres could also act as hub/host for other services such as District Council information points, CAB or public access point for police services
- A comprehensive countywide collection of books, online resources and other items, accessible to all, and exploited to support: reading and literacy; learning; economic wellbeing; community cohesion and healthy living.
- Online and telephone based remote services including: eBook and eAudio downloads and/or online access, Oxfordshire Libraries Answers Direct telephone enquiry service, online access to the library catalogue to reserve or renew items and to library membership; online information, local history and archival sources.
- Public access computers, deployed across the building network, used to: provide access to online information; help people develop digital and information skills; and combat digital inclusion. This network, supported by trained staff and volunteers, can also facilitate access to public services delivered online and a range of learning opportunities, by supporting those people who lack confidence in using online services independently.

Targeted core services

Clearly there will be some for whom town libraries and/or virtual services will not be accessible or appropriate. The detailed needs analysis currently being undertaken will facilitate the prioritisation of these library needs by both community and demography. Priority groups are likely to include families with pre school children, who may find it difficult to travel, (e books do not currently cater for young children), older people who may not be able to travel or wish to use virtual services and other adults who are less mobile for other reasons. Priority communities will be those identified corporately (eg. in the Closer to Communities strategy).

Service provision for those unable to make use of town libraries or virtual services will need to be responsive to local need and designed collaboratively; there will not be a one size fits all solution. The mix is likely to include targeted mobile provision, (eg, service to all primary schools; a service for older people based on the rural children centre principle; use of other council or community facilities, such as Children’s Centres and use of self service technology. Services could be commissioned from or managed with partners and delivered flexibly through a mixed economy.

The extent of targeted core services will depend on the level and overall prioritisation of resources but they may comprise:

- Bookstart and associated initiatives with early years, school children and young people – designed to improve literacy and support learning.
- Home Library Service – using volunteers to deliver books and other items to home bound customers.
- Mobile vehicle services providing access to library services for all primary aged children and access for older people in more remote communities. These vehicles would become a hub and focal point for communities where people could meet with each other, foster good neighbourhood schemes and promote stronger communities. In partnership with other services, such as Health, they could provide a mix of services in rural communities.
- Outreach; a range of projects, activities and events that use reading to stimulate and support communities or individuals with particular needs.

Big Society

Beyond the core service we would seek to work with local communities and individuals, to create new local opportunities to support Big Society initiatives.

Examples include:

- Work to support local initiatives to extend library services over and above the core service. Priorities for core service provision and the overall level of resources available to the service will determine the extent of support that could be given. Support, however, could include: a circulating collection of books and other items for loan, the necessary ICT systems to ensure that loans are logged and stock can be traced; a reservation system – delivering items from core libraries to local communities on request; and advice and assistance in stock maintenance and organising activities and events to promote reading and literacy. In some cases it might be desirable to consider the transfer of freehold assets to communities to support such initiatives. This might also include some capital costs to bring these assets to a reasonable state of repair before transfer, together with the ongoing revenue costs associated with the day to day costs of maintaining a property. In other communities where existing premises are rented it is not clear what support local people might expect in order to take over responsibility for local service delivery.
- Working with partners county-wide to embed reading as a cultural activity for all ages.
- Supporting work to extend volunteer activity in libraries, especially to support reading and digital skills initiatives.
- Access to information and skills that support democratic engagement, and facilities for local meetings or to promote local initiatives to the wider community.
- A continued commitment to involve local people in designing and shaping local services, for example by consulting over refurbishment of buildings and revisions to opening hours.

Service Area - Library Service

Employees	229.77
2010/11 Gross Budget	£8.700m

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	TOTAL
Existing Service £m	0.211	-0.004	-0.014	0	0	0.193
Savings £m	-0.133	-2.620	-0.721	0	0	-3.474
Planned FTEs	61.7	33.6				95.3 fte (176 staff)

Current service activity

The Library Service provides access to books, information and knowledge, to support the recreational, cultural and educational needs of those who live, work, and study in Oxfordshire. Our customers are all those who live, work, visit and study in Oxfordshire. The core service provides a universal network of library buildings (43) and vehicles (7); a comprehensive countywide collection of books, online resources and other items, accessible to all, and exploited to support: reading and literacy; learning; economic wellbeing; community cohesion and healthy living; targeted work to support children's and adult's reading, learning and digital skills; online and telephone based remote services; public access computers, deployed across the building network, used to provide access to online information; help people develop digital and information skills; and combat digital exclusion. The service provides and manages the Rural Children's Centre on behalf of Children, Education and Families and two prison libraries on behalf of HM Prison Service.

Statutory minimum

Extract from the legislation:

The County Council's general statutory duty, laid down in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, is:

“to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof “.

