

Cabinet
6 March 2018
Appendix 2

East Sussex Libraries The Way Forward

**Strategic Commissioning Strategy
2018/19 to 2022/23**



March 2018

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Foreword by Councillor Bill Bentley

Lead Member for Communities and Safety

Libraries are a popular and highly valued service across East Sussex. In 2016/17 there were nearly one and a half million visits to our libraries. Libraries offer an affordable way for people to enjoy the pleasure of reading and access to culture for all, but they also support people in so many other ways, like getting online, finding employment or new training opportunities, information about health and other services in the local community, studying, pursuing hobbies and interests, and much more. Put simply, libraries and libraries staff can provide the knowledge, information and inspiration to support and empower people to make transformational changes to their lives.

We have continued to invest in improving and modernising our library buildings and have introduced and developed our eLibrary, offering an increasing number of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and other eServices for residents online.

In the context of significant reductions in public spending, most residents are aware that the Council has to save money by finding ways to provide all of our services more affordably. Residents may be less aware that the number of people visiting our libraries and the overall number of items borrowed have both reduced by about 40% over the last 10 years, despite an increase in the loans of digital items like eBooks and eAudiobooks.

We are clear that libraries are and will remain a highly accessible service for everyone. But we have to recognise the change in demand and the necessity and responsibility to respond to it. We must recognise the fact that the way people live their lives has changed, and this has an impact on libraries. Due, among other things, to the widespread availability of information and entertainment online and the relatively low cost and ease with which people can now buy many books, fewer people are dependent on libraries for reading, for information and for leisure in the way they once were.

However, our work to produce this Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy shows that there are still significant needs across the county, and especially within certain communities, around literacy, attainment, employment and ultimately health and wellbeing. These are needs which the Library and Information Service is ideally placed to help tackle. We still have the ability to make a difference, particularly for those who could benefit the most from the services we offer.

We are very grateful to the more than 3,500 people who took the time to complete a consultation questionnaire and the several hundred people who have written to or emailed us separately with their views, or taken the time to meet with councillors and officers. Every response, comment and representation has been read and carefully considered, and we have used the ideas and suggestions to shape this revised Strategic Commissioning Strategy for the East Sussex Library and Information Service.

We received broad support for our proposal for a Community Library Membership and we will proceed to implement this scheme. We will also go ahead with a number of other schemes for children and young people that we proposed in the draft Strategy, including piloting Homework and Study Clubs (based on feedback from the Youth Cabinet among others) and Code Clubs. We have also received very useful feedback from schools, which confirms our view that replacing the Schools Library and Museum Service with a more flexible and affordable offer for schools is the right thing to do.

I recognise, however, that people understandably do not wish to lose well-regarded local services, and the strength of feeling about the proposals we put forward to no longer provide certain libraries and the Mobile Library reflects this. Consulting on closing libraries was not a step we took lightly. We have reviewed the evidence that we put forward for the draft Strategy in the light of the feedback received. Having carefully considered all of the representations and feedback received during the consultation we remain of the view that the evidence base supports our original proposals for a needs-based library service for the county, with a high level of accessibility for the majority of people. This will be provided by 17 library buildings within a reasonable journey time of 20-25 minutes, our eLibrary and a range of other services including the Home Library Service and Community Library Membership.

I also recognise that there are individuals and families with needs in every community in the county. The fact that our resources are limited and decreasing means I believe that it is right that we focus our resources in such a way that we would have the maximum impact in achieving our Strategic Outcomes in communities where needs are highest, to provide a modern, sustainable library service for the future.

At the very core of our Strategy is a commitment to work alongside partners within and outside the Council, to make the most of the limited resources and ensure that the Library and Information Service operates at the heart of a collective effort to improve outcomes for residents and communities in East Sussex.

I believe that, in addressing the challenges of reducing numbers of people using libraries and less money to spend on them, we have identified the benefits that will come from a different but enhanced range of library services that enable us to get the best possible outcomes we can achieve. Ultimately, we hope that this will allow us to reinvigorate and grow new audiences for the Library and Information Service for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cllr Bill Bentley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Bill Bentley

Executive Summary

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy is a complete review of the East Sussex Library and Information Service. It is the final part of a wider Libraries Transformation Programme designed to deliver a modern and sustainable Library and Information Service for East Sussex, based on current and future needs for the county. It is designed to address the challenges the service faces, both in terms of less money to deliver the service but also reducing demand for libraries.

Our Vision and Strategic Outcomes provide a clear direction for the delivery of the future Library and Information Service. Our Vision is to provide **a Library and Information Service that promotes reading and knowledge as a route to leading fulfilling lives, prioritising our resources and expertise to support the needs of residents and communities in East Sussex to achieve four key outcomes:**

- **improving child and adult literacy and numeracy**
- **supporting the economy**
- **better health and wellbeing**
- **increasing digital inclusion**

They have been developed based on the evidence within the Technical Appendices that libraries can and already do support a wide range of needs, directly and indirectly. Each Strategic Outcome will be delivered through a range of different offers, or services, provided according to evidence of need. Three underlying transformation principles have also been developed for the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy to ensure that the library service is able successfully to respond to the challenges described. These are working together, promoting use of libraries and increasing our capacity to add value to what we do.

The Library and Information Service will continue to provide a range of quality materials and personalised support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure and benefits of reading as well as the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock. We will provide reliable information and services to promote good health, and support people to manage their own health and the health of those they care for. In future we will target our spending on stock and resources to ensure that it supports the delivery of Strategic Outcomes. We will also continue to provide, both in libraries and online, training and guidance for people of all abilities seeking to learn and to work, so they are able to build skills and confidence in a supportive environment.

We will provide access to library services through an enhanced eLibrary, continuing to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered. We will promote the eLibrary more widely, ensuring that our customers have a much better understanding of the resources it offers and confidence to use it, and we will actively promote the benefits of the eLibrary to different groups according to their needs. Recognising that digital exclusion remains an issue for some people due to the cost of home broadband or mobile internet and because some people have never had the opportunity to learn digital skills, we will continue to provide free access to computers

and Wi-Fi in libraries. We will provide free training for people to use technology and the internet, so they are able to independently access vital information and services and participate in the benefits of the digital world, including our growing eLibrary.

We will also have a greater focus on outreach provision, working closely with other County Council services and partners to make sure that we reach directly the communities and individuals with the greatest needs. We will promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings (for example other service locations, community venues and people's homes)

We will provide a range of new services through our Children and Young People's Literacy offer, and this will include literacy support and outreach work for pre-school and school age children and their families. We will pilot Homework and Study Clubs so that children and young people have quiet spaces with access to resources that can help them study and revise, and we will run Code Clubs in selected libraries, helping children learn computing skills that could unlock a wide range of future career opportunities. In addition we will support schools in areas with highest needs free of charge and continue to provide some charged services to all schools which they tell us they would use. We will also provide teachers in East Sussex schools with a membership which allows them to borrow items on a long loan from libraries for use in the classroom. The Strategy sets out the details of our new offer.

We will seek to enhance the role of libraries as cultural spaces within their communities, launching a new Culture Offer with an expanded programme of free or paid events in libraries to support the wider cultural economy of the county. Working more closely with other cultural and heritage institutions in East Sussex we will promote libraries as spaces that can be used for the arts, covering activities such as creative writing workshops, book and poetry readings, exhibition areas, and venues for outreach by other cultural organisations.

We will provide a smaller network of 17 library buildings in appropriate locations across the county according to need, ensuring that there remains a very high level of accessibility to a library within a reasonable journey time of 20-25 minutes by car or public transport. These 17 libraries are Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Eastbourne, Forest Row, Hailsham, Hampden Park, Hastings, Heathfield, Hollington, Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Rye, Seaford, Uckfield and Wadhurst. We will work with partners to make the best use of space within these buildings, which will result in some new services being offered in libraries. The Strategy provides more information about this.

Seven of the current 24 libraries will, therefore, not be retained. These are Langney, Mayfield, Ore, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer and Willingdon. Based on registered home addresses, our analysis shows that 100% of the members of these seven libraries live within a 20 minute journey time by car to one of the 17 remaining libraries, and over 96% are within a 30 minute journey time by public transport.

In the case of Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer and Willingdon, the libraries are in lower areas of need relative to other parts of East Sussex and closing these libraries would enable us to direct resources to where they are needed most. Langney and Ore libraries are in areas of higher need. However, the needs in these

communities can be met effectively and efficiently from alternative libraries, supported by targeted local outreach work.

We will make changes to provision for rural communities, no longer providing the Mobile Library Service, and we will no longer provide stock or financial assistance to Northiam Village Library, a community book swap, which is not part of the statutory library provision of the county. Rural communities will still be able to use one of the 17 library buildings, which our analysis shows will provide a high level of accessibility across the county. Rural communities will also be able to access the eLibrary, and use the new Community Library Membership which we will introduce in 2018/19. This will allow communities to borrow a range of items which can be made available locally to the community, for example, within a village hall, community café or a similar setting.

We will also provide additional support through the Home Library Service for those who are unable to travel to libraries or use the eLibrary, ensuring the Home Library Service retains the capacity to serve the small but important and potentially increasing group of our customers who rely on it.

92% of members of the current 24 libraries are registered to one of the 17 libraries we will retain and will therefore be unaffected by the implementation of the Strategy. 82 of the 88 Mobile Library stop locations are served by public transport to an alternative library building, on a day when the closest alternative library is open, of which 76 have a journey time of 30 minutes or under. All 88 Mobile Library stops are within a 20 minute drive of an alternative library.

Overall, the Strategy will enable the Library and Information Service to continue to provide very high levels of accessibility to a library building within a reasonable journey time of 20 to 25 minutes and by using the eLibrary and the other services we will provide. Over 86% of the population will still be within a 20 minute journey time by public transport and over 99% within a 20 minute journey by car of a library.

A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to identify those groups who it is considered might be more affected than others by the closure of seven libraries and removal of the Mobile Library Service and reduction in support for Northiam Village Library. The EqIA has identified three main groups who it is considered might be more affected by the proposals; those aged 75 and over; those with certain disabilities; and those in rural communities. These groups are primarily identified for a common reason, in that they are likely to be less able to travel further to an alternative library and in some cases may be lacking the digital skills or technology to access the services via the eLibrary. The Strategy identifies the appropriate mitigations that will be in place for each group.

The results of the consultation have also highlighted that for some residents, particularly those aged 75 and over, a visit to the library is a source of social interaction and it is acknowledged that the closure of libraries, and the Mobile Library, may contribute to their feeling of social isolation alongside the closure of other rural services, if they are unable to travel further to an alternative library. The Community Library Membership category would enable individuals in communities to continue to

run a book exchange in their area and support social interaction, if they wish to do so.

