

Local Members' Interest
N/A

## **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 12 May 2014**

### **Achieving Excellence - Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire (part 2)**

#### **Recommendation**

1. To agree the methodology being used to assess the library offer

#### **Report of Michael Lawrence Cabinet Member for Children, Communities & Localism**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?**

2. To consider and comment upon the methodology that will be used to assess the library offer. This is an opportunity for the Committee to influence and shape both criteria and models which will be used to adapt and reposition Staffordshire's library offer so that it makes a more effective and relevant contribution to the lives of local residents.
3. The library service welcomes comments from the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee which will be reported to Cabinet at their meeting on 18th June 2014 for them to take into account in their consideration of the subsequent proposals.

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

4. Under the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964, public library services are a statutory duty for local authorities who are required to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service. To comply with the act local authorities must:
  - Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it (section 7)
  - Promote the service (section 7(2)(b))
  - Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b))

The Government superintends councils' role and has a duty to:

- Oversee and promote the public library service (section 1(1))
- Take action where a local authority fails to perform its duties (section 10)

This role is currently undertaken by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Secretary of State of the DCMS is Sajid Javid. The Minister responsible for libraries is Ed Vaizey.

## Current Position

5. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee discussed proposals to adapt and reposition Staffordshire's library offer and agreed a report on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2013. A commitment was made to update the Committee and seek further involvement in the process following Cabinet approval of the model and the first engagement phase. Input from the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee will inform a second paper, Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a connected Staffordshire: part 2 which will be discussed at Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014
6. On 15 January 2014 Cabinet agreed the tiered model for Staffordshire's library offer which included the following:
  - A virtual (online) offer
  - A physical offer at a locality / town level
  - A physical offer at a community/ village level
7. During February 2014 a first engagement phase was held which:
  - Began the conversation with communities and raised awareness that libraries need to adapt to better serve their needs.
  - Encouraged staff, stakeholders and individuals to have their say and contribute to the proposals that we're developing
  - Registered contact details from people who wish to be involved in the formal consultation proposed for later this year, subject to Cabinet approval.
8. During this phase District Managers held stakeholder conversations with 107 partners and organisations. These discussions highlighted the importance of libraries to our partners, particularly in terms of libraries as a social space, somewhere to meet, the hub of the community, a safe place. Vulnerable groups value the library. Meeting rooms are important to our partners/ stakeholders. Libraries are seen as having educational and socio-economic value, an important place for developing skills and seeking employment. Information services are also valued by stakeholders, both the traditional reference service and also use of PCs and Wi-Fi to access the internet and online reference resources.
9. We held 8 drop in coffee mornings in our District Libraries which were attended by approximately 350 people. There were 244 replies to the dedicated Connected Libraries mailbox and 1674 leaflets were returned with answers to the following questions:
  - How do you currently use your library?
  - How could your library do things differently to support more members of your community?
  - What do you need from your library service now and in the future?

- Do you have further ideas or suggestions on how Staffordshire Library service could develop?

10. During the engagement phase our customers and stakeholders told us that:

- They use the library to borrow, learn, visit, gain information, read newspapers, find out about local history, find out what is going on in the community, socialise, attend events and training courses, use computers, use the photocopier, study, bring children, and hire the meeting rooms.
- The social value of libraries is important with stakeholders highlighting the importance of libraries in supporting education and job seeking. Libraries have become a place not only where knowledge can be found, but more proactively where people can access training and develop new skills
- Libraries are valued as a community space where people can socialise and relax. They are seen as safe places which are neutral and non –judgmental.
- While some people do not want to replace staff with volunteers, others do see the potential of volunteers as a way of maintaining or extending services and to fulfil specific roles
- Libraries have a role to play in the community. Many people value the library service, wish it to remain and the words “vital” and “essential” appear repeatedly in the feedback.

11. All library staff were given the opportunity to comment online to share their aspirations and expectations for the library service as it is remodelled. Over a third of front line library staff were also engaged with directly through discussions facilitated by their District Manager.

12. During the staff engagement, library staff told us that:

- Libraries are currently used by a wide range of people from all ages and all backgrounds including vulnerable groups and individuals.
- They anticipate that our future customers will have additional needs and that there will be increased demand from the service due to an aging population. It is also expected that there will be more people accessing the service online.
- There is a need to market the offer effectively and work with local partners to enhance local services.
- The virtual/online offer could be enhanced.

