Community libraries

10 case studies

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For Arts Council England and Local Government Association

By Locality
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Contents

Independent community libraries

1 Grappenhall Library, Warrington
Independent community library, including asset transfer

6 Primrose Hill Library, Camden
Independent community library, not including asset transfer

Co-produced libraries: managed or supported

12 Buckinghamshire
Community managed libraries

18 Bradford
Community managed libraries

23 North Yorkshire
Community managed libraries

28 Lincolnshire
Community supported libraries

33 Telford and Wrekin
Community supported libraries

37 Northamptonshire
Community supported libraries

Co-produced libraries: commissioned

42 Croxteth Library, Liverpool
Individual commissioned community library

46 Suffolk
Commissioned library service
Grappenhall Library, Warrington
1 Local context

Warrington is situated in North West England. It is ranked 153rd on the index of multiple deprivation out of 326 local authority districts in England. It is one of the new towns developed in the 1960s. Its population has grown over subsequent decades, as has its economy.

As part of efforts to find budget savings, the council carried out a review of library provision in 2010. Members led the decision-making process and officers led the consultation on the future of the library service. Amongst other things, the 2010 review identified two libraries for closure: Great Sankey and Grappenhall.

In May 2012, as part of a wide-ranging restructure, Warrington Borough Council transferred its leisure, library and lifestyle services into a Community Interest Company (CIC), called Livewire, with a board made up of local residents and people working for or running significant local institutions, such as the local business park and college. A registered librarian sits on the CIC’s board. Livewire operates 11 libraries.

The focus of this case study is Grappenhall Library, which is run independently by the Friends of Grappenhall Library.

2 Transition process

The initial review of the library service that led to Grappenhall Library operating as an independent library began in 2010. The council sought savings in the library service budget. The public consultation discussed options for how to reduce costs, including across-the-board cuts or the closure of two libraries and ending the mobile library service: 70 per cent of respondents to the survey preferred targeted to across-the-board cuts; 20 per cent opposed targeted cuts and 10 per cent did not express a preference between the two options. In addition to the survey, 28 consultation sessions were held at different locations and times (including weekends and evenings).

Two libraries were selected for closure (by the executive board of the council) on the basis of usage (Grappenhall and Great Sankey had around 2,700 active users, the equivalent of just over six per cent of library service users); proximity to another library (both locations are fewer than two miles away from another branch); and the likely social impact of a closure.
Once the libraries were identified for closure expressions of interest were sought from organisations that wished to take over the library buildings. A workshop was held for community organisations in order to brief them on the proposed process for transferring the buildings. The process required interested parties to set out their aspirations for the building; there was no expectation or requirement for expressions of interest to include the maintenance or provision of a library service in either of the buildings.

Warrington Borough Council had an asset transfer team that had developed a toolkit with which to assess the suitability of organisations seeking to take ownership of community assets and a protocol for the transfer of assets to communities; the process to transfer former-library buildings from the council to the community drew on this knowledge base.

Expressions of interest in taking over the two buildings were scored and meetings were held with the two successful groups.

In the period between closure of the libraries and the buildings’ re-launch the council maintained the condition of the buildings.

In the case of Great Sankey, King's Church, a national organisation with a local branch that used the hall next door to the library, expressed an interest in taking over the building (to run it as a community facility not as a library).

In relation to Grappenhall (a small library with a single main room, a small staff room and small toilet) there was no pre-existing group to take over the building. Over the course of several public meetings a group of nine like-minded people (including a lawyer, a librarian, a retired director of social services, a retired GP, and a local government officer with understanding of health and safety issues) came together and a steering group was formed. Furthermore, an accountant offered his services to help set up and maintain the library's financial records so that it would comply with the requirements of Companies House and the Charity Commission; and the parish council gave access to the parish clerk’s time, in order to help identify funding for the venture.

From June 2011, the group held monthly meetings with council officers in order to work out how the transfer could take place. Council support included the provision of specimen policies for such issues as data protection and health and safety; as well as support on the transfer of the building, based on work already carried out to support the transfer of youth clubs to community organisations.

The Friends of Grappenhall Library was incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 in August 2011 and became a registered charity in November 2011. The aim of the Friends of Grappenhall Library is to ‘advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for residents.’ The library building was formally transferred in December 2011 (via a licence pending finalisation of the lease) and the library was launched in early February 2012.
3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The wider approach to leisure, library and lifestyle services in Warrington is via a CIC; 11 libraries are delivered through this model. The Grappenhall model is an independent non-statutory library run by the Friends of Grappenhall.

The original expression of interest in taking over the building submitted by the Friends of Grappenhall set out the following aims:

- to continue the provision of good quality books and periodicals for loan and reference in a comfortable, welcoming and easily accessible local setting for members of the Grappenhall community, especially children and their parents, older people who live close to the library and groups using the building
- to provide access to the internet for those in the local community who have no home access or need assistance with the technology
- to promote and encourage literacy and reading for pleasure through reading groups, storytimes and book related events

b) Staffing and funding

No full-time professional local authority library staff are involved in running Grappenhall Library; three librarians are involved in running the library (one based in a university, one in a business and one retired librarian).

The library is operated and supported by the community. As of August 2012, the library had around 50 active volunteers (including four board members, a 12-person strong library team overseen by a librarian and 15 volunteers who support community activities, eg preparing refreshments for drop-in sessions for older people). Where necessary, volunteers receive training and support from a professional librarian with experience of setting up new library services. Furthermore, three young people on Duke of Edinburgh community placements have worked with the library; a further placement is due in September 2012.

To date, many books have been donated to the library; and as of August 2012 it had nearly 5,500 books in stock (nearly 2,000 each of adult and children’s fiction, 1,000 non-fiction books for adults and 500 non-fiction books for children). The Library sells surplus (duplicate) stock in the library and at local events, in order to raise money.

When the Library was part of Warrington Borough Council’s Library Service, the branch had around 1,200 active members. In its short period of operation, the Library has attracted nearly 600 borrowers (over one-third of these are under-16s); between February and August 2012 the library issued approximately 3,750 books (around half of which were to under-16s).
The Library currently has around 135 Friends, each paying £10 a year. Furthermore, by the end of the financial year 2011/12 the Library had received donations worth nearly £2,000; grants from parish and borough councils and Warrington Area South Board worth nearly £5,000; and had undertaken fundraising and trading activities that earned in excess of £2,000. Further applications for funding in the financial year 2012/13 include nearly £10,000 from the Big Lottery (to fund development of a kitchen) and around £30,000 WREN grant to fund the provision of toilet facilities. These are essential ‘enabling projects’ that will extend the kinds of activities and services that the library can offer.

The pattern of opening hours has changed slightly compared with previous arrangements but with no reduction in access to users. The old pattern of opening hours was Monday and Wednesday 2pm to 7pm; Thursday 2pm to 5pm and Saturday 9.30am to 1pm. Current opening times are from 1pm to 5pm Tuesday to Friday and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays.

c) Property

The building has been transferred to the community with no rent to pay. The council retains the freehold of the building and if for any reason the library fails the council can take back the building. The council expects the building will be used as a community facility that provides a number of functions ie the council does not assume the building operates solely as a library; indeed the council believes co-location of services is the right approach for libraries (building on its experience of the Woolston Neighbourhood Hub).

Warrington Borough Council has provided financial assistance for the first two years of operation (50 per cent of the costs in the first year and 25 per cent in the second year). The library was also given access to the council’s excess furniture store to help furnish the library.

In the short time that the library has been in operation it has run two art exhibitions and a photography exhibition and provided rehearsal space for a choir. It aims to operate more activities and services in co-operation with the local authority and others, eg the police service will run a monthly surgery from the library from September 2012 and the careers service has approached the library to discuss the possibility of providing some of its services from the library.

d) System linkages

Grappenhall Community Library sits outside Warrington Borough Council’s library management system and operates its own library management system (bought with financial assistance from Warrington Area South Board). In effect users have two library services as they can utilise the library service that is now operated by Livewire, as well as Grappenhall Library.

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i. Subscribing members have voting rights in the running of the organisation.
Grappenhall Library has its own IT equipment (some donated, some purchased). It does not currently operate public internet access; but intends to offer this service in the future.

e) Future plans

The Friends of Grappenhall Library proposes a number of extensions to the library’s activities, in addition to the exhibitions and community policing, including:

- internet access
- homework clubs
- story times
- carers and toddler group
- evening activities for teenagers
- centre for Duke of Edinburgh Award voluntary activities for young people
- careers and employment advice

The key short-term developments, however, are the provision of kitchen facilities and improved toilet facilities, which will enable much greater community use of the building.

4 Learning lessons

A number of lessons can be drawn from the Grappenhall process:

- the existence of an asset transfer team in the local authority eased the process of transferring the building to the community, as procedures to select and work with groups to effect asset transfers were in already in place

- the holding of public meetings enabled the members of the group that ultimately took on Grappenhall Library to identify each other and make the necessary connections – the meetings were held by a number of different bodies including the council, the parish council and the Friends themselves, this enabled people involved in different networks to interact with each other

- the existence in the local community of the skills and experience required to take over and run a library was a vital factor in ensuring the asset transfer took place over just six months

- the council drew on national-level support from the Asset Transfer Unit to support its wider work on asset transfer; learning from others and drawing on a wide knowledge base
• at times of significant changes in local authorities, legal and financial departments do not always have the capacity to deal with the requirements of community asset transfer; the main delay to the process related to the lease for the building, and a licence to occupy had to be issued in order to enable the Friends to take over the building in a timely fashion

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information about Grappenhall Library may be found via this link:
friendsofgrappenhalllibrary.wordpress.com/

More information on Livewire may be found at:
www.livewirewarrington.co.uk/

More information about Woolston Neighbourhood Hub may be found here:
www.livewirewarrington.co.uk/livewire-leisure/woolston-leisure-centre
Primrose Hill Library, Camden

Deptford Lounge Library, Lewisham, London. Photo: Michael Cameron Photography
Primrose Hill Library, Camden case study

1 Local context

The London Borough of Camden is located in central London. It is the 74th most deprived local authority district of 326 in England.

Camden Council reviewed library provision as part of wider efforts to reduce its spending in the face of cuts to its budget. The cabinet decided to reduce spending on libraries from £8 million to £6 million a year by 2014. The library service operated 13 libraries in 2010 in an area covering eight square miles when the review was undertaken in 2011/12.

2 Transition process

The change process was carried out within London Borough of Camden’s overall vision for the library service, which is that Camden’s libraries ‘should be at the heart of their communities’ and be ‘places where people can connect to shared interests, resources and knowledge’. The strategy states that in order to deliver the vision the service needs to:

- be accessible in the ways, places and at the times that people need it
- ensure it is affordable to Camden and offers value for money
- offer spaces for a range of different uses by individuals and groups
- be connected to other services
- be relevant to our customers’ needs and stay up to date

The council aims to achieve these priorities by:

- ensuring it invests in libraries that are well located and provide convenient opening hours, and make specific provision for disabled and other vulnerable people to facilitate access
- reviewing the service regularly to ensure value for money and the setting of challenging performance targets for each library
- providing spaces that meet a range of different needs for social and study space across the service as a whole
- providing help and support in accessing council and other public services, in a local and convenient setting
- ensuring that there is a range of library and information resources available including new formats such as e-books and online

Of the £2 million savings target for the service, £400,000 a year was realised as efficiency savings in 2011/12 without affecting the service delivered to customers. Of the remaining savings £1.2 million was to be delivered in 2012/13 and a further £400,000 during 2013/14 onwards. The portfolio holder led a large scale public consultation to gather views on how the service might be delivered at lower cost.

The council consulted library users early in 2011. The consultation included a survey, customer and non-user focus groups, public meetings and meetings with Friends groups and stakeholders. The survey was made available in paper and electronic formats. It was e-mailed to about 33,000 people on Camden Libraries’ email database, with one reminder email. The survey was also available in 13 libraries, to mobile and home library users and in a 19 Camden service points. Library staff also undertook outreach work, taking the survey to people in the street. The survey was open for two months. The survey received 5,114 responses (2,781 paper surveys and 2,333 e-survey responses). And a further 1,069 responses were received from a separate children’s survey.

