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**THE LIBRARY SERVICE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Paul Wildsmith, Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. For decisions to be made about the Library Service in Darlington. For the Library Plan for 2017 -2021 and capital allocation to be agreed for referral to Council.

**Summary**

2. In June 2016 as part of last year's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), proposals were considered by Members about the library service. The proposals agreed were :-
  - (a) To relocate the Crown Street library service to the Dolphin Centre
  - (b) To close Cockerton Library
  - (c) To cease operating the Mobile library service
3. In August 2016 the proposal to relocate the central library service from Crown Street Library to the Dolphin Centre was subject to a threatened legal challenge. In the event it was decided (Cabinet 13 September 2016) not to implement the library service proposals but to continue to develop them, to update members about the Crown Street building (confirmation having been received from the Charities Commission that it is held on trust for use as a public library) and for all the proposals to be brought back to members, with the benefit of additional information and detail, to enable new decisions to be made.
4. In the intervening period further consultation has taken place about how a relocated library at the Dolphin Centre might look and operate. Also work has been continuing in order to develop the volunteer model for Cockerton Library. A proposal has been received from Cockerton Library Cooperative which sets out plan for the future of Cockerton Library as a community library run by volunteers with support from the library service. Further details are set out in the report.

5. This matter was considered by Cabinet on 17 January 2017 and by Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2017 (as a result of the Cabinet decision being 'called in'). The report that went to Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee is attached at **Appendix 12**. Also included at **Appendix 13** is supplementary information about the Crown Street Library and details of the trust, member interests and dispensations.
6. Members are now invited to consider afresh the proposals for the library service, with the benefit of the additional information that is set out in this report. Members will need to approach decision making carefully having regard to the original consultation responses, the submissions made by Darlington for Culture, new information set out in this report as well as and any submissions or representations that may be received prior to the decision being considered.
7. The Library Service Assessment of Local Need that has been produced as part of the Library proposal, pulls together a range of information about the population, library usage, from the consultations, Equalities Impact Assessment and benchmarking data. The Assessment of Local Need is attached at **Appendix 1**.
8. The Library Plan 2017 – 21 is attached **Appendix 2**. It will form the basis of the future direction of the service. The plan has been updated taking account of information gathered from the previous consultation, the most recent consultation and the Assessment of Local Need, The Library Plan if adopted will form part of the Council's Policy Framework and will need to be approved by Council,
9. Members should take into account all the consultation responses received and **must read the Library Service Assessment of Local Need and the equality impact assessment forms and in full, rather than only relying on the summary information set out in this report.**

## Recommendation

10. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) Members approve the Assessment of Local Need.
  - (b) Members approve the Library Plan for 2017 -2021 for referral to Council for approval.
  - (c) The Central Library Service is relocated from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre, as set out in this report.
  - (d) Subject to Council confirming the allocation of £1.7m to relocate the Central Library service to the Dolphin Centre, Cabinet approve the release of these funds.
  - (e) The procurement of this scheme to be delivered in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules by the Council's Building Services Division and that the procurement is designated as non-strategic.

- (f) Cockerton Library becomes a community run library supported by the library service as set out in this report and (subject to due diligence):
    - (i) A lease is granted to the Cockerton Library Cooperative,
    - (ii) Funding of £75,000 is allocated to support the Cockerton Library Cooperative in total over 5 years.
    - (iii) The sum of £10,000 to be allocated for repairs to the windows at Cockerton Library
  - (g) The Mobile Library Service is discontinued.
  - (h) The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Local Environment be given delegated authority to implement the decisions set out above,
11. It is further recommended that any matters agreed by Cabinet (as set out above) are not implemented until:-
- (a) Council has had the opportunity to consider and debate the library proposals.
  - (b) Council approve the Library Plan for 2017 - 2021.
  - (c) Council confirms the allocation of a capital sum of £1.7million to relocate the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre.

## **Reasons**

12. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) To enable the Council to achieve the savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
  - (b) To meet the statutory obligation to provide for library services’.
  - (c) For the Library Plan to be updated to give future direction and to enable the library service to be positioned as an efficiently run and modern service which is responsive to the changing nature of library use.
  - (d) To enable Council to consider the proposals for the library service.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

## **Background Papers**

Previous reports to Members

Cabinet 11.2.16 – MTFP 2016/17 to 2019/20 Phase 2  
Cabinet 22.6.16 - MTFP Library Service Proposals

S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report does not impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The Library Service does have an impact on the health and well-being of the people who use the service.
Carbon Impact	The impact is difficult to quantify. If the Mobile Library Service is discontinued the carbon impact will reduce but this will be offset, to some extent, by the expanded Home Library Service.
Diversity	Equality Impact Assessments have been updated with regard to the additional information that is available.
Wards Affected	All Wards are affected.
Groups Affected	All groups that use the Library Service will be affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	There will be an impact on the budget as a result of the delay in implementing the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Library Plan, which is part of the policy framework is included in this report.
Key Decision	Decisions made about the Library provision will have a significant impact on library users.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Library Service does impact on a number of the priorities within One Darlington Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report will enable the Council to deliver the efficiencies with regard to the Library Service within the MTFP.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### Background

13. In February 2016, Cabinet considered the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) report. The MTFP 2016/17 to 2019/20 Phase 2 report included a proposal for Crown Street Library to be relocated to the Dolphin Centre. Cabinet agreed that the MTFP proposals should be referred for public consultation. Consultation on the MTFP proposals ran until the end of May 2016.
14. On 22 June 2016, Cabinet met to agree the MTFP proposals that would be submitted to Council for a decision. At the Council meeting on 29 June 2016, a

number of decisions were agreed by Members in relation to the Library Service. The recommendations made in respect of the Library Service included:

- (a) To note and approve the Library Needs Assessment.
  - (b) The relocation of the Central Library Service to the Dolphin Centre.
  - (c) Cockerton Library would be closed on 31 March 2017 unless suitable, alternative proposals are agreed before December 2016.
  - (d) The Mobile Library ceases to be provided from 1 October 2016 and additional work is undertaken to promote the Housebound Service.
  - (e) The capital sum of £1.7million be released to relocate the Library Service to the Dolphin Centre. The procurement of this scheme be delivered in accordance with the contract procedure rules by the Council's Building Services Division and that the procurement be designated as non-strategic.
  - (f) The Crown Street building be declared surplus to requirements and the Director of Economic Growth in consultation with the portfolio holder for Efficiency and Resources be authorised to dispose of the building, however interested community groups with proposals for use of the building will be considered as part of the disposal process.
15. In August 2016 the proposal to relocate the central library service from Crown Street Library to the Dolphin Centre was subject to a threatened legal challenge. In the event it was decided (Cabinet 13 September 2016) not to implement the library service proposals but to continue to develop them, to update members about the Crown Street building (confirmation having been received from the Charities Commission that it is held on trust for use as a public library) and for all the proposals to be brought back to members, with the benefit of additional information and detail, to enable new decisions to be made.

### **Crown Street Library Building**

16. Given the attention that has been focussed on the Crown Street Library by campaigners seeking its retention as the town's central library, it may be helpful to clarify matters about the building.
17. The Crown Street Library building is held by the Council, subject to a trust that it should be used as a public library (further details are set out in **Appendix 13**).
18. The decisions that Members are being asked to make in this report are about the library service (rather than directly about the Crown Street building). Members must be mindful that a decision to move the library service from Crown Street will have consequences for the future of the trust property. A decision to relocate the central library service from Crown Street will mean that the purpose or objective of the trust in respect of the Crown Street Library building can no longer realistically be fulfilled.

19. Should Members decide to relocate the central library service from Crown Street meeting of the sole trustee<sup>1</sup> will need to be convened to consider the future of the trust property and the best way that it can be used to accord with the intentions of the trust. One of the options that could be considered would be to sell the building and for the proceeds to then be held on trust as a library fund or endowment. Any decision involving a disposal of the Crown Street building and a variation of the trust will require public consultation and also the approval of the Charity Commission.

### **Financial position facing the Council**

20. In the period 2010/11 to 2016/17 the Council faced unprecedented financial challenges as the Government responded to the worldwide economic downturn by introducing significant public sector spending reductions. For Council finances this has meant an overall real terms decrease in government funding of £37.3m anticipated to increase to £44.5m by 2020/21. This has resulted in the Council agreeing reductions to planned expenditure of £46.6m with the reduction to date of 698 in the Council's workforce.
21. In agreeing the MTFP 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Council acknowledged that spending would need to be further reduced by £12m per annum by 2019/20 and following significant public consultation agreed a Core Offer budget for the period which reduced expenditure and services to a statutory level with a small investment fund of £2.5m for services which the Council does not have to provide but which add great value to Darlington and its residents.
22. The financial position facing the Council since approving the MTFP remains serious with reductions in Local Government funding along the lines predicted in the MTFP likely. Delivering the Core offer is going to be extremely challenging as further budget pressures have emerged since the MTFP was approved.

