

Gobowen Library Frequently Asked Questions

What is meant by developing Library services in a way that best meets the needs of the local community?

Shropshire Council is continuing to develop as a commissioning Council and to setting out its future commissioning intentions. Alongside this the Council is considering which parts of its business might be best delivered locally and will seek to reflect this within its future commissioning intentions.

Specifically the Council wants to work with partners to re-design existing face to face customer focused services including its Libraries in order to provide places that residents can easily access services and get information and advice that both helps them and enables them to help others within their community.

Our vision is that traditional face to face services will be delivered outside Shropshire Council by community focused enterprises who recognise and support the important role that organisations and individuals who are active in their communities have.

This approach, often referred to as localism, is also a key part of the government's effort to decentralise power and to support communities to be more empowered and to have a bigger say on the issues that matter to them.

What is your vision for library services redesign in more detail?

We want to:

- Support the development of modern sustainable libraries achieved by the active involvement of community partners, who can be responsive to community needs.
- Explore opportunities to co-locate Libraries with other services and partners within a “community hub” and to create synergies where appropriate. The result of these changes would be the retention of the library service, whilst also creating an exciting new community hub, offering a range of important community services to local residents (as described in the document ‘A day in the life of Gobowen Community Hub’.)
- Provide flexible space to allow for library events such as Rhyme Time, Time to Listen, author events, local history sessions etc.
- Provide public access computer facilities and free Wi-Fi provision.

What are the Council's Statutory Duties to delivery Library Services?

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (“the PLMA”) states that the council, as a library authority, has a statutory duty (not a discretionary power) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons wishing to make use of it.

The PLMA does not define what is meant by “comprehensive and efficient”. However it does provide that the library authority must make facilities for borrowing books and other materials available to people who live, or work, or are undergoing full-time education in Shropshire. It also provides that in fulfilling the duty to provide a

comprehensive and efficient library service, it shall in particular have regard to the desirability of:

- providing facilities for the borrowing of, and reference to, books and other printed matter, pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirement both of adults and children
- encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service, providing advice as to its use, and making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required
- securing co-operation between the library authority and others exercising public functions within the county.

Will the library remain in its current location in Gobowen?

Yes, Information to date from the community through community consultations, local meetings and partnership has indicated that the current location is the best location available.

Who owns the current library?

Shropshire Council currently own the library and would continue to hold the management, whilst developing a community hub with partners under option one.

What is a community hub described in option 1 and how could it help me?

Gobowen Library Partnership Group has looked at data for the area and the services that are currently available, as well as taking on board the feedback that has been received from the consultation work that has taken place already. They have identified that there is a need for local services that could make a real difference to local people's lives such as training and employment skills, debt advice and housing advice and that these could be delivered from the library building alongside the library service, which is highly valued by its users. Partners and organisations have the potential to make a real difference.

How was the option one, a community hub, been developed to date?

Over the course of the year local partners, with an invested interest in Gobowen Library and the wider area, have been meeting and working through a timeline of checking existing information, data, talking to existing users of the library, speaking with residents and new stakeholders who could offer additional benefit to the library, about a community hub. Community meetings and visioning event have been held develop these ideas further.

How could a community hub work and how could it be financed?

Within the preferred proposal, the future delivery of the library service in Gobowen is that Shropshire Council continues to manage the overall statutory responsibility for library provision (library service, staff and the building) supported by a financial contribution from local partners to the running costs. This could enable the building to open for longer enabling the delivery of services and activities for and by local people.

It is proposed that the funding for the running of the Community Hub in 2016 - 2017 will come from 4 partners – Shropshire Council, Gobowen and Selattyn Parish Council, STAR Housing and Three Parishes Big Local. **In principle** funding support for the year 2016 - 2017 has been agreed by Gobowen & Selattyn Parish Council (**subject**

to the outcomes of this consultation) and STAR Housing, and a funding application has been made to Three Parishes Big Local.

Will the opening hours of the library change?

Within the Council's preferred approach, i.e. joint partnership approach with a community hub, it is planned to reduce the hours from 23 to 17 but with increased opening hours of the building so that it can be used by partners and organisations to provide additional services alongside.

Under option 2 on-going management by Shropshire Council without a community hub and partnership support may necessitate a significant reduction to the opening hours to make the required savings.

How will the library be staffed? Will the existing library staff stay?

Council support to the local staff and to the local library operation will continue to be provided by Shropshire Council.

Will we still be able to request books from other Libraries and from Libraries outside Shropshire?

Yes, these services will continue as they are now

What support will the Library Service provide?

The library will continue to provide a range of support functions, principally in access to the library management system, book stock, training, professional support, the support of a librarian etc.

What assurances are there to new partners and residents?

The Council's wish is to help create long term sustainable local approaches. If, through this consultation it is agreed that the Community Hub should be created, and the in-principle funding for 2016-17 is approved, the partnership group will work together to develop more opportunities for the direct funding of the Community Hub and income generation for future years.

If there should be any need to change the proposal agreed through this consultation, another consultation process will be carried out. No further changes will be made without full user and public engagement.

What is Gobowen Library Partnership Group?

Gobowen Library Partnership Group is an informal group of interested and dedicated organisations. It was formed in March of this year, with the aim of developing a community hub and library, which could be responsive to those community needs, identified by communities and partners. These partners include North Shropshire College, Shropshire Town and Rural Housing, Gobowen Primary School, Children's Centre, Derwen College, Three Parishes Big Local, Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council, Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police.

Are other libraries in Shropshire changing too?

Yes this is part of a wider process across the county. Shropshire Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy requires Libraries to achieve £1.147m savings over the corresponding three year period, and consequently we're reviewing how services are

delivered at all Shropshire's libraries. Currently consultations are taking place or have recently taken place in a number of locations.

Nationally the way that libraries are run is also changing, with the community taking a bigger role in the running of libraries, so this process isn't unique to Shropshire.

Have you considered the implications for people with disabilities?

Shropshire Council has a strong commitment to working to promote equality, diversity and social inclusion and the potential impact of the preferred proposal on library users, particularly those who might be impacted by any change, is being assessed through the completion of an equality and social inclusion impact assessment.

Next Steps:

We are seeking your thoughts and ideas for the library service in Gobowen through a six week period running from 9th November to 21st December 2015.

Comments can be submitted online by going to **shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved** and searching for **Gobowen Library**. You can also submit your comments on the survey forms available at the Gobowen Library, Gobowen Post Office, The Co-operative Gobowen, Gobowen All Saints Church Hall, Gobowen Pavilion and Gobowen Primary School.

This information received will help inform the development of options for the future delivery of library services in Gobowen. When the consultation has ended the responses will be considered and a recommendation will be made about the future of the library.