The council also ran a number of focus groups to discuss savings and the future shape of the library service. The focus groups showed different tastes and requirements among users; some consultees favoured a multi-functional community facility that included library services along with community, learning, children’s activities and advice services; others favoured a move to have fewer, better libraries with enhanced study space, cafes and better provision of books and computers; others sought a community library model with highly localised provision; and some requested what might be termed ‘retro libraries’, ie quiet places with greater focus on books.

Both the survey and the focus groups considered a number of ways that the savings target could be made and sought people’s views on potential options. The options highlighted:

- close three medium libraries
- close two large libraries
- close five smaller libraries
- close the mobile library
- have fewer staff and management
- 10-20 per cent reduction in opening hours
- increase fees and charges
- spend less on furniture and computers
- spend 40 per cent less on books and other items
- spend less on local studies and archives
- spend less on maintaining library buildings
The focus groups and survey respondents were also given the opportunity to express their views and were asked open questions about other ideas they might have for how the savings could be made. Their suggestions included selling stationery, renting space to businesses and other users, charging for use of the PC and holding exhibitions.

As well as getting feedback on options to make savings, the survey explored people’s views on volunteering. It found almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of respondents were in favour of more volunteers being used in Camden libraries; and 36 per cent of respondents said that they would be interested in volunteering (with 74 per cent of those interested in volunteering saying they would be willing to volunteer for up to 10 hours a month).

Following the public consultation the council undertook a formal cabinet decision on how to make the £1.6 million savings required. The options proposed and officer recommendations were developed on the basis of: the outputs from the public consultation, a library needs assessment and an equalities impact assessment on all 13 libraries. The assessments took account of relative levels of deprivation, customer use patterns including travel, feedback on services that customer’s valued, access to alternative provision and the local groups served. Based on this information three libraries were identified as surplus to requirements for Camden to meet its statutory duty for delivering a comprehensive and efficient public library service. A number of other changes were also identified to deliver the £1.2 million savings for 2012/13. These included, reductions to opening hours, changes to the management structure, a reduction in staffing levels, increased fees and charges and ceasing the mobile library service. Further reductions in costs will be made from April 2013 with changes to two more libraries, in order to contribute the remaining £400,000 of annual savings required of the service.

Elected members decided that whilst the libraries (Belsize, Chalk Farm and Heath libraries) would cease to be Camden public libraries the buildings would be offered, in the first instance, for community use – in response to public feedback on the wider community benefit derived from the buildings. The council asked for expressions of interest from groups that were interested in taking over the three buildings in September 2011; the deadline for proposals was November 2011. The council ran briefing sessions on the expression of interest process.

London Borough of Camden did not require those expressing an interest in taking over the buildings to run a library but in all three cases those expressing an interest wanted to maintain a library as at least part of the activities offered. The Winch (a local charity focused on children young people) was selected from three expressions of interest (EOI) received for Belsize Library. A new group was established in order to take over Heath Library (now known as Keats Community Library). The EOI to take over Chalk Farm Library building was made by the Primrose Hill Community Association, which worked in collaboration with the local Friends Group. The EOIs were scored using criteria that were published in advance and transparent to all those involved – the criteria included finance, governance, community need and equalities.
Prior to submitting the EOI, Primrose Hill Community Association had run a campaign to solicit pledges of support for the library, if it were saved. Using stalls in the street and other means they received 560 pledges to donate money (at the time of writing 80 per cent of these had been honoured with an average of one donation a day still coming in) and 220 pledges to volunteer to support the library. This gave the Community Association the confidence to submit the EOI, in the knowledge there was local support for such a move.

Primrose Hill Community Library, which was previously known as Chalk Farm Library, is used as an example of the process in this case study.

3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The approach in Camden has not been given a specific name. Three (static) libraries in London Borough of Camden are currently community managed libraries that do not form part of statutory provision. The changes occurred in 2011 and 2012.

Primrose Hill Community Library re-opened under community management in April 2012.

b) Staffing and funding

There are no members of the council’s library staff working in any of the three libraries. The libraries are managed and operated by the community.

For the first year of operation London Borough of Camden has given each library revenue support to cover the running costs associated with the building, plus the revenue costs to cover management at the number of hours that was previously in place. In addition to this funding, each of the three libraries also accessed funds from Camden’s People Fund (which was established by elected members to help fund transitions to new arrangements for delivery of public services across the council). Each of the three libraries accessed around £50,000 from the fund. Money from the fund is released in tranches. The initial tranche was for £15,000 to enable the libraries to deal with the immediate costs of transition ahead of taking over the buildings from April 2012; the remainder of the funding is released on a quarterly basis. Each library is able to use the funding in the way that suits them best, for infrastructure such as a new Library Management System; or to fund adaptations to their buildings.

The original aim of the Primrose Hill Community Association was to establish an endowment of around £1.2 million which would be used to generate income that would enable the library to continue. In the event £600,000 was raised. This was not enough to establish an endowment but it was enough to run the library for a number of years – before going down this route the Community Association discussed what it should do with some of those who had made some of the largest donations.
Primrose Hill Community Library is governed by a separate management board that sits under the umbrella of Primrose Hill Community Association, which is responsible for the finances of the library. The board of 11 contains four trustees from the Community Association. It is possible that the library could become a separate body at some point in the future but such a move is not part of the plan.

As well as its volunteers, Primrose Hill Community Library aims to employ its own librarian – it was noted in consultations that normal routes for advertising the post through a professional body for librarians were not open to the library because it was managed by the community.

Support in recruiting and managing volunteers was provided by the Volunteer Centre Camden.

It is anticipated that all three libraries will have extended opening hours, relative to those that operated in the past; and will provide a wider range of services than was previously the case.

c) **Property**

Each of the buildings was different: the London Borough of Camden owned the freehold of Chalk Farm Library within the Housing Revenue Account; Heath Library occupied a building owned by the Corporation of London; and the library in Belsize Park was owned by Camden but with historic covenants attached.

The lease on Primrose Hill Community Library is an internal repairing lease for 20 years and it gives Primrose Hill Community Library 100 per cent rent relief for the first six years. Rent relief is reviewed by the council on a three year basis. In the case of Primrose Hill Community Library, six years was agreed in the first instance linked to the business model proposed.

The Primrose Hill lease is for community and library use (ie the building should not be used for purely commercial purposes); and it is anticipated that provided the building is operating along similar lines in six years’ time rent relief could still be available in line with the council’s policies and priorities at the time.

Staff and volunteers working in the building and insurance for the internal space and activities are the responsibility of those operating the library.

d) **System linkages**

London Borough of Camden gifted the existing book stock and furniture to the community groups; but the libraries do not form part of Camden’s statutory provision and are not part of the Library Management System. Thus the libraries will be responsible for updating their own book stock and maintaining records of borrowing etc. Information from the Library Management System was migrated. London Borough of Camden also gifted PCs to the libraries, but these are no longer linked to the council’s IT infrastructure.
Once the EOI process had been concluded, Camden ran a couple of sessions with the successful organisations in order to discuss issues associated with data management, data protection and security issues associated with public access terminals.

Since the community managed libraries were established there have been adaptations in their relationship with the council, eg two of the libraries now use the council to buy new book stock, as London Borough of Camden can do this on more favourable terms than they have been able to achieve; and a volunteer arrangement has been established so that books ordered from London Borough of Camden are collected and dropped off at the community managed library for the convenience of their users.

**e) Future plans**

London Borough of Camden has started to facilitate a network of libraries located in the borough (which is home to the British Library, the British Museum, university and commercial libraries, as well as libraries in schools and local museums). The network is one way of ensuring the community managed libraries are supported and feel part of a wider library community that is able to provide support and assistance. Just fewer than 40 organisations were represented at the event. The group is now exploring how best to facilitate discussion and the exchange of information within the network.

**4 Learning lessons**

There are a number of points that local authorities and community organisations considering similar approaches may find helpful to consider:

- effective support for new models and ways of working is important – both in terms of financial support, expertise and officer time

- developing new models and the processes needed to deliver them requires the input of colleagues from across a range of council departments, eg property services, procurement, legal services, finance and those specialising in grants and community development

- council management information systems do not necessarily provide data in a way that is useful to community groups, eg council data on the running costs of buildings may include central re-charges and utility costs that are part of large contracts that will not apply to small community organisations – steps need to be taken to ensure relevant data, eg readings of actual electricity usage can be made available to groups expressing an interest in taking over a former library building

- an open and transparent process for expressing interest in taking over a former library building is essential – but this does not preclude preliminary discussions on local groups’ requirements prior to finalising the EOI process and paperwork
• assets have different and particular conditions that need to be taken into consideration – the transfer of former library buildings to communities is not a one-size-fits-all process

• the EOI process included scoring proposed governance arrangements, as a means of ensuring processes were in place to sustain the community organisation that was taking over the assets

• communications has an important role to play: from encouraging a wide ranging response, to public consultation and helping to publicise subsequent opportunities and changes

• the process in Camden worked as there was local capacity and willingness to take on (and raise funds for) the local libraries – some communities may not have the same appetite or capacity

• those interested in taking over a library need to be aware that there is a difference between running a campaign and running a library; steps need to be taken to manage this transition

• a local network of librarians can help community managed libraries avoid unnecessary mistakes, develop practical links and feel part of a wider community of libraries

5 Key documents or other evidence

The following link has more information on changes to library services in Camden:
camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/leisure/libraries-and-online-learning-centres/library-savings-programme.en?page=1

More information about Primrose Hill Community Library is available via the following link:
phcl.org/
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire case study

1 Local context

Buckinghamshire, in South East England, is a relatively affluent county with a two-tier local government system.

Following a public consultation on the library service that ran from November 2010 to February 2011 a move to a ‘county and community’ model was agreed by the cabinet in 2011. The main driver behind the review and the proposed changes to the service was the need to make financial savings. The county council aimed to make overall savings of £56 million over 3 years. The new model for community libraries is expected to realise annual savings of just under £500,000.

The county already had a track record of self-managed community libraries that worked with the library service, eg via a shared IT system, allowing users to access libraries across the county.

Farnham Common Community Library began in October 2011. It was the first community library formed under the new arrangements and, where appropriate, it is used as an example in this case study.

2 Transition process

The council sought to develop 14 community partnerships with local community groups, parish councils and partner organisations over a two-year period. The 14 community libraries will be supported by nine (larger) county libraries and they will also have access to online reference material and reservations across the south east of England. It should be noted that libraries at Burnham, Bourne End and Micklefield were excluded from the consultation as they are part of an ongoing Lottery project; these operate in addition to the 14 community libraries established as part of the most recent review.

The nine county libraries are: Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Amersham, Chesham, Beaconsfield, Princes Risborough, Buckingham, Hazlemere, and Marlow. These are more urban locations or areas of high population.

The 14 community partnership libraries are: Castlefield, Chalfont St Peter, Farnham Common, Flackwell Heath, Gerrards Cross, Great Missenden, Haddenham, Iver Heath, Ivinghoe, Long Crendon, Stokenchurch, Wendover, Wing, Winslow. These are predominantly rural locations. Farnham Common Community Library is located close to the village centre.

The community libraries operate with different governance and management arrangements, eg parish councils take a lead role in some areas and in other areas community groups are in the lead.
The 2011 visitor figures for the 14 community libraries show they made up 19.7 per cent of the total visits across the service (Annex A provides a breakdown of usage by library).

Buckinghamshire County Council held a public consultation on the future of libraries that ran from 9 November 2010 to 1 February 2011. In order to ensure the consultation process was inclusive, the consultation documentation was made available in standard and large print versions, an audio version for people with visual impairments was also produced, and the documentation was also available in Urdu. The consultation invited residents, community groups, local businesses and organisations to work with the council in order to find lower cost ways of delivering sustainable local library services. The council held 14 information meetings attended by approximately 1,000 people.

The lead and/or the deputy lead member for community engagement (which includes the libraries portfolio) addressed each of the public consultation meetings on behalf of the council. Follow-up workshops were held in most communities, together with additional local meetings with community groups and residents. In some wards, such as Haddenham, Ivinghoe and Wendover local ward councillors took the lead in responding to the changes; but this did not happen in all affected wards. The council also received over 100 letters and emails in response to the consultation.