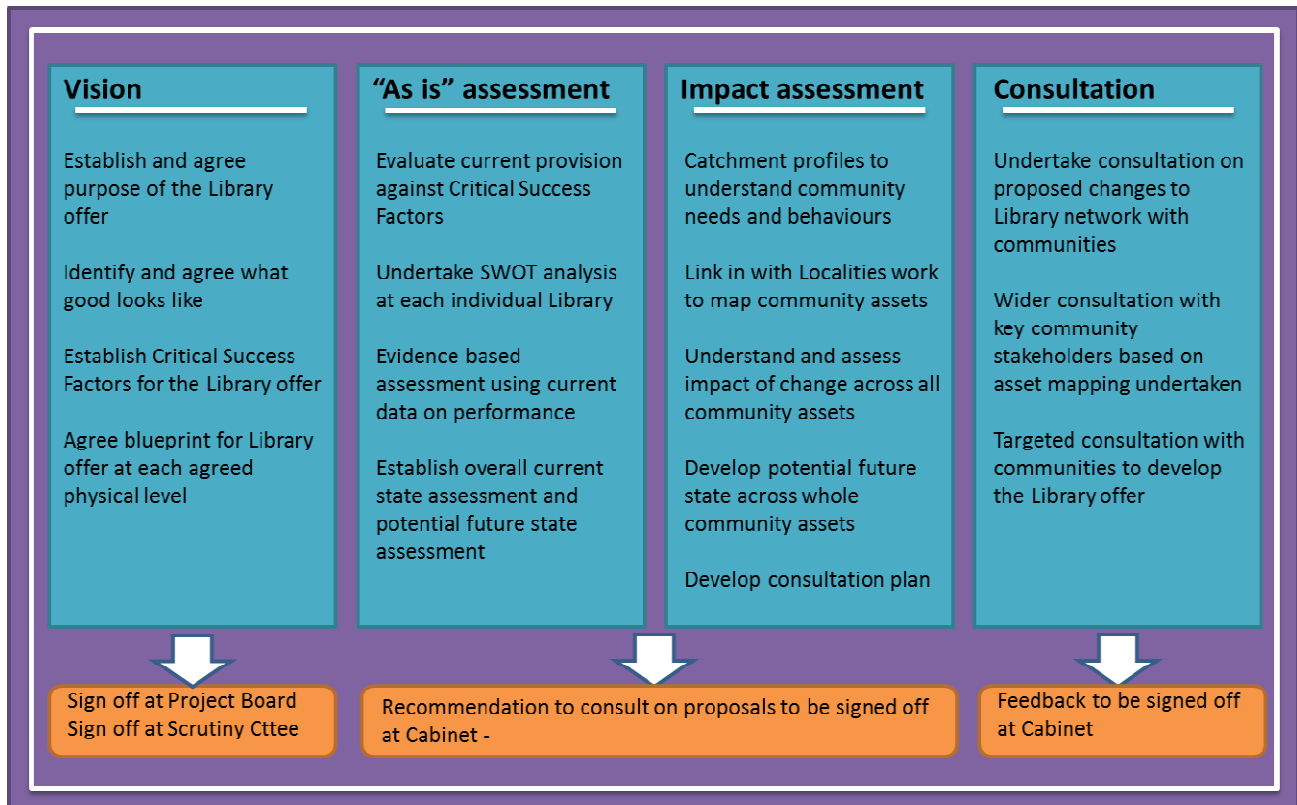
13. Having analysed what communities, customers and library staff are telling us and made an assessment against the critical success factors, we have further clarified the levels for the library offer and recommend the following, these are clarified later in this report:

- Virtually – Library Plus
- Physically at a locality level – Library Extra
- Physically at a town level - Library
- Physically at a community/ village level – Library Local

## Key Considerations

14. As outlined in Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 1, the way that people access information and learning, the way they socialise and interact with each other or with organisations continues to evolve in the digital age. The core principles of a library are described in Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 1. However expectations of libraries already have and will continue to change so we need to adapt our library service so that it remains a relevant and valued part of the community, whilst also ensuring it is affordable.
15. In addition to these changing patterns of use, the Library Service has changed the way it operates to deliver £1.1m of savings over 5 years without any building closures or reductions of opening hours. This has been achieved through a combination of reducing management and support services and reducing investment in new books and other resources. There is now a need to save a further £1.325 million by 2016/2017 as part of the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
16. The introduction of the Commissioning Framework in early 2013 changed Staffordshire County Council's approach to the delivery of services. The Commissioning Framework seeks to deliver better outcomes for people and communities rather than directly delivering services, and seeks to do so through the most appropriate and value for money solution. This encourages innovation and creativity in finding ways of providing what people want and need that may not necessarily be directly through the County Council. The role of the County Council is therefore changing into seeking out, developing and facilitating new approaches that encourage personal responsibility amongst communities in order to achieve outcomes.
17. It is intended to review the Library offer in Staffordshire based on this commissioning context and also the Art Council England's report 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' and the Society of Chief Librarian's Universal Offers. The outcome of this review is to identify a "tiered" library offer.
18. This report outlines the approach being taken to reviewing the current Library offer in order to engage Member input into this approach prior to finalising the evaluation of each individual Library and identifying what the future network might look like.