### **The statutory duty**

23. The Council has a statutory duty to provide free libraries. This is covered in Section 7(1) of the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964, which requires local authorities to deliver a public library service. The main obligation is to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for persons desiring to make use of it".
24. Section 7(2) requires authorities in fulfilling the duty to have particular regard to the desirability of:-
  - (a) Keeping of adequate stocks by arrangements with other library authorities and by other appropriate means that facilities are available for the borrowing of or reference to books or other printed matter and pictures, gramophone records, films and other material, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council operates an executive model of decision making, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. Under this model of governance the role of the sole trustee is an executive function to be discharged by the Council's Executive body – Cabinet (acting in the capacity as sole trustee).

- (b) Encourage both adults and children to make full use of the Library service and provide advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it.

25. There is no statutory definition of comprehensive or efficient, but in the provision of the library service local needs must be assessed and account must be taken of equalities implications of any proposed service changes. In meeting the statutory duty account must be taken of the resources available to the Council.

### **Assessment of Local Need**

26. A Local Needs Assessment was produced in the summer of 2016. Following further consultation the Local Needs Assessment has been updated (**Appendix 1**) to help inform the final proposals and the Library Service Plan 2017-2021.

27. The Conclusion from the Assessment of Local Need is detailed below (paragraphs 28 to 66). Members must read the Assessment of Local Need, attached at **Appendix 1**, in full.

### **Assessment of Local Need Conclusion**

#### Key information (2015-16)

28. The library service in Darlington continues to be valued and well used. There are 52,000 members and 11.9% (12,710 people) of the Darlington population borrowed books in the last year.

29. There were 245,875 visits and 59,882 queries from the public to Darlington Libraries in the last year. In total 374,211 books, CD's, DVD's and Audio Books were issued.

30. Crown Street Library accounts for 61% of the total issues, Cockerton Library accounts for 22%, the Mobile Library 13% and the Housebound and Residential services, 4%.

31. The Centre for Local Studies (based at Crown Street Library) has 7,500 visitors a year seeking information about local and family history and deals with some 10,000 queries a year.

#### Declining Use

32. Although the Darlington library service continues to be well used, the overall library use in Darlington accords with the national picture of declining levels of activity. This has much to do with the transformation of ways of accessing information and reading material in the digital age.

33. In a 5 year period from 2011/12 to 2015/16 the total number of items issued by the Darlington Library Service fell from 548,090 to 374,211 (a fall of 31.7%). In the same period the number of physical visits to the Libraries in Darlington fell from 377,525 to 245,876 (a fall of 34.9%).

34. The decline in usage has been happening notwithstanding the fact that the population of Darlington has been increasing (the 2011 census recording an increase of 7.9% since 2001).

### Declining Public Funding

35. The national picture indicates a time of change and challenge for the library service. This is partly because of the demand reduction but has much to do with financial constraints on local authorities and the reduced budgets that are available for all funded services.
36. The Council has been faced by a very challenging financial position and has had to make difficult choices over the services that it is able to fund and over the level of funding for core statutory services.

### Service delivery points

37. The Council has traditionally delivered the library service via three main service delivery points, a central library (Crown Street), a branch library (Cockerton) and by operating a mobile library service.
38. Unlike some Councils Darlington has a low number of service points and therefore a high population per library service point. There is however good transport connectivity within the Borough. Using public transport 95% of the population can access Crown Street Library within 30 minutes, 82% of the population within 20 minutes. Using public transport 93% of the population can access Cockerton Library within 30 minutes, 53% of the population within 20 minutes.
39. The issue over physical service points is somewhat diminishing in significance as the level of virtual library access/online service grows in popularity. In 2015 -16 the number of virtual visits to the library website was 35,848. The online service is relatively new and enables customers to borrow e-books by downloading titles to their own devices from the online library catalogue. Customers can browse the online catalogue, renew their hard copy books and reserve items to collect in branch. Social media is also of increasing importance for the promotion of events and activities in the library. The library has a Twitter account and two Facebook pages, one exclusively for Baby Rhyme Time information.

### Service Provision

40. The current level of service provision has been viewed by the majority of service users as meeting their needs, at least as far as can be judged from the responses received from the consultation exercises that have been conducted about proposals for changes to library provision. From the Library Consultation Survey completed by 3,265 residents (3% of the population), a significant majority support the existing service and would not wish to see any changes.
41. The central library service is well regarded and it is clear that a significant number of users want the service to continue at Crown Street, with heritage considerations playing an important part in the views expressed. The consultation about the library service also highlighted strong local support for maintaining the Cockerton



Branch library.

### Central Library Service

42. The proposed move of the Central Library Service from the historic and purpose built Crown Street Library remains controversial. However it is considered that the needs for a central library service can be met by the provision of the service at the Dolphin Centre.
43. Both buildings are in the town centre, the Dolphin Centre is approximately ¼ of a mile away from Crown Street. Both are located near bus stops, neither have on site parking but both are near to off street parking and both have on street blue badge parking nearby. The Dolphin Centre is nearer to the main taxi rank. At whichever location the central library service is located in, the town centre can be accessed by approximately 95% of the population within 30 minutes using public transport.
44. Responding to consultation views, a separate entrance to the Dolphin Centre library via Bull Wynd is now proposed (as well as access being available from the main Dolphin Centre Entrance). There is a lift available at Bull Wynd entrance (as well as from the main Dolphin Centre entrance).
45. Opening hours – the move to the Dolphin Centre will allow the central library service to take advantage of the longer opening hours that this facility allows for. The first floor Dolphin Centre library will move to 7 day opening, with the library opening on Sunday and also on two nights a week until 7 pm (the overall opening hours increasing to 57 hours compared to 49 hours per week at Crown Street). The Centre for Local Studies will have reduced opening hours, opening 30 hours a week compared to 49 hours at Crown Street.
46. Quick Picks – there will be a new service of quick picks at the Dolphin Centre. This will be on the ground floor and comprise a self-service area where users will be able to pick up popular books using self-check out facilities. Book returns will also be able to be made here. In addition there will be quick pick 10 computers will be available. The quick picks service will be available for the entire weekly opening hours of the Dolphin Centre, 7 days and 103 hours per week.
47. ICT - the provision of public access computers provides an important service. The availability of access to computers will significantly increase with the move of the library from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre. There are currently 46 computers available at Crown Street. At the Dolphin Centre 50 computers will be in the first floor library (including an additional 4 computers in the Children's Library). These will be available during the proposed longer library opening hours at the Dolphin Centre (both increased daily opening hours and also Sunday opening). In addition 10 computers will be available for express ICT usage and the library catalogue in the quick picks area available for the more extended Dolphin Centre opening hours (in total 103 hours per week). The additional IT provision will enable the library to increase the number of public use computer sessions available.
48. Staffing – there will be a reduction of library staffing at the Dolphin Centre. The library will reduced from up to 6 staff on duty to up to 4 staff and the Centre for

Local Studies will reduce from 2 people to 1 person. The move to a self-service checkout model, with 3 self-service machines, will however help in freeing up available staff to focus more on assisting users with core library queries. The presence of the Dolphin Centre staff will also mean that some of the non-library functions previously undertaken by library staff will instead be carried out by Dolphin Centre staff.