The council held a survey that received around 3,000 responses (the equivalent of approximately three per cent of library users): 45 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposed delivery model; 34 per cent disagreed with it; nine per cent had no view; and 12 per cent didn’t answer the question. Over one-third of respondents expressed interest in getting involved with their local library, along with 189 organisations that expressed an interest in working with a local library. Opposition to the proposals came from some parish and town councils – that expressed concern at a potential disproportionate adverse impact on rural areas – as well as from residents of those areas most affected by the proposed changes.

In the case of Farnham Common, an initial consultation meeting on the changes to the library service was not well attended. A subsequent meeting was held by a local councillor in order to enable local discussion. The manager of Little Chalfont Community Library (an established community-managed library) attended one meeting and shared their experience of the practicalities of operating a community library, eg establishing and managing volunteer rotas, operating IT etc. This locally organised knowledge-sharing process was very helpful in generating the development of a group and a business plan for the library. With financial support from the council and the practical assistance of the local scout troop, Farnham Common Community Library carried out a survey of 4,000 homes to assess interest in supporting the library. A response rate of 16 per cent was achieved; over 200 respondees were identified as willing to support the library – this figure has now grown to around 500 people on the library’s database.
There is variation in local governance and management arrangements across Buckinghamshire, in some instances new friends groups were established, in order to take over a local library (eg in Winslow, where the town council opposed the plans); in other cases a Village Hall Trust led work on the transition (eg Ivinghoe). Parish councils took the lead in Long Crendon and Stoken Church.

Farnham Common Community Library is operated by a group of people who came together in response to the original consultation. The group contained members with many of the skills and much of the experience required to operate a library successfully, ie the group included accountants, someone with PR expertise and an ex-librarian. The group has established a charitable trust that is in the process of being formally registered with the Charities Commission.

3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The Buckinghamshire model is called the ‘County and Community Model’ reflecting nine (static) county libraries and 14 (static) community libraries.iii The 14 community libraries are part of the statutory library service. Eight libraries became community libraries between October 2011 and Jul 2012; six more are due to transfer between July and December 2012.

b) Staffing and funding

The model allows for variation in local arrangements: for smaller community-led libraries that are managed by a voluntary management committee, the council provides support through an annual Resource Grant to cover some of the non-staff running costs of the library, the continued provision of loan stock and connections to the county’s library network, plus computers for the use of library users. For larger community libraries led by community partnerships, the council manages the building with a reduced level of staffing and the community provides volunteers and fundraising activities to ensure the identified savings can be achieved.

Relations between Farnham Common Community Library and the library service of Buckinghamshire County Council are positive; but no full-time member of the council’s library staff works out of the library. The council provides training to volunteers on the library management system and the IT equipment required to operate it; although one of the learning points highlighted in consultations was that a library run on the basis of a large number of volunteers requires a relatively large number of people to be trained on the IT system (ie more than eight people), in order for the library to operate effectively.

iii. It should be noted that three community libraries were established in 2007 under a different process.
In addition to the annual Resource Grant of around £5,000 provided by the council, Farnham Common Community Library receives support from the local community, including volunteering, donations, Friends subscriptions and other support. There are around 500 ‘live entries’ on the community library’s database; with around 30 volunteers operating on a rota basis, each doing four hours a week every two weeks. Donations have come from the Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches, the parish council’s proceeds from the Christmas Carols on the Green, SEGRO (operators of the nearby business park) and Farnham and Hedgerley Horticultural Society. Furthermore, a local horticultural firm maintains the library’s gardens free of charge. Duke of Edinburgh volunteers also reorganised the Teenage Section of the library.

Farnham Community Library is open Tuesday 9am to 5pm, Thursday 9.30am to 5pm; Friday 9am to 5pm and Saturday 9.30am to 1pm. This compares to just 17 hours a week under previous arrangements.

c) Property

The Buckinghamshire model allows for co-location of libraries with other services, eg in Great Missenden work is underway to co-locate local business as well as public service with the library, and in Ivinghoe, the Post Office is co-located with the community library.

In the case of Farnham Common Community Library the buildings are leased by the library from Buckinghamshire County Council at a peppercorn rent as part of a 25-year agreement; the council remains responsible for maintenance and external decoration. The community library is responsible for interior maintenance, cleaning, insurance, rates and utility bills.

Farnham Common Community Library incorporates a Surestart Children’s Centre and an office for local Thames Valley Police Community Support Officers – both pay rent to the community library, which provides additional income to cover the costs of running the library.

d) System linkages

Each community library has a contract with Buckinghamshire County Council whereby the community library is committed to provide core library services and in return the county council provides an annual book stock allocation, PCs for library users and technical and online support to staff at no charge.

Farnham Common Community Library has a Resource Agreement with Buckinghamshire County Council. The agreement requires the library at least maintains the opening hours that pertained under previous arrangements, ensures the service remains free, operates the same fines and reservations charges as the council; it also ensures access to the library network, so that users experience no difference in the service, eg for inter-library loans.
Farnham Common Community Library could buy its own books and enter them on to the county’s system if it wished to but it has opted to be part of the council’s agreement with a distributor. This arrangement removes the need for volunteers to enter new stock on the system and it also gives the library access to a ‘top 10 service’ that ensures the library can respond to the latest borrowing trends.

e) Future plans

As part of the learning that came out of the development of community libraries, the council plans to undertake a simplification of its internal processes, eg in relation to legal issues and property, in order to make it easier for voluntary groups to run council services.

Plans to establish a county-wide group or forum once all of the community libraries are established were also reported during consultations. The forum would enable the different community libraries to share ideas and learn from each other.

Farnham Common Community Library aims to establish itself as a charity so that it can gain the benefits of charitable status, eg a reduction in non-domestic rates; it also aims to develop corporate sponsorship, once charitable status has been achieved. There is no room on the premises to operate a cafe or to sell other items to generate income.

4 Learning lessons

The success factors were reported to be:

• an open and honest presentation of the financial situation and a request by the council for help from local communities
• a clear statement of the options available
• a shared desire to protect the library service
• regular communication and dialogue between all parties, including the sharing of ideas
• ongoing specialist support to those running the service eg legal and IT support, to enable management groups to concentrate on running the service
• provision of a single point of contact for community groups to assist them to navigate their way through the council’s processes
• a five-year resource agreement between community libraries and the council, which gives a degree of predictability to the income that community libraries may anticipate in the early years of operation
One area where there was room for improvement was in the complexity and the time taken negotiating the legal issues associated with transferring a service out of the council and into the community. The observation was made, that the changes would have been easier to implement if a process to simplify the council’s processes had been carried out before the transfer programme had begun.

Learning points from the Farnham Common Community Library include:

- locally available expertise meant credible local proposals could be developed in a relatively short period of time
- Buckinghamshire County Council’s desire to talk and discuss issues with the community was positive and helpful
- a local councillor ensured dialogue and discussion took place in a timely manner, which ensured time was not lost in developing a local response to the council’s proposals
- the establishment of a group of local people who wanted to work with the council to achieve a shared, practical and affordable solution (as opposed to campaigning against proposed changes) ensured a relatively smooth transition process

5 Key documents or other evidence

Further information may be found at:
www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/libraries/future.page

A copy of the consultation booklet may be found at:
www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/culture_learning/libraries/library_consultation1.pdf

A copy of the report summarising findings from the consultation may be found at:
www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/libraries/library_consultation_report_april2011.pdf

A copy of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commissioning Committee may be found here:
democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/Published/C00000656/M00004471/AI00016766/$libraryitem22March2011.docA.ps.pdf

A copy of the cabinet paper of April 2012 may be found at:
democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/Published/C00000107/M00005054/AI00020875/$CommunityEngagementreport.docA.ps.pdf

More information on Farnham Common Community Library may be found at:
www.buckscommunitylibraries.org/farnham-common/
Annex A

Usage data on the 14 community libraries for 2011 indicate the following:

- Castlefield – 8271 visits, 31009 issues, 757 active borrowers (includes school)
- Chalfont St Peter – 32059 visits, 67799 issues, 2322 active borrowers
- Farnham Common – 14924 visits, 36251 issues, 1048 active borrowers
- Flackwell Heath – 37230 visits, 57016 issues, 1097 active borrowers
- Gerrards Cross – 79780 visits, 89836 issues, 2958 active borrowers
- Great Missenden – 64916 visits, 85020 issues, 2575 active borrowers
- Haddenham – 37200 visits, 75587 issues, 1672 active borrowers
- Iver Heath – 30909 visits, 31124 issues, 632 active borrowers
- Ivinghoe – 15141 visits, 18361 issues, 521 active borrowers
- Long Crendon – 25617 visits, 37205 issues, 916 active borrowers
- Stokenchurch – 20163 visits, 27683 issues, 872 active borrowers
- Wendover – 61011 visits, 109213 issues, 2585 active borrowers
- Wing – 8620 visits, 19261 issues, 382 active borrowers
- Winslow – 31535 visits, 64322 issues, 1447 active borrowers

Farnham Common Community Library reports record borrowings in July 2012 of 2,000; part of an upward trend since its launch.
Bradford case study

1 Local context

The City of Bradford is the 26th most deprived of England’s 326 local authority districts. It is located in West Yorkshire and has a mix of urban and rural areas.

The library service was reviewed by the council in 2010/11; under a previous administration. At the time of the research for this case study, the service was being reviewed by the new administration. The initial review was at a high level; looking at the future of libraries and what this might mean for Bradford’s libraries. The current review is taking a location-by-location approach to understanding how the library service can evolve in the future. The work to date was described in consultations as ‘steps on a journey’.

2 Transition process

In 2010, Bradford had 31 static libraries; at that time, the council identified five of the least-used libraries for possible closure. Four of these have since become community managed libraries – Addingham, Denholme, Wilsden, Wrose; three are in rural locations and one is in an urban location. Heaton Library closed following agreement with Heaton Township Association and a mobile library provided the service for like for like hours. None of the libraries located in Bradford’s most deprived areas were identified for closure.

Between May and August 2011 a number of meetings were held in the areas affected by the proposals. A number of options were discussed: closure; replacement by a mobile library; provision of an unstaffed Library Link; or a community managed library. Communities in three areas expressed interest in a community managed library; and these libraries remained open. Wilsden Library closed in July 2011 but in January 2012 community representatives approached the council to say that they would be interested in operating a community managed library and it has subsequently re-opened.

Community groups were formed in order to run the libraries, often with the support from the local parish council or community association. Recruitment of volunteers was made possible by local networks tapping into people’s enthusiasm for the local library, eg in one area the local ward councillor started the process going by asking members of her network if they would consider or knew someone who would be interested in volunteering to support the local library and the process grew relatively quickly from there. Local meetings to discuss the issue also provided the means by which potential volunteers were identified.
As part of the handover, staff from the council’s library service worked with volunteers for six weeks, in order to ensure that they were familiar with the requirements of the role and processes managing the library.

Wrose Library is used as an example in the rest of this case study to illustrate the process at that local level.

3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The council has not developed a name for its approach but its vision for library services in the future involves community managed libraries working as a complement to a professional library service; with community managed libraries forming ‘community hubs’ where communities can come together to make the most of the space available by undertaking and accessing a wide range of activities, over and above those traditionally associated with libraries.

At present, four of Bradford’s 30 static libraries are community managed libraries. The transition occurred in 2011/12. The libraries remain part of the council’s statutory provision.

The council has established a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with each of the community managed libraries. The SLAs cover the obligations of Bradford Council, eg to:

- supply the books and other stock and equipment, including computer equipment, necessary to provide a Library collection as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2. Such items will remain the property of Bradford Council and must be returned if this agreement is terminated
- ensure that any computer equipment placed in the library by the council is insured
- ensure that there is a library delivery and collection service, at least once a week unless otherwise agreed
- maintain regular visits and/or telephone contact from a member of library staff to assist with any queries or problems relating to the community library
- provide training in the operation of the community library and associated information technology where applicable
- deliver an agreed programme of support activities and events that meets community and library service priorities
- ensure there is a telephone contact available during operating hours
- ensure reasonable computer problems will be actioned in accordance with current Bradford Council ICT guidelines
• ensure that all new documents relating to procedures and to training which are pertinent to the operation of the community library will be made available to the operator

• ensure that training is given to those operating the community library in relation to stock management procedures.