In fulfilling its general duty, the County Council should:

“in particular have regard to the desirability — of securing,that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other...materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children.....; and

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; “

The legislation does not set minimum specific minimum standards. The most recent challenge to a library authority under the legislation (Wirral Inquiry 2009), indicated that to ensure it meets the general duty, an authority should identify the specific and local needs of adults, children and young people of all ages and demonstrate that having done so, it provides services to meet these needs in the best way possible, within the resources available. In the light of the general duty and the conclusions of the Wirral Inquiry, if any of the examples given below were implemented, (or other configurations at 40% reduction), there would be potential for challenge under the legislation.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

The examples below have been developed in the absence of a detailed needs analysis (see above comment). The latter has been commissioned and will be available mid November. The three examples have not been subjected to an equality impact assessment or to specific consultation. In the light of the authority's legislative duty and the conclusions of the Wirral Inquiry, they should, therefore, not be regarded as firm proposals or recommendations at this stage. They do, however, provide an illustration of what could be achieved at the expected level of revenue resource.

The first two examples draw on the model that together with Kent Libraries, Oxfordshire Libraries is developing under the DCMS (Department for Culture Media and Sport) sponsored Future Libraries Programme. This programme aims to model public library services for the future. The model being developed by Oxfordshire and Kent is based on core universal services being delivered through a smaller but highly accessible building network, an extensive online library offer, including eBooks and social media and core targeted services delivered to and managed in partnership with priority communities and groups. It aims to permanently reduce the cost of service delivery, while retaining those features which are valuable to customers (good stock, good opening hours, access to information, community spaces and knowledgeable staff) and enhancing those which materially contribute to the achievement of priorities of the County Council and its partners.

Although, the first two examples draw on the principles of this model, it is evident on the basis of work undertaken to date, that the Future Libraries Programme model cannot be fully realised in the context of 40% revenue reductions.

The third example takes an alternative approach, reducing expenditure, proportionally across the public service.

Two other examples have been considered but not included here:

- A variation on Example 1 that gives priority to rural libraries and maintains Children's mobile services
- An example which takes the first two examples and applies opening hours reductions

The first required the substitution of a main town library for a wider range of rural provision and the second provides relatively marginal effects which does not substantively change the significance of the examples given. Both could be developed in further detail if necessary.

Example 1 to deliver efficiencies of 40%

Core universal services would comprise a building network of 10 libraries (Oxford Central Library, Abingdon, Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Didcot, Henley, Wantage, Thame and Watlington. All libraries would provide a comprehensive collection of stock, internet access, volunteer support to extend access to services eg. in digital skills, reading promotion, local history. Core targeted services would comprise, Book Start, volunteer provided Home Library services, 3 children's mobiles and 3 public service mobiles and some outreach activity, encouraging children's and adult's reading, literacy and learning. Opening hours and expenditure on books and other materials would remain as currently for these individual libraries and vehicles but some stock expenditure would be diverted from print to establish an ebook download service, compensating in part for the reduced building network. This would be equivalent to 61% of the current stock fund; the remaining 39% would be cut. Online and remote access enquiry services would continue to be provided and public access computers would be available across the building network. The leadership and wider management teams would be combined and reduced from 14 to 4 FTE; peripatetic librarian teams would be combined and reduced from 17 to 6 FTE. Expenditure on bibliographic and support services would be reduced by 50%. There would be some limited capacity to support community based initiatives over and above this core service; for example, stock removed from closed libraries could be circulated but could not be maintained in significant quantities without compromising the offer and performance of the core service; stock could be combined with surplus self service equipment for use by communities but this would incur annual maintenance costs, which if met by OCC would require additional expenditure of c. £60k per annum; building assets could be transferred to communities. There would be an insufficient number of managers/librarians to provide any significant support for community based activity over and above the core service.

Libraries that would close under this example:

Adderbury, Bampton, Benson, Berinsfield, Blackbird Leys, Botley, Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chinnor, Chipping Norton, Cowley, Deddington, Eynsham, Faringdon, Goring, Grove, Headington, Hook Norton, Kennington, Kidlington, Littlemore, Neithrop, North Leigh, Old Marston, Sonning Common, Stonesfield, Summertown, Wallingford, Wheatley, Woodcote, Woodstock, Wychwood and one public service mobile.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

This example is relatively cost effective; net cost per static library visit is estimated to be £1.59. On 09/10 performance, these 10 libraries handle 61% of current visits and 56% of current issues; without reductions in opening hours or stock expenditure they

could be expected to at least maintain these levels. Conversely, however, 39% of current users would find it more difficult or impossible and/or time consuming to access library services. Children and adults who are less mobile for whatever reason (eg. older people, people without their own transport, people with disabilities) would be much less well served than currently, as would rural communities and Oxford City residents, workers and students who do not have cause to travel regularly to the city centre.