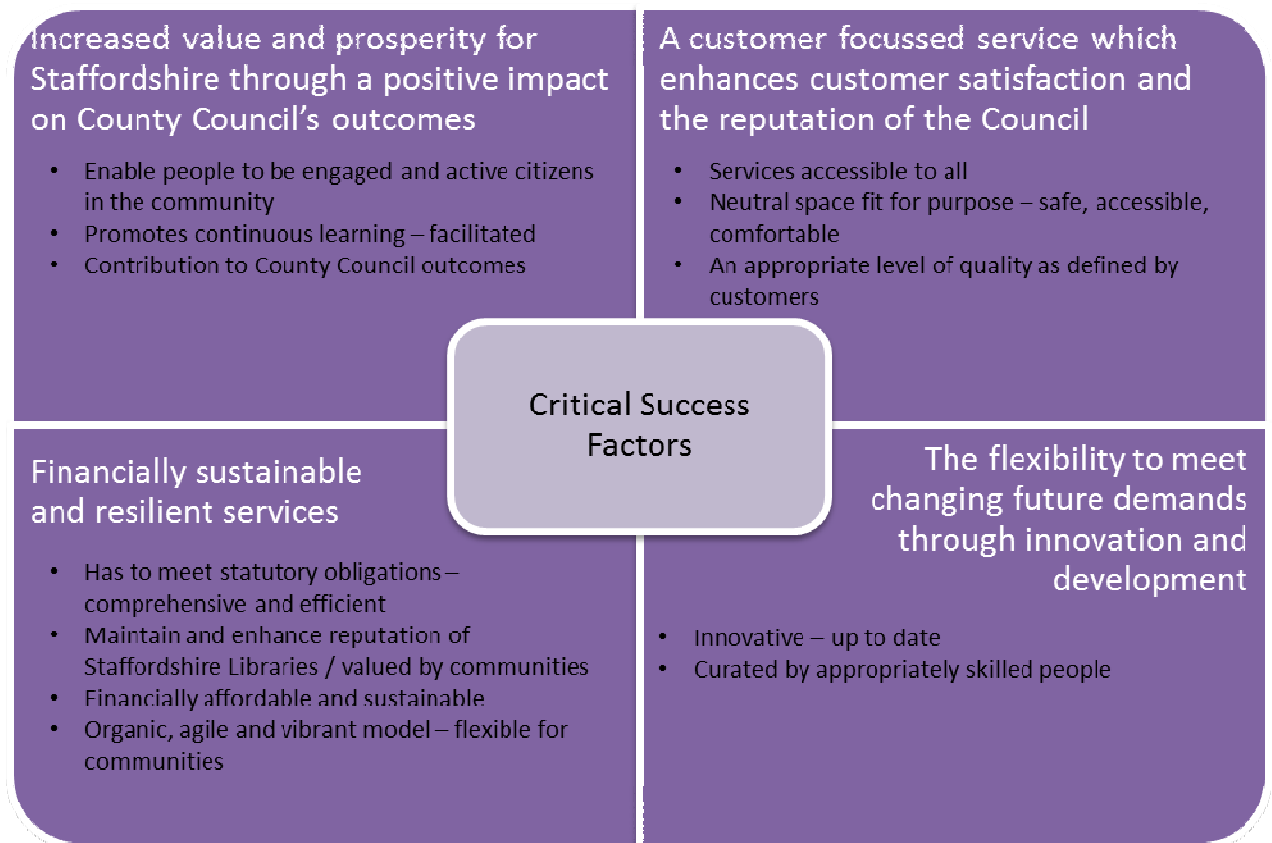
19. The approach being taken to review the Library offer is summarised in the diagram below:



20. At present the project is into the "As is" assessment stage, evaluating each individual Library against the agreed Critical Success Factors. Prior to completion of this stage, it is important to ensure the methodology being used is understood and agreed by key stakeholders in order to achieve buy-in to future proposals when they are identified.
21. At the first stage, we re-affirmed the purpose of the Library offer as outlined in Achieving Excellence – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 1 as follows:

***Enabling people to access, explore and enjoy learning, reading and knowledge***

22. In view of this purpose and taking into account feedback from the early engagement exercise we have developed four Critical Success Factors (CSF). These identify what a good Library offer looks like and how it contributes to wider outcomes. The critical success factors have been established as follows:



23. The table below shows how the critical success factors can be applied to determine each level for the library offer:

	Library Extra	Library	Library Local
<b>Increased value and prosperity for Staffordshire through a positive contribution to SCC outcomes</b>			
<b>• Enable people to be engaged and active citizens in the community</b>	This offer will be able to accommodate more partners and will be better integrated into the wider offer available to the community. It will, however, be limited in terms of how personalised it can be to any one particular community or need.	This offer will have less space to accommodate partners and wider service offer, but will be able to provide a more local and personalised offer than at the Library Extra level.	This level will provide the most personalised community focused offer and will also have some space to accommodate partners and contribute to wider outcomes. It will be limited in terms of the scope of services able to be offered due to space available.
<b>• Promotes continuous learning – facilitated</b>			
<b>• Contribution to County Council outcomes</b>			

**A customer focussed service which enhances customer satisfaction and the reputation of the Council**

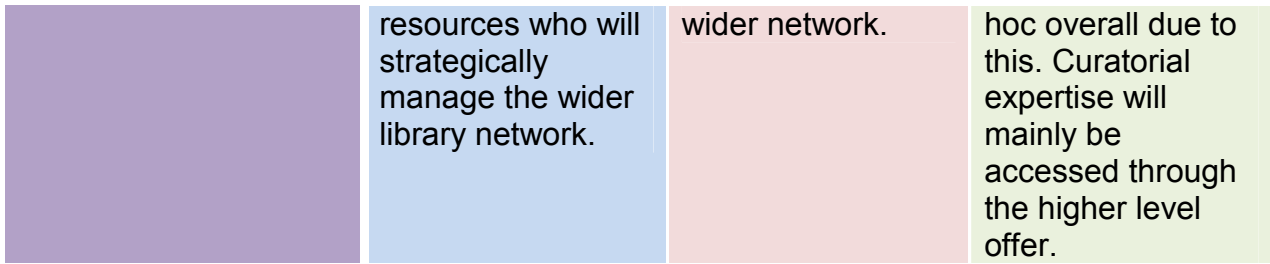
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Services accessible to all</b></li> </ul>	<p>Services will be fully accessible and there will be a broad range available. There will be scope to bring partners in and work across a number of priority areas. The offer will be broad and all inclusive, but will not be personalised to any one particular group or community.</p>	<p>There will be less space at this level than at the Library Extra level, but a smaller more localised offer will be able to adapt more readily to customer requirements</p>	<p>Services will be accessible to all and will all fit the neutral offer. Customers will have a greater say in designing the offer, but it will be limited in terms of the space and size available</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neutral space fit for purpose – safe, accessible, comfortable</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>An appropriate level of quality as defined by customers</b></li> </ul>			