During the public consultation on the draft Strategy we have met with and heard from representatives of the seven communities, the closure of whose libraries we consulted upon. We supplied a large amount of information about the costs and practicalities of running these libraries, so that communities could develop proposals to take them over or fund them, if they were able and wished to do so.

We have not received any proposals for communities to take over or fully fund any of these seven libraries as a preferred option to the County Council continuing to operate and fund them.

We did, however, hear from communities who told us that the initial costs of stocking a community-run library would be high, and that the costs of renting or buying at their market value the buildings in which the libraries are currently based would be a significant barrier, considering all of the other challenges that there would be in setting up a community library. There was also a desire to be able to continue to offer up-to-date county-wide stock and the free People's Network computers in community libraries.

We recognise these challenges and the desirability of a different model. We would therefore consider offering a lease on a peppercorn rent to a community group that has a viable proposal in the order of 3 to 5 years to take on a library in a building that the County Council owns. We would also consider lending, again on a peppercorn basis, a selection of core starter stock and the current fixtures and fittings of the library. Where we do not own the building, we would do our best to assist in assigning or sub-letting leases, where possible. If communities wished to continue to provide county-wide stock on an ongoing basis and to offer the People's Network computers, we would provide this if the cost was reimbursed to the County Council.

We are happy to continue to explore any options that would enable a viable community library model to be implemented. However, having carefully considered all of the representations and feedback received during the consultation we remain of the view that the seven libraries and the Mobile Library Service are not required for us to provide a needs-based library service that meets our statutory duty, and there would not, therefore, be a case for providing an ongoing financial contribution from the Council for community libraries

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy will deliver a saving of £653,000 through a combination of shared efficiencies by co-locating library services with other County Council services, income generation, and the reduced provision of library buildings, the Mobile Library and other services. Overall, this will equate to £1.903 million of total savings from the Libraries Transformation Programme. This is considered to be the most appropriate strategy to prioritise resources in order to meet identified needs at this time.

Introduction

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 is a complete review of the East Sussex Library and Information Service. It is the final part of a wider Libraries Transformation Programme designed to deliver a modern and sustainable Library and Information Service for the next five years, which is based on the needs of the people of East Sussex.



In the context of significant reductions in public spending at Government level, the Council cannot afford to spend as much on its library service as it has in the past. The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy identifies further savings of £653,000 from the library service. This means that the transformation programme as a whole will deliver total savings of £1.9 million.

In this strategy document we set out the range of services that the East Sussex Library and Information Service will provide in future for those who live, work and study in the county. In developing the plan, we have looked at our statutory obligations and the contribution that the Library and Information Service makes to Council priorities. We have also explored whether it would be better if someone other than the County Council provided the Library and Information Service in future.

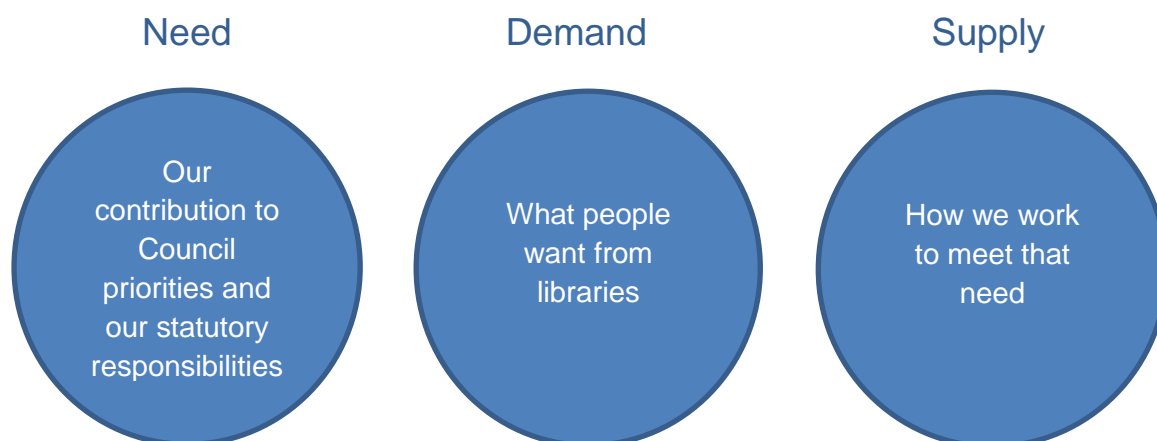
Our staff in the Library and Information Service provided their views on the evidence base for the Strategy as it has emerged, drawing on their knowledge and experience to help us develop a sustainable programme for the future that would meet the greatest needs of the communities we serve. We have done the same with colleagues from across Council services, seeking to ensure that we make the best use of our resources by working effectively together as One Council.

We have undertaken an extensive public consultation on our initial proposals, in which over 3,500 people gave us their views. We have met with and listened to community groups, parish, town, borough and district councils, the voluntary sector and the many organisations who work hard on behalf of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in East Sussex, as well as the large number of our own volunteers within the Library and Information Service, without whom we could not provide the library service that we do. We have met with and heard from groups who represent older people and children and young people, and those who specifically represent rural interests. All of the ideas, suggestions and comments have been considered in detail, and have been enormously helpful in shaping this Strategic Commissioning Strategy for the East Sussex Library and Information Service.

What is Strategic Commissioning?

We want to make sure our Strategy is designed properly and provides a long term focus on what is important for East Sussex residents. To develop our Strategy, we are using the 'strategic commissioning framework'. This ensures a clear understanding of 'need', before identifying the best way to meet it. It also sets out a clear rationale for the review and decision making process.

Adopting the commissioning approach enables us to understand three key areas:



Our Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy is, therefore, based on clear evidence of need, which will enable the Council to prioritise the resources available for the Library and Information Service to deliver the best outcomes for residents.

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy presents just a summary of all of the evidence gathered as part of the strategic commissioning process. There is a more detailed rationale for our proposals and assessment of their impacts in Appendix 1 to this Strategy. This is a document called the Rationale and Impact Assessment for a Needs-Based Library Service. You can read or download it from the following webpage: eastsussex.gov.uk/librarystrategy. On this webpage you can also read or download the full evidence base which is presented in the Technical Appendices, or a summary of all of the evidence contained in all of the Technical Appendices.

What does the library service look like now?

The Library and Information Service lends books and other materials, in hard copy and digital formats, provides information, and delivers formal and informal learning opportunities as well as volunteering opportunities. Computers and Wi-Fi are available in all library buildings to enable people to use the internet.

Access to the library service is currently provided by 24 library buildings across the county, the online eLibrary, a Mobile Library Service, a Home Library Service, a Prison Library Service, a community information service (ESCIS) and a Schools Library and Museum Service.

We deliver a range of initiatives, both local and national, often with partners and sometimes externally funded, to support literacy and numeracy, and to help people into employment by developing their IT skills. Many of these services are delivered with the support of over 400 volunteers.

Membership of the Library and Information Service is free to everyone who lives, works and studies in East Sussex. At the start of 2017/18 there were approximately 230,000 registered members of the Library and Information Service, or about 44% of the East Sussex population. However, only about 62,000 people (27% of the population) have borrowed an item in the past year, and visits and loans of items have fallen by around 40% in the past ten years.

Our statutory duty

East Sussex County Council is one of 151 local councils in the UK with a statutory responsibility (a legal duty) to provide a local library service in accordance with the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*. The Act requires each local authority to provide a library service that is 'comprehensive and efficient'. It is for local decision how the library service best meets this requirement practically, including how many libraries there are, where they are, when they are open, and what each one offers.



Surveys we have undertaken in our libraries show that nearly half (45%) of adult visitors to libraries in East Sussex are aged 65 and over and half (50%) are retired. However, in terms of registered members of the library service, children and young people aged below 16 represent 26 per cent of all members, more than any other age group.

Most people we surveyed consider their library visits to be related to leisure and enjoyment. Almost three quarters of adult library users (74%) visited a library to borrow, return, renew or reserve a book. The next most common reason for visiting (19%) was to access the public computers or Wi-Fi.

Surveys tell us that there is a lack of awareness among non-users of the library service about the range of different services on offer, particularly online services, such as eBooks.

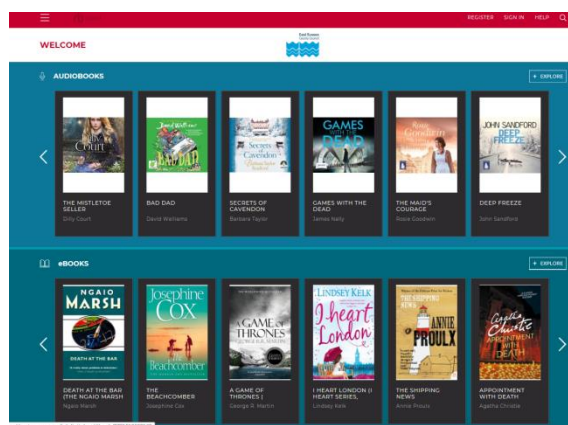
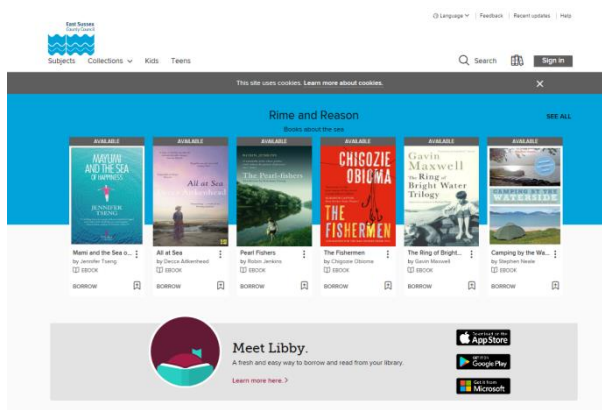
The eLibrary

The eLibrary provides a wide range of online services and resources, with the majority available 24 hours a day. All of the content in the eLibrary is FREE of charge.

In the eLibrary you can:

- Download eBooks and eAudiobooks to your own device (computer, phone or tablet) FOR FREE without having to go to a library. This includes both fiction and non-fiction for adults and children, and just like regular books, you can download these items for a three week period.
- Download a wide range of eMagazines, both current and backdated copies, free of charge to your own personal device.
- Access our online reference library, which includes lots of information resources such as newspapers, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, and family history sites which customers can use free of charge. Some of our online resources are only available in libraries due to licensing restrictions.
- Search all the stock across East Sussex County Council libraries using our online catalogue.
- Access your library account, renew your loans and place reservations on items you'd like to borrow, using your library card number and PIN.
- Access ESCIS, our online database of local and community information and events across East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. ESCIS is a free resource for everyone. It is free to be listed and free to use. Over 8,000 organisations use ESCIS – visit www.escis.org.uk

Visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/
to find out more and explore the eLibrary



Our Vision and Strategic Outcomes

Our Vision and Strategic Outcomes provide a clear direction for the future delivery of the Library and Information Service over the next five years.