49. Space reductions - There will be some reductions in overall space. The total space allocated to the library service at the Dolphin Centre is 748m<sup>2</sup>, this compares with 838 m<sup>2</sup> (excluding the Art Gallery space) at Crown Street. The Centre for Local Studies will be 91m<sup>2</sup> at the Dolphin Centre compared to 131m<sup>2</sup> at Crown Street. However it must be borne in mind that outside of the library space the Dolphin Centre also offers break out spaces and meeting rooms which people can use.
50. Improved facilities - the new Library will benefit from some improved facilities. Better toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, changing facilities for adults with complex needs, access to a comprehensive range of food and drinks from the café and social/breakout facilities. The new library first floor entrance will be near to the soft play area and a café area. There will also be a range of sports facilities and classes too.
51. Books on offer – because of the slightly reduced shelving there will be some reduction of books and material on view, but the rotation policy (i.e. books from storage) will address this. The retention of Cockerton will also help in enabling books to be visible to potential readers.
52. Overall while there are differences between the two venues for the central library service, the offering is broadly comparable. At the Dolphin Centre the service is centrally located and provides good access for people with disabilities with much improved facilities. The venue will also offer opportunities to access a café and other facilities at the Dolphin Centre. The opening hours will be much improved for the general library service, which will mitigate the slight space reductions. While there is some staffing reduction, the use of technology with increased ICT facilities and self-service check outs will help the staff to focus on providing the core library service assisting those users who require it. The Centre for Local Studies will be open less hours and operate from a smaller area. In mitigating against this, regular used items will be available on instant access but with an appointment system for other items.
53. While there are users who are unhappy at the proposed move, there are benefits from the co-location of services at the Dolphin Centre. A refreshed modern service is likely to be attractive to a new range of service users and may help with the declining numbers. The Dolphin Centre is a key town centre building which is well used by a demographically diverse audience for sporting, recreational and social reasons. Providing a Library Service from this venue offers opportunities to broaden the reach of the library service to new users as well as providing for the needs of existing users.

54. It is considered that the proposed model for the Dolphin Centre meets the needs for a central library service.

### Cockerton Library

55. Cockerton Branch Library was originally proposed for closure. In the period 2011/12 to 2015/16 the number of physical visits to Cockerton Branch Library fell from 61,500 to 39,600 (a fall of 35.6%), which will be partly attributed to reduced opening hours.
56. The consultation about the library service also highlighted strong local support for maintaining the library. The library is well used with over 80,000 book issues in 2015.
57. The library is situated in a ward which has a higher level of deprivation than most others (the 4th most deprived in the town).
58. There are proposals the library to remain open as a community run library using local volunteers and supported by the library service. Keeping the library open is considered to be an important part of Darlington library provision.

### Mobile Library Service

59. The Mobile Library Service (which has been suspended since 1 October 2016) visited 90 locations across the Borough on a three-week cycle. On average 110 adults made use of the mobile library per week and 154 children when it visited their school or nursery.
60. Use of the mobile library has fallen more than any other area of the library service with a reduction of 68% in the past five years. There are potential financial implications for the replacement of the mobile library vehicle which would need to be addressed should the service continue.
61. The withdrawal of this service will have negative impacts on service users particularly in outlying and rural areas. However there will be measures in place to mitigate some of the impacts as set out below.
62. Home Library Service – the Home Library Service (formerly called the Housebound Library Service) provides books and audio books to those who are unable to use a library due to illness, disability or frailty. The service can be permanent or temporary, for example where someone is recovering from an illness. Customers have access to the same range of materials as those found in the central library which will be delivered direct to the individual's home. Visits are made on a three-weekly basis and at a regular time by library staff who carry identification. The service is free of charge and requests to receive it can be made by individuals themselves, relatives, friends or carers. If the Mobile Library Service is permanently withdrawn, the Home Library Service is able to expand where appropriate. The service will be actively promoted both within the libraries and with partners, e.g. Age UK, Darlington Dementia Action Alliance, etc. Additional routes can be added to the schedule as required.

63. Residential Care Homes – the library delivers a collection of books to nine residential care homes. The stock is changed on a three- monthly basis. In 2015/16, 7,958 items were issued to the nine care homes. There are plans to develop the service. This will include liaising more closely with the Activities Leads within each home, increasing the regularity of stock exchanges and promoting the service to other residential care providers. The service will also be extended to include sheltered accommodation.
64. Children - a regular deposit collection of books (the 'Book Ahead' scheme) will be provided to all nurseries and playgroups which previously accessed the mobile library service. All schools on the former mobile library routes will be offered a regular outreach visit by the Library and Bookstart Literacy Co-Ordinator.

### Conclusion

65. Support for the current service provision has to be balanced against falling library use, the resources available and potential opportunities that moving to a differently delivered library service might offer.
66. In this context, it is considered that, the Council will be able to meet the overall need for library provision within the Borough, by providing a Central Library located at the Dolphin Centre, a community run library at Cockerton (with volunteers and Council support), alongside a new outreach service to serve the needs of the wider Darlington community.

### **Library Service Proposals**

67. The proposals are for Darlington Borough Council's Library Service to be provided as follows:

#### **The Central Library at the Dolphin Centre – Service Level**

68. The Central Library would be relocated to a remodelled Dolphin Centre with the following services being provided:
  - (a) Adults Lending Library
  - (b) Children's Library
  - (c) Reference Library
  - (d) Centre for Local Studies
  - (e) Children's and Young People's Events
  - (f) Bookstart Rhyme Time Sessions
  - (g) Facilities for school visits
  - (h) Teen Zone
  - (i) ICT Facilities
  - (j) Quick Picks area at the front of the Dolphin Centre
  - (k) Community Engagement / Library Groups
  - (l) Meeting Room Hire
  - (m) Reading Groups
  - (n) Quiet study area
  - (o) Photocopier & Fax

69. As part of the consultation on the proposed move to the Dolphin Centre views were sought on the proposed service standards against the existing standards. 25 service areas were consulted on including opening hours; design, layout and floor space; lending service; reference library; staff numbers; art gallery; baby change/parent and baby room; Bookstart Rhymetime sessions; buggy store, catering facilities; centre for local studies; changing facilities for adults with complex needs; children's library; community use; housebound service and residential service; ICT provision; informal breakout space for activities; learning and skills, library access; meeting room hire; quick picks (easy access) to popular books; reservations and requests; toilet facilities; working with schools and groups and finally the vision for the library service. Attached at **Appendix 3** is a document comparing the existing Library service standards to the proposed service standards for the Library service at the Dolphin Centre.
70. Throughout the consultation, feedback has been received, which as a result, a number of changes have been proposed to the design and service that will be offered from the Dolphin Centre. With regard to the design, the following changes are proposed:
- (a) Introduce a buggy store upstairs converting the male toilet on what is the existing squash court balcony.
  - (b) Providing access to the lift from Bull Wynd enabling Library/Dolphin Centre users to access the building from Bull Wynd, either using steps or if required the lift.
  - (c) Relocation of the majority of exercise to music classes to The Studio to reduce the risk of noise spill-over into the Library.
  - (d) Further consultation will take place with Darlington Dementia Action Alliance on final colour and finishes to ensure they are appropriate for individuals suffering from dementia.
  - (e) Further consideration will be given to the programme of activities in the new Library to minimise conflict with other Dolphin Centre uses.
71. The Dolphin Centre is a key building within the town centre that is used by a broad and diverse audience of residents and visitors for sporting, recreational and social reasons. There are up to 1million visits per annum to the Dolphin Centre, which presents a significant opportunity to broaden the reach of the library service to young people, families, people with disabilities or long term health conditions, BME communities and travellers, who all use the facilities within the Dolphin Centre.
72. The Experience Darlington strategy is currently being consulted on and a library service relocated to the Dolphin Centre would be the perfect location for an information hub as the main coach drop-off and pick-up are next to the Dolphin Centre. The Dolphin Centre is well known to both residents and visitors and therefore including the library within it presents a significant opportunity for this to be a key cornerstone of Experience Darlington.

73. With regard to the service standards, there are proposed changes following feedback on opening hours, as there was not significant support for extended opening on an evening. While opening hours will be subject to review depending on usage patterns, it is proposed that the opening hours of the Library will be:

	<b>Existing Opening Hours</b>	<b>Proposed Opening Hours detailed in previous Cabinet Report (22 June 2016)</b>	<b>Proposed Opening Hours detailed in this report</b>
<b>Monday</b>	9am to 6pm	9am to 7pm	9am to 7pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	9am to 6pm	9am to 7pm	9am to 5pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	9am to 5pm	9am to 7pm	9am to 5pm
<b>Thursday</b>	10am to 6pm	9am to 7pm	9am to 7pm
<b>Friday</b>	9am to 5pm	9am to 7pm	9am to 5pm
<b>Saturday</b>	9am to 4pm	9am to 5pm	9am to 5pm
<b>Sunday</b>	Closed	10am to 3pm	10am to 3pm
<b>Total</b>	<b>49 hours</b>	<b>63 hours</b>	<b>57 hours</b>

74. The reduction of six hours from those previously proposed to Cabinet in June 2016, will be used in providing more staff support during other opening hours.
75. In addition to the opening hours, one of the additions to the service is the Quick Picks area, which will be open Monday to Friday 6.30am to 10.30pm, Saturday and Sunday 8am to 7.30pm, Bank Holidays 10am to 4.30pm.
76. Attached at **Appendix 4** is a sample of images of the new library design within the Dolphin Centre. Further images are still available on the microsite at <http://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/library-consultation/plans/>