This example would be unpopular with library stakeholders. No library authority to date has reduced core services on this scale and should this or a similar proposal be agreed in the future, it is highly likely to generate articulate and organised opposition locally (and possibly nationally.) Some of the impact could be mitigated by the extension of virtual services to include eBook and eAudio download services and by the distribution of bookstock from closed libraries to community use. However, users and potential users without access to the internet would find it difficult to make use of virtual services and stock discarded from closed libraries could not be maintained without significant detriment to the core service. The closure of libraries in community premises (eg. Old Marston, Stonesfield, Neithrop) and the cessation of rental income may have implications for the viability of some community groups/associations.

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The closure of library buildings will have an impact on Property Services in terms of over property costs, maintenance requirements, leasing arrangements and overall asset management considerations. The closure of libraries in shared OCC premises (eg. Kidlington, Blackbird Leys) may have implications for other OCC services, such as Adult Learning that occupy the same building. The closure of libraries on shared school sites (Littlemore, Woodcote and Sonning Common) will have implications for the respective schools involved.

Capital implications of proposed change

The reduction of the core building network to 10 libraries, places the greatest emphasis of service provision on Oxford Central Library and the main towns. The case for capital investment in the town libraries, therefore, becomes even stronger from both a community and a service perspective. This is especially so, where investment would meet the needs arising from population growth (Didcot and Bicester), redevelopment (Westgate and Abingdon) and a combination of needs arising from population, redevelopment and deprivation (Banbury).

This example would have the potential to release capital assets from the sale of OCC owned premises. The asset value of those OCC owned libraries that would be closed is estimated at £8,069k. Mouchel have been commissioned to identify the market value of those OCC owned libraries that would be closed under this example.

Example 2 to deliver efficiencies

Core universal services would comprise a building network of 14 libraries (Oxford Central Library, Abingdon, Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Didcot, Henley, Wantage, Thame, Watlington, Cowley, Carterton, Wallingford, Chipping Norton). There would be no mobile services. All libraries would provide a comprehensive collection of stock, internet access, volunteer support to extend access to services eg. in digital skills, reading promotion, local history. Core targeted services would remain as in example 1. Expenditure on books and other materials would remain as currently for these individual libraries but some expenditure would be diverted from print to establish an ebook download service, compensating in part for the reduced building network. This would be equivalent to 63.4% of the current stock fund; the remaining 36.6% would be cut). Online and remote access enquiry services would continue to be provided and public access computers would be available across the building network. The leadership and wider management teams would be combined and reduced from 14 to 3 FTE; peripatetic librarian teams would be combined and reduced from 17 to 6 FTE. Expenditure on bibliographic and support services would be reduced by 50%. As described in example 1 there would be some limited capacity to support community based initiatives over and above this core service.

Libraries that would close under this example:

Adderbury, Bampton, Benson, Berinsfield, Blackbird Leys, Botley, Burford, Charlbury, Chinnor, Deddington, Eynsham, Faringdon, Goring, Grove, Headington, Hook Norton, Kennington, Kidlington, Littlemore, Neithrop, North Leigh, Old Marston, Sonning Common, Stonesfield, Summertown, Wheatley, Woodcote, Woodstock, Wychwood, two Children's mobiles and five public service mobiles

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

This example is the most cost effective; net cost per static library visit is estimated to be £1.34. On 09/10 performance, these 14 libraries handle 72% of current visits and 68% of current issues; without reductions in opening hours or stock expenditure they could be expected to at least maintain these levels. Conversely, however, 28% of current users would find it more difficult or impossible and/or time consuming to access library services. Children and adults who are less mobile for whatever reason (eg. older people, people without their own transport, people with disabilities) would be better served in the Cowley area of the City and in Carterton, Wallingford and Chipping Norton but still overall much less well served than currently, as would rural communities and Oxford City residents, workers and students in the north of the city, who do not have cause to travel regularly to the city centre.

This example would be unpopular with library stakeholders. No library authority to date has reduced core services on this scale and should this or a similar proposal be agreed in the future, it is highly likely to generate articulate and organised opposition locally (and possibly nationally.) Some of the impact could be mitigated by the extension of virtual services to include eBook and eAudio

download services and by the distribution of bookstock from closed libraries to community use. However, users and potential users without access to the internet would find it difficult to make use of virtual services and stock discarded from closed libraries could not be maintained without significant detriment to the core service. The closure of libraries in community premises (eg. Old Marston, Stonesfield, Neithrop) and the cessation of rental income may have implications for the viability of some community groups/associations.

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The closure of library buildings will have an impact on Property Services in terms of over property costs, maintenance requirements, leasing arrangements and overall asset management considerations. The closure of libraries in shared OCC premises (eg. Kidlington, Blackbird Leys) may have implications for other OCC services, such as Adult Learning that occupy the same building. The closure of libraries on shared school sites (Littlemore, Woodcote and Sonning Common) will have implications for the respective schools involved.

Capital implications of proposed change

The reduction of the core building network to 14 libraries, places the greatest emphasis of service provision on Oxford Central Library and the main towns. The case for capital investment in the town libraries, therefore, becomes even stronger from both a community and a service perspective. This is especially so, where investment would meet the needs arising from population growth (Didcot and Bicester), redevelopment (Westgate and Abingdon) and a combination of needs arising from population, redevelopment and deprivation (Banbury).