This will help us to support the Council's four overarching priority outcomes of driving sustainable economic growth, keeping vulnerable people safe, helping people help themselves, and making best use of resources.

Our Vision and Strategic Outcomes

We will provide a Library and Information Service that promotes reading and knowledge as a route to leading fulfilling lives. We will prioritise our resources and expertise to support the needs of residents and communities in East Sussex to achieve four key outcomes:

Improving child and adult literacy and numeracy. We will provide a range of quality materials and personalised support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading as well as the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people.

Supporting the economy. We will provide training and guidance for people of all abilities seeking to learn and to work, so they are able to build skills and confidence in a supportive environment.

Better health and wellbeing. We will promote reading as a source of wellbeing, provide reliable information and services to promote good health, and support people to manage their own health and the health of those they care for.

Increasing digital inclusion. We will provide free access to computers and Wi-Fi, and paid access to printers and scanners, training for people to use technology and the internet, so they are able to independently access vital information and services and participate in the benefits of the digital world.

We will ensure that in working to deliver our Strategic Outcomes we will meet our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone who lives, works and studies in East Sussex.

Each Strategic Outcome will be delivered through a range of different services, provided by the Library and Information Service according to evidence of need across the county as a whole and within specific communities.

A needs-based library service

In order to develop the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy we undertook and commissioned a wide range of research to establish a robust evidence base from which to determine how best to deliver a needs-based library service.

A needs-based library service means a library service where we prioritise our resources towards the achievement of outcomes that will best meet the needs of those who live, work and study in East Sussex. In order to do that, we had to find out what those needs are and in which communities (of both people and place) they are greatest. We recognise that there are individuals and families with needs in every community in the county. The fact that our resources are limited and decreasing means that we have to focus our resources in such a way that we will have the maximum impact in achieving our Strategic Outcomes where needs are highest. We also needed to understand how people are using the Library and Information Service, how that is changing, and what impact it might have on what we do in future.

Understanding need enabled us to identify the outcomes which the Library and Information Service is well-placed to help achieve, either in its own right, or by working with others. We could then identify how well our current library service is able to achieve those outcomes, and what things we should continue to do or do differently. We could also identify whether there were completely new services and activities we should provide because they would help achieve the outcomes, and whether we should stop doing some things completely. We also needed to consider if there were better ways of providing this needs-based library service that would make it more likely to achieve its goals. This is the basis of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

Some of the key things we found were:

Reading, literacy and numeracy

Children who are disadvantaged do worse at school than those from non-disadvantaged backgrounds.

At the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) only 51% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard for reading, 60% for writing, and 52% for grammar, punctuation and spelling, compared with 72%, 79%, and 74% respectively for non-disadvantaged pupils.

At GCSE (Key Stage 4) 39% of disadvantaged pupils achieve A*-C in both English and maths, compared with 71% of non-disadvantaged pupils.

In 2016, about 29% of East Sussex state school pupils were disadvantaged at Key Stage 2 and 25% at Key Stage 4.

There are areas of East Sussex among the top 10% most deprived areas in England for working age adults with no or low qualifications or who cannot speak English well or at all.

Reading, literacy and numeracy (continued)

Parts of the county have an adult population with skills below a level which means they could not compare products and services for the best buy, or work out a household budget.

Literacy and numeracy skills underpin success in all walks of life, and libraries have a key role to play in ensuring children in particular have the building-blocks for future academic and employment success, thereby improving people's prosperity, their health and their wellbeing. Young children's early communication and vocabulary skills are particularly important. In addition, the health and wellbeing benefits of reading for pleasure are evident for adults as well as children and young people.

The Library and Information Service has the potential to support the literacy needs of every child, although some children are likely to have higher needs than others, such as those living in households with low incomes, those with Special Educational Needs and those without English as a first language. Where there are low adult literacy rates it is expected that this will create a need that can be positively met through access to library services.

Economic Development

In 2016/17 4.5% of the working age population (16-64 year olds) were unemployed in the county compared to 4.8% in England and 3.8% in the South East. Hastings has the highest percentage at 6.3% of unemployment and Lewes has the lowest percentage at 3.8%.

There are 23 areas of East Sussex ranked within the 10% most deprived areas of England in terms of levels of employment, including 16 in Hastings, 5 in Eastbourne and 2 in Rother.

The Library and Information Service can provide access to online information about job vacancies and training and skills development opportunities, and support individuals directly to develop skills such as applying for jobs and learning new literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This can also boost self-confidence and preparedness for a job interview, increasing the chances of getting into or back into work.

Disability and long-term ill health are factors which can prevent people from obtaining a job when they want to work, and being out of the workplace for long periods of time can have a further impact on people's skills, levels of confidence and mental health.

Health and Wellbeing

14 areas of East Sussex are ranked within the 10% most deprived areas of England in terms of health deprivation and disability, including 10 in Hastings, 3 in Eastbourne and 1 in Rother.

The county has a higher percentage (24.9%) of residents aged 65 and over compared to England (17.7%). The highest percentage of residents aged 65 and over is in Rother and the lowest percentage in Hastings.

There is a 13 year difference in life expectancy for those born in different parts of the county. The lowest life expectancy (75.6 years) is in Gensing ward in Hastings and the highest (89 years) in Mayfield ward in Wealden.

There are health and wellbeing needs which the Library and Information Service can meet by supporting community and individual resilience, health improvement and reducing health inequalities. These needs can be met through the provision of safe and inclusive spaces, quality assured self-help information and resource materials tailored for residents of all ages, as well as direct signposting to other services.

In particular, the Library and Information Service can provide resources and information to enable people to take greater ownership of their own health and wellbeing, to be more resilient, increasingly independent, self-sufficient and resourceful, and thus better able to help themselves.

Research has identified the positive benefits of reading for mental health, as well as the positive correlation between literacy and a person's ability to access health information. Those in greatest need are people in poor mental or physical health or at risk of developing health problems, particularly people with a long-term health problem or disability.

The highest health deprivation levels and disability measures are concentrated in the coastal towns, either in central residential areas or large estates on the edge that often have other income, employment and social exclusion issues. There are some pockets of health deprivation in each of the three more rural districts, but usually associated with the mid-sized towns. One area with a relatively high percentage of residents with long term illness is east Bexhill. Other high levels are found in Eastbourne, Hastings, St. Leonards and Newhaven.

Digital Exclusion

Information is increasingly moving to digital platforms and there continues to be a social divide between those who have easy access to the internet and those who are offline. On digital inclusion, the needs which have been identified are the ability to access and use the internet to get information about skills and employment opportunities, health and wellbeing information, and accessing the more competitive online market place for goods and services, which can help households on low incomes.

Digital Exclusion (continued)

Behind these needs are the affordability of home or mobile internet provision, the lack of basic digital skills (which is linked to low levels of educational attainment and also to age) and, to a lesser extent, the availability of broadband technology.

There are 18 areas in the county that are ranked within the 10% most deprived areas of England in terms of household income. This includes 12 areas in Hastings, 3 in Eastbourne and 3 in Rother.

In order to serve the needs of the county as a whole, we will provide a core library offer for all residents. In addition to the core offer, by re-prioritising and developing new, more targeted services we have a key opportunity through the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy to support and empower those people and communities with the greatest needs to make potentially transformational changes to their life chances. While many of the services we provide will remain the same, the way we promote and engage people will be targeted towards those individuals and communities who stand to benefit more.

Our offers as part of a needs-based library service are as follows, for each Strategic Outcome:

Our offer for improving child and adult literacy and numeracy

Fiction and non-fiction reading materials for all ages and needs. We will provide a wider range of quality materials and tailored support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading and the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people. The choice of titles and websites available to download from the eLibrary, the online library service, will be increased and prioritised according to countywide needs.



A new Children and Young People's Literacy and Numeracy offer. We will work closely with other services for children and young people of all ages (including pre-school) and in all settings, to encourage children and their families to use the library service. The new offer comprises:

- **Literacy and numeracy support for pre-school children and their families.** We will aim to provide rhyming and storytelling activities in all libraries or community settings, prioritised according to local needs. This supports pre-school learning and development of speech and language.

Our offer for improving child and adult literacy and numeracy (continued)

- **Literacy and numeracy support for school age children and young people.** We will work with schools and other providers to improve children and young people's literacy, numeracy and personal development by promoting the library service, its resources and targeted activities, such as the Summer Reading Challenge.
- **Outreach services for pre-school children and their families.** We will work with Early Years services to support family learning and development in areas of higher need, delivering services in Children's Centres and through health workers.
- **Support for schools.** We will offer more targeted, free services in areas of identified need and provide resources to support literacy and numeracy to all schools on a pay-as-you-go basis. We will no longer provide the Schools Library and Museum Service (SLAMS). Further details of our proposed support to schools offer is set out on p22.
- **Homework clubs in libraries.** We will pilot homework clubs aimed at 9 -13 year olds in selected libraries. These will run during term-time at the end of the school day on one or two days per week during library opening hours. These will either be staff or volunteer led, and will provide a quiet space for children to do their homework, with some supervision and support, although children can, of course, use the library at any other time to do their homework.
- **Study Clubs in libraries.** For older children and young people aged 14-18, we will pilot Study Clubs in selected libraries. These will operate in the run-up to exam periods and provide a quiet study space for revision or self-directed study on one or two days per week when the library is closed, including one evening. We would not provide any academic support during these sessions, but the library will be supervised by a member of staff, with the support of volunteers. Children and young people can, of course, use the library at any other time for study or revision.

Literacy and numeracy support for children and adults with disabilities. We will support children and adults with disabilities and long term health conditions, such as visual impairments, to be confident using adapted reading materials and technology.

Literacy and numeracy support for adults with low literacy and numeracy. Building on the success of our Advantage East Sussex project and Learndirect schemes, we will seek external funding to provide courses to improve basic literacy and numeracy in libraries in areas with higher needs, working with other adult education providers to signpost people to the right offer for them.

Home Library Service for isolated or vulnerable residents. We will provide a free Home Library Service supported by volunteers to deliver books and other resources from the local library to people who cannot easily use a library due to disability or frailty, or are caring for someone who cannot be left.

Our offer for supporting the economy

Support to improve IT skills for work. We will provide free online training resources to help people look for and secure jobs as well as improving their ICT skills. Resources include access to job sites, video guides on how to produce an excellent CV, as well as support to use the most popular computer software, including Microsoft, Apple and Google products.

