

Shawbury 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 (and where appropriate Customer Service Points) 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 in the day to day operation of the library and the development of self-service facilities. Ongoing “back office” support provided by Shropshire Council.
- Explore opportunities to co-locate Libraries with other services and partners within “community hubs” and to create synergies where appropriate.
- 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.

Within the aim to transfer the day to day management of the library to a new community enterprise organisation Shropshire Council will retain the overall statutory responsibility for library provision.

Will the library remain in its current location in Shawbury Village Hall?

Not necessarily, the council is open to any suggestions, particularly where these give the best chance of sustaining the library in the future.

Who owns the current library?

Shropshire Council has a 35 year part-repairing lease with Shawbury Village Hall to provide library services within part of the village hall.

Will the opening hours of the library change?

Within the Council's preferred approach, i.e. management by a new organisation, it is planned to at least maintain the existing opening times of the library, and possibly extend them.

However, on-going management by Shropshire Council 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?

Within our preferred approach, i.e. management by a new organisation, the library will still be staffed, but they will no longer work for Shropshire Council. Existing staff will have the opportunity to transfer within the TUPE regulations to the new provider.

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

Within the preferred approach these services will continue as they are now.

What support will the Library Service provide?

In the event of the library being managed by an alternative organisation Shropshire Council will continue to provide a range of "back office" support functions, principally in access to the library management system, book stock, training, professional support, the support of a librarian etc.

The Council's wish is to help create long term sustainable local approaches. The nature of future roles and responsibilities, support, risk, etc. would be defined within a contract between Shropshire Council and the new provider.

What assurances are there if the new provider can't continue to run the library?

Shropshire Council will have a contract with the new provider, which will provide them with security. The intention is to regularly review the agreement and to extend it as appropriate.

However, if the new provider can't run the service for any reason the library would revert back to Shropshire Council.

What happens if an alternative partner library management organisation is not identified?

A significant element of the current library running cost is fixed within the lease between Shropshire Council and Shawbury Village Hall meaning that if the Council continued to deliver the library service from its current location only staffing costs could be reviewed.

If the Council continued to run the library, and in order to achieve the level of savings required to ensure a sustainable and efficient service, a significant reduction in opening hours may be necessary; under these circumstances it may not be sensible, efficient or practical for the static library service to continue.

Closure and alternative provision, for example via a mobile library service, would need to be considered. However, before any final decision was taken this would be subject to a period of formal public consultation.

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 ideas for alternative management arrangements for the library service in Shawbury through a six week period running from 6th November to 18th December 2015.

Comments can be submitted online by going to **shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved** and searching for **Shawbury Library Consultation** You can also submit your comments on the survey forms available at the Shawbury Library, Village Hall and Co-Op.

This consultation will help inform the development of options for the future delivery of library services in Shawbury. Detailed options will be subject to a further period of public consultation.

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