It also covers the obligations of the ‘operator’ ie the group running the library, eg to:

• maintain an accurate record of items loaned from the library collection and returned to the library and other relevant statistics (visits, activity sessions etc)

• promote the library within the local community

• welcome all library users and assist them with enquiries, accessing their account on line and basic library transactions (loan and return of materials)

• forward any customer complaints relating to library stock and services to a named library manager

• ensure that all library facilities are available to actual and potential users during advertised opening times

• agree any changes to opening times hours in negotiation or discussion with Bradford Council

• ensure that any public access computers are switched on and available during agreed opening hours

• ensure the library space is clean, tidy, safe and welcoming

• ensure that any faults with the computers are reported to the contact telephone number immediately and recorded in the fault log for monitoring purposes

• provide a named contact person(s) to liaise with the Bradford Libraries and communicate with volunteers

• ensure that all volunteers are CRB checked\textsuperscript{iv}

• agree to participate in any library surveys or statistical collections undertaken by Bradford Council

• ensure items awaiting the van delivery service are packed, labelled and placed at agreed collection point according to instructions

• ensure that legal requirements are adhered to such as compliance with relevant legislation eg Disabled Persons Act, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Human Rights legislation

• ensure that there is public liability insurance for damage caused by library equipment supplied by the Bradford Council, and indemnify Bradford Council against any claims made which are due to the negligence of the operator\textsuperscript{v}

\textsuperscript{iv.} The Council paid for all CRB checks in the first 12 months of operation.
A review of the arrangements will take place after a full year of operation; this will build on quarterly meetings between the Development Officer and the community managed libraries.

b) **Staffing and funding**

The four community managed libraries are run entirely by volunteers, who have been trained by the council. The council provides no permanent staff on site or funding for the library. The council has a Branch Libraries Development Officer who supports the community managed libraries and works with volunteer coordinators. Each of the community managed libraries has a ‘link library’ that provides support on queries, reservations and fines when required. More specialised support, eg on summer reading challenge, is available from specialist development officers.

As noted above, local groups were formed in order to maintain local libraries. The number of volunteers varies between libraries, at the time of the research it was reported Addingham had around 30 active volunteers, Denholme had 14, Wilsden 15, and Wrose 16. A number of the libraries attracted volunteers with previous experience of working in libraries and/or with experience of working in public service.

The volunteers are organised under different arrangements, eg Wrose Library has a management group that operates through a trust with support from Wrose Community Association. Denholme and Wilsden have also set up trusts; and Addingham operates through the parish council.

Wrose Library has undertaken some fund raising activity, selling books donated to the library and running coffee mornings; the Community Association pays its rent.

Opening hours have increased in all of the libraries, one from eight to 17 hours; one from eight to 10 hours; one from seven to 8.25 hours; and one has remained the same, at eight hours a week, but was about to increase by two hours a week at the time the research was undertaken.

c) **Property**

One library was in a council-owned building, it pays no rent for the space it uses, and the building may be considered for a community asset transfer in the future. Three premises were originally based in buildings that were not owned by the city: Addingham library is in a building owned by Addingham Parish Council and the other two community managed libraries took over the leases for the properties. In Wrose, the Community Association pays the rent to the co-op, which is the landlord; the lease on the space is for three years.

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v. Quoted with the permission of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
d) **System linkages**

As noted above, each of the community managed libraries has a SLA with the council. The council has agreements with either a parish council or a community association, depending on local arrangements. The agreement provides for an annual joint review of the service along with quarterly updates. The review covers all aspects of this agreement in particular: levels and patterns of use of the library; feedback from customers; processes and procedures; and the responsiveness of library service.

Council-owned PCs with Internet access remain in place in each of the libraries – for use by the public as well as by volunteers; but access to the Library Management System is not available to the community managed libraries, due to data protection issues; data, eg on loans, is put into a spreadsheet in the community managed libraries and is then transferred via email to a ‘link library’. The data is then transferred to the system by a member of staff in the link library.

e) **Future plans**

The council was undertaking a review of library provision at the time the research for this case study and it was therefore difficult for consultees to pre-judge the outcome and comment on future plans with any certainty.

4 **Learning lessons**

In terms of lessons learned so far, consultees thought:

- positive relationships between volunteers, community associations, parish councillors, and ward councillors helped smooth the transition process
- the offer of options for the future of the library service enabled communities to express their preference for community managed libraries over other forms of changes to provision
- decision-makers should not under-estimate people’s willingness to volunteer to support local libraries
- there was a need to identify a manageable number of active volunteers to operate a given library, as there are risks in having a large number of volunteers for a small library with limited opening hours, eg costs of training and ensuring volunteers have enough time in the library to remember the procedures
- during the transition, it was very useful to have a member of the library service on site to help train volunteers
- the volunteer coordinator needs to have experience of managing people if s/he is to be effective
• a deputy to assist the volunteer coordinator is important, so that one person is not carrying too much responsibility

• at Wrose library, the craft skills of some volunteers has enabled the library to extend the range of services it offers; a development that might not have happened under previous arrangements

• ‘Link libraries’ need to have named contacts for community managed libraries to contact when they need support or wish to pass on data that needs to put on to the LMS

• central library services need to provide community managed libraries with named specialist to give specialised support, over and above the support that can be provided by staff in a link library

• having a dedicated Development Officer to provide advice and support to the community managed libraries helped the transition and helps to maintain links between them and the council library service

5 Key documents or other evidence

The 2010 Library Review is available at:
www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisure_and_culture/library_and_information_services/library_services/library_policies_and_reports.htm
North Yorkshire
North Yorkshire case study

1 Local context

North Yorkshire is a largely rural county in the North of England with sparsely populated areas and a number of large towns and small villages. It suffers from poor transport links – particularly east to west – which poses a challenge for all service providers.

The library service operates to a strategy called New Look, No Shush! that covers the period 2008 to 2023. The strategy (which will be refreshed in 2012/13) has four strategic aims, that:

• libraries are centres of excellence for books and opportunities for reading, learning and access to information technology and computers, including the internet
• libraries are the venue of choice for information
• libraries are relevant and responsive and at the heart of local communities
• the library service has a workforce that is committed to these aims and fit for the purpose of delivering them

The council operates a number of different types of library and access points as part of its statutory provision (these are explained in more detail below). Community groups and town and parish councils play an important part in operating the county’s library service. In this case study, the example of Barlby Library which is run in partnership with Barlby Library Volunteers and Barlby and Osgodby Parish Council is used to illustrate some of the lessons from North Yorkshire’s experience.

2 Transition process

Prior to the 2010 Spending Review, the council had experimented with different models for community managed libraries. The savings required as a result of the 2010 Spending Review meant that changes to the service had to be introduced at a faster rate than originally anticipated. Following a public consultation in early 2011, the council resolved in June 2011 and November 2011 to make a number of changes to the way that the county’s library service is delivered. The largest libraries (Category 1) had reductions in staff time and sought to make greater use of volunteers. The smaller libraries (Category 2) were kept open with paid library staff but with greater involvement of the local community to complement library staff. The remaining libraries (Category 3) were identified for closure, unless local proposals to retain them were made. Key factors in determining Category 3 libraries were proximity to a main library and the suitability of premises.
The council also operates ‘outlets’, which are run by community groups (sometimes under the aegis of a town or parish council). The outlets operate on the basis of a service agreement and are part of the statutory library service with access to professional support. The outlets use a manual system to track books as they do not have access to the county’s Library Management System. There are also ‘collection points’ in a number of ‘host buildings’, which include private businesses such as pubs, as well as public buildings. The collection points provide only a limited service but are part of the county’s statutory provision and have access to professional support.

A total of 22 ‘Category 2’ and ‘Category 3’ libraries were the subject of consultations with local communities. Local voluntary sector bodies supported the consultations with some financial assistance provided by the council. It was also recognised that some communities would require support in developing their plans. Voluntary organisations, such as Rural Action Yorkshire provided assistance when required.

Interest was received from local communities in respect of nearly all the affected libraries. As of May 2012, nine libraries were run by local communities: Ayton, Barlby, Bilton, Embsay, Gargrave, Great Ayton, Hawes, Grassington and Masham. Most of these were Category three libraries. These libraries remain part of the council’s statutory provision. More libraries (outlets and collection points) may follow in future.

Most of the community groups were established for the purpose of running the library, some of these were established under aegis of town or parish council; many have set up as companies limited by guarantee.

In the case of Barlby Library, it became clear to local people in January 2011 that North Yorkshire County Council was unable to maintain the library. Two people from the council spoke to a public meeting to explain the situation. There was a petition to ‘save the local library’ rather than to oppose cuts. It was clear to Barlby and Osgodby Parish Council that if it did not step in the library was likely to close; so the parish council expressed interest in taking over the library. A survey of local people was carried out in July 2011. The survey received 2,300 responses and 91 per cent were in favour of the parish council’s proposals. A small group – based in Osgodby a village that is part of the parish – opposed the parish council’s plans, which involved an increase in the parish precept (of £6 a year). A second survey was conducted to test opinion and two-thirds of respondents approved the parish council’s plans. The library was slated for closure in March 2012 and the parish and volunteers developed a business plan in the run up to its closure. The library re-opened in June 2012. The library sought to establish itself quickly as a community hub, hosting a photographic exhibition, a logo competition, a poetry competition and a couple of planning-related displays.
The Community libraries

3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

As noted above, North Yorkshire County Council operates a hybrid model of library provision with main libraries operated by paid library staff augmented by volunteers, community-led libraries operated by community groups and town and parish councils, outlets and collection points. All elements of the service remain part of the statutory service. At the time of the case study research there were nine community-led or managed libraries.

The community-led libraries have agreements with the county that cover the council’s obligations, which vary from agreement to agreement but include the obligation to:

- supply the books and other stock and equipment necessary to provide a library collection. Such items will remain the property of the council and must be returned to it at the end of the term
- change the stock periodically
- ensure that there is a library delivery and collection service to the community library at least once a week unless otherwise agreed.
- ensure that there is a visit from a Service Development Officer once a month to help with any queries or problems relating to the community library
- ensure there is a telephone and email contact available at the base library or other nominated location from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays (except Bank Holidays)
- provide appropriate training for volunteers in the operation of the community library
- provide up to three activities for library users per year (e.g. a story time session)
- provide NYnet Basic Internet connection and a self-service (RFID) machine
- supply People’s Network Computers (as agreed and paid for locally)
- provide performance information and support in achieving targets
- provide details of the council’s library policy and procedures and inform of any changes in such procedures

The agreements also set out obligations for community-led libraries, these vary from library to library but include such obligations as to:

- provide public access to the library for the agreed hours; alteration to the agreed hours may take place with the council’s prior agreement
- ensure that all library facilities are available to the public during the agreed hours
- publicise the availability of the library facilities in relevant publicity material
- maintain the library service quality standards
- participate in any public library surveys or statistical collections carried out by the council
- ensure named contact people are available to liaise with the council
- ensure that all volunteers who have frequent or intensive access to children or vulnerable adults in the library are CRB checked and to provide evidence of this fact whenever reasonably required by the council
- ensure that the guidelines in the community library Volunteers Handbook are followed:
  - ensure volunteers attend appropriate training and are aware of the key elements of this agreement
  - inform all volunteers of any changes in procedures
  - ensure all volunteers are aware of current performance against targets
  - comply with all relevant statutory provisions including, but without limitation, those relating to health and safety at work, disability discrimination and equalities

**b) Staffing and funding**

On average, across the county, libraries open for as at least as long as they did prior to the changes to the library service, and in some cases opening hours have increased. Furthermore, all libraries have self-serve terminals and self-log on for IT, thereby enabling use outside of paid-staff hours.

In the case of Barlby Library (which was a Category 3 library) a volunteer coordinator produces a rota for 25 active volunteers. The volunteers wanted to maintain the previous opening hours (Tuesday 2pm to 7pm, Wednesday and Friday 2pm to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 12 pm). They have achieved this by having enough volunteers to have two volunteers in the library during opening hours (with two back-up volunteers); they hope to extend opening hours in future. Volunteers were recruited using a number of techniques, including posters in windows and free advertising space on Arriva buses, based on the theme of ‘your library needs you’.