Space to work and study. We will provide free space in all libraries for children and adults to study or work, with free access to computers, the internet and other library resources.

Code Clubs for children. We will provide Code Clubs in selected libraries. Our Code Clubs are part of a nationwide network of after-school coding clubs for children aged 8–12 years old. Using specially created Code Club materials, the sessions are designed to build confidence and encourage creativity in 3 different coding languages, helping children learn computing skills that could unlock a wide range of future career opportunities.

A new Culture Offer. We will work closely with other cultural and heritage institutions in East Sussex to provide an expanded programme of free or paid events in libraries to support personal development and the wider cultural economy, with particular emphasis on local literature and the creative industries in the county. Wherever possible, we will seek external funding to deliver free events and activities. We will also promote libraries as spaces that can be used for the arts, covering activities such as creative writing workshops, book and poetry readings, exhibition areas, and venues for outreach by other cultural organisations.

Our offer for better health and wellbeing

Fiction and non-fiction reading materials for all ages and needs. We will provide these in all libraries to support the health and wellbeing benefits of reading for pleasure. Different formats and a choice of titles will be provided in each library, prioritised according to local needs.

Self-help materials and support for all ages and needs. We will provide self-help materials online and in all libraries, as well as signposting to other services, prioritised according to local needs.

Health and wellbeing information for all ages and needs. We will provide reliable sources of health information online and in all libraries with guidance to other services. We will work with Adult Social Care and Health to develop ESCIS as the main website for health and wellbeing information for East Sussex.

Our offer for better health and wellbeing (continued)

Physical and mental health support. We will work with other services, such as Public Health, to increase the range of health initiatives offered within libraries. These will be prioritised according to local needs and by the services providing them. We will work with partners, including Adult Social Care and Health, to provide resources to support positive mental health.

Outreach for isolated or vulnerable residents. We will continue to offer our Home Library Service to provide reading materials for isolated or vulnerable residents, and we will enhance it by offering Make Every Contact Count training for Home Library Service volunteers, to enable them to support vulnerable individuals in their physical and mental health through signposting and early intervention.

At present our Home Library Service has enough volunteers to serve all of our isolated and vulnerable customers, but we will work with partners to develop additional volunteering capacity and opportunities within the service, to ensure that we retain the capacity to continue to serve an increasingly elderly population with more complex needs.

Initial discussions have taken place with the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to explore opportunities for joint working. We will also continue to advertise volunteering opportunities via our ESCC website, in libraries, and through our existing voluntary and community sector networks, for county-wide volunteering opportunities.

Our offer for increasing digital inclusion

Access and support to use computers and Wi-Fi. We will continue to provide free access to People's Network computers and Wi-Fi in all libraries. We will review usage of computers to ensure we have good access in all libraries and promote this offer more effectively.

Support to use technology and the internet. Computer Buddies volunteers will provide personalised support in libraries, prioritised according to local need. This will be expanded to offer support to people to use the eLibrary confidently.



Transformation principles

In addition to the Vision and Strategic Outcomes we will work according to three underlying principles which will enable the Library and Information Service to successfully adapt and respond to the challenges described.

- **Working together**

We will work together with other council services as 'One Council' and with partners outside of the Council, making the most of limited public resources to deliver shared goals and the County Council's priority outcomes.

- **Promoting use of libraries**

We will stimulate use of library services where there is need, so that as many people as possible who are able to benefit from the Library and Information Service know what is on offer and how to access it.

- **Increasing our capacity to add value to what we do**

We will build closer relationships with communities and other partners, developing new volunteering opportunities to deliver additional services that will support a wider range of needs and seek new external funding opportunities.

Accessing the new offers

Currently there are a number of different ways to access the Library and Information Service. These include library buildings, the eLibrary, the Mobile Library, one 'village library' in Northiam, and the Home Library Service.

Based on the evidence of need, we will continue to provide a range of different ways to access our services, but with an increasing focus on online provision and library services delivered in other settings (for example other service locations, community venues and people's homes). This will enable us to meet a wider range of needs.

There are three key ways in which people will be able to access the new offers in future:

An enhanced eLibrary service

We will continue to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered through the eLibrary, our online library service. We will actively promote the benefits of the eLibrary to different groups according to their needs in the following ways:

- New step by step video guides on our website, which will show users all of the different things that they can do with the eLibrary, from downloading eBooks and eMagazines, to searching the catalogue and reserving or renewing an item.

- We will continue to include regular articles on the eLibrary and the resources it has available to users in our monthly e-newsletter to all library members whose email addresses we hold
- Our computer buddies and staff will be on hand within libraries to provide any customers who would like a demonstration or help in accessing the eLibrary.

Library stock focussed on needs

We have historically spent more on library stock than comparable library authorities. As part of the Libraries Transformation Programme we have been reducing the amount we spend on stock to bring our spending down into line with our comparator authorities. The draft strategy proposed a final reduction, and this will be implemented in 2018/19 reducing our spend on stock by a further £100,000.

In future, we will ensure that a greater proportion of the total amount we spend on stock is more closely aligned to the Strategic Outcomes for this Strategy. We will increase the proportion of our stock spending on children's fiction and non-fiction, to support child literacy and ensure we provide resources to support adults with literacy problems. We will also spend proportionally more of our stock fund on resources and information to enable people to take greater ownership of their own health and wellbeing, to be more resilient, increasingly independent, self-sufficient and resourceful, and thus better able to help themselves. This includes resources like our Books on Prescription selection.

A focus on outreach

We will work closely with other County Council services and partners to make sure that we reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs. We will promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings including the East Hastings and Shinewater Children's Centres, schools and community venues.

For example, at the East Hastings and Shinewater Children's Centres our librarians will work alongside Children's Centre staff to support pre-school learning and children's speech and language development. We will train volunteers to deliver rhymetimes and storytimes at the centres, and we will provide collections of children's stock. Librarians will also run outreach sessions to raise awareness of the library offer and its benefits e.g. our eLibrary, encouraging parents and carers to join the library if they are not already members, and promoting the benefits of reading to children. We will also signpost parents and carers to the opportunities for adult learning that are available from the Library and Information Service.

We will continue to develop our Home Library Service where volunteers deliver library services through outreach to people in their homes, according to their needs. We will ensure that those who could most benefit will be aware of the service and will promote it better by:

- Including regular articles about the benefits of the Home Library Service for both customers and those volunteering to deliver it, in our monthly e-newsletter to all library members whose email addresses we hold
- Writing to all parish and town councils with an article about the Home Library Service and ask them to include it in parish magazines

- Contacting all relevant community organisations, including East Sussex Seniors' Association, to provide information about the Home Library Service and ask them to promote it through their channels
- Including information about the Home Library service when promoting library services through outreach activities

We are keen to hear from anyone who wishes to volunteer to deliver the Home Library Service, please see further information on our website <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/activities-and-events/library-volunteers/>, ask at a library or ring 0345 6080196.

Support for schools – part of a new Children and Young People's Offer

Currently we provide a Schools Library and Museum Service (SLAMS) which is funded by schools paying for our service. Income is declining each year and SLAMS, as a distinct service, is no longer financially sustainable. SLAMS will therefore cease to operate at the end of the summer term in 2018. The SLAMS mobile library service, the topic loan service and the schools museums service will no longer run after this date. We will offer our museum stock to The Keep and to local museums and collections.

We will continue to offer the more affordable and popular of our current charged services to all schools. We will also introduce a free library membership specifically for teachers. In addition, schools in areas of need will be offered free targeted support with literacy and reading through outreach activities. This will form part of the new offer for Children and Young People and will allow teachers and children to benefit from the expertise of our librarians.

Support for Schools

Free services (for all schools)

- We will provide teachers in East Sussex schools with a membership which allows them to borrow items on a long loan from libraries for use in the classroom. Teachers will be able to apply for a Teachers Library Membership on behalf of their school, enabling them to reserve items online from a special Schools Catalogue, which will include books from our former SLAMS stock, both fiction and non-fiction, to support the curriculum and promote reading for pleasure. The Teachers Library Membership will allow 30-40 items to be borrowed at a time. Teachers will be able to pick up and return books to an East Sussex library of their choice.

Support for Schools (continued)

Charged services (for all schools)

- Participation in the Children's Book Award
- Stock selection and purchase on behalf of the school – our librarians will help schools to make the best of their budget by selecting a range of titles (non-fiction or fiction) for them; schools can benefit from their expertise and our discounts on stock purchase
- Advice on management of a school library - training for teachers/volunteers on running a school library
- Any other relevant training for teachers we can provide (bespoke services)

Free services (for primary and special schools in areas of need)

- Our librarians will work with families, children and teachers in schools through an outreach programme to contribute to literacy and numeracy, targeting need and working in partnership with Children's Services. Activities could include introducing children to a range of books to encourage reading, and involvement with family learning, depending on the specific needs of the school.
- Our librarians will work more closely with schools to ensure children, families and teachers can maximise use of public library resources, both in hard copy and online.
- Our free services will be targeted to areas of need and prioritised according to the needs of the school community and our capacity to support the requests we receive.
- This service would also be available to schools in all areas on a chargeable basis

A smaller network of library buildings

Currently we provide a network of 24 libraries across East Sussex. In future we will provide 17 libraries in appropriate locations across the county according to need and in order to maintain a high level of accessibility. The research we undertook for the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy of the types and duration of journey people make shows that a journey time of 20 to 25 minutes to a library by public transport and car is reasonable. We will also work with partners to make the best use of space within these buildings.

Our network of library buildings:

Battle	Hollington
Bexhill	Lewes
Crowborough	Newhaven
Eastbourne	Peacehaven
Forest Row	Rye
Hailsham	Seaford
Hampden Park	Uckfield
Hastings	Wadhurst
Heathfield	

We will not retain seven of our current libraries, based on evidence of need in those areas. These libraries are Langney, Mayfield, Ore, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer and Willingdon. We will publicise the dates of library closures widely, and ensure all customers are aware of the alternatives to them and their next nearest library.