### **Cockerton Library – Service Level**

77. It is proposed that Cockerton library is retained as a community run library supported by the library service.
78. A proposal has been received from Cockerton Library Cooperative (**Appendix 5**), which is a partnership between a number of businesses in the local community of Cockerton, Darlington for Culture and the Council. A steering group has been set up with a range of expertise in various areas to develop the proposal and set up a cooperative that will run the library. The steering group comprises of:

- (a) John Whitehouse, local Funeral Director, Chair of the Steering Group
- (b) John Dean, Darlington for Culture
- (c) Ann McMorris, Darlington for Culture
- (d) Jane Tomlinson, Darlington Building Society
- (e) Matt Roche, Darlington for Culture
- (f) Susan Carter, Darlington Age UK
- (g) Steve Rose, Stockton Catalyst and Onsite
- (h) Alex Llewellyn (Local Scout Leader) significant business and community experience

79. The proposal is based on:-

- (a) A library run by volunteers supported by DBC professional library staff with the Council providing book stock and library systems infrastructure.
- (b) An IT Centre for people to access information online, to apply for jobs and benefits, and improve their digital skills.
- (c) Space and resources for the local community to be developed in line with the wishes of local people and business.

80. The group are requesting a 99-year full repairing lease without break clauses, which would enable the organisation to gain external funding to improve the building and service provision. The lease would include provisions about the respective responsibilities of the Council and the Library Cooperative for the library service at Cockerton.

81. The Council will need to build into any lease the guarantee that the library service would continue to run from the building for the duration of the lease and that in default the building will return to the Council.

82. Generally the building condition at Cockerton is satisfactory; however there is a request to replace the windows as they are coming to the end of their life with modern, new PVC high performance double-glazed units. It is anticipated that this would cost in the region of £10,000.

83. In order for a professional library service to continue to be delivered from Cockerton, there is a need to support the volunteers with some library resource. This would be from appropriate library staff for approximately 18 hours per week. The group are requesting transitional arrangements whereby the Council fund the 18 hours for up to five years with a review after three years.

84. The group will take on responsibility for the building, providing volunteers to run the library service as well as expanding and developing the uses of the building for the local community.

85. Cockerton Library is an important part of the overall library service mix as detailed in the Library Plan. It is therefore proposed that Officers continue to work with Cockerton Co-operative to finalise delivery model with a view to it moving forward at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that this is likely to be September 2017.

Officers will support Cockerton Library Cooperative in the transition process.

86. If Members approve the proposal, the financial implications are discussed later in this report.

### **Mobile Library**

87. It is proposed that the Mobile Library Service is permanently withdrawn (it has been suspended since 1 October 2016).
88. The service visits 90 locations across the Borough in a 3 week cycle. On average 110 adults use the mobile library per week and 154 children when it visits their school or nursery. Service use has fallen more than any other are of the library service with a reduction of 68% in the past 5 years. There are potential financial implications for the replacement of the mobile vehicle which would need to be addressed should the service continue.
89. It is recognised that the withdrawal of this service will have negative impacts on outlying and rural areas and for particular service users. However there will be measures in place to mitigate some of the impacts as set out below.

### Home Library Service – Service Level

90. As a result of the withdrawal of the Mobile Library Service, the old Housebound Library Service, now renamed the Home Library Service is continuing and where appropriate will expand to ensure that residents who are unable to attend the Central Library or community-led Library at Cockerton have the opportunity to receive books on a regular basis.
91. The Home Library Service provides books and audio books to those who are unable to use a library due to illness, disability or frailty. The service can be permanent or temporary, for example where someone is recovering from an illness. Customers have access to the same range of materials as those found in the central library which will be delivered direct to the individual's home. Visits are made on a three weekly basis and at a regular time by library staff who carry identification. The service is free of charge and requests to receive it can be made by individuals themselves, relatives, friends or carers.

### Residential Care Homes – Service Level

92. The library delivers a collection of books to nine residential care homes. The stock is changed on a three monthly basis. In 2015/16, 7,958 items were issued to the nine care homes. There are future plans to develop the service will include liaising more closely with the Activities Leads within each home, increasing the regularity of stock exchanges and promoting the service to other residential care providers to include sheltered accommodation.



## Children

93. A regular deposit collection of books (the 'Book Ahead' scheme) will be provided to all nurseries and playgroups which previously accessed the mobile library service. All schools on the former mobile library routes will be offered a regular outreach visit by the Library and Bookstart Literacy Co-Ordinator.

### **Partnership with Teesside University – Service Level**

94. Darlington Library is working in partnership with the University of Teesside and plans to expand the partnership to improve the offer for both organisations. The membership card of either organisation will provide ID to register with the other. Darlington Library will develop a collection of stock at the University's Darlington campus. The Centre for Local Studies will provide displays and exhibitions of local interest.
95. The University will provide walk-in access to some online resources, staff support, and will work with the library on author visits and literary events such as World Book Night and National Libraries Week. Working with the University will assist the Library in promoting the service to young people, traditionally a 'hard to reach' group and will provide new ideas on the design, layout and delivery of a fresh and relevant library service.

### **Local Studies – Service Level**

96. The proposal is for Local Studies to relocate from the Crown Street Library to the Dolphin Centre. It would be relocated to the former Registrar's Office based within the Dolphin Centre where users of the service can have access to a range of material. However as funding has been reduced and a large proportion of the Local Studies resource being stored in alternative locations, some items will have to be booked for retrieval, whereby an individual can return at a time convenient to them when the Local Studies Centre is open to view the requested material.
97. Local Studies will be open as follows:

- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) Monday              | Closed                         |
| (b) Tuesday to Saturday | 9am to 12pm, 12.30pm to 3.30pm |
| (c) Sunday              | Closed                         |

### **Books/Local Studies Resource Storage – Service Level**

98. Storage of library books and the Local Studies resource will be within the Dolphin Centre, Bennet House adjoined to the Dolphin Centre and office accommodation on Beaumont Street within the Multi Storey Car Park.

### **Art Collection and Art Gallery**

99. The Borough Art Collection is currently stored within Crown Street Library within a room in the basement. The collection will be relocated into the Town Hall and stored appropriately and securely.

100. To date no solution has been found for the re-provision of an art gallery within a suitable location in the Borough. However in the future if opportunities present themselves to provide an art gallery, this can be revisited at that time.

### **Timescale**

101. Subject to Members approving the recommendations within this report, it is anticipated that the Central Library would relocate to the Dolphin Centre in early 2018. It is anticipated the building work would start in the second half of 2017 following a planning application and tendering/procurement. A planning application would be submitted at the earliest opportunity following Cabinet's/Council's approval of the Library Service proposals.

102. As discussed earlier in this report, subject to successful conclusion for the volunteer model for Cockerton Library, it is anticipated that this would take effect from September 2017.

### **Consultation**

103. Consultation about the library proposals has taken place in two phases. There was a general consultation about the MTFP proposals, including the proposals for the library service, which ran until the end of May 2016. Following the decision of Cabinet in September 2016 not to implement the library service proposals but to continue to develop them, further consultation has taken place about how a relocated library at the Dolphin Centre might look and operate.

104. It was not considered necessary to conduct a further full consultation on the library service proposals that were included in the MTFP. An extensive recent consultation was undertaken about the library service and proposals concerning the three library service points. The outcomes of the consultation are still believed to reflect the range of views held about the proposals. The responses to the earlier consultation are being presented back to Members and will need to be taken account of when the considering the recommendations in this report.

105. Following the Cabinet report in September 2016, additional detailed information has been published on the proposed relocation of the central library to the Dolphin Centre. A further consultation on the more detailed proposal ran from Monday 3 October 2016 and Monday 11 November 2016.

106. Members will need to take account of both the original consultation and also the more recent consultation.

### **Outcome of the MTFP Consultation**

107. A significant amount of consultation took place as part of the MTFP proposals. This was both general on the MTFP as a whole, but also specific on the library proposals.

108. The general consultation ran from 11 February 2016 to 31 May 2016. A dedicated budget website was developed ([www.darlington.gov.uk/budget](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/budget)) with a link from the Councils main website home page. This included all of the proposals, timeline

details and regularly updated FAQ's and responses received. A considerable number of those were generated relating to the library proposals. The One Darlington Magazine has carried a number of articles on the MTFP proposals. Social media was also used to inform and engage with people. Local press and media also ran news items on the MTFP. The Northern Echo in particular highlighted the library proposals and campaigning activity in connection with the proposals. There were two general MTFP public meetings. More details can be found in the separate Consultation report.

