



Councillor Barry Lewis
Leader of the Council (Conservative)
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire DE4 3AG

To: All Town and Parish Councils

Office: (01629) 536003
Mobile: 07920 484 207
Email: barry.lewis@derbyshire.gov.uk

County Councillor for Wingerworth and
Shirland (Conservative)

Ref: BL/BJH
9 April 2018

Dear All

I wanted to take a moment to write to you about our proposals to consult on potential changes to the library service in Derbyshire, which was considered and approved by the County Council's Cabinet on 5 April.

We recognise and value the important role the library service has in our communities, which is why we have made a clear commitment in our Council Plan not to close any of our 45 libraries. However, this does not make the service immune from the many challenges facing the Council and the library service. Those changes have to address the fall in usage of libraries and reflect the resources available. On 20 July 2017 Cabinet approved a reduction to the library service budget up to 2021 of £1.6 million. We hope the attached fact sheet helps explain why we need to do this but a good analogy is we are making meals for a thousand dinner guests but we know only 750 are turning up, which in all conscience requires us to look at how we tackle this issue.

We believe the proposed strategy will ensure that we can deliver a transformed library service that is sustainable and remains relevant to the needs of our local communities. The proposal to transfer 20 libraries to community management has been formed through discussions with many other local authorities who have implemented this model. Examples from community managed libraries across England show how communities can be better placed to deliver a more responsive and enhanced service at a local level, including increased opening hours and additional services.

The consultation on the proposed reduction in opening hours are for the 25 libraries suggested to remain under Derbyshire County Council control. In these instances this will reflect a commonsense approach of reducing hours at quieter times to minimise the impact on the communities and the service.

Cont ...

We are proposing that the community managed libraries are retained as part of the statutory network to ensure that all users can still access the same services they currently enjoy and need, including free access to WiFi and computers. If the proposed strategy is approved the library service will support the communities with training, advice and guidance, in addition to the financial support, throughout this process. In the unlikely event that community groups do not come forward then we shall explore other ways such as mutuals, to deliver a service with communities, ensuring no library will close.

I can also confirm that our Home Library Services will continue to deliver books and other library resources directly to customers who are unable to access libraries. The proposals also include looking at finding a provider for the two mobile libraries the County runs, with a clear hope expressed that whoever takes on this provision will seek to improve service delivery for residents.

We will always seek to be innovative to ensure we can deliver for Derbyshire residents and be clear in our plans for this important service. I hope this reassures parish and town councils and Derbyshire residents that, contrary to some stories and misinformation emerging about our plans, we will not be closing any libraries.

The public consultation process is due to commence on Monday 7 May 2018 and I would encourage you to share your views through that process. The Council is also planning to arrange a series of drop ins and focus groups across the county which we will be publicising in the near future. I also intend to visit some of these meetings across Derbyshire and look forward to speaking with residents and hearing your views in this important consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Lewis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Barry Lewis
Leader of Derbyshire County Council

‘Libraries for Derbyshire’

The proposed strategy for the Public Library Service in Derbyshire.

Libraries have been going through a period of unprecedented challenges with many local authorities changing their library service as part of wider, and increasingly significant, changes to service delivery.

Nationally usage of public libraries in England has dropped and the trends in library use across Derbyshire are in line with national performance. Between 2012/13 and 2016/17 book issues saw an overall reduction of 33%, in line with the national trend, and there was a 21% decline in physical visits to libraries.

The public consultation will seek views on the following proposals:

1. To transfer 20 libraries to community management which could see community groups take responsibility for delivering the library service in the following locations:

1. Borrowash
2. Etwall
3. Clowne
4. Duffield
5. Creswell
6. Brimington
7. Whaley Bridge
8. Killamarsh
9. Melbourne
10. Hadfield
11. Holmewood
12. Gamesley
13. Whitwell
14. Wingerworth
15. Pinxton
16. Hayfield
17. Tideswell
18. Old Whittington
19. Somercotes
20. Woodville

This model, with no closures, would ensure that access to a total of 45 static libraries would be maintained. No Derbyshire residents should have to travel any further than they currently do to access a service. Potentially the community management model could also offer increased access to library services in the form of improved opening hours.

2. To implement a tiered approach to library service. (In order to tier libraries current levels of use and evidence of need have been considered). Tiering provides a framework in which resources can be allocated and managed across the library service in a clear and consistent way e.g. staffing, materials fund.

3. To reduce weekly opening hours at the 25 libraries remaining under local authority management.
4. To reduce the Materials Fund which is used to support the purchase of books and other materials
5. To consult community organisations on providing an alternative delivery model for the Mobile Library Service.
6. To consider the future implementation of 'Smart Libraries'. These are libraries where the latest technology allows customers to enter locked buildings, use their library card, and a PIN, to borrow books and log on to the internet without staff being present
7. To withdraw the DVD loan service based on an ongoing decline in use.

Full details of all the proposals in the strategy can be found at the following link:

https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2018-04-05%20Public%20Library%20Strategy_tcm44-298486.pdf