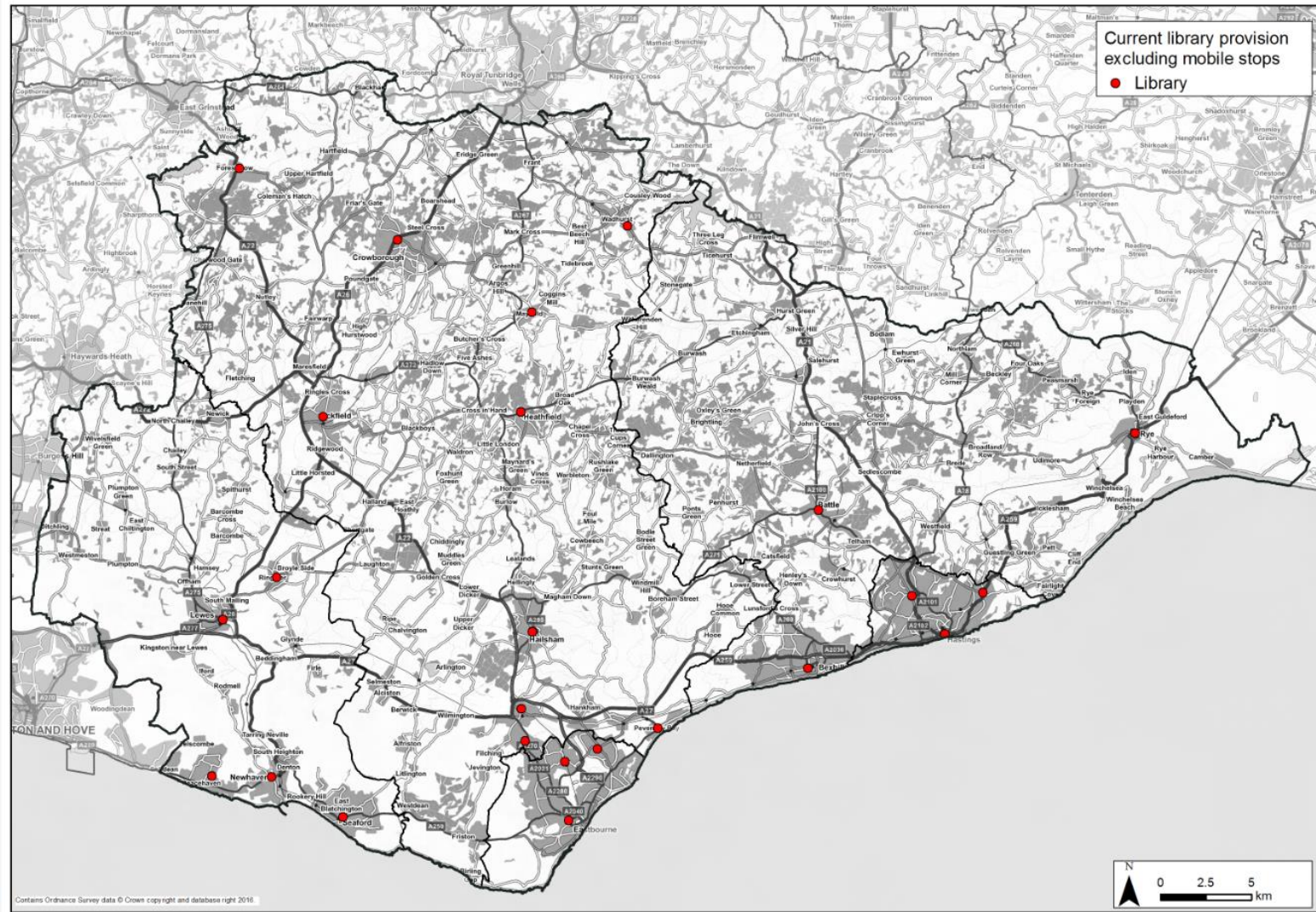
Based on registered home addresses, our analysis showed that all of the members of these seven libraries live within a 20 minute journey time by car to one of the 17 remaining libraries, and over 96% are within a 30 minute journey time by public transport.

In Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Ringmer and Willingdon the evidence shows that there are lower levels of need across the wide range of indicators that we examined. In and around Langney and Ore there are high levels of need. However, each of these communities is also served by a large town centre library (Eastbourne and Hastings) as well as another smaller library (Hampden Park and Hollington). The proximity of both libraries to alternative provision means that it is possible to meet needs in Langney and Ore through other libraries nearby.

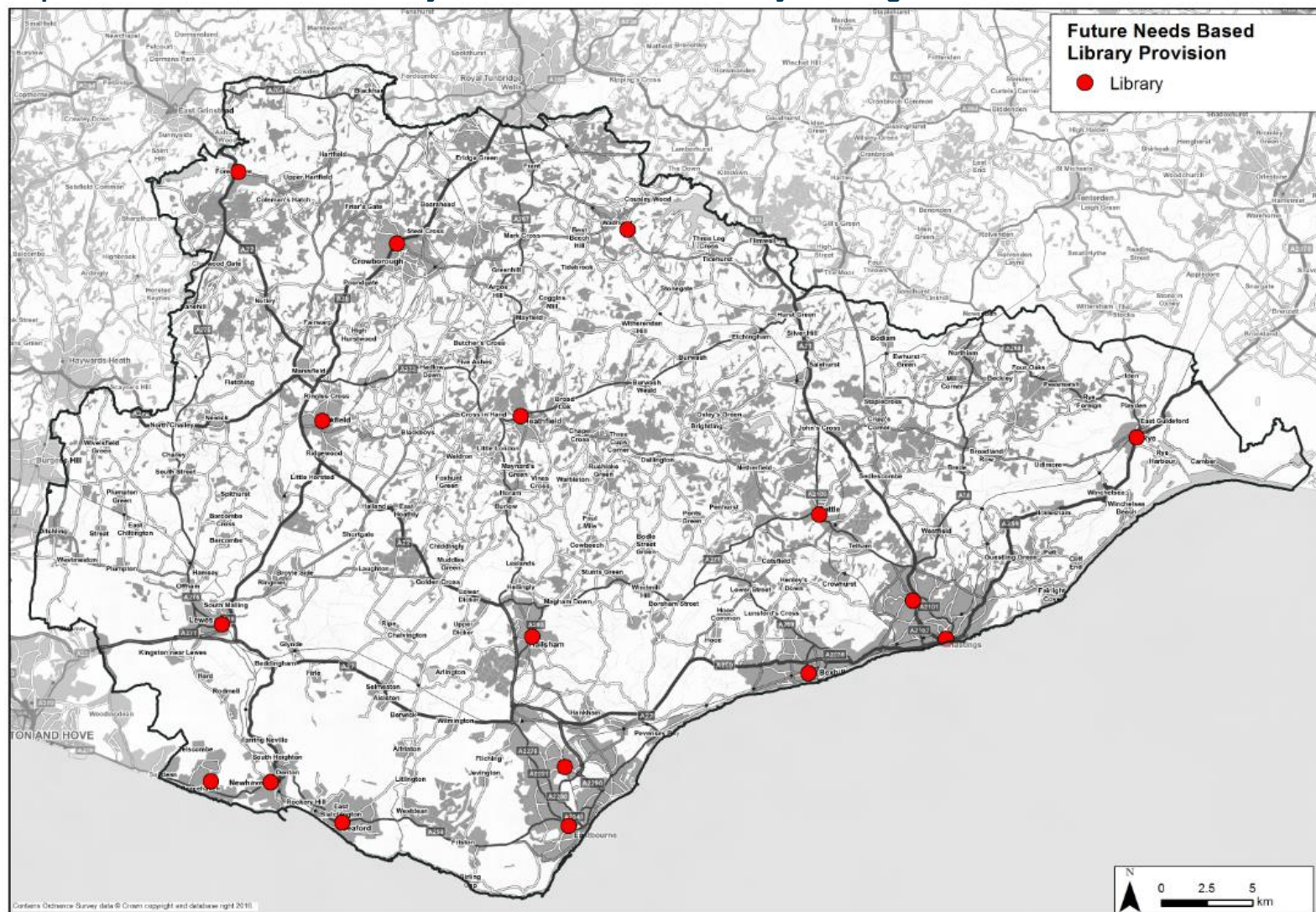
In addition, however, we will deliver part of our outreach programme described on p21 of the Strategy for children and families in Langney from Shinewater Children's Centre and for children and families in Ore from the East Hastings children's centre. The needs assessment identifies these children and families as groups the Library and Information Service is well placed to support.

Maps 1 and 2 below show the current library buildings and those that we will retain.

Map 1 Current network of library buildings for East Sussex



Map 2 Future Needs-based Library service - network of library buildings in East Sussex



We have set out below the evidence we have gathered for the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy, which explains in more detail why these library buildings are no longer required for an effective needs-based library service for East Sussex.

Langney

The needs assessment shows high levels of need around both Langney and Hampden Park libraries. The proximity of both libraries to each other and to Eastbourne Library will enable us to meet needs in Hampden Park and Langney by retaining Hampden Park Library and through the wider range of services provided in Eastbourne Library. Off-peak journey times from Langney Library to Hampden Park Library are 16 minutes by bus (or between 20 and 30 minutes to Eastbourne Library) and 4 minutes by car.

The costs for Langney Library are relatively high because it is in a commercial retail unit within a shopping centre, which we pay rent for, whereas Hampden Park Library is owned by the Council, so it has lower running costs.

However, in addition to the provision of libraries in Hampden Park and Eastbourne, we will deliver an outreach service for children and families in Shinewater Children's Centre, who are identified by the needs assessment as one of the groups the Library and Information Service is well placed to support. This outreach service is described in more detail on p21.

Mayfield

The needs assessment shows that Mayfield is in a very low area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed most it is proposed that Mayfield Library is not retained. Off-peak journey times from Mayfield Library to Heathfield Library are 12 minutes by bus and 9 minutes by car.

Ore

The needs assessment shows high levels of need around Ore, Hollington and the Hastings main library. The proximity of all three libraries enables us to meet needs in these communities by retaining the completely refurbished Hastings Library (which will re-open on 2 March 2018) and Hollington Library. Off-peak journey times from Ore Library to Hastings Library are 18 minutes by bus and 6 minutes by car.

The proximity of the East Hastings Children's Centre to Ore Library means that it is more effective to meet needs in Ore by delivering an outreach service at the East Hastings Children's Centre for children and families who are identified by the needs assessment as one of the groups the Library and Information Service is well placed to support. This outreach service is described in more detail on p21. Hastings Library and Hollington Library are well placed to meet the remaining needs within the community.

Pevensey Bay

The needs assessment shows that Pevensey Bay is not in a priority area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed Pevensey Bay Library will not be

retained. Off-peak journey times from Pevensey Bay Library to Eastbourne Library are 20 minutes by bus and 11 minutes by car to Hampden Park Library.

Polegate

The needs assessment shows that Polegate Library is not in a priority area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed most Polegate Library will not be retained. Frequent public transport links connect Polegate with Hampden Park, Eastbourne and Hailsham libraries. Off-peak journey times from Polegate Library to Hailsham Library are 12 minutes by bus or 7 minutes by car, and 7-10 minutes by train to Eastbourne.