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/PublicMinutes/Council%5CJune%2029%202016%5C4a%20MTFP%20Consultation.pdf>

109. On the specific library consultation concerning the Library proposals the following consultation has taken place:-
- (a) The Library Service Consultation Survey was live from 17 February to 3 April 2016; an online survey was accessible via the Council's website and hard copy surveys were available from Crown Street Library, Cockerton Library, Town Hall Customer Contact Centre and Head of Steam.
  - (b) Two Library Service Public Consultation Events, chaired by Councillor Nick Wallis, (other panel members Ian Thompson, Assistant Director Community Services, Luke Swinhoe, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture) were held on 23 March 2016 at 2.30 pm (Central Hall, Dolphin Centre) and 6.00 pm (Cockerton Methodist Church).
  - (c) Drop-in Sessions with Councillor Wallis were held by pre-bookable appointment on 21 and 24 March 2016 between 11.00 am and 7.00 pm at the Dolphin Centre.
  - (d) Letters were distributed on 11 March 2016 to Library User Groups, Schools, Nurseries, Sheltered Housing and Parish Councils to explain proposals, signpost to survey and advise on public consultation events.
  - (e) Email drop on 14 March 2016 to all library members who had provided an email address on their contact details to explain proposals, signpost to survey and advise on public consultation events.
  - (f) Letters were distributed to squash players at the Dolphin Centre on 10 March 2016 advising them of the proposals, plans, key milestones within the consultation period and the effect on squash in the Dolphin Centre.
110. The library proposals were also considered by Place Scrutiny Committee on 15 April 2016 where members of the public were also present and made representation. Following this meeting a Task and Finish Group was set up for 26 April 2016 where Members initially visited the Dolphin Centre to view the areas where the library is proposed to relocate to and then considered the proposals in detail. Notes from Library Services Task and Finish Review on 26 April 2016 can be found at <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/democracy/meeting-details/?id=1971> Also Minutes of the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny on the 26/5/16 who also reviewed the MTFP proposals.

111. The results from the Library Service Consultation Survey are attached at **Appendix 6**. A total of 3,265 surveys were returned. The survey focused on identifying who used the service, what services were used and how people felt about the budget proposal. Below is a table of the number of survey results returned per Ward where the individual completing the survey had provided their post code and a brief summary of the results.

<b>WARD</b>	<b>Number of survey returns</b>	<b>% Returns based on known postcodes</b>
Bank Top & Lascelles	98	4.3%
Brinkburn & Faverdale	126	5.5%
Cockerton	194	8.5%
College	150	6.6%
Eastbourne	95	4.2%
Harrowgate Hill	98	4.3%
Haughton & Springfield	105	4.6%
Heighington & Coniscliffe	129	5.7%
Hummersknott	156	6.8%
Hurworth	77	3.4%
Mowden	180	7.9%
North Road	87	3.8%
Northgate	75	3.3%
Park East	130	5.7%
Park West	131	5.7%
Pierremont	158	6.9%
Redhall & Lingfield	65	2.9%
Sadberge & Middleton St George	86	3.8%
Stephenson	40	1.8%
Whinfield	100	4.4%
<b>TOTAL COMPLETED</b>	<b>2,280</b>	<b>69.8%</b>
BLANK	598	
ERROR	387	
<b>TOTAL RETURNS</b>	<b>3,265</b>	

- (a) The majority of the individuals who completed the survey were users of the library service (95.46%).
- (b) The majority of respondents 'borrowed books' (88%) with 46% 'finding information and using reference books', 25% 'using the computer and internet facilities' and 29% 'using Local Studies'.
- (c) 91% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with relocating the main library to the Dolphin Centre. 77% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the closure of

Cockerton and 70% disagreed or strongly disagreed with stopping the Mobile Library service.

- (d) The top three library services that respondents value were 'borrowing books', 'finding information using reference books' and 'Centre for Local Studies'.
- (e) The majority of respondents were female (64%) with 71% being over 45.

112. Open questions were asked in the survey with regard to the impact the proposals would have on individuals. Key responses were as follows:

- (a) **What impact, positive or negative, would closing Cockerton Library have on you?** (1,993 responses to this question).

76 individuals indicated that the proposed closure of Cockerton Library would have physical capability/access impacts on them as they would be unable/have difficulty in accessing the town centre library.

11 individuals indicated that the proposed closure would have an impact on their mental health/well-being.

- (b) **What impact, positive or negative, would the withdrawal of the Mobile Library Service have on you?** (1,809 responses to this question).

57 individuals indicated that the proposed withdrawal of the Mobile Library service would have physical capability/access impacts on them as they would be unable/have difficulty in accessing the town centre library.

6 individuals indicated that the proposed withdrawal of the service would have an impact on their mental health/well-being.

- (c) **What impact, positive or negative, would moving the town centre library to the Dolphin Centre have on you?** (2,383 responses to this question).

89 individuals indicated the proposed relocation of the library to the Dolphin Centre (i.e. travelling to and accessing that building) would have physical capability/access impacts on them.

9 individuals indicated that the proposed move would have an impact on their mental health/well-being.

The majority of comments received related to individuals wanting the service to continue as at present and for the service to remain at Crown Street, with a significant number of individuals focusing their comments on the Crown Street building in particular.

113. From the corporate consultation process, the following comments were received where there was a specific issue raised (84 comments). The remaining comments were generally in disagreement with the proposal as opposed to identifying any specific issues. A total of 103 comments were received overall, however a number of comments are duplicated within this figure as they referred to more

than one proposal.

(a) **Closure of Cockerton Library**

Summary of Comments	Number received
Why not use volunteers/community led	2
Impact on community, particularly children and older people	2
Loss of access to internet (no home internet)	1

(b) **Withdrawal of Mobile Library Service**

Summary of Comments	Number received
Look for a sponsor for the Mobile Library	1
Suggest a home delivery model would be cheaper	1
Agree with withdrawal of service as it is a waste of money	1

(c) **Relocation of Crown Street Library**

Summary of Comments	Number received
Attachment to Crown Street Building, e.g. architecture/history/love of building, etc.	26
Object to Dolphin Centre as a venue for library	10
Suggestions to generate income in Crown Street	9
Want to keep service as it is	5
Cost of move	5
The move is positive	5
Lack of publicity on proposals/more information required	4
Retain Local Studies provision as it is	3
Wrongly assume library is closing altogether	2
Close all libraries	1
Move all libraries to schools	1
Object to reducing squash courts in Dolphin Centre to accommodate library	1

114. A number of letters and comments were also forwarded by The Northern Echo along with **6,420 completed** 'Save Crown Street Library' coupons.

A breakdown of the letters and comments received is as follows:

Summary of Comments	Number Received
<b>Letters from Mount Pleasant Primary School (regarding Cockerton Library):</b> Don't close Cockerton Library. We go there from school. We love books. We learn things and do research. We visit the library outside of school. We go to activities on Saturdays and in the holidays.	21

<b>Summary of Comments</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
People go there to use computers. Long journey to the Dolphin Centre. Old people might not be able to go into town.	
<b>Posters from Mount Pleasant Primary School (regarding Cockerton Library):</b> Don't close Cockerton Library.	10
<b>Selection of letters written by Year 4 Class, Whinfield Primary (regarding Crown Street Library):</b> Where will the books go, where will the groups go. We love books. It is a quiet place. We go to activity groups at the library. Closure would affect old people.	5
<b>Letters from readers of The Northern Echo (regarding Crown Street Library):</b> The Council probably has plans to pull down libraries and replace with shops or car parks. Crown Street could be an Art Centre with galleries and workshops, café, shop selling local arts and crafts and the Borough's Art Collection on view. Don't close Crown Street Library I visit the library to trace my family history If Crown Street closes the town would lose its Art Gallery No Art Gallery space for significant celebration of railway heritage in 2025. Edward Pease left £10,000 in his will to build a free library for Darlington.	8

### **Consultation since September 2016**

115. Following the Cabinet report in September 2016, consultation has taken place on the design for the Library service within the Dolphin Centre and the service standards. The consultation ran from Monday 3 October 2016 and Monday 11 November 2016, a six-week period.
116. A number of methods were used to raise public awareness of the consultation. Online approaches included the development of a dedicated consultation website which was available at [www.darlington.gov.uk/libraryconsultation](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/libraryconsultation), and accessible via Darlington Borough Council home page, and the consultation page within the Darlington Borough Council website. The consultation was also promoted through the main corporate Facebook and Twitter profiles and by some member's social media profiles. For the duration of the consultation, the browser home page on all of the public access PC's in the libraries was set to display the library consultation website.
117. Recognising that some people cannot or prefer not to use online approaches we undertook a number of focus group meetings, regularly briefed and responded to media enquiries, provided paper versions of the survey in a number of public locations, and set up pop up banners and information boards in prominent locations within the libraries, Dolphin Centre, and the Town Hall customer services

centre.