This example would have the potential to release capital assets from the sale of OCC owned premises. The asset value of those OCC owned libraries that would be closed is estimated at £6,193k. Mouchel have been commissioned to identify the market value of those OCC owned libraries that would be closed under this example.

Example 3 to deliver efficiencies

Core universal services would comprise the current building network of 43 libraries, 2 children's mobiles and 5 single staffed public mobiles. However, opening hours would be reduced by 50% across all static service points and the move to single staffing for public service mobiles would reduce the number of communities that could be visited. Expenditure on books would be reduced by 45%. All libraries would provide a severely diminished collection of stock. Core targeted services would remain as in example 1. Online and remote access enquiry services would continue to be provided and public access computers would be available across the building network. The leadership and wider management team would reduce from 14 to 9 FTE; peripatetic librarian teams would be combined and reduced from 17 to 7.5 FTE. Expenditure on bibliographic and support services would be reduced by 50%.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

This example offers poor value for money; net cost per static library visit may rise to £1.96. It does enable communities to retain static library services where they currently exist but access to these services would be severely restricted; for example, North Leigh would be open 5.5 hours per week; Wychwood would be open 10 hours per week; Goring would be open 13.5 hours per week; Wallingford would be open 18.5 hours per week; Kidlington would be open for 22.25 hours per week; Abingdon would be open 25.75 hours per week and Oxford Central Library would be open 28.5 hours per week.

Consideration would need to be given to an optimum pattern of opening hours and priority where possible would be given to core hours of business, those being, Saturdays, and weekdays 10.00 am -12 noon and 3.00 pm - 5.30 pm. However, notwithstanding such an approach, it would be impossible to avoid cuts to core opening hours. The current opening hours for the Oxford Central Library and an example of what those hours could be reduced to are as follows:

	<u>Current Hours (Total 57)</u>		<u>Example Hours (Total 28.5)</u>
Monday	9.00 am – 7.00 pm		2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Tuesday	9.00 am – 7.00 pm	v	10.00 am – 6.00 pm
Wednesday	9.00 am – 7.00 pm		10.00 am – 1.00 pm
Thursday	9.00 am – 7.00 pm		10.00 am – 1.00 pm
Friday	9.00 am – 5.30 pm		11.00 am – 5.00 pm
Saturday	9.00 am – 5.30 pm		10.00 am – 3.30 pm

Between 1998-9 and 2003-4 book expenditure was reduced and opening hours were cut by 15% (in particular the least well used hours) in order to make savings. They were restored to current levels in 2003-4. Over the intervening period, visits remained static but book issues declined by 20%. Opening hours reductions of the magnitude indicated here are far in excess of those imposed in 1998, (in Oxford Central, for example, hours were **reduced** to 49 per week) and the viability of operating some, if not all, libraries at these levels would be questionable.

It is possible that this example, if compared to the previous two, would be relatively more popular with library stakeholders, as it retains the building network. However, there is little doubt that in reducing opening hours and book expenditure to this degree, the quality of the core universal loan service would decline rapidly to an extremely poor baseline. It is also worth noting in this context that the 1964 Act makes specific reference to the sufficiency of book stock and other materials; this example reduces expenditure on stock to a lower level than in example 1 and 2 and spreads the remaining resource over 43 (rather than 10 or 14) libraries.

Since 2004-5 visits (including virtual visits) have risen by 11% and book issues have risen by 14%. Customer consultation consistently reveals that the three key determinants of library use are good opening hours (to match retail), good bookstock and pleasant, modern environments. In this example, the impact on levels of use could be as high as a 50% decline. All current users would feel the impact of these reductions and many would be deterred from using the service, as a result of inconvenient opening hours and poor quality bookstock. Potential users (as we know from recent consultation) would be also deterred from using the service for the same reasons. Users in the City and main towns (who comprise the vast bulk of customers) are likely to be most frustrated by these restrictions because it will be impossible to match retail opening hours in the town libraries and library use is so closely associated with retail activity. This example would fall well below an acceptable level of customer service and would call into question the continuing viability of public library services overall.

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The maintenance of the current building network may restrict savings options for Property Services. Maintenance of 43 buildings which will for the most part be closed to the public represents a poor use of property assets. Opportunities to establish joint and shared use with other OCC services and partners could and would certainly be pursued but this would incur cost elsewhere and is unlikely to be an appropriate solution for the use of every library building.

Capital implications of proposed change

With the exception of any future Westgate development, there are no significant capital implications arising from this example. The in-principle case for capital investment in the city and town libraries related to population growth, redevelopment and deprivation remains, as stated above. However, it would be more difficult to justify significant capital investment in new library provision in towns such as Banbury and Abingdon to which access would be severely restricted, unless opening hours and stock expenditure could be restored. The exception may be Oxford Central Library. If the Westgate development proceeds in future as previously planned, although refurbishment costs would be met by the developer, there would inevitably be some capital cost to the County Council.