Ringmer

The needs assessment shows that Ringmer Library is not in a priority area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed most Ringmer Library will not be retained. Off-peak journey times from Ringmer Library to Lewes Library are 10 minutes by bus and 9 minutes by car.

Willingdon

The needs assessment shows that Willingdon Library is not in a priority area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed most Willingdon Library will not be retained. Off-peak journey times from Willingdon Library to Eastbourne Library are 18 minutes by bus and 6 minutes by car to Hampden Park Library.

The full evidence base for the identified needs in each of these seven areas is presented within the Needs Assessment (Technical Appendix 2).

The Mobile Library and Northiam Village library

74% of the population of East Sussex live in urban areas and 26% in rural areas. The needs of communities in more rural areas have been considered, where access to a library may be more limited than in urban areas, for example due to greater distances and fewer public transport options.

The Mobile Library Service has traditionally provided an alternative to travelling to a library building for more rural communities. It offers a three weekly service to 88 stops across the county. Each stop lasts between 15 minutes and 2 hours and 10 minutes, although most stops are for 20-30 minutes.

In the past year 1,112 residents have used the Mobile Library. For the majority of the 88 mobile library stops, the number of customers that access the mobile service is extremely low. Of the 88 stops, 72 (82%) had on average fewer than 10 customers per visit in 2016.

We will cease provision of the Mobile Library Service, offering instead the eLibrary and the network of 17 library buildings that support rural communities within reasonable journey times. We will provide additional support, including the Home Library Service, for those who are unable to travel to libraries or use the eLibrary.

The Library and Information Service also supports Northiam Village Library, a volunteer-led community book swap which offers a limited selection of books to the local community from 2pm to 4pm on Thursday and Saturday each week. This support takes the form of a regular supply of library books and a financial contribution towards the rent, rates and electricity costs of the village library, amounting to almost £1,300 per year. However, Northiam Village Library is not part of the East Sussex Library and Information Service and we do not provide this kind of support to any other community-run book swap.

In the past year, there were just under 1,000 visits to the village library, around 83 visits on average each month. There are 348 residents of Northiam who are members of the ESCC library service, the majority of whom (241) are registered to Rye Library. Off-peak journey times from Northiam Village Library to Rye Library are 28 minutes by bus and 17 minutes by car. Bexhill Library is also well used by residents of Northiam.

The needs assessment shows that Northiam Village Library is not in a priority area of need. In order to direct resources to where they are needed we will no longer provide support to it.

We have held discussions with Northiam Parish Council and the volunteers who run the library. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the running costs of the Village Library with Beckley Parish Council and to submit a proposal to the Local Planning Authority seeking the release of up to £5,000 of funding which has been provided under a section 106 agreement in relation to housing development in the area for enhanced library provision. This could include works to enable additional services or space to be provided as well as internal re-organisation to increase capacity such as upgrading ICT equipment and self-service facilities and/or new, improved counters and shelving. Additional supplies of books could also potentially be provided.

If the community also wished to do so, it could use the new Community Library Membership (see below) to ensure there is a continued supply of books for Northiam Village Library. This would provide a selection of more up-to date stock from the wider ESCC library catalogue than is currently available from the Village Library, and would potentially be an improvement to the service offered to residents.

Community Library Membership

We will introduce a new Community Library Membership in 2018/19. This will allow communities to borrow a range of items which can be made available locally to the community.

The Community Library Membership will require someone in the community to apply for the Community Library Membership and to take a lead role to organise the collection and make it available. For example, it could be co-ordinated by a member of a Town or Parish Council, a member of a community organisation or a local volunteer. The collection could be made available within a village hall, community café or a similar setting, but it would need to be somewhere that the public have access to, and where the collection can be properly looked after.

We will provide a core collection (the number of items will depend on the size of the community) and then it will be possible for the Community Library Member to change the stock by making a selection online from our Community Library Catalogue and exchanging stock at a library of their choice. The Community Library Member would do this on a voluntary basis.

What will be the impact of the Strategy?

Our Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy will ensure that there remains a very high level of accessibility to a library by public transport or by car across the county, within a reasonable journey time of 20 to 25 minutes, including for rural communities. It will also ensure that libraries are well-placed to serve areas with greater needs.

The key impacts of the Strategy are:

- **92% of members of the current 24 libraries will be unaffected by the changes. For the 8% of users who will be affected by the revised strategy, all live within a 20 minute journey time by car to one of the proposed 17 remaining libraries, and over 96% are within a 30 minute journey time by public transport**
- **Of the 88 Mobile Library stops, 82 have an alternative library that can be accessed by public transport, and of these 76 are within a 30 minute journey from their existing Mobile Library stop**
- **All 88 Mobile Library stops are within a 20 minute drive of an alternative library**
- **Over 99% of residents will still be able to travel to a library within a reasonable journey of 20 minutes by car, compared with 100% for the current library network or a Mobile Library stop.**
- **Over 86% of residents will still be able to travel to a library within a reasonable journey time of 20 minutes by public transport. This compares to 89% for the current network of libraries.**

As we have summarised above, the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy will mean that over 86% of the population of East Sussex will be within a 20 minute journey time of a library by public transport and over 99% of the population will be within a 20 minute journey by car. This compares with over 89% of the population who can get to one of the current 24 libraries by public transport and over 99% of whom can currently do so by car. In terms of current access to our existing 24 libraries and the 88 Mobile Library stops, 97% of the population of East Sussex have access within 20 minutes by public transport and 100% by car.

Looking at accessibility within half an hour, over 95% of East Sussex residents will be able to get to a library within a 30 minute journey time by public transport (bus or train) and 100% by car. This compares with over 96% of the population who can currently reach a library within 30 minutes by public transport and the same 100% who can currently do so by car. If current Mobile Library stops are included over 99% of residents are currently able to get to a library within half an hour by public transport and 100% by car.

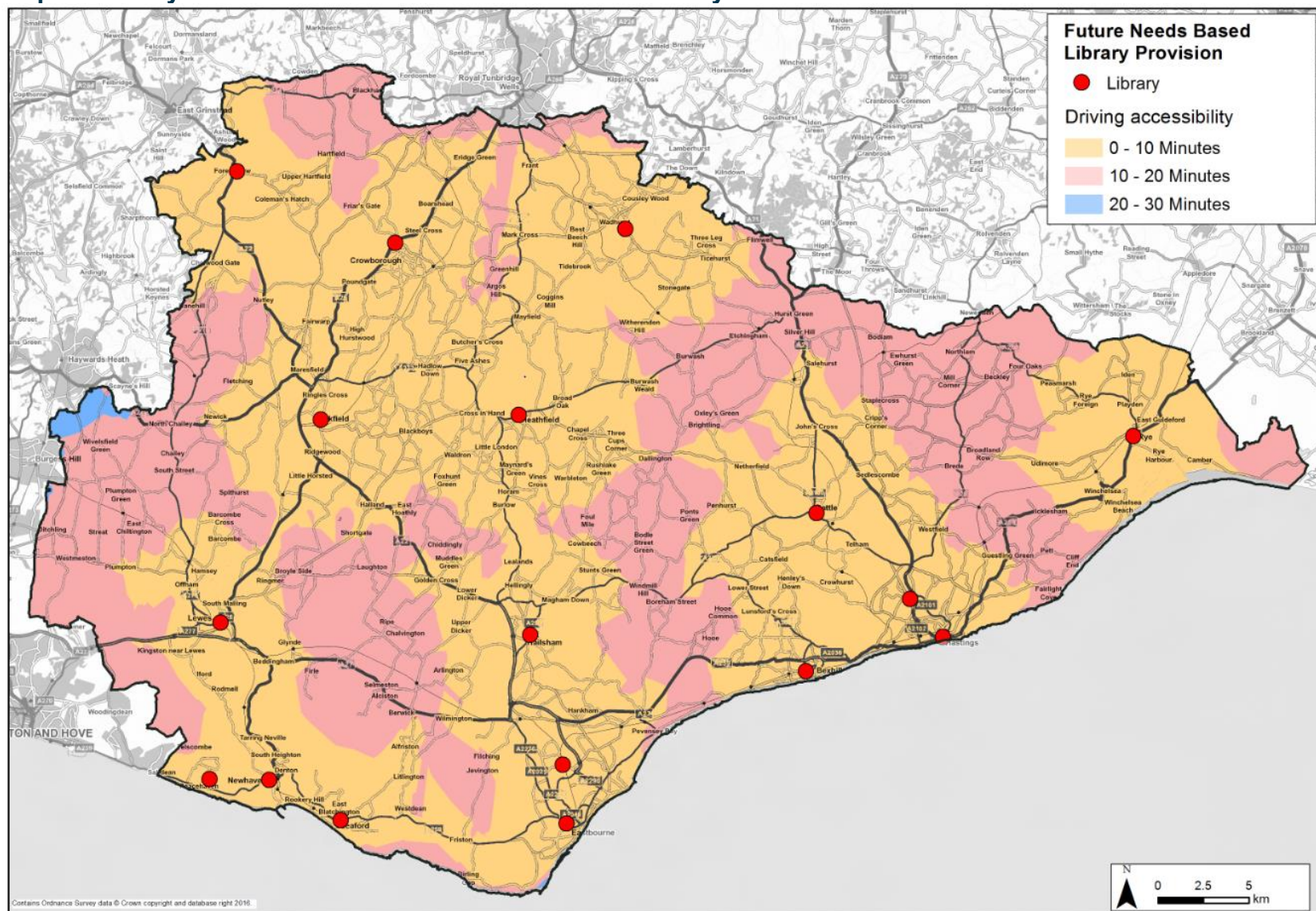
Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of access to a library within 10, 20 and 30 minute journey times for the population of East Sussex for the future network of 17 libraries compared to the current network of 24 library buildings and the current network of 24 library buildings plus mobile library stops.