118. The consultation involved:-

**(a) Online Survey**

The survey asked residents for comments and impacts on the design of the proposed service at the Dolphin Centre and the service standards. The online approach included the setting up of a microsite within the Council's website dedicated to the Library Service Consultation. The microsite included background to the proposals, copies of the plans, details on each of the proposals, frequently asked questions and the opportunity for residents to respond by having their say. People were able to give their views via the microsite between Monday 3 October 2016 and Monday 14 November 2016, a six-week period. The site remains available today for people to view.

- (i) The online form was used to capture comments directly from members of the public and by council staff who typed in all of the handwritten surveys that were received. In total 3,649 comments spanning the range of proposals were received from 369 people.

**(b) Focus Group Consultation**

A number of focus group sessions were held with specific groups to gain their feedback on the detailed design and service standard proposals. The focus groups were held with the following organisations/groups:

- (i) Carers' Strategy Group
- (ii) Circle of Friends Carers' Group
- (iii) Knitting Group
- (iv) Looked After Children
- (v) Bookstart Baby Rhymetime attendees
- (vi) Dolphin Centre Breastfeeding Group
- (vii) DISC Young Carers Group
- (viii) Wiggles and Woggles attendees
- (ix) Schools and Colleges
  - a) Rydal Academy
  - b) Reid Street Primary School
  - c) Corporation Road Primary School
  - d) Beaumont Hills Academy
  - e) Mowden Federation of Schools
  - f) Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
  - g) Northwood School
  - h) Darlington College
  - i) Learning and Skills Group

In addition, officers attended meetings with the following groups over the course of the consultation to present the proposals, take questions and



record feedback.

- (i) Darlington 11-19 Executive Group
- (ii) Darlington Dementia Action Alliance

(c) **Email Contact**

The following groups were also emailed with regard to the consultation and directed towards the Library Consultation microsite

- (i) Nurseries and Childminders
- (ii) Family Support Workers
- (iii) Early Intervention Team
- (iv) Voluntary and Community Sector (via the Strategic Implementation mailing list)
- (v) Primary Schools
- (vi) Community groups (via the former Darlington Inclusion Group mailing list)

(d) **Letter Contact**

The following groups were sent letters informing them of the consultation and hard copies of the questionnaire to complete.

- (i) Parents of home-educated children known to the Council
- (ii) Representative of the Gypsy and Traveller Community

119. The Library designs and service standards were also considered by the previous Place Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review Group on 31 October 2016 <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/PublicMinutes/Place%20Scrutiny%20Committee%5CDecember%2015%202016%5CItem%209.pdf>

### **Outcome of the Consultation since September 2016**

120. Attached at **Appendix 7** is the detailed analysis of the library consultation, both the comments received via the microsite and from the focus groups.

(a) **Online Survey**

Key points from the online survey are:

- (i) 3,649 feedback responses were received about the 25 separate service area proposals from the 369 individuals who completed the on line form. On average respondents fed back on 10 out of the 25 separate service area proposals.
- (ii) The most popular opening time each day was between 10am to 5pm; weekdays being most popular, followed by Saturday and then Sunday.
- (iii) Service users were asked whether or not the proposals make them more likely or less likely to use the library if it relocates to the Dolphin

Centre. 42% said they were less likely, 50% it would make no difference, 8% more likely.

- (iv) With regard to any impacts relocating the library service would have on them, 48% reported a negative impact, 44% no impact and 8% a positive impact.
- (v) 36% of responses (1,237) included a written response to the request to provide details of any likely impacts resulting from the proposals. Of these, 33% (403) detailed likely impacts from 177 respondents (48%).
- (vi) Overall there were 69 positive and 334 negative impacts identified from the 24 service proposals.
- (vii) Of the 334 negative written impacts received for the 24 service area proposals, just over three quarters of these impacts were reported by 122 respondents (69% of total) as being significant enough to make them less likely to use the library service in the future.
- (viii) For many of the identified negative impacts, mitigations have already been proposed or indeed implemented, i.e. noise minimisation from other areas.
- (ix) A slightly higher proportion of respondents to the survey reported being female, having a disability or being from a minority ethnic background compared to the corresponding figures for Darlington as a whole. Under 25s were grossly underrepresented relative to the Borough population, whilst 60-75 year olds were correspondingly grossly overrepresented. Extrapolating the results to make allowance for this showed that the general response may have been skewed to reporting more negative impacts as a result of these under and over representations.

## **(b) Focus Groups**

- (i) Over the course of the consultation period 17 focus groups were held with a total of 206 participants.
- (ii) Of the 73 impacts recorded from these sessions 47 (64%) were positive and 26 (36%) were negative.
- (iii) The proportion of positive impacts recorded at the focus group sessions were notably higher than those received for the survey in most instances. Anecdotal feedback suggest that this was due to the conversational nature of these events – in several cases it was reported that groups initially focussed on the decision to move the library, however once it was explained that the current consultation was about the proposals for how the new service would look/work etc., discussions became more positive.

- (iv) In addition to the above focus groups, officers attended meetings of the following groups to present the proposals, take questions and record feedback
  - a) 11-19 Executive Group
  - b) Darlington Dementia Action Alliance

Feedback from these sessions was also generally positive.

- (v) Because focus group feedback was received during the consultation period, in a number of instances mitigations to negative impacts identified have already been put in place. For example:
  - a) Bookstart Baby Rhymetime attendees raised concerns around the breastfeeding facilities at the Dolphin Centre and, as a result, these concerns have been addressed with private breastfeeding room updated.
  - b) The 11-19 Secondary School Head teachers Group raised concern about noise from other areas in the Dolphin Centre travelling to the library and as a result consultation with soundproofing providers has been undertaken and the provider of the fitness classes held in Central Hall have been moved to The Studio.

121. The Darlington Dementia Action Alliance raised concerns about some of the design details in the plans, particular the carpet, which could make the library inaccessible to certain groups. As a result, members of the group have been invited (and agreed) to get involved in the detailed design process going forward to ensure it is as accessible as possible for all residents

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

122. When making its decision, Members will be aware of the requirement to have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic, and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding).

Section 149 (3) of the Act states in general terms that having 'due regard' to advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to:

- (a) the need to remove or minimise disadvantages;
- (b) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups;
- (c) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

123. Equality Impact Assessments were carried out for each of the three key areas of the Library Service; the Relocation of the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre, Cockerton Library and the Mobile Library Service prior to the Full Council meeting on 29 June 2016. As a result of the decision not to implement the decisions taken at that meeting, the Equality Impact Assessments have been updated to take into account the further period of consultation which occurred between 3 October and 11 November 2016. Copies of the Equality Impact Assessments are attached at **Appendix 8(a)(b) and (c)**. Members are required to read the Equality Impact Assessments prior to taking any decisions.

124. The main impacts identified as a result of the Equality Impact Assessments are documented below. The potential level of each impact identified is detailed within the Officer Assessment (Section 3) of each Equality Impact Assessment.