Summary

Library Service: This paper has set out a broad framework for the future provision of library services. That framework is based on a core service, including universal and targeted activity, the shape of which is informed by local needs. Where resources permit the core service also supports local community initiatives to extend library services beyond the core offer. Services would be delivered from a reduced building base focused on the City and towns throughout the county, through extended remote and virtual services, including e books, and through a range of flexible mechanisms that might include, mobiles, partnership arrangements and increased volunteer activity.

The paper has also provided 3 examples of how the library service could be modelled on the basis of a 40% reduction in revenue expenditure. These examples have not been informed by a thorough needs analysis, (this will be available in December as an output of the Future Libraries Programme), and they have not been subject to an equality impact assessment. At this stage they should not therefore be regarded as firm proposals or recommended options.

The first two examples are based on the broad framework and they are the most viable in so far as they could meet 60-70% of current demand with 40% less funding. The first example enables some flexibility around targeted services through the use of mobile libraries but the second (which includes no mobiles) could meet the higher level of current demand (72%).

The third example has been included to show the effect of a 40% pro rata reduction in opening hours and stock expenditure combined with existing planned savings of £950K in management and staffing. This example represents poor value for money and would not offer a viable level of customer service.

Each of these examples (and indeed others that might be configured on the same revenue assumptions) has the potential for challenge under the public libraries legislation.

A future strategy for public libraries which reduces the building base would be enhanced by a commitment to capital investment in city and town libraries, to ensure that these key library spaces could be as efficient and as accessible as possible to all users and potential users.

- b. The following is the action note for the first Community Services Star Chamber, held on Wednesday 13 October 2010. Some of the information in this document concerns proposals from other service areas, which are not related to your request. This information has therefore been omitted:



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

**Action Points from the Community services Star Chamber held on
Wednesday 13 October 2010**

Present:

Cabinet

Cllrs David Robertson (Chairman), Keith Mitchell, Louise Chapman, Jim Couchman, Judith Heathcoat, Ian Hudspeth, Michael Waine

CCMT

Joanna Simons, Stephen Capaldi, John Jackson, Huw Jones, Sue Scane

Other Officers

Alexandra Bailey, Lorna Baxter, Simon Kearey, Jan Paine, Arzu Ulusoy-Shiptone

Observers

Cllrs Lawrie Stratford, Loraine Lindsay-Gale, Don Seale.

	Action	Lead
	<u>Cultural Services</u>	
1.	[Redacted]	John Jackson
I.	[Redacted]	
II.	[Redacted]	
III.	[Redacted]	
	[Redacted]	
	[Redacted]	
IV.	[Redacted]	



<p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] <p>2. [REDACTED]</p> <p>3. [REDACTED]</p> <p>4. [REDACTED]</p> <p>5. [REDACTED]</p> <p>6. [REDACTED]</p> <p>7. [REDACTED]</p>	<p>John Jackson</p> <p>John Jackson</p> <p>John Jackson</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Libraries</u></p> <p>8. The proposed options were not accepted.</p> <p>9. The following additional work was requested for the second SCS star chamber :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative options for library services focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An initial phase of work to reduce the number of libraries in suburbs of the city e.g. Summertown and Banbury e.g. Neithrop and in rural areas where good accrss exists to facilities in market towns/ the city ○ Piloting alternative models of service provision including: co-location of library services in children’s centres or schools; Amazon type services; community run libraries; greater use of mobile library services. 	<p>John Jackson/Jan Paine</p>

- c. The following is a paper presented at the second Community Services Star Chamber held on Wednesday 24 November 2010

Star Chamber Paper Future Libraries for Star Chamber 2

Introduction

The library service needs to reflect 21st century customer expectations, while living with reduced resources. There are opportunities to extend electronic systems to download books and for commercial franchises in some libraries e.g. coffee shops. These options are being pursued as part of our strategy for the future.

We do need to reduce the number of libraries where we are going to provide a high level service and several options are set out below. We also need to recognise that where we close libraries we need to consider other options for rural and suburban communities. These will include:

- Self-service Library Links or
- Mobile library facilities or
- Book delivery to these or other community points such as secondary schools where we already have OCC deliveries or
- Community run libraries to which we give start-up support

We are not being prescriptive about how a local service is maintained where we close an OCC library because the options need to be explored and agreed in local communities

Vision for future library services

Our vision (see appendix) is that by 2012-13, Oxfordshire will have sustainable library services within reduced resources which meet the reading, learning and information needs of customers in the 21st century. We will:

- Establish, and invest in, a core network of city and town libraries
 - Self service will be rolled out to 10 further libraries
 - We will work to secure investment in key town libraries
 - Sunday opening will be introduced in the Central Library
 - Commercial partners will be sought for coffee shop franchises
- Use technology to modernise and extend services
 - eBook and eAudio downloads will be introduced
 - Social media will be exploited to develop online library communities
- Meet the particular needs of young children and older people
 - Children's mobile library services will be extended
 - Book gifting schemes for pre-school children will be retained
 - Public service mobiles will stay longer in key locations and deliver a range of services to older people
 - Home library services will be extended

- Mobiles will be used to drop off, order and collect books.
- Create innovative solutions with partners to extend access to services beyond the core network.
 - Self service *Library links* will be introduced shaped by community need and hosted by partner organisations. (see appendix)
- Offer communities the opportunity to support the extension of library services or manage community provision for themselves
 - We will encourage and work with more volunteers
 - Library assets may be offered to the community, (buildings, IT, books), together with start-up support for those interested in running their own community libraries

Models for future library services

Three possible models for future provision are proposed. Each model incorporates and builds on the proposals that emanated from the Star Chamber discussion on 13 October and includes the following principles:

- Library provision is focused on centres of population and evenly spread geographically
- Library provision reflects regular shopping and travel patterns from local communities (to be confirmed by data analysis which will be available week beginning 6 Dec 2010).
- Library provision reflects key patterns of current use
- Access to library services is targeted in areas of socio-economic need (to be confirmed by data analysis)
- The core library offer includes universal and targeted services as described in the business strategy prepared for the first Star Chamber.

Current library provision in Oxfordshire, as in most library authorities, reflects a haphazard history of development and growth with the result that access to services is unevenly distributed across both urban and rural areas. The city, (prior to 1974, an independent library authority) has generous provision through 7 libraries (8, if Botley is included), while other localities, such as Bicester, Kidlington, Faringdon and Didcot have only one library. Some rural localities, such as Chipping Norton/Woodstock and Banbury are also well served. Chipping Norton/Woodstock locality has five libraries: Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Charlbury, Wychwood and Stonesfield; Banbury locality has 5 libraries: Banbury, Neithrop, Adderbury, Deddington and Hook Norton.

The three models presented here propose a more even geographical spread of provision, taking account of population distribution, shopping patterns, current library use and socio/economic needs.

Model 1 saving £1.479m 17% of current gross expenditure

Model 1 proposes a rationalisation of the library network, reducing the network to 31 libraries by the closure of 12 libraries on the basis of the availability good transport links to other services and/or close proximity to other library services.

Libraries retained in this model would be:

Oxford Central	Chinnor
Cowley	Woodstock
Abingdon	Berinsfield
Banbury	Wheatley
Witney	Goring
Bicester	Sonning Common
Didcot	Eynsham
Henley	Benson
Wantage	Wychwood
Thame	Deddington
Kidlington	Burford
Faringdon	Kennington
Carterton	Hook Norton
Wallingford	Charlbury
Chipping Norton	Bampton
Watlington	

Model 1 would retain 7 mobile libraries, changing their use as described above.

The 12 libraries proposed for closure in this model are:

Summertown
Headington
Botley
Littlemore
Old Marston
Blackbird Leys
Grove
Neithrop
Woodcote
Adderbury
Stonesfield
North Leigh

This model would:

- Give good geographical coverage
- Maintain current levels of access and stock provision in retained libraries
- Retain 85.58% of current visits and 85.9% of current issues.
- Provide good access for rural communities.

- Reduce management team numbers from 14 fte to 6fte and reduce librarians from 11 fte to 6 fte.
- Reduce bibliographic services (acquisition and supply of stock) by 40%

This model:

- May reduce City provision disproportionately given the numbers that live, work and study in the City (to be confirmed by data analysis)

Model 2 saving £1.67m 19% of current gross expenditure

Model 2 proposes a rationalisation of the library network by closing 20 libraries and retaining two or three libraries in each Closer to Communities locality; in total 23 libraries would remain.

Libraries retained in this model would be:

Oxford Central	Faringdon
Abingdon	Carterton
Banbury	Wallingford
Witney	Chipping Norton
Bicester	Burford
Didcot	Eynsham
Cowley	Goring
Henley	Hook Norton
Wantage	Watlington
Thame	Wheatley
Kidlington	Woodstock
	Wychwood

Model 2 would retain 7 mobile libraries, changing their use as described above and make provision for up to 10 library links elsewhere in the County. Other provision for rural and suburban options would be considered as noted above.