Table 1 Journey times to East Sussex libraries – current and future library network

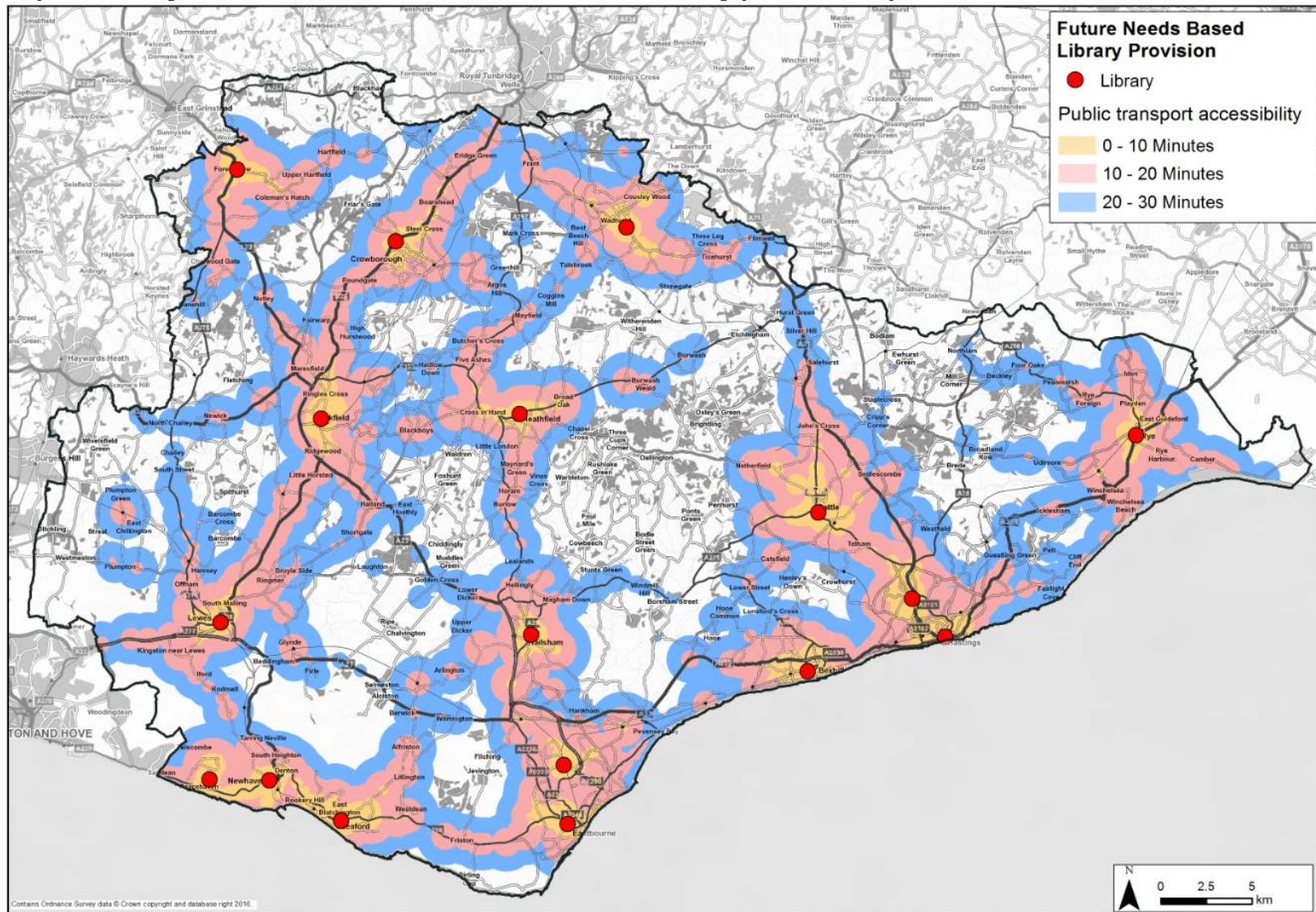
Cumulative totals		Journey time in minutes								
		Public Transport			Driving			Walking		
		0-10	0-20	0-30	0-10	0-20	0-30	0-10	0-20	0-30
No. of residents within journey time	Current 24 libraries & Mobile Library stops	380,428	511,894	524,342	527,108	527,521	527,521	119,851	300,467	460,805
	Current 24 libraries only	307,975	469,758	507,219	496,817	526,799	527,521	86,113	256,226	397,193
	Future network of 17 libraries	241,980	454,364	504,851	482,621	526,799	527,521	65,532	203,991	309,387
% of residents within journey time	Current 24 libraries & Mobile Library stops	72.1%	97.0%	99.4%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	22.7%	57.0%	87.4%
	Current 24 libraries only	58.4%	89.1%	96.2%	94.2%	99.9%	100.0%	16.3%	48.6%	75.3%
	Future network of 17 libraries	45.9%	86.1%	95.7%	91.5%	99.9%	100.0%	12.4%	38.7%	58.6%

Map 3 shows journey times to the future network of 17 libraries by car and **Map 4** shows the journey times by public transport.

Map 3 Journey times to the future network of 17 libraries by car



Map 4 Journey times to the future network of 17 libraries by public transport



53 of the 88 Mobile Library stops (60%) are within a 10 minute drive of one of the 17 libraries that we will retain. On average seven customers use the Mobile Library at each of these stops. 35 stops (40%) are within a 20 minute drive. On average five customers use the Mobile Library at each of these stops. 82 of the 88 Mobile Library stop locations are served by public transport to an alternative library building, on a day when the closest alternative library is open, of which 76 have a journey time of 30 minutes or under.

The changes do have a greater impact for people who currently walk to libraries. Over 58% of residents will be able to walk to a library within half an hour compared to over 75% for the current network of libraries and over 87% when mobile library stops are included.

It is also important to bear in mind that a wide range of factors influence whether people make particular journeys by car or public transport and that people commonly travel to libraries as part of combined trips to do other things, such as shopping or when they are at work. 55% of library users use more than one library.

A draft Equality Impact Assessment was produced to identify those groups of people who it is considered will be more affected by the proposals than others. The Equality Impact Assessment has been revised following the analysis of the public consultation on the draft Strategy, which has helped us better understand the impacts of the changes that the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy will bring about. Three main groups are identified; those aged 75 and over, those with certain disabilities and those in rural communities.

Those aged 75 and over and those with certain disabilities were primarily identified for a common reason, in that they are likely to be less able to travel further to an alternative library and in some cases may be lacking the digital skills or technology to access the services via the eLibrary. For those individuals unable to access a library themselves due to mobility issues, illness or their caring responsibilities, the Home Library Service is considered to be a suitable alternative way to access the service.

For individuals living in rural communities, it is likely that they will have further to travel to the library if they currently use the Mobile Library Service, the Northiam village library or one of the rural libraries that we will not retain (Mayfield, Ringmer and Pevensey Bay). For those who have access to a car or are able to travel by public transport to an alternative library, the majority of people in the county will still be able to access a library in reasonable travel times. In addition, the eLibrary provides a suitable alternative way of accessing the service.

The results of the consultation have also highlighted that for some residents, particularly those aged 75 and over, a visit to the library is a source of social interaction and it is acknowledged that the closure of libraries, and the Mobile Library, may contribute to their feeling of social isolation alongside the closure of other rural services, if they are unable to travel further to an alternative library. The Community Library Membership category will enable individuals in communities to to run a book exchange in their area and support social interaction, if they wish to do so.

Library opening hours

Library opening hours were changed in November 2016, following a public consultation. The rationale was to decrease library running costs by reducing opening hours at times when libraries were less busy, ensuring that people can access services across the county when they are most used. Given the necessary savings, some hours were reduced at other times.

We have looked again at the evidence we considered prior to reducing library opening hours in 2016 and we do not think that increasing current library opening hours is required in order to provide a needs-based library service.

We have, however, looked at different ways to open libraries for longer, including technology which allows people to use libraries when they are unstaffed. These systems are not cheap, and at present, there is not a case for investing in them in East Sussex, especially considering the evidence we found that libraries were not well used outside of our 'core hours' of 10am to 5pm.

Community and partner involvement

Volunteering opportunities

Our Library and Information Service is supported by over 400 volunteers who play a vital role in enabling us to deliver the full range of services we provide. Volunteering with the Library and Information Service is a way to meet new people, learn new skills and give something back to your community. You could help with our home library service, our bookshop, children's activities, or give advice on using computers and more. We will train you and meet regularly to make sure all is going smoothly.

We have identified the potential to develop new volunteering opportunities to deliver the additional services that we have set out in the Strategy, which will support a wider range of needs, such as Study and Homework Clubs and Code Clubs.

During the consultation on the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy we invited anyone who would be interested in volunteering with the Library and Information Service to get in touch with us, and we are hugely grateful that an enormous number of people expressed an interest. 637 people responded to say they were interested in volunteering with us in one of our available roles and we have contacted all those people who gave us their contact details. 460 people said they were interested in supporting volunteer led opening hours or supporting friends or other forms of community involvement in library provision. We will put them in touch with the various community and other groups exploring these options. We are always keen to hear from anyone who is interested in volunteering with us.

You can find out more about what is involved in all of the volunteering roles we offer and apply online at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/activities-and-events/library-volunteers/

We will contact you within 5 working days to talk about our volunteering opportunities and whether your preferred role is available near you. If roles are full, we will add you

to the waiting list. You will need to provide 2 references for all our volunteering roles. We may also need to arrange a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) check.

We pay expenses like mileage costs for using your own car for our Home Library Service. We will need confirmation from your insurance company that your car is insured for voluntary work.

Following the changes to library opening hours in 2016, we are piloting a project with Forest Row Parish Council, where volunteers in Forest Row open the library without paid staff on one afternoon per week when the library would normally be closed. So far this pilot is working well. Although we do not plan to increase library opening hours we would welcome any approach by communities who wish to work with us to set up volunteer-run library sessions as a way of increasing library opening hours if there is a desire within their communities to do so. As with the pilot in Forest Row Library, volunteers would need to be managed and coordinated by the community, but we would provide full training and protocols for volunteer-led opening hours.

Similarly, if communities wanted to set up Friends Groups as a way of supporting the Library and Information Service through fund-raising or volunteering, we would be very interested in hearing your ideas.

You can get in touch through the Contact Us page of our website at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/library-cards/contact-the-library-and-information-service/

Options for community library provision

Our draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy invited comment on potential options for the seven libraries that we proposed not to retain to be community-run or community-funded if there was a desire within communities for the libraries to continue to operate.

The principle behind these options was that the seven libraries could be kept within the East Sussex Library and Information Service if they could be funded wholly by communities or other organisations. Alternatively, we suggested that communities or other groups or organisations may wish to take over the leases of buildings or purchase them, and run them as completely independent libraries or use them for other purposes.

During the public consultation on the draft Strategy we have met with many of the communities affected by the changes we proposed and listened carefully to all of their ideas and suggestions. We have supplied a large amount of information about the costs and practicalities of running these libraries, so that communities could develop proposals to take them over or fund them, if they were able and wished to do so.

Many of the communities we talked to understandably did not wish to lose well-regarded local services and argued strongly for the County Council to retain and fully fund all of the seven libraries. We did not receive any formal proposals for communities to take over the running or funding of any of the seven libraries as a preferred option to the County Council continuing to operate and fund them.

As we have explained earlier in this strategy, having carefully considered all of the representations and feedback received during the consultation we remain of the view that the seven libraries and the Mobile Library Service are not required for us to provide a needs-based library service that meets our statutory duty, and there would not, therefore, be a case for continuing to provide ongoing funding for them.