(a) **Central Library Relocation**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p><b>Age &amp; Disability</b> - Negative impact on older people with physical impairment or limited mobility who may experience more difficulty in accessing the Dolphin Centre than Crown Street Library (i.e. walking across Tubwell Row/ Market place). There may be an increased distance for some library users to travel and, if walking some or all of the way, to carry books which means that they either have difficulty in travelling to the library or don't want to.</p>	<p>Signpost customers to alternative bus stops or bus routes that would be closer to the Dolphin Centre and promote these prior to any change in location of the town centre library.</p> <p>The Home Library Service offers a delivery of library books direct to the customer's door, for those who are unable to use a library due to illness, disability or frailty. The service will be actively promoted both within the libraries and with partners. Additional routes can be added to the schedule.</p> <p>Library staff will make customers aware of disabled parking spaces in vicinity of the Dolphin Centre: 3 on-street parking spaces where can park up to 3 hours, 7/8 disabled parking spaces on Market Square, 3 disabled parking spaces under the Council Chamber, 40 disabled parking spaces in the new Multi Storey car park behind the Dolphin Centre. In addition, Blue badge holders can park in on-street parking spaces.</p> <p>Provide chair(s) adjacent to the lift in Dolphin Centre for those customers who may need to wait for the lift to become available.</p>
<p><b>Age &amp; Sex (gender) &amp; Maternity</b> - Negative impact perceived by some mothers regarding lack of privacy at the Dolphin Centre for breastfeeding</p>	<p>Suitable areas are available within the Dolphin Centre for mothers to breastfeed their babies in private, including a dedicated private parent room which has recently been updated. These areas will be clearly</p>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
when compared to Crown Street Library.	<p>signposted.</p> <p>In addition, the Dolphin Centre is a designated breastfeeding-friendly location within the town centre.</p>
<b>Age &amp; Sex (gender)</b> - Concern raised about possible congestion of lifts at the Dolphin Centre.	<p>The decision has been taken to open the entrance at Bull Wynd and make the lifts there available to Library Users and there will therefore be lifts available in the main entrance, the Bull Wynd entrance and in the 16 Horsemarket/Dolphin Centre café.</p> <p>There is a buggy store available on the ground floor of the Dolphin for parents who would prefer to leave their buggy and take the stairs.</p>
<b>Age &amp; Disability</b> – Some library users may not feel comfortable going to the new library or when they first visit they may not be familiar with the new layout and the way in which the service operates.	<p>As part of the second round of consultation service users and residents were consulted about the layout and design of the library should it be relocated to ensure that it is accessible for residents. In addition, Dementia Action Alliance is inputting into the design process to ensure that it will be clear to individuals with disabilities where to go and where they can find help, if required.</p> <p>A programme of familiarisation sessions for library users with staff will take place to assist people with getting to know and feeling comfortable in the new space.</p> <p>There will be a separate, dedicated entrance available via Bull Wynd for library users who do not feel comfortable accessing via the main Dolphin Centre entrance.</p>
<b>Maternity &amp; Sex (Gender)</b> – Concerned about security of buggies at proposed stores	<p>Buggies left in the stores will be able to be fully locked down and secured.</p> <p>If parents do not want to leave their buggies, they will be able to take them into the library.</p>
<b>Disability</b> – Those with disabilities may have difficulties adjusting to an unfamiliar setting and/or layout	<p>The Council will seek the views of the Dementia Alliance on the design and layout of the new library so that it is welcoming to dementia sufferers.</p> <p>As stated above, familiarisation sessions will also take place for users upon relocation.</p>
<b>Disability</b> – Those with a mobility impairment and who cannot use lifts may not be able to access the main new library area	<p>The Quick Picks area will be on the ground floor of the Dolphin Centre. Officers will explore the possibility of a pick-up option where books can be requested by service users and left at a designated place for collection.</p> <p>There will also be the option to use the glass-sided lift within the 16 Horsemarket/Dolphin Centre café, which may be suitable to some</p>

Impact	Mitigation
<p><b>Age &amp; Disability &amp; Maternity -</b> Those who require additional help may be disproportionately impacted by the reduction in staff</p>	<p>individuals.</p> <p>The introduction of self-service terminals is intended to free up remaining staff so that they will still be able to assist those requiring additional help.</p> <p>Dolphin Centre staff will be available throughout the building to offer general assistance.</p>
<p><b>Age &amp; Sex (Gender) &amp; Maternity –</b> Concern about security of children’s area</p>	<p>The proposed layout of the library will be changed as a result of feedback received during consultation – children’s area and Bookstart area will be relocated further from the main entrance and café . In addition, flexible bookcases that can be used to cordon off areas have been added to the design proposals in response to this concern.</p>
<p><b>Disability &amp; Maternity –</b> Potentially require more space and therefore disproportionately impacted by the reduction in floor space</p>	<p>The layout of shelving and space will be designed in such a way as to minimise any potential impacts.</p>
<p><b>Disability (Visual Impairment) –</b> Lack of daylight may make it harder to read</p>	<p>The proposed study and conference rooms and reference and non-fiction area will have windows for users who prefer sunlight. In addition, users will be able to take items into the café should they want to.</p> <p>Lighting in other areas will meet accessibility standards.</p>
<p><b>Disability (Hearing Impairment) –</b> Noisier environment of Dolphin Centre may cause difficulties for individuals with hearing impairments</p>	<p>Efforts to minimise noise from other areas of the Dolphin Centre to the new library have already been undertaken e.g. fitness classes will be relocated from Central Hall to The Studio.</p> <p>Looped sound system being installed which will also help minimise background noise for those with hearing aids.</p> <p>Plans include dedicated quiet areas of the library for those who require this e.g. reference library.</p>
<p><b>Disability (Mental Health) – Art</b> Gallery can be therapeutic for individuals with mental health issues</p>	<p>Officers will explore options to find an alternative space for the Art Gallery.</p> <p>Arts-based programmes targeting individuals with mental health issues are provided within the Borough and will continue to be advertised by the Council , including by the Library Service.</p>

**(b) Cockerton Library**

Listed below are the impacts identified from the previous Equality Impact

Assessment carried out as part of the MTFP earlier this year. However, it is likely that the majority of the impacts will be mitigated with the introduction of the volunteer supported model discussed later in this report. Once the final model is agreed, the Equality Impact Assessment will be updated to identify any potential impacts.

Impact	Mitigation
<p>Negative impact on older people with physical impairment or limited mobility who are unable to access the town centre library</p>	<p>Signpost older people to bus services and transport options to town centre and promote these within Cockerton Library. Explanation of raised bus stop platforms and buses that lower themselves when stationary to aid access on and off.</p> <p>Provide advice regarding free bus passes. Promote the extension of the Housebound service for those who for health or mobility reasons can't travel to the town centre. Current eligibility criteria for the Housebound service to be reviewed.</p> <p>For residents of Squires Court, to look at leaving deposit collections of books, delivery via the Housebound service and refreshing stock every few weeks.</p>
<p>Negative impact on primary school children attending the three local primary schools who walk to Cockerton library.</p>	<p>Primary schools currently use a contracted bus for swimming lessons at the Dolphin Centre. The schools may be able to look at timetabling their visits to the library to coincide with the swimming lessons.</p> <p>The library service could do more outreach work with the primary schools.</p> <p>The library service will leave the primary schools deposit collections of books, including specific themes for projects.</p>
<p>Negative impact on people with a visual impairment, which could potentially contribute to a loss of independence, increased loneliness and isolation.</p>	<p>A familiarisation session with the new central library would be offered to those who felt it would be beneficial to them.</p>
<p>Negative impact on people with dementia and their carers and those with other mental health issues, by closing a library facility that is a safe and familiar place where they feel comfortable and which provides a social outlet and access to a range of appropriate materials.</p>	<p>A dementia café and a dementia hub are available within Crown Street Library and it is planned to relocate these services to the Dolphin Centre if the library transfers to that venue.</p> <p>A familiarisation session with the new central library would be offered to those who felt it would be beneficial to them.</p>
<p>Negative impact for those individuals with a learning disability and their carers who live in the local area by closing a library facility that is</p>	<p>A familiarisation session with the new central library would be offered to those who felt it would be beneficial to them.</p>

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
a safe and familiar place, where they feel comfortable.	

(c) **Withdrawal of Mobile Library Service**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Negative impact for older people for whom the journey into town may be a deterrent to using the library, increasing isolation and loneliness.	Extension of the Home Library service.
Negative impact for those people with a mobility impairment, visual impairment, learning disability, long term limiting illness or multiple impairments, or mental health issues, who rely upon the mobile library for the opportunity to browse and select a choice of books and who may be unable to travel into the town centre. This may create or increase isolation and loneliness and will remove a social outlet.	Extension of the Home Library service.
Negative impact on schoolchildren on the mobile library route. This may be the only chance some of them have to access a library.	More outreach work by the library. Deposit collections of books left with schools.
Negative impact on young children at nurseries visited by the mobile library, as they will lose this early introduction to the library service.	More outreach work by the library. Deposit collections left with nurseries.

**Library Plan**

125. The Library Plan is part of the Council's Policy Framework and following the information gathered from the previous consultation, the most recent consultation and the Local Needs Assessment, the Library Plan has now been updated (**Appendix 2**), which will form the basis of the future direction of the service, subject to Member approval.