**Financially sustainable and resilient services**

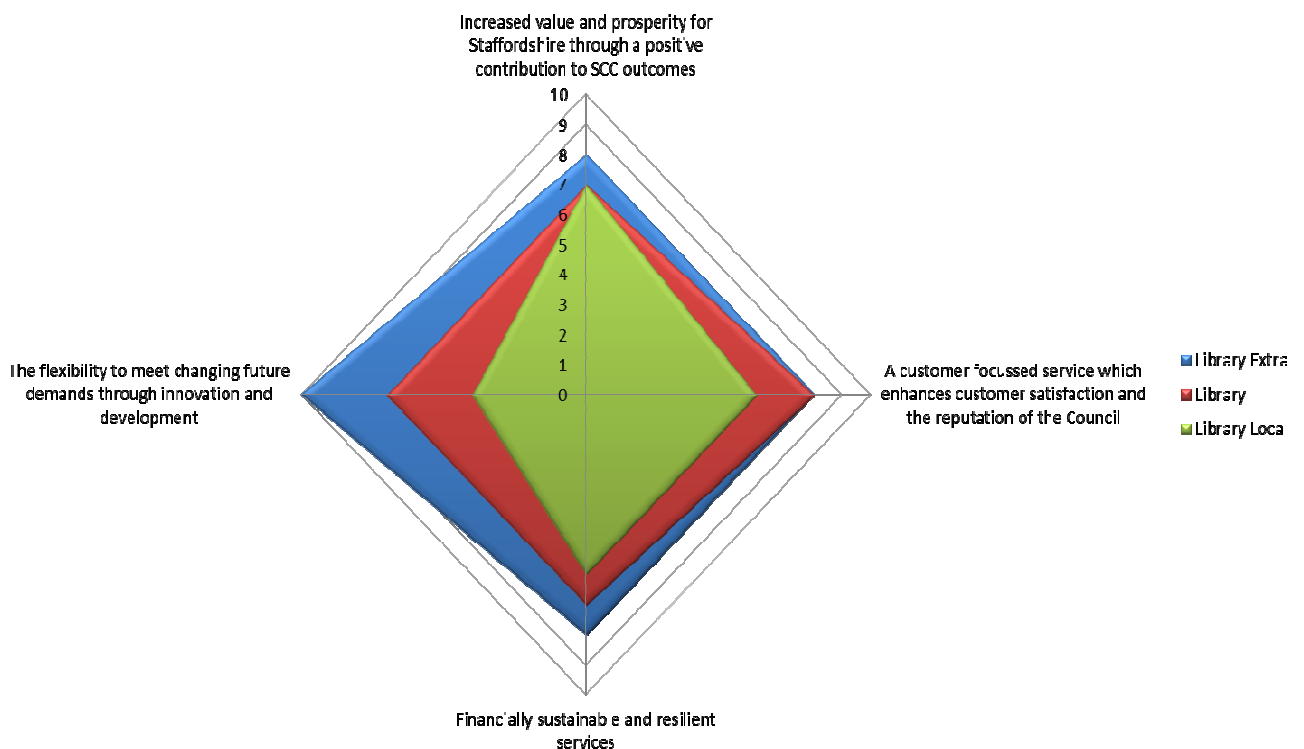
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Has to meet statutory obligations – comprehensive and efficient</b></li> </ul>	<p>This offer will meet statutory requirements and will enhance the reputation of the Council and service overall. It will be more expensive than a smaller facility and will be more difficult to adapt to the needs of specific communities quickly.</p>	<p>This offer will be similar to the Library Extra offer in terms of sustainability. However, where it is likely to have a slightly smaller offer, this may be slightly cheaper and more able to flex to the needs of communities.</p>	<p>This offer will meet statutory requirements and will enhance the reputation of the service locally. It will also be adaptable to the needs of the community quickly and effectively. However, it will be limited in size and scale of offer and whilst it will be cheaper to deliver, value for money will always be a real challenge at this level.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maintain and enhance reputation of Staffordshire Libraries / valued by communities</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financially affordable and sustainable</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Organic, agile and vibrant model – flexible for communities</b></li> </ul>			

**The flexibility to meet changing future demands through innovation and development**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Innovative – up to date</b></li> </ul>	<p>This offer will be the most innovative facility across the offer and will also have the space to accommodate highly specialised curatorial</p>	<p>This offer is likely to be very similar to the Library Extra offer, with a slightly reduced curatorial presence. It also is unlikely to provide strategic leadership to the</p>	<p>The scope for innovation and development at this level will be reliant on community input and is therefore likely to be localised and ad-</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Curated by appropriately skilled people</b></li> </ul>			



24. Each Critical Success Factor was assigned a value which has helped to create the radar diagram below. This has helped to determine a blueprint of what ‘good’ should look like at each level of the library offer.



- 25. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis has been completed for each static library. The next step is to use the SWOTs to measure the current library offer at each library against the critical success factors.
- 26. The offer at each library will then be assessed against the blueprints to determine which level we are proposing for each library.
- 27. Summary sheets for individual libraries including details of existing opening hours, customer profiles, performance and library survey data will be used to validate this assessment.
- 28. The proposals for the library service will need to be viewed alongside the wider Staffordshire County Council work on localities and take into account the implications of the Locality Impact Assessments.



## **Next Steps**

29. If this approach is agreed, specific recommendations to be tested with communities will be taken to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014 as part of the next stage in this process.
30. To comply with our statutory duty we propose to consult formally on these proposals during a 12 week consultation period which will be managed with support from the Customer Insight & Engagement Team.
31. During the formal consultation the proposals will be brought to this committee for discussion to ensure that the process used to adapt and reposition Staffordshire's library offer is robust and transparent.
32. When the feedback from the formal consultation has been fully analysed, final recommendations with a full Community Impact Assessment will be taken back to Cabinet for consideration later this year.

## **Contact Officer**

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