The 20 libraries proposed for closure in this model are:

Summertown	Chinnor
Headington	Berinsfield
Botley	Sonning Common
Littlemore	Benson
Old Marston	Deddington
Blackbird Leys	Kennington
Grove	Charlbury
Neithrop	Bampton
Woodcote	
Adderbury	
North Leigh	
Stonesfield	

This model would:

- Give reasonable geographical coverage
- Maintain current levels of access and stock provision in retained libraries
- Retain 82% of current visits and 79.5% of current issues.
- Provide reasonable access for rural communities.
- Enable mobiles to provide targeted universal services eg. to all primary aged children via schools; to older people; to sizable rural communities

- Enable up to 10 library link services at a net cost of £33k each per annum.
- Reduce management team numbers from 14 fte to 6fte and reduce librarians from 11 fte to 6 fte.
- Reduce bibliographic services (acquisition and supply of stock) by 40%

This model would:

- Not fully address socio/economic need (to be confirmed by data analysis)
- Not fully address rural isolation (to be confirmed by data analysis)
- May reduce City provision disproportionately given number that live, work and study in the City (to be confirmed by data analysis)

Model 3 saving £2.01m 23% of current gross expenditure

Model 3 proposes a rationalisation of the library network by closing 27 libraries to retain at least one library in each Closer to Communities locality, giving a network of 16 libraries.

Libraries retained in this model would be:

Oxford Central	Wantage
Cowley	Thame
Abingdon	Kidlington
Banbury	Faringdon
Witney	Carterton
Bicester	Wallingford
Didcot	Chipping Norton
Henley	Watlington

Model 3 would retain 6 mobile libraries, changing their use as described above and make provision for up to 10 library links elsewhere in the County. Other provision for rural and suburban options would be considered as noted above.

The 27 libraries proposed for closure are:

Summertown	Woodstock
Headington	Chinnor
Botley	Berinsfield
Littlemore	Wheatley
Old Marston	Goring
Blackbird Leys	Sonning Common
Grove	Eynsham
Neithrop	Benson
Woodcote	Wychwood
Adderbury	Deddington
North Leigh	Burford
Stonesfield	Kennington
	Hook Norton
	Charlbury
	Bampton

This model would:

- Provide basic geographical coverage across the county
- Maintain current levels of access and stock provision in retained libraries
- Retain 77% of current visits and 73% of current issues
- Enable mobiles to provide targeted core services e.g. to all primary aged children via schools; to older people; to sizable rural communities
- Enable up to 10 library link services at a net cost of £33k each per annum.

- Reduce management team numbers from 14 fte to 6fte and reduce librarians from 11 fte to 6 fte.
- Reduce bibliographic services (acquisition and supply of stock) by 40%

This model would:

- Not fully address socio/economic need (to be confirmed by data analysis)
- Not fully address rural isolation
- May reduce City provision disproportionately given number that live, work and study in the City (to be confirmed by data analysis)

Appendix: Vision for Future Libraries

Over the past five years Oxfordshire Libraries have changed and modernised in response to rising customer expectations and national aspirations for public libraries. In particular we have adapted our services to reflect the way that people now live their lives. We have:

- Moved to a 24/7 service where books can be checked, ordered and renewed on line, where customers can join online and manage their accounts directly. As a result, virtual business has soared.
- Shifted from traditional reference books to online access for information, making references resources available to everyone, rather than just those able to visit the four main libraries
- Adopted self service in 4 libraries, improving customer service and making significant staffing efficiencies
- Adopted customer-centred principles of library design for new build, refurbished and self service, libraries with exceptional results in all four
- Achieved and retained Customer Service accreditation with 97% compliance
- Collaborated with partners to extend and develop services such as the Rural Children's Centre Mobile, Book Start and the dementia reading programme, *Pictures to Share*.
- Established a remote and telephone reference enquiry service, providing improved customer service and delivering staffing efficiencies
- Consulted closely with communities to understand how library services can be shaped to meet their needs and aspirations

The pace of this change will now have to change if the challenges faced by public services are to be met.

Our vision is that by 2012-13, Oxfordshire will have sustainable library services which meet the reading, learning and information and learning needs of customers in the 21st century. We will:

- Establish, and invest in, a core network of city and town libraries
 - Self service will be rolled out to a further 10 libraries in the core network, securing improved customer service and significant staffing efficiencies
 - We will work with developers and District Councils to secure investment in library services in key towns such as Abingdon, Bicester, and Didcot
 - Sunday opening will be introduced in the Central Library
 - Commercial partnerships will sought to extend coffee shop franchises in Oxford, Abingdon, Witney and Bicester
- Use technology effectively to modernise and extend services
 - Loan services will be extended to include eBook and eAudio downloads
 - Social media will be exploited to develop online library communities; reading groups, communities of interest,