The parish council in Barlby in partnership with the local County Councillor provided the lead in developing the community’s response to the proposed closure of the local library. The first meeting to discuss the community’s response attracted only seven or eight people, but numbers grew to 30.
There were a number of meetings between volunteers and county council officers where officers provided assistance and made them aware of what was happening in other parts of the county. The volunteers also received training in managing volunteers from the Selby Association of Voluntary Service – most volunteers were originally over 60 years old but recently more young people are getting involved. The parish council’s current insurance policies cover volunteers over 15-years-of-age who are under the direction of the parish council at no additional cost – therefore volunteers have to be at least 16 years of age.

North Yorkshire County Council staff not only provided training to aid the transition in Barlby they also visit once a week to check how things are going. The county has also produced a community volunteer handbook to assist local volunteers.

In terms of legal status, the library is managed by a local group that is neither a trust nor a company limited by guarantee; the parish council is the lead body for any deals that need to be agreed with the county council.

c) **Property**

A range of different arrangements operate with regard to freehold and lease arrangements across North Yorkshire. Some leases are for two years, others are for 25 years – their length is determined by what local community groups want; some don’t want to make a 25-year long commitment, others sometimes want long leases to enable them to make long-term plans involving a number of different services in their communities. The council sees three years as the minimum length necessary to demonstrate a commitment to providing the service and the possibility of establishing a sustainable library.

In the case of Barlby Library, the county council has offered the premises on a six-year lease at a peppercorn rent to the Barlby and Osgodby Parish Council. The parish council has a grounds maintenance contract and therefore the additional cost of maintaining the land outside the library is minimal. The parish council plans to move in to the library to improve its own accommodation, which will also provide an additional presence in the building during working hours. Each lease specifies respective responsibilities for maintenance; the county is generally responsible for maintaining the structure of the building, which is Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant.

d) **System linkages**

Eight of the community-led libraries are on North Yorkshire County Council’s IT network, and use the County’s Library Management System enabling self-serve issue, return and renewals, membership and book requests through web access. The council continues to provide book stock and advice to community-led libraries.
In the case of Barlby Library, as well as access to the county’s Library Management System, through RFID, at no cost to the parish, there are four personal computers with broadband access provided by the council, linked to the county’s IT system (NYNet) paid for by the Library Volunteer Group.

**e) Future plans**

The county’s library service continues to evolve in response to local initiatives and lessons from past experience. The number of outlets may grow from three to 10 and the number of collection points may grow from the current 18 to around 50, over time. The county plans to encourage more volunteers to enable an extension of opening hours in existing libraries and to continue to promote the use of libraries for multiple purposes.

In terms of Barlby Library, the plans are to develop a community hub, by building on past experience using the building as a polling station, for drop-in sessions by the police, for exhibitions of local planning applications, as a space for business and community meetings. The aim is to use the building for wider community uses outside of library opening hours, in particular making links with local schools. Improvements to toilet, kitchen facilities and the lobby are required if the community’s plans to turn the library into a multi-purpose building are to be realised.

**4 Learning lessons**

A number of lessons can be drawn from experiences in North Yorkshire, including:

- where changes to a library service are required in order to save money, establish a shared goal to maintain libraries
- develop a communications strategy to ensure local media have positive stories about the changes that are taking place
- understand the process of change is one of cultural change that needs to be led by senior councillors and officers
- ensure those working in community-led libraries feel part of the wider library system by providing regular contact and support
- develop a vision of change for libraries that takes account of their community role and also sees them in the context of their corporate role in the council
- enable community-led libraries to evolve into multi-purpose buildings, serving a number of different community uses – allowing maximum use of buildings that previously were not fully utilised due to restricted opening hours
- provide support to community groups to assist them establish and manage volunteer networks as well as operate library management systems
• have confidence that communities will rise to the challenge
• where parish council precepts are involved, ensure wide consultation and debate to ensure there is widespread support for proposals to take over the running of a library

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information about North Yorkshire’s arrangements may be found at: www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3144
More information on the consultation and review may be found at: www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraryconsultation
Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire case study

1 Local context

Lincolnshire is a rural county in the east of England. It is the fourth largest county in England with sparsely populated areas and a mix of towns and villages with the City of Lincoln at its centre.

Local authority officers and elected members have discussed the evolution of the library service for a number of years; after the Government’s Comprehensive 2010 Spending Review, the council adopted a “core offer” that envisaged £4 million of savings in the budget for cultural services (of which £2.1 million was due to come from the base budget for libraries). Officers and members have worked together to realise these savings, while minimising their impact on service users. The cuts have been end-loaded to allow maximum time to identify savings.

The likely shape of the service is emerging but the authority’s position is:

“While we’ve no plans to close any of our static library sites, the service will certainly have to evolve. It’s likely that volunteers and shared premises will both have a role to play. However, the present service won’t be affected until we’ve had consultations with communities over the next couple of years.”

A number of communities have expressed their willingness to work in partnership with the county council to deliver the library service; an organic process of change has begun.

An example of local initiative in taking over provision of a local library service is in Saxilby. The parish council approached the county council in 2008 to express its willingness to take over the running of the local library; Saxilby Library is the focus of this case study.

2 Transition process

The library service has not been reviewed recently, but a Library Needs Assessment was underway at the time of the research for this case study. Members have set the parameters of the budget for the service. Officers within the Library Service have led the work on the Library Needs Assessment, and have called on support from staff in the following council services: legal, financial, human resources, business change management, information technology, procurement, performance management, workforce development, research (via the Lincolnshire Research Observatory) and external bodies (eg Experian, Mouchel, Intellident, LMS suppliers), and other library authorities (mainly through the Society of Chief Librarians).
The development of community supported libraries in Lincolnshire to date has been a bottom-up process, i.e. libraries have not been selected by the council; rather communities have approached the council as partners willing to support the provision of the library service.

Saxilby is located seven miles north-west of Lincoln. It has a population of around 3,500. The parish council employs staff, operates premises and controls the local grounds maintenance contract for the village; it therefore has demonstrated its capacity to manage and operate public services.

The library was located in a prefabricated building that was under-occupied since it lost its co-located NHS partner in recent NHS re-organisations. In 2008, the parish council suggested the county council sell the library and re-locate the service to the community hub run by the parish council; thereby adding to existing facilities that now include sports changing rooms and sports fields, a bar, a kitchen and meeting and function rooms. Initially the county council declined to act on the suggestion, in part because it could not ring-fence the proceeds from a sale of the existing library to fund a re-location.

In the wake of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review and the subsequent cuts in the library budget, the county council approached Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council in order to see if it still wished to take over the local library. The parish council confirmed its interest. The county council encouraged the establishment of a Friends group for the library in order to demonstrate local commitment to the library. Furthermore, a survey of users and residents was undertaken, in order to gather local people’s views; the parish council’s proposals were adopted as a way forward for the local library.

The parish council had already undertaken improvements to its centre by utilising a £70,000 loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The improvements to the facilities included changes to toilets and kitchen facilities, which in turn made space available for the re-location of the library. Once it was agreed that the library could re-locate and the parish council could take over responsibility for operating the library, the parish council borrowed a further £50,000 from the PWLB to fund the alterations required to enable the re-location of the library. The library is due to open in its new location in October 2012.

Lincolnshire County Council and Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council have signed a 10-year Service Level Agreement that sets out the arrangements for the library; and Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council staff work with local library volunteers to assist library users. It should be noted, however, that the Friends group was initially reluctant to support changes that resulted in the loss of library staff jobs. It is anticipated that the service to library users will be largely unchanged, though some elements of the service that took place on site will, in future, be undertaken remotely, e.g. inter-library loan requests will be dealt with online, rather than in person.
Currently in Lincolnshire there are 49 static sites and 10 mobile libraries, plus libraries in two prisons, one immigration and repatriation centre and support for two hospital libraries. A number of different arrangements for community management and support to libraries operate across the county, with pilot projects testing out what works in different circumstances. Local operations vary from a community book deposit with 300 items of county council book stock to multi-faceted and complex operations, such as those in Saxilby, which include a complete library with access to the People’s Network and printing facilities.

The council has not given a formal name to its approach, which is best described as an evolutionary approach, underpinned by a Library Needs Assessment. The council is still forming its view on which elements of its provision should form part of the statutory service and which elements should fall outside statutory provision.

As noted above, different local arrangements apply across the county; some libraries have professional library staff on site, others do not.

In April 2012 the county council created its first Library Development Officer to support communities interested in taking on library operations.

When the library opens in Saxilby there will be no permanent presence from professional library staff employed by the county council; three librarian posts were offered relocation as part of the changes, although two chose redundancy. The new library will operate as part of a community hub operated by the parish council. The hub has a cafe/bar, meeting and function rooms, kitchen and storage facilities. There will be staff presence in the hub from 10am to 11pm; the bar operates from 3pm to 11pm and the library will open from 10am to at least 7pm (the contractual minimum required by the county council is for the library to be open 49 hours a week).

The parish council’s staff, based in the hub, will oversee the library. A self-service kiosk (provided by Lincolnshire County Council) will be located in the cafe/bar enabling staff to oversee its use. Furthermore, glass doors will enable cafe/bar and kitchen staff to see into the library. Parish council staff will be supported by a group of volunteers coordinated by the parish – the target is to achieve 14 hours of volunteer-time a week to help operate the library. Previously, the library was open for 14 hours a week using three county council staff with support from volunteers two hours per week. The parish council – via a parish councillor with training on managing volunteers – is providing support to the Friends group in recruiting and organising volunteers. The parish council’s insurance policies cover staff and volunteers under its direction on the site – to date the district council has covered the cost of insuring volunteers at the library.
In line with previous arrangements, book stock will be brought to and from the library under the county council’s courier contract. The county council retains ownership of the book stock and will replenish it as part of the Service Level Agreement between the county council and the parish council; Lincolnshire County Council operates dynamic stock system, whereby requests made by customers will be retained by Saxilby until requested elsewhere.

c) Property
The current library building is owned by the county council; the new library will be located in premises owned by the parish council. The county council will provide the parish council with a level of revenue that is sufficient to repay the PWLB loan with interest over a 10-year period, plus some funding to cover incidental office costs. The new arrangement will save the county council £26,000 a year.

d) System linkages
Lincolnshire County Council is funding the library service in Saxilby via a 10-year Service Level Agreement. The SLA is an agreement between two local authorities and, as such, the services it covers are not subject to competitive tender; therefore, should both parties wish it, the arrangement can be continued in future.

The SLA sets out the quality and targets required of the library and a Library Development Officer will check to ensure standards of service are maintained. Data on the number of books issued, numbers of people using the library, number of members and new members, the level of staff and volunteer time in the library and any emergency closures will also be collected.

When customers wish to interact directly with the library service, eg to arrange an inter-library loan, they may do so via the Internet. Lincolnshire County Council has provided and will maintain four personal computers with Internet access for use by the public on site. As part of a wider move, since April 2012 the county council has centralised its call handling for all library and heritage sites. This service is available 9am to 5pm, seven days a week. The service covers book reservations and renewals. The Customer Service Centre also alerts customers to any overdue items by phone.

The parish council, as a public authority, has to abide by the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act; and all staff and volunteers handling personal data have to be trained in abiding by the relevant legislation. Work is in hand to commission a new library management system which will limit access to personal information by non-Lincolnshire County Council personnel.
e) **Future plans**

The county council is currently undertaking a Library Needs Assessment, and is piloting a series of different models for community management and support for libraries, to see what works. Following wider public consultation, the council anticipates greater involvement of volunteers in running the library service and more co-locations of libraries with other services or providers.