During the public consultation, communities also told us that the two options we proposed were rather ‘all or nothing’ options. They felt that community-funded models would be expensive for local Council Tax payers if the costs were raised through a local Council Tax precept.

Community-run libraries could help reduce costs by using volunteers and potentially making savings on business rates and at the same time provide a more tailored library service that was better suited to the community, e.g. potentially longer opening hours and combining the library with other community services and activities. However, communities felt that one of the key benefits that would be lost under this kind of model would be the access to up-to-date county-wide library stock and the free People’s Network computers, with all of the resources they bring. They therefore felt that any future community-run library would need to retain these features.

Communities also told us that the initial costs of stocking a community-run library would be high, and that the costs of renting or buying at their market value the buildings in which the libraries are currently based would be a significant barrier, considering all of the other challenges that there would be in setting up a community library.

We recognise these challenges and the desirability of a different model. If Cabinet endorse the recommendation to close the 7 libraries, we propose that any community group that comes forward with a viable 3 year proposal to take on one of these libraries in a building that the County Council owns could be provided with a lease on a peppercorn rent, for an agreed duration (Ore, Polegate, Willingdon libraries). This would be subject to approval of the proposal by the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive. In addition, we could lend, again on a peppercorn basis, a selection of core starter stock and the current fixtures and fittings of the library. Where we do not own the building, we will do our best to assist in assigning or sub-letting leases, where this is permitted under the lease and subject to any other restrictions such as planning permissions (Langney, Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, and Ringmer libraries). However, if communities wished to continue to provide county-wide stock on an ongoing basis, which would require access to the Library Management System (LMS – the computer system that holds our catalogue and manages issues, renewals and reservations) and to offer the People’s Network computers, the cost of this would need to be reimbursed to the County Council. We also believe that, in these cases, we would need to provide ESCC staff time to act as a point of contact between the community library and the County Council, to resolve any issues.

We have not received any proposals that would meet the above criteria, which do not require an ongoing cash contribution from the County Council, and as set out

earlier in the Strategy, the seven libraries will therefore close as County Council operated libraries. However, we are happy to continue to explore any new options or work with communities to revise any existing proposals that would enable a viable community library model to be implemented, whether this enabled a seamless transition from ESCC to community library after the library closes, or whether it would mean that the library might re-open at a later date as a community library.

Space in library buildings

We have undertaken a Property Assessment for all of our library buildings. This includes consideration of how effectively the space within each library is used. We have been able to secure partnerships within the Council to locate or deliver other services in some libraries as part of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. This will allow us to support a wider range of needs, draw in new audiences and generate additional income to offset required savings for the Library and Information Service.

Operational bases for parking enforcement staff will be provided in Hastings, Eastbourne and Lewes libraries from July 2018. The Library and Information Service will deliver some of the functions of the three Parking Shops from these libraries. This joint venture will enable the parking services to be delivered at a lower cost due to the sharing of overheads and other operational costs.

The Seaford Integrated Locality Team, part of our East Sussex Better Together health partnership, has moved into accommodation within Seaford Library. This team brings together a number of social care and health services for adults, from the County Council and the NHS, within the community. Their services are not delivered in the library.

There are further opportunities for partners to use space within other library buildings to provide services or for office accommodation. This would increase the potential of the library service to offer an increased range of services, delivering shared outcomes with partners and creating further savings. We would welcome approaches from organisations or groups interested in using space within any of our libraries to provide services or for office accommodation. An expression of interest only is necessary at this stage, and any arrangement would be negotiated on a case by case basis.

HMP Lewes

The library in Lewes Prison is provided by the Library and Information Service as a traded service, which means that it is self-financing. We will continue to provide this service subject to any future negotiations with the prison authorities. It is recognised that the prison community do have specific needs which the library supports, but these are not assessed as part of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

Alternative delivery models

We have spoken to or visited a number of other local authorities to understand how they run their library services and see what lessons we could learn from them. They include West Sussex, Kent, Brighton and Hove, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Devon and Suffolk.

We have explored whether it would be better if someone other than the County Council provided the Library and Information Service in future and have undertaken an initial options appraisal to explore the advantages, disadvantages and risks of different delivery models that would most effectively enable the Library and Information Service to implement the draft Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

This options appraisal included:

- Keeping the Library and Information Service in-house, delivered by the County Council, but assuming that the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy is implemented, as proposed;
- Establishing a Local Authority Trading Company;
- Establishing a Public Service Mutual;
- Outsourcing the service (to a 'for profit' or third sector provider); and
- Establishing as a joint venture between the Council and a library service staff group.

A summary of these different delivery models is provided in the table below.

The options appraisal identified a Local Authority Trading Company and continuing to provide the Library and Information Service in-house as the two highest scoring options for East Sussex, with the Local Authority Trading Company scoring slightly higher. The main advantage of a Local Authority Trading Company over the in-house model would be the ability to trade for profit. At present the opportunities for us to do that are limited as most councils are not outsourcing their library services.

Both Suffolk and Devon County Councils have created Public Service Mutuals for their library services. Both of these Public Service Mutuals have savings programmes that include many of the options we have either already delivered through the Libraries Transformation Plan or that we propose to deliver through the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

The options appraisal therefore concluded that there is currently no convincing argument for changing from the current in-house model in order to implement the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. Discussions have taken place with the District and Borough Councils to explore opportunities for the potential of a Service Level Agreement to operate libraries on our behalf. It does not currently appear that there are efficiency gains from a Service Level Agreement approach, and there is the potential for the loss of current economies of scale for both the County Council and any other organisation that might wish to operate a part of the library service under a Service Level Agreement, meaning that costs of delivering the service would

probably increase rather than decrease under this model. However, we remain open-minded about the possibility of such an approach in the future.

Summary of alternative delivery models for the Library and Information Service

Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCs)

LATCs are bodies that are free to operate as commercial companies but remain wholly owned and controlled by the 'parent' council(s). As trading bodies, LATCs are in a position to provide their services to a wider market than a council department. LATCs are contracted by the parent council (or councils) to provide services back to the council(s) via a service contract.

Public Sector Mutual (PSM)

The Department for Culture Media and Sport defines a PSM as an organisation that has left the public sector (also known as 'spinning out'), which continues to deliver public services, and which has a significant degree of employee control, influence or ownership. Typically a PSM would involve an element of employee-ownership (or at the very least a significant level of employee control). The model also allows for the involvement of a range of other stakeholders, possibly including community groups and the Council.

Depending on the intended ownership and governance arrangements, stakeholders (e.g. staff, community groups, Friends Groups and the Council) may own part of the PSM and sit on the board of directors. Several advisory groups could be established to ensure that a diverse range of stakeholders are effectively represented and able to influence the PSM's strategic direction.

Outsourcing

The process of outsourcing a council's library service involves the procurement of a third party to deliver the library service on behalf of the council via a contract. The outsourcing of library services may take several forms, including:

- Procuring an existing social enterprise or charity to deliver the service on behalf of the council;
- Procuring local community groups to deliver library services on behalf of the council (with funding, professional library services and back-office support and systems);
- Procuring another council to deliver part or all of the service; and
- Procuring a for-profit provider to deliver the service on behalf of the council.

Joint venture

The term 'joint venture' can describe a range of different commercial arrangements between two or more separate entities. Each party contributes resources to the venture and a new business is created in which the parties collaborate together and share the risks and benefits associated with the venture.

A party may provide land, capital, intellectual property, experienced staff, equipment or any other form of asset. Each party generally has an expertise or need which is central to the development and success of the new business which they decide to create together. It is also vital that the parties have a 'shared vision' about the objectives for the joint venture.

**Summary of alternative delivery models for the Library and Information Service
(continued)**

In the case of libraries, a joint venture may involve the Council and one or more third party (possibly including the staff group) establishing a new entity.

Ownership of the joint venture would conventionally be split across each of the parties involved. Typically this would be determined by the appetite of the Council to share ownership, and the level of investment and risk taken on by each party.

Identified savings

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy will enable us to deliver an estimated saving of £653,000 through a combination of shared efficiencies by co-locating library services with other County Council services, income generation, and the reduced provision of library buildings, the Mobile Library and other services.

This is £97,000 less than the £750,000 savings target for the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Overall, this will equate to £1.903 million toward the total £2 million savings target for the Libraries Transformation Programme. This is considered to be the most appropriate strategy to prioritise resources in order to meet identified needs at this time. The remaining £97,000 of savings will be met from elsewhere within the Communities, Economy and Transport Department.

Identified saving	Value of saving
Closure of buildings, including frontline staff	£172,000
Management savings associated with closures	£137,000
Income generation from buildings and building efficiencies	£171,000
Additional reduction in stock fund	£100,000
Cease Mobile Library provision, including staff costs	£73,000
Total	£653,000

Implementing and monitoring the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy sets out a programme through which we can deliver the identified savings within the agreed timeframe, to the end of the current Medium Term Financial Plan in 2018/19.

Key performance indicators for the implementation of the Strategy will be developed as part of the business planning process for the Library and Information Service and through the Council's public reporting on the Council Plan and Portfolio Plans. These will enable the Council and members of the public to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and its delivery of the Vision and Strategic Outcomes.

Supporting information

The Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy is supported by a number of other documents.

There are three appendices to the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

- **Appendix 1. Rationale and Impact Assessment for a Needs-Based Library Service.** This provides a more detailed rationale for the proposals contained within this Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy
- **Appendix 2. Equality Impact Assessment.** This document determines the impact of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy on equalities.
- **Appendix 3. Summary of the Technical Appendices.** This provides a summary of all of the evidence developed in the supporting Technical Appendices (see below)

A number of Technical Appendices (TA) have also been developed, providing the detailed evidence base which has informed the commissioning process. Together these documents also fulfil the legal duty of the Council to produce an assessment of needs for the changes we are making, which demonstrates that, by implementing them, we will continue to meet our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

TA	Title	Purpose of the Technical Appendix
1	National and local context	Explains the context in which the library service operates at a local and national level, including the legal duty to provide a library service
2	Needs Assessment	Explains the different needs across the county and within different communities, which are relevant to the library service
3	Service Description and Analysis	Explains how the current library service is provided, including comparison with other library services and findings from consultations with service users
4	Property Assessment	Explains the current buildings used to provide the library service and opportunities that exist to use them better in future
5	Accessibility Analysis	Explains current access to the library service, including library buildings, the e-library and the mobile library, and determines reasonable travel times for journeys to libraries
6	Gap Analysis	Explains gaps between the way that the library service is currently provided and the way that it should be provided to meet needs and identifies the proposed Vision and Strategic Outcomes
7	Delivery model options appraisal	Explains the different models that are available to provide the library service and proposes the preferred model for future delivery



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