Listening, Learning, Changing – The future of hubs and libraries

Proposals

Introduction

We know libraries are important to people in Somerset. We are making plans for the future of the service, which sets out how we will do everything we can to keep them open. We want to make sure they continue to be welcoming and vibrant places for now and the future. However, our libraries need to change because the way people use them is changing.

At the same time we are starting to share building space with other public sector and voluntary partners across the county. A number of public services will be located together in shared buildings (hubs). Potentially these will include libraries, children’s centres, Citizens Advice, Avon & Somerset Constabulary, district councils and more. What is in each hub will vary from town to town as it will depend on what local people want and need and what opportunities there are to work with partners.

As the way forward for libraries and hubs are linked, we want to tell you more about our ideas and ask you what you think.

Proposed changes to library services

We have developed a vision and five outcomes for our Library Services. This helps to explain the difference that libraries can make to peoples’ lives and why that matters.

To find out more about our vision and outcomes, please see

- Libraries vision and outcomes

We know libraries need to evolve. As well as making sure that there is always an adequate supply of books and free access to high quality computer facilities, we also want to involve local organisations and people in helping to run and shape the future of our libraries. In these tough economic times, when our budgets are squeezed ever tighter, we want to do everything we can to keep libraries open and to provide good value for money.
There are a number of potential changes to individual libraries and proposals for the service:

- **Main hubs:** Libraries may form part of hubs (shared buildings) over the coming years. A number of towns across Somerset have been identified as priority locations for the development of hubs. Mostly they are in our main towns.

- **Local hubs:** In some smaller locations local, partners have come together to talk about sharing public spaces, including libraries. All are at different stages of ideas and discussions. There is no one size fits all solution, so we will work with local partners to find solutions, which work for local communities. We are already talking with Castle Cary, Dulverton and Martock about local hubs.

- **Self-service technology:** We want to pilot self-service technology to enable people to access the library for longer, outside of staffed opening hours.

- **Library opening hours:** We considered the needs of communities and the demand on library services. We have reviewed opening hours so they better reflect how and when people use them. This proposal will save £128,000 or about the same as it costs to run ten of our smallest libraries.

To find out more about proposed changes to library services, please see:

1. **Priority locations:** This explains where we are hoping to create hubs
2. **Open libraries: Self-service technology.** This explains the technology, which enables people to use libraries outside of staffed hours.
3. **Proposed library opening hours changes:** This sets out the proposed changes and how we reached the proposals for each of our 34 libraries in Somerset.
4. **Ranking of all libraries:** This shows on a graph all Somerset libraries ranking for size of the library catchment population, average monthly computer use, average monthly borrowing and average monthly active library users.
5. **Library opening hours and activity graphs:** This shows graphs Somerset libraries daily opening hours and the amount of library transactions during each hour of opening.
6. **Library current and proposed opening hours graph:** This shows on a graph Somerset libraries and their current opening hours, plus the proposed new opening hours.
Sharing building space with other organisations

With partners, we aim to provide an improved and more efficient customer experience by creating hubs. You’ll be able to access different services in one place, saving you time, as we jointly reduce our building running costs. This will help make financial savings and help to make services more sustainable and fit for future use.

While a number of towns across Somerset have been identified as priority locations for the development of hubs, there could be more hubs developed across the county in the future.

Glastonbury will be the first hub (opening in 2016), with several services located together, including the library, getset children’s centre and Citizens Advice. Our second pilot will be Williton.

These shared buildings need a name and logo, so that they are easily recognisable. If possible, we aim to use the same name and logo across the county so that they will be recognisable wherever you go. We have developed a design proposal and would like your views to help shape what we decide.

To find out more about hubs and the name and logo for them, please see:

1. **Priority locations**: This explains where we are hoping to create hubs.
2. **Glastonbury pilot hub – look and feel**: This shows some of the plans for the hub and the design proposal for a name and logo.

Your views on our proposals
Our plans are evolving and we need your views to help shape our thinking.

Drop-in sessions
We are holding a series of drop-in sessions around the county where staff will be available to talk with you. While each drop-in session is an opportunity to discuss any of our ideas and to hear your views, the drop-ins sessions at Castle Cary, Dulverton, Glastonbury, Martock, and Williton will focus more on ideas for those particular locations.

Questionnaire
We would like you to complete our questionnaire. There are three ways you can do this:

1. Online at [www.somerset.gov.uk/hubsandlibraries](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/hubsandlibraries)
2. Online at [www.somerset.gov.uk/hubsandlibraries](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/hubsandlibraries), with help from library staff in your local library.
3. Complete a paper copy, available from your local library, and then hand it in to one of our library staff.

Please complete the questionnaire by **Thursday 11 February**.
Next steps

Following the feedback we receive we will publish the findings. We aim to have further conversations with local communities as we develop more specific plans for shared buildings and individual libraries in specific locations.

To find out more about how you can contribute your views, please see:

- Listening, Learning, Changing – The future of hubs and libraries – Drop-in events
- Listening, Learning, Changing – The future of hubs and libraries – Questionnaire

To request this document in an alternative format, please speak to a member of library staff or contact the enquiry line:

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