4 **Learning lessons**

There are a number of lessons at the level of the county council, including:

- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) self-issue technology is important in achieving successful moves to locally managed library services that remain part of the overall library management system

- a willing local partner is important if transfer of responsibilities are to take place smoothly

- a Library Development Officer to support a community during and after a transfer or development is important for all parties concerned with managing changes to community managed libraries

- a whole service approach to encouraging volunteers across the council helps attract and support volunteers; the county council’s Economy and Culture team has recently achieved Investor in Volunteer Status and the library service has drawn on lessons learned from the experience of working with volunteers on museums and heritage sites

- local consultation is important – it can result in a number of volunteers being identified to support the delivery of the library service, as well as build local residents’ understanding of the need for change

- communication with staff and public is important in order to stop gaps in information being filled by rumour and speculation

There are a number of lessons at the level of the local parish council and library, including:

- a parish council is more able to respond to proposed changes to a local library service if it knows what local people want; in the case of Saxilby Library, the parish council knew local people wanted the service to be protected and was able to act accordingly

- a parish council with a track record of employing staff, managing buildings, delivering services and operating contracts is more easily able to do deals with a county council to take over the operation of a library than parish councils without such experience
• the existence of an established community hub with the ability to generate income and cross-subsidise services made the re-location of the library financially feasible, while the ability of the library to increase footfall to the community hub’s cafe/bar also meant relocating the library to the community hub made business sense for the parish council

• the relatively low level of interest rates offered by the PWLB and the county council’s willingness to sign a 10-year SLA that enabled the parish council to pay back the loan with interest meant the parish council was able to do the deal to relocate the library to a fit for purpose building

• parish councillors and staff need to familiarise themselves with the language and procedures of a county council in order to conduct negotiations and reach legally binding agreements – they also need to take independent legal advice when required

• county council officers may need to familiarise themselves with the procedures of parish councils, as parish councils do not operate to the same procedures as larger district and county councils, and cannot always respond as anticipated by officers

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information about Lincolnshire Libraries may be found at:
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/discover-libraries/

Further information about current library provision in Saxilby can be found at:

More information about Saxilby with Ingleby Parish council may be found at:
parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SaxilbywithIngleby/index.asp?catId=14882
Telford and Wrekin
Telford & Wrekin case study

1 Local context

The district of Telford & Wrekin, in the West Midlands, contains a mix of urban and rural locations and both relatively affluent and relatively deprived areas. It is the 96th most deprived local authority district out of 326 districts in England.

The council is one of 17 ‘cooperative councils’; as such it works with residents and communities, as well as staff in the management and running of services and aims to bring services together to ease access and to encourage people to help their communities. This is the council’s preferred approach to finding budget savings rather than using other means, such as pooling or sharing services with neighbouring local authorities.

The library service was reviewed on the basis that changes should be fair, equal, affordable and sustainable. The driver of the review was the need for the local authority to make 20 per cent savings in the costs of running the service – in line with the savings required of all council services.

The council has a long-established Parish Charter; as part of the charter, the council has to consult town and parish councils about any changes to library opening hours and the routes of the mobile library service. The council worked with parish councils in conducting its review and in making changes to the library service; where appropriate Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council’s experiences are used to illustrate the learning points from the overall process.

2 Transition process

Elected members decided to maintain all nine library branches in the district and that savings should be found through (a) changes in opening hours: (b) co-location of services to share overhead costs; and (c) efficiencies achieved from operational changes, eg self-service facilities.

A dual approach to libraries was proposed by officers with four main libraries and five neighbourhood libraries (with reduced core opening hours that could be topped-up by other sources of funding, eg additional funding from parish councils).

The five neighbourhood libraries are located in Dawley, Donnington, Hadley, Oakengates and Stirchley and whilst valued by local residents account for around 25 per cent of library usage. The areas they serve (in the case of Dawley, Hadley and Stirchley) contain Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the 10 per cent most deprived SOAs in England.
The review process started in earnest in summer 2011 and came to a conclusion in April 2012. The process was led by elected members, who set the parameters of the debate, ie the need to make savings of 20 per cent and a commitment not to close any libraries. The neighbourhood libraries most affected by the proposed changes (mainly a reduction in the hours of operation) were identified on the basis of usage.

A Community Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the review process. This included a review of the potential impacts on different ‘equality groups’ as covered by the General Equality Duty, and the likely impact of changes in deprived urban and rural areas. The analysis included data on the numbers and patterns of use in each of the affected libraries, reports on consultations with the public and elected members, as well as proposed mitigation measures and the potential role of ‘cooperative working’ in the future.

Town and parish councils in the areas affected were consulted about the changes at the same time as the public was consulted on the scheduling of library opening times and services.

The council initially consulted with town and parish councils affected by the proposed reduction in hours and set out its intention to continue funding 16 hours a week at each of the five neighbourhood libraries; 35 hours per week at Madeley and Newport Libraries; and 46 hours per week at Telford and Wellington libraries. Town and parish councils were offered the opportunity to mitigate against the proposed reduction in opening hours at neighbourhood libraries either by purchasing additional hours or by assisting in some other way.

The public was asked the following questions to help inform the development of the service:

- when would you prefer the local library to be open?
- what sort of books would you like to have available?
- what sort of other services would you like to find at the library?

Questionnaires were available at the affected neighbourhood libraries and at Newport Library (where reduced hours were proposed) over a four-week period. Quick response sheets were also provided and the questionnaire was also available online throughout the four weeks of the consultation; comments could also be made through the library enquiries e-mail address and Facebook.

The council received 125 response with regard to Newport Library and 340 responses in relation to the neighbourhood libraries (of which 207 provided preferences on opening hours). The results of the consultation influenced the scheduling of opening hours (with earlier opening on Friday and Saturday than was initially proposed by the council) and the allocation and management of stock in the neighbourhood libraries.
Great Dawley Parish Council and Hadley and Leegomery Council purchased additional hours of operation for their neighbourhood libraries; and Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council decided to co-locate with the library.

There were no proposed changes to the following services: the mobile library; the home library service (for people who cannot get to their local library); deposit collections in community settings (eg community centres and residential homes); targeted services for priority groups delivered through outreach visits and activities; and the virtual library available 24/7 direct to customers’ computers.

### 3 The model(s)

#### a) Basic information

The approach has not been given a name as such; but it is a ‘main and neighbourhood libraries’ model. There are five neighbourhood libraries involved in the model and four main libraries. The new approach was introduced in 2012 and is still bedding in. All of the libraries remain part of the statutory service.

#### b) Staffing and funding

Professional library staff operate in all libraries. The four main libraries open 35 hours a week (Madeley and Newport libraries) or 46 hours a week (Telford and Wellington libraries) and the five neighbourhood libraries receive funding from Telford and Wrekin Council for 16 hours a week (a third fewer hours than under previous arrangements).

Great Dawley Parish Council is funding an additional five hours of staff time per week. Hadley and Leegomery Council is funding an additional three hours staff time per week at Hadley Library (this is subject to review, based on usage over a six-month period).

In the case of Stirchley, the co-location of the parish council and library means that when library staff are not on the premises, parish council staff can oversee the operation of the self-service element of the library. The parish council has three staff that will be able to oversee the library between 9.30am and 4.30pm (library service staff provide 16 hours a week, over five days, including Saturdays 10am to 1pm).

A number of volunteer roles are available to support the non-core elements of the library service, including: community history volunteers, young volunteers supporting the Summer Reading Challenge, home library service volunteers and IT volunteers.
c) **Property**

The council owns the library buildings.

In some cases, neighbourhood libraries are co-located with other users (and in most cases the possibility of co-location is being explored). Hadley Library is already co-located with local schools in the Hadley Learning Community; and Oakengates Library, based in Oakengates Theatre, operates beyond its core hours due to the introduction of self-service technology overseen by theatre staff. Within two years, it is anticipated that Dawley library will co-locate with a new school; potentially providing extended access to the library (the parish council will review its procurement of additional hours once the move has taken place).

During 2012, Stirchley Parish Council will co-locate with the library. The space that the parish council is taking is smaller than it previously rented and the library and parish council expect to reduce the size of overhead costs, as they will be able to share them.

At the time the research was carried out, the lease on the building had not been finalised, but the expectation is that building’s running costs will be split 30:70 between the library service and the parish council. Telford and Wrekin Council retains responsibility for maintaining the external elements of the building and Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council is responsible for the internal elements of the building. The parish council had security of tenure in its previous building (in part of an old school on the same site as the library) and security of tenure is anticipated as part of the new lease.

d) **System linkages**

All libraries remain open and funded by the council and all branches will be managed using the council’s performance management system. Furthermore, all libraries remain part of the council’s ICT network and library management system. The council owns and maintains the book stock.

e) **Future plans**

The council expects that eventually all libraries will be co-located with other council services or for example with a school or parish council. For Stirchley Library the immediate plan is to open a cafe/coffee bar.

4 **Learning lessons**

Locally, the model is thought to be sustainable, provided there are no further changes to the funding environment.

One of the key learning points from the council’s perspective is that the Parish Charter helped facilitate a positive dialogue between Telford and Wrekin Council and town and parish councils. Other success factors noted by consultees were:
• positive working relationships between those involved, based on good personal relationships and an understanding of the roles that individuals play in organisations

• the existence of a mutually beneficial outcome for those involved in the negotiations, eg reductions in running costs as a result of co-location

• leadership from elected members in setting the objectives and parameters of the review, eg no library closures and 20 per cent savings

• that some borough councillors were also parish councillors and could understand what parish councils could do in order to assist the library service; a clear and open statement of interests from the councillors involved in both borough and parish council decision-making processes was a necessary part of this process, in order to manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interests

5 Key documents or other evidence

Please identify any key documents, evidence or web-pages that are available from this authority

A press release on the changes may be found here: www.telford.gov.uk/press/article/1243/changes_to_make_savings_for_libraries

The findings from the public consultation maybe found here: www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4281/telford_and_wrekin_library_service_review_2012_public_consultation_findings
Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire case study

1 Local context

Northamptonshire in the East Midlands is a county with a mix of urban and rural areas. It ranks 119 of 326 English local authority areas on the index of multiple deprivation.

A review of the Library and Information Service in 2006/07 resulted in a substantial reduction of opening hours and reductions in the number of libraries’ staff. This reduction in opening hours was restored and improved into a pattern of ‘working family friendly’ opening hours in 2008/09. This was made possible by the application of ‘lean thinking’ which resulted in self-service being introduced into all but one of the authority’s libraries.

Prior to the withdrawal of Public Library Standards in 2008, Northamptonshire was just below the standard of 85 per cent of households being within two miles of a static library. Thus, people in the county did not have access to libraries relative to the size of population, which in any event is expected to continue to grow in the coming years. Therefore, the opportunity to make savings via library closures was and is felt to be limited.

The Library and Information Service was reviewed by the council in 2011. The review sought to reduce the costs of the service to the taxpayer, as such it looked at cost savings through staffing reductions and property rationalisation, income generation and increased use of volunteers alongside professional staff. It also reviewed the Library and Information service fit for 21st century. Libraries have a strategic role in the county council, as part of the delivery of its customer services role working in tandem with the council’s contact centre and the team developing access to council services through web and digital platforms – sitting at the heart of the council and its relationships with local people.

In 2011/12 it cost £5.6 million to run the Library and Information Service. The libraries generated income of around £800,000 a year, plus a further £200,000 for hosted services. Thus, the total cost of the service to residents was £4.6 million; the council aims to reduce this sum by £1.08 million to achieve annual running costs of £3.52 million a year by April 2015.
2 Transition process

The Library and Information Service formed an advisory group in 2011 to act as a sounding board and source of ideas for the service. A local businessman, who has since become Chair of the advisory group, funded a study visit by a member of staff to learn about New York’s approach to its library service; which gets 40 per cent of its funding from non-state sources, and runs a volunteering programme that is based on working with individuals who want to enhance their curricula vitae and companies that want to do something practical to demonstrate corporate social responsibility. The lessons learned from this visit are feeding into future planning.

Local friends groups have been operating in Northamptonshire for a number of years and provide a focus around which community support is offered to libraries; in addition individuals can and do subscribe as friends. Furthermore, individuals may volunteer to support the library service directly without going through a third party, such as a friends group; they can do this via the service’s website.

As part of the council’s consultation on the future of its Library and Information Service, a survey was undertaken. It found 82 per cent of respondents said that they would like to donate to the service and 50 per cent said they would like to volunteer to support the service; demonstrating strong local commitment to maintaining and developing the service.