- SMARTSM software and RFID technology will be utilized to ensure optimum efficiency and value for money in stock management
 - Meet the particular needs of young children and older people
 - Children's mobile library services will be extended to all primary schools
 - Book gifting schemes for families with pre-school children will be retained (so long as government funding is retained.)
 - Public service mobiles will provide a service hub in otherwise isolated rural communities. They will move to single staffing but stay longer in key locations and will potentially deliver a range of partner services to older people, such as consumer advice or health information, as well as library services.
 - Home library services will be extended with the help of volunteers (and in liaison with good neighbour schemes) to support older people wishing to remain independent in their own homes
 - Anyone will be able to use mobiles to drop off, reserve and collect books.
 - Create innovative solutions with partners to extend access to services beyond the core network.
 - *Library links* will be introduced shaped by community need and hosted by partner organisations offering space in community buildings. Through service level agreements, partners will deliver library loan services in venues such as, children's centres, community centres, schools, adult learning centres and health centres. *Library Links* will be additional provision, managed as part of the core service in areas of particular need or demand. They will:
 - Operate on an RFID self service basis
 - Give access to core library loan services, including a collection of regularly refreshed and circulated stock
 - Be co-located with other services in attractive and accessible accommodation
 - Be community access points where people can order, collect and drop off books
 - Offer communities the opportunity to support the extension of library services or manage community provision for themselves
 - We will encourage and work with interested volunteers to help us extend services; for example, to support learners, to disseminate digital skills or to promote reading.
- Library assets may be offered to the community, (buildings, IT, books), together with start-up support for those interested in running their own community libraries

- d. The following is an outline timescale submitted to the second Community Services Star Chamber held on Wednesday 24 November 2010

Policy principles/proposals/consultation/decision

The information below is based on advice from Nick Graham in Legal, which suggests the following process:

- Revenue savings and policy principles which will enable savings to be achieved agreed at SCS Star Chamber 2 on 24 Nov. Star Chamber may consider policy proposals but these will be subject to consultation.
- Savings and policy principles/proposals scrutinised at Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee 20 Dec
- Policy proposals for public consultation developed and agreed by Cabinet or Portfolio holder. Depending on the outcome of Star Chamber, these could be ready by the end of January 2011. NB. Consultation on policy proposals does not have to the same timetable as the budget process.
- Initial consultation plan will be required by 6 Dec, however, a final plan for consultation on libraries policy changes will require more time, probably at least until the end of January 2011.
- Minimum time for public consultation on library policy changes is 6 weeks; given the likely complexities and the numbers of stakeholders involved, a realistic timescale is likely to be 12 weeks. Possibly March – May 2011.
- Collation and analysis of consultation, public feedback; the volume of response is likely to be very high and therefore sufficient time and resource needs to be given to collation, analysis and feedback. June/July 2011
- Proposals will also be subject to an EQIA. The latter will be informed by the data analysis currently being collated and by the outcomes of the consultation. EQIA completed July/August 2011.
- Policy recommendations, informed by public consultation and EQIA, agreed by Cabinet. September 2011

Closure/decommissioning

- Public notice (12 weeks) of library closures given October 2011
- Following policy decision by Cabinet; consultation with all affected staff on post deletions and/or structure/role changes. Oct-Dec 2011.
- Libraries closed 31 December 2011, affected posts deleted.
- The management of stock in closed libraries will require considerable attention. The vast majority of stock will have to be withdrawn from the catalogue, prepared and boxed for disposal or re-distribution. It will all need to be removed from the building and depending on its condition and relevance, it could be:
 - Withdrawn from the catalogue and re-cycled
 - Withdrawn from the catalogue and donated to a charitable organisation

- Withdrawn from the catalogue and transferred to another OCC service; eg. Children's centre
- Withdrawn from the catalogue and transferred to a community scheme
- Transferred to another OCC library
- Transferred to a Library Link
- The service has no experience of stock disposal or re-distribution on the scale of whole library collections and has not yet estimated the time required or the detailed logistics that will need to be considered. However, depending on the number of libraries that need to be de-commissioned, the time required is likely to be in the order of months. Jan – June 2012.
- The IT infrastructure will need to be de-commissioned and the hardware disposed of or re-distributed.
- The library furniture will need to be disposed of or re-distributed.
- Lease arrangements will need to be considered and terminated where necessary.
- Arrangements for utilities and services will need to be terminated.
- Consideration will need to be given to the future of OCC owned buildings and arrangements made to ensure the security and maintenance of empty properties.
- As with stock, the service has no experience de-commissioning buildings on the scale envisaged in any one of the current proposals but the time required is also likely to be in the order of months. Jan – June 2012.

Policy proposals to close libraries; processes and outline timescale

Process or actions	Possible timescale
Savings and policy principles agreed at SCS Star Chamber 2	24 Nov 2010
Savings and policy principles scrutinised at Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee	20 Dec 2010
Policy proposals for consultation agreed by Cabinet/ Portfolio holder	Jan 2011
Detailed public consultation plan agreed	Jan 2011
Public consultation	March – May 2011
Collation and analysis of consultation	June 2011
Public feedback	July 2011
EQIA of policy proposals completed	August 2011
Library policy recommendations agreed by Cabinet	Sept 2011
Public notice of closure of libraries	Oct 2011
Consultation with affected library staff	Oct – Dec 2011
Libraries closed to the public	31 Dec 2011
Libraries de-commissioned (stock, IT, furniture, utilities, services, buildings)	Jan – June 2012