The review looked at three options for the Library and Information Service:

- partnership libraries
- sponsored libraries, eg libraries funded via sponsorship deals with businesses
- independent community-led libraries

Partnership libraries (run by full-time staff with support from volunteers) was the option preferred by local people. As part of the exercise, the number of mobile libraries was reduced from four to two in 2011 with the remaining mobiles focused on serving rural communities where access to static libraries is more difficult and adding Saturdays and Sunday afternoons to the schedule.

The 2011 Strategy that resulted from the review aimed to make savings of £250,000 on accommodation costs; raise volunteering from 400 to 1,600; generate income by providing services to other authorities worth £590,000 a year; save £300,000 from the staffing budget; maintain income of £800,000 a year; grow friends’ membership from 700 to 3,500; and raise funds of £60,000 a year from charities, trusts and donations all of this to be achieved by 2015. The consultation process resulted in some modifications to the original proposals, eg there was a reduction in the level of funding expected from donations (from £130,000 to £50,000).
3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The approach is called ‘partnership libraries’ and applies across all 36 static libraries in the county; all libraries are part of the statutory service and remain part of the library management system. The new arrangements operate as part of the 2012-15 Libraries Strategy. They are best understood as an evolution of previous arrangements and practices, which are encapsulated in the phrase ‘LibraryPlus’ (ie libraries that are more than buildings and more than places for reading and borrowing books) where businesses and job seekers can access information, advice and guidance and where older people can keep active and engage with the wider community, where young people can participate in a range of activity, where people can make connections with others in a place that feels safe.

The Library and Information Service provides support to businesses through enterprise hubs in two libraries; and there are plans to offer business support services in all (six) of the larger libraries. The service works in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership in delivering this service and the services it provides helps to embed the Library and Information Service in the county's economic development agenda.

As well as seeking efficiencies in the way that it operates, developing partnership arrangements with friends groups and volunteers and generating income from the non-statutory elements of the libraries, the council aims to generate income by offering to manage the library services of other authorities.

b) Staffing and funding

The local authority continues to fund the service albeit on a reduced basis with volunteers providing add-on, wraparound support. Professional library staff operate in all 36 libraries with clear, distinct and complementary role descriptions for paid staff and for volunteers. There are currently:

- 33 different role descriptions for volunteers in the library service; the roles are distinct from those of paid staff and offer a diverse range of opportunities from gardening to reading to children
- 820 volunteers supporting the library service
- 26 friends groups supporting libraries with around 800 members, each paying £7 a year with benefits in terms of free reservations and so on; friends groups have a degree of local autonomy in how they raise funds for their library, one library has a ‘sponsorship deal’ with a local estate agent that makes a donation for each house they sell in the area – this is, in part, due to the library’s ‘amenity value’ that helps make houses in the area attractive to buyers
The service has around 620 new members joining each week and 25 per cent of new members say they would like to volunteer; thus, there is a reservoir of support to be tapped.

The Library and Information Service has piloted the operation of a ‘time bank’ in partnership with Changing Minds in Northamptonshire; this approach helps build a greater sense of community engagement and a means to formally recognise volunteers’ contributions. At the moment adult volunteers within the Library and Information Service are offered free adult learning opportunities in appreciation of their support.

The partnership approach operated by Northamptonshire County Council has led to a deeper understanding in the Library and Information Service of the different motivations people have when volunteering – from young people seeking to enhance their curricula vitae, to people with learning difficulties seeking opportunities to engage with the wider community. Thus, volunteering opportunities and relationships between the Library and Information Service and volunteers have evolved over time. The learning about volunteers’ motivations has led to the development of an approach that sees volunteering as a two-way process, ie it is not just the Library and Information Service that gets something from the volunteers but the Library and Information Service needs to give something to the volunteers. As part of ensuring mutual benefit for the Library and Information Service and volunteers, there is an interview process, to ensure there is a ‘fit’ between what volunteers want and can offer and the volunteering opportunities available in the service.

As well as being able to look at volunteering opportunities online, people can make online donations via the ‘Fund a Future Programme’. The online information provides a clear statement of the level of add-on service that donations buy, eg £3 buys an IT support session; £15 buys three new paperbacks; £450 buys 10 weekly library-based homework clubs. The design of the website draws on lessons from the New York library service. Libraries also have donation boxes to enable cash donations on site.

The service operates a wide definition of ‘community’; it works with local businesses and the Local Enterprise Partnership to support start-ups and to help job seekers. As a result of this approach a broad range of services are offered in the county’s libraries, including free Internet on Fridays – which enables free job searches for members of Job Clubs that meet on Fridays – and cooperation with the Citizens’ Advice Bureau to provide ‘IT-buddies’ for library users.

The service is also looking to roll out the provision of ‘work pods’ for new businesses who lack office space and has established a list of volunteer business mentors to assist growing businesses; the service has developed this approach with a view to ensuring those who receive assistance in the early stages of forming their business will remember the support they received and potentially offer support to the service in the future.
Libraries are now open to 6pm on week nights; 10am to 2pm or all day on Saturdays and 1pm to 4pm on Sundays since April 2012. The design principle is to have easy to remember weekend rich opening.

c) Property

All properties remain with the local authority – some are owned by Northamptonshire County Council, and some are leased; one is leased from an education trust.

There is co-location of services with libraries – this may be on a permanent basis or periodically. The co-located services include tax advice from HM Revenue and Customs (delivered periodically), jobs clubs (delivered weekly), IT training etc. Some of the permanent co-locations provide a revenue stream to the Service, eg from district councils that use a library for outreach and the police service that use a library for local surgeries. The overall approach is captured by the term ‘community hubs’.

Access to PCs and the Internet is available; fees are chargeable for Internet access – except on Fridays.

Savings to the council’s capital programme were made via co-location with children’s centres (seven libraries are co-located with children’s centres and three are run directly by the service) and savings were made to the county council’s revenue budget by delivering bus passes via 36 libraries rather than seven district council offices.

d) Future plans

The service’s plans for the future include the development of:

- a charitable trust – building on the lessons of museums and art galleries in raising donations and attracting philanthropic support
- enterprise hubs in five more libraries
- the ethos that a library is not just a place or building, it requires the provision of wraparound services that are provided by a mix of professionals and volunteers
- co-location of libraries with other services, eg ceremonies and registrations, offering opportunities to link information and advice to births and bereavements
- being the cost effective walk-in service for the whole council and other public services
4 Learning lessons

The bulk of funding for libraries will continue to come from the council but the Library and Information Service has not viewed the budget challenges it faces purely in terms of cutting costs. It has:

• looked for efficiencies through the application of lean-thinking
• sought to enhance service provision by looking at the wider information and advice needs of resident and business communities; which has led to co-location with other services
• sold non-statutory services to residents, businesses and other local authorities and public bodies, in order to generate income
• made significant efforts to ask for and enable donations and volunteers to support the Library and Information Service

Key learning points on how library services can achieve savings, generate revenue and promote community involvement in libraries are to:

• learn from the experience of other places, including drawing on lessons from abroad
• understand why people volunteer and try to ensure they get what they want out of volunteering – different people will have different motivations and will want different things
• make volunteering fun
• seek co-location to save costs and provide more and better wraparound services to users
• take the opportunity to support community integration – with volunteers of different ages and different abilities interacting with library users
• apply ‘lean thinking’ to the processes that are used to operate libraries
• use the service’s website to inform users about the service, achievements to date, and encourage people to donate and volunteer
• move towards the ‘post-recession library’ as a choice to be made and then shaped

Key learning points in establishing an advisory group of local residents to act as a sounding board for the local library service at the level of the service, rather than at the level of the individual library are:

• recruit members with a range of relevant skills and knowledge, eg business background, knowledge of IT and social media, experience of fund-raising and crowd-sourcing etc
• ensure members of the advisory group are passionate about libraries
• encourage members of the advisory group to use their personal networks to generate ideas as well as attract volunteers and funding

• make sure the group’s meetings are business-like, so that members feel their time is well used, eg limit the number of agenda items for each meeting and operate a rolling agenda to give a sense of momentum

• keep the advisory group separate from the political process, so that it is free to provide unfettered advice that can then be incorporated in the political process as appropriate

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information on volunteering arrangements may be found here:

Information on the service and service plan may be found here:

The Review and Strategy may be found here:
Liverpool case study

1 Local context

The city of Liverpool, in North West England, is the most deprived local authority district in England according to the index of multiple deprivation.

Liverpool City Council has been required to make significant savings across all budgets, including its library service. Reductions relating to all service budgets in 2011/12 amounted to £91 million and further reductions of £50 million were required for 2012/13. The council has reviewed the library service, along with other services, in order to identify efficiency savings. However, achieving savings has not been the sole motivation for changes to the library service in the city.

2 Transition process

At the time of the research, there was already a community managed library in Liverpool (run by Alt Valley Community Trust in Croxteth); and negotiations were underway on the transfer of assets from three other libraries (Edge Hill, Woolton and Great Homer Street). This case study focuses on the Alt Valley community managed library experience which commenced in 2010.

Alt Valley Community Trust began in 1983. It is a community anchor organisation that carries out a number of functions and provides a range of services, including adult education, training, information and guidance and community and cultural activities for all ages. It has a ‘sister organisation’, a Neighbourhood Services Company, that delivers contracts, eg grounds maintenance, for clients that include housing associations and the council. The surpluses generated from the contracts are invested in the local community, including the library.

The Croxteth Community Library is based in the ‘Communiversity’ building next door to Croxteth Sports Centre also operated by Alt Valley Community Trust since 2009 (previously the library’s location until 2010). The Communiversity was created after the purchase of a neighbouring old people’s home, which was transformed into a lifelong learning centre in 2000.

Before the transition, the library suffered from significant anti-social behaviour (uniformed guards were deployed to maintain security). Usage had fallen as a result of the uninviting atmosphere. Both Liverpool City Council and Alt Valley Community Trust recognised that the situation was not sustainable – change was required. Alt Valley Community Trust’s profile and reputation with local people, together with its and the council commitment to working in partnership, meant that local people’s concerns around the library service being withdrawn could be addressed in a positive manner. Local politicians helped facilitate this process, thereby reinforcing the sense of partnership working.
3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

The council’s approach is in line with its commitment to improving services through community engagement and social enterprise. The Croxteth Community Library is the only community managed library currently operating in Liverpool. It is run by Alt Valley Community Trust as part of a range of services for the community. One of the key elements of AVCT’s operation is that it is run by people from the local community with access to family and social networks; this has enabled the trust to address anti-social behaviour that had adversely affected the operation of both the library and the sports centre. The library re-located from the Sports Centre location to the Communiversity building in 2010. It remains part of Liverpool City Council’s statutory provision.

The library provides a range of services, including:

- audio (speaking) books
- selling bus tickets and Saveaways
- photocopying and printing services
- help with researching family history
- help with financial services
- support to use the internet

b) Staffing and funding

The library is operated by two members of staff who work the hours of 1.5 full-time equivalent positions. They are employed by the trust, ie they are not volunteers. Liverpool Libraries and Information Service provide professional support and expertise to the library when required.

Volunteer support in the library comes from Learning Champions; volunteers also work behind the counter serving users and in archiving material.

The council has a service contract with Alt Valley Community Trust for providing the library service that is capped at £50,000 a year. The trust covers any additional costs associated with the library by drawing on its own resources.

The library’s opening hours are: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm; Wednesday 8.30am to 8pm; Friday 8.30am to 3.30pm; and Saturday 10am to 1pm. This compares well with other community libraries in Liverpool, eg Near by Norris Green Library opens from 10am Monday to Friday (closed on Thursday) and is open 10am to 4pm on Saturdays. Toxteth Library opens Monday to Wednesday 10am to 6pm and also 10am to 4pm on Saturdays.
Liverpool City Council continues to replenish the book stock via its regional consortium contracting and best value arrangements. AVCT can specify up to 25 per cent of the new stock that is ordered.

c) **Property**

The library is co-located with a lifelong learning centre which is owned and run by Alt Valley Community Trust. AVCT re-located the library from the original Sports Centre location to the Communiversity at its own expense, in October 2010. Liverpool City Council provided AVCT with resources to operate the library as part of the service contract.

d) **System linkages**

The library is integrated with the council’s automated library management system and it has access to inter-library loans. Users of the library have access to any book or other lending item that is part of the Liverpool City Council’s book stock; items requested are dropped off twice a week.

There are three personal computers with Internet access in the library – these were bought by AVCT and AVCT is responsible for providing IT support for them; however, the PCs are linked to Liverpool City Council’s Library Management IT system.

Since AVCT has taken over the library, usage has increased considerably (from around 30 books a day to 130 books a day). Last year 26 children took up the Summer Reading Challenge; this year 75 children were involved.

During the transition process a local councillor was asked about how he proposed to deal with complaints about the library in future – given it was owned by AVCT. He asked AVCT to arrange a sub-committee to deal with any complaints that were brought to him or other councillors; there have been no reported complaints since AVCT took over running the library.

e) **Future plans**

AVCT is not only looking to extend the space available to the library by 15-20 per cent but is also developing a media centre with the co-location of a recording studio. It will use its own resources to do this.

## 4 Learning lessons

A number of lessons can be drawn from the experience of the Alt Valley Community Trust:

- the trust is a multi-faceted organisation with a track record of managing buildings, delivering services to the public and investing in the local community; it therefore had the organisational capacity and local knowledge to operate the library and to make changes that would increase the number of users and loans
• the trust has a number of income streams that enable it to invest in the library and cover any running costs in excess of the service contract with Liverpool City Council; it is therefore able to be bold in its proposals for the library

• the library is co-located in a building that is dedicated to learning, thereby increasing the potential usage through higher footfall than was previously achieved

• the fact that the library is co-located means that it can open for longer than under previous arrangements; improving the service to users

• the employment of local people with links to the local community enabled anti-social behaviour to be managed more effectively than under previous arrangements, which in turn made the library a more welcoming place for users

• the changes achieved by AVCT have resulted in a significant increase in the number of books loaned out by the library

• the model is only likely to be replicable in areas where there is a long-established community-based organisation with a number of different income streams

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information about Alt Valley Community Library is available via the following link: www.communiversity.co.uk/Default.aspx?ID=6
Suffolk
Suffolk case study

1 Local context

Suffolk, in the East of England, is a largely rural county. It operates a two-tier local government system. Suffolk County Council is ‘committed to developing decision-making at a local level, to make it easier for local groups to put their ideas into practice, and drive improvement, building a partnership approach at a time of great financial challenge’.

The library service was set a target of reducing costs by 30 per cent by the financial year 2013/14. In 2011/12, 10 per cent savings were sought through efficiencies. The remaining 20 per cent was sought by developing a new structural model for delivering library services with the support of communities.

2 Transition process

Suffolk’s library service has 44 static libraries and six mobile libraries. From August 2011, officers worked with eight groups associated with 14 libraries as pilot projects to explore how community governance and greater community involvement in supporting library services might work in the future – such as community outreach – and they identified the functions and help that such services would expect. As well as identifying the preferred model for the council, the pilot projects helped the development of a draft ‘menu of delegated responsibilities’, which sets out mutual expectations and responsibilities with regard to central and local functions in the library service.

When determining which new model to adopt, Suffolk County Council drew on best value guidance to develop four key tests:

- the statutory test: will the council be able to meet its statutory obligations?
- the financial test: how much will it cost, what are the set up costs, and will it meet the savings targets for the service?
- the aspirations test: how far does the option meet the council’s aspirations on meeting customer needs and expectations described in the Vision, enhancing stronger community governance, opportunity for integration, meeting corporate priorities, and scope for innovation
- the sustainability and risk test

A fifth key test on partnerships and community ownership was added following a stakeholder workshop.

vi. Library Services for the Future’ paper, Agenda Item 5, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Meeting, 8 November 2011.
Following a review of library services and a public consultation in 2011, the council resolved in December 2011 to commission its library service from an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) for community benefit. Two other options were considered: an in-house model and a company limited by guarantee owned by Suffolk County Council; neither of the other options offered the level of savings anticipated in the IPS model (less than 22 per cent compared to an expected 27 per cent saving from the IPS). It should be noted that a charitable IPS is eligible for 80 per cent mandatory relief on business rates (to give an indication of the savings on offer, in 2011/12 over £380k would have been saved if the service had been operated by an IPS).

The IPS model was selected by the cabinet on the basis that: “An IPS will have the lowest running costs and is most likely to meet the required savings. It would be registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) with charitable status and have greater potential for finding other income streams. It offers the most promise for future innovation, and reduced overheads.” The report to cabinet went on to say that the IPS was the model ‘most likely to meet both the Government’s and the council’s aspirations around community governance and inspire community groups to engage in the running of their local libraries.’

A shadow IPS operated from January 2012 and the IPS became fully operational in August 2012. In the first half of 2012, the IPS operated with a chief executive, a finance director and an interim board (the board contained local people, mainly drawn from the pilot groups, with the necessary skills and expertise to assist the development of the IPS). The task during the shadow operation of the IPS was to take an abstract concept and set of principles and to turn it into a practical reality. This included the transfer of 515 staff (180 full-time equivalent posts) from the county’s library service to the IPS; a process that required good communication with staff and their representatives. It also included a process of culture change for staff as they moved from a multi-functional county council to being part of an independently run library service.

3 The model(s)

a) Basic information

Suffolk’s library service has 44 static libraries and six mobile libraries. The council has commissioned its library service from an Industrial and Provident Society, which began operating in full in August 2012. Suffolk County Council has retained its statutory responsibility for library services and will continue to be accountable for ensuring a county-wide network is provided.

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vii. An IPS is registered with and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). An IPS may also register with Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as a charitable organisation.

viii. Library Services for the Future’ paper, Agenda Item 5, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Meeting, 8 November 2011.
The council sets the strategic direction for the library service and has negotiated a contract with the IPS. The IPS is responsible for the budget and delivery of ‘library enabling services, its central functions and the development of community governance’. ix If the IPS fails or defaults on the contract the council would step in, and in extreme circumstances take the service back in-house.

At the time of the research, the IPS’s Board had not been formed (the interim board was still in operation). The board is subject to election by the membership. It is likely to consist of the IPS’s chief executive, plus seven directors drawn from the IPS’s membership (with the possibility to co-opt additional members either from the membership or from outside the membership). It is not anticipated that the Board will have more than 12 directors at any one time. The IPS has to hold its first AGM by August 2013; it is therefore important to build membership so that there is some competition for places on the Board by that date.

The IPS has two forms of member – incorporated organisations and unincorporated groups – with equality of status. Each member organisation/group nominates someone to represent them in the IPS.

b) Staffing and funding

515 staff (180 full-time equivalent posts) transferred to the new independent Industrial and Provident Society in August 2012. At present, the IPS employs all library staff directly; although it is possible that over time local groups that are members of the IPS could employ staff transferred under TUPE regulations. The IPS was undertaking a review of the staff structure at the time of the case study research. The IPS has retained its own HR advisors – at one-third of the costs of the HR service used by the county council – to support the development of HR policies that reflect the requirements of the new organisation.

The county council retains sufficient in-house libraries expertise to ensure the council’s statutory duties are met.

It is intended that local libraries will move to community governance with the organisations that run individual libraries being members of the IPS and, therefore, able to influence its operations. Each library should have local people as members and should work with local communities to improve services and reduce costs. At the time of the research for this case study a meeting of 18 areas interested in forming local organisations and friends groups had been hosted by the IPS, in order to progress this work. To date it has proved more difficult to establish Friends groups for the larger libraries that are not necessarily embedded in local communities; work is underway to try to address this issue.

ix. Library Services for the Future’ paper, Agenda Item 5, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Meeting, 8 November 2011.
It is anticipated that libraries could develop different arrangements, drawing on a menu of delegated responsibilities, where they may choose the level of responsibility that they want. It is intended that there will be a contractual or formal relationship between each library and the IPS – with grants given to each library in return for service performance. Initial consultations carried out by the IPS indicated that the most common form of arrangement, in the first instance at least, is likely to be unincorporated Friends groups, rather than incorporated organisations. Furthermore, some libraries are waiting for the introduction of a new form of organisation known as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). The necessary secondary legislation was anticipated to be in place by the end of 2012.

Opening hours remain unchanged under the new arrangements.

c) **Property**

Suffolk County Council owns the freehold of 30 of the library buildings. In most cases these buildings are occupied exclusively by the library service but in some cases other council services or groups use the buildings. The remaining 14 static libraries occupy properties on a leasehold basis. This is either exclusively by way of a lease, or where shared with other users by way of a licence.

Under the arrangements for the IPS, the council retains ownership of capital assets, including buildings and library stock – the IPS has a ring-fenced stock budget for future purchases. Buildings are leased to the IPS on a landlord repairing and insuring basis, at a peppercorn rent for 25 years. Where Suffolk County Council is the head lessee, the under-lease to the IPS will be for the term of the head lease. Granting of leases directly to local community organisations is a possibility in the future.

d) **System linkages**

The IPS currently uses the county council’s IT infrastructure and also uses the county council’s framework agreements to procure goods and services. The Library Management System was jointly procured in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council prior to the establishment of the IPS and this arrangement will be continued for all libraries; the council covers the costs of this service.

The IPS is currently using the county council’s IT support service (which is outsourced to a company part-owned by the council); however, the IPS is able to procure such support along with other services, such as HR – from other suppliers if it wishes.
e) **Future plans**

The IPS has a number of issues to address in the short and medium term, it needs to:

- establish its new board
- move from shadow board arrangements to a more traditional non-executive board arrangement
- review staffing structures to ensure optimum use of staff resources
- embed new policies and procedures for the delivery of the service to reflect the library service's new independent status and the need to improve services to customers, eg empowering local managers to take decisions locally rather than escalating them up the management hierarchy
- realise cost savings, including reviewing the cost of support services, such as IT support, and procuring new support where necessary
- work with local areas in order to discover what sort of relationship local people and organisations want to have with the IPS, eg test the level of interest in local ownership and management of libraries in different communities and support local groups that want to extend the library offer by working with volunteers
- ensure the effective functioning of a network that has been established for local groups and organisations to come together to share information and ideas
- build on local interest in developing adult education, health and citizenship activity in local libraries
- work with local library managers and district councils to build community capacity and interest to engage with the library service in those areas that have yet to show interest in developing partnerships with local libraries
- work with library campaigners to build their engagement in the new arrangements

4 **Learning lessons**

A number of lessons can be drawn from the process:

- the requirement to save 30 per cent of library costs indicated a need for structural rather than incremental change in the library service
- a review of the library service involving public consultation and the testing out of different models for the future structure of the library service enabled an evidence-based decision-making process
- good working relations between officers and members were essential to the effective management of the process
• the operation of an effective scrutiny process enabled elected members to input into the process and effect the eventual shape of proposals

• not all parts of the council were operating at the same speed in response to changes, eg the council’s property services team was not initially clear about the implications of the council moving from being a provider to an enabler of services

• an audit of all property affected by the proposed changes – carried out by property services – was very helpful in ensuring elected members understood the local implications of proposals, the mapping work also made it easier to discuss issues with the public

• in order to bring about change, there needs to be a cabinet member leading the process but drawing on councillor colleagues’ specific expertise to enable constant challenge eg on finance issues

• the development of an Industrial and Provident Society provided significant opportunities to make cost savings, its charitable status reduced the costs of non-domestic rates, its separation from the county council and the associated re-charges to cover central services and overheads enables the IPS to cut running costs over time

• the review and consultation process helped to develop the concept of an IPS with local management of libraries but a 4-month period of intensive work was required in order to establish practical arrangements and an organisation that was ready to take over the library service; the work required:
  • months of negotiations between the shadow IPS and the county council; the IPS used independent legal advice (appointed through a competitive dialogue process) to develop its proposals for the agreement with the county council
  • the members of the shadow IPS board to have HR, IT, legal expertise etc. in order to steer the process to a successful conclusion and be able to contribute significant amounts of their time during the transition process
  • regular consultation with staff and their representatives, in order to make sure staff were aware of the process and were able to engage with it

5 Key documents or other evidence

More information about the IPS is available at:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/libraries-and-culture/libraries/providing-library-services-in-suffolk/

The key council documents can be found at:
suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/about-us/review-of-library-services/