126. The vision for the library service is:

***To provide a sustainable, accessible and inclusive library service for the people of Darlington.***

127. The objectives for the library service are:



- (a) Improve access to learning and library services so that local people can fully engage in education, employment and community activities.
- (b) Create a modern, sustainable, cost-effective and innovative model for the delivery and development of the public library service, which responds to the community's need.
- (c) Provide opportunities and pathways for people to other learning and cultural activities.
- (d) Promote the value of learning and the enjoyment of culture

128. The Library Plan covers the period 2017-2021 and will be delivered in three phases:

- (a) **Phase One:**  
Moving the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre and delivering a volunteer supported model for Cockerton
- (b) **Phase Two:**  
Opening the new Central Library in the Dolphin Centre and supporting Cockerton Library Cooperative
- (c) **Phase Three:**  
Future Developments

129. Adopting and implementing the Library Plan will give the opportunity to move the library service forward focusing on the services provided and expanding participation. There are opportunities to look for external funding to deliver a range of innovative and creative programmes with the Library at the core, particularly using arts and culture as a way of getting new people into the Library and library users into art and culture.

130. The potential will be following the relocation of the Library a range of activities and programmes will be developed and implemented. Examples are:

- (a) Developing one membership card for Library and Leisure activities.
- (b) Work alongside the Move More Team to support learning through dance and sport.
- (c) Engage volunteers to support the delivery of ICT as digital buddies and to assist in the digitalisation of the resources of the Centre for Local Studies.
- (d) Work with existing user groups in the Dolphin Centre and integrate them into the library timetable.
- (e) Offer the Library as a facility to 'The Zone' each Friday evening.  
(‘The Zone’ aims to make sport more widely available to disadvantaged young people and utilise the power of sport to change young lives, and change disadvantaged communities. The Zone takes place at the Dolphin Centre

every Friday evening 7pm-9pm and targets young people aged 11 – 16yrs. The two hours includes coach led activities delivered by Move More coaches encouraging young people to move more in a safe town centre environment. Activities include gym access, swimming, badminton, trampolining, table tennis, football, dodge ball, music room and more).

- (f) Take an active role in the development of arts in the town, increasing the effective partnership with arts and culture groups, including the Civic Theatre and the Head of Steam, to place the Library at the heart of the town's cultural hub.
- (g) Support local creative businesses through exhibition and events.

- 131. There is an opportunity to work with organisations and agencies in the local health sector. The Library has the potential to be a key partner in the dissemination of health and social care information as well as signposting users to online facilities and specialist agencies.
- 132. Alongside the service provision within the Dolphin Centre and the partnership with Cockerton Library Cooperative, the Outreach Library Service is a fundamental part of reaching as many members of the community as possible. Sports Development provides an excellent model to learn from and replicate where appropriate to increase the reach of the library service.
- 133. This Library Plan presents a real opportunity to focus on the service, increasing usage and access.

### **HR Implications**

- 134. Library staff and staff across Cultural Services have been updated on the current position of the Library Service and will continue to be involved moving forward. Formal consultation on a revised structure and roles will be re-entered into with staff at the appropriate time. Library staff were placed at risk of redundancy and this situation remains unchanged as the revised restructure will still result in a number of redundancies. The redundancies are due to a number of factors including modernisation including self-serve, cessation of the mobile service, removal of building management/facility responsibilities and reduction in lone working considerations due to being in a well occupied building.

### **Financial Implications**

- 135. The overall savings from the Library Proposals of £449,000 as identified in the MTFP report in June 2016 are still deliverable:, however they will be phased in due to the need to provide transitional funding for Cockerton Library. The breakdown of savings is as follows :-
  - (a) Relocation of Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre saving £375,000 less £65,000 for contribution for capital.
  - (b) £53,000 for the transfer of Cockerton Library to a volunteer supported model.

(c) £56,000 from ceasing the Mobile Library Service.

(d) £30,000 from a reduced Local Studies.

136. As the implementation of the Library Proposals have been delayed following the report to Cabinet in September 2016 with the anticipated relocation taking place early 2018 as opposed to early 2017. The revenue implications have been factored into the MTFP. The impact is as follows:

(a) 2016/17      £23,000

(b) 2017/18      £379,000

137. Therefore the cumulative impact of the delay on the MTFP is estimated to be £402,000 however at this stage it is not possible to be 100% accurate due to a number of remaining uncertainties that could impact on the implementation date. Should the relocation of the central library proceed and the building is not disposed of there is a cost to the Council of £47,000 per year until the building is sold or put to another use which would need to be funded from within the Councils Corporate Landlord budget.

138. The capital investment required for the relocation to the Dolphin Centre is estimated to be £1.1million (and the repayment costs are offset against the overall saving as identified in 133(a) above) with a further £600,000 to carry out Phase 2 of the Mechanical and Electrical works within the Dolphin Centre.

Note: this would need to be done regardless of the Library relocation.

139. Within the proposal for Cockerton Library, there is a request that the Council support transitional arrangements for five years until Cockerton Library Cooperative are in a position to fund the requested 18 hours of professional library staff support, plus associated with this will be approximately £15,000 per annum, therefore for the five years, £75,000. In addition to this, there is the potential of a further £10,000 for window replacement.

## **Alternative Proposals**

### **(a) Central Library to remain at Crown Street**

140. As part of the original MTFP proposals, consideration was given to the Central Library being retained in Crown Street, reducing staffing, supplies and services, as well as spending up to £800,000 on essential repairs/refurbishment (Note: this is an estimated cost with no detailed work carried out). The savings associated with this proposal would be:

(a) Staffing up to potentially	£150,000
(b) Supplies and services (including books)	£60,000
(c) Less financing costs for refurbishment/maintenance work	£47,000
(d) Total saving	£163,000

141. Therefore to retain the service in Crown Street, there would be a potential saving of £163,000 which when compared against relocating to the Dolphin Centre is

£147,000 less.

142. It also needs to be noted that it is likely that further costs would be associated with the Crown Street building in coming years as it is an aging building, which will require significant investment and will continue to be a liability to the Council.
143. Alongside the financial benefit of relocating the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre is sustainability and future of both the Library Service and the Dolphin Centre. By relocating the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre enables the Council to consolidate services into one building that has recently had significant investment, and which is one of the main buildings in the town centre that attracts footfall of up to 1 million per year.
144. Overall there are significant benefits of relocating the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre for both the Library Service and the Dolphin Centre. Co-location provides the opportunity to extend the reach and utilisation of both services therefore ensuring their sustainability into the future.

## **(b) Alternative Proposal to retain Crown Street**

### Darlington for Culture

145. Attached at **Appendix 9** is a detailed proposal from Darlington for Culture (DfC) as part of the MTFP report which proposes a new model of governance and ideas on how the service can be retained at Crown Street and developed. There is a lot of detail and assumptions made in their proposal and challenges to the MTFP proposal.
146. The proposal identifies more work and time are required to deliver the proposal and indeed to test whether it is deliverable on behalf of the proposers as number of unknowns and risks remain in the submission itself.
147. A number of meetings were held with the group involved in producing the proposal and a great deal of information shared and advice given by offers particularly surrounding income and profit projections contained within the proposal.
148. The key financial element of the proposal is income generation as it assumes a profit on sales and hires of £154,350 per year by Year 3 of operation. Those figures in officers' views are extremely optimistic. The breakdown of the profits is set out at Page 16 of Appendix 9. There is clearly some possibility to raise income if investment is made in the building and marketing but such levels do appear unrealistic. Without such profit levels the proposal is financially short of targets set out in the MTFP. An independent review of the business case was commissioned from Price Waterhouse and Cooper (PWC) attached at **Appendix 10**. In which they conclude we do not feel there was sufficient evidence to support the proposed income levels set out in the business plan. In addition, the proposal would see the continued use of Crown Street and this creates an unbudgeted potential financial risk as this building continues to require significant repairs whereas relocation of the service to the Dolphin Centre which has undergone significant refurbishment recently removes this risk.

149. The Council is facing a significant financial challenge and delivery of financial savings is essential to ensure the delivery of a balanced budget, any under delivery or delays in savings will lead to the need to cut or cease more services. Given the state of completeness and the inherent financial risks it is not recommended that this proposal is taken forward.

### **Survey by Friends of the Darlington Library**

150. Attached at **Appendix 11** is a paper circulated to all Councillors on 14 December 2016 and although not formally submitted to the Council it is included in this report for completeness.

### **Other information**

151. Members should also have regard to representations and emails that they have received direct from members of the public expressing views about the proposals (including the proposals to relocate the Central Library Service from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre).

### **Procurement Advice**

152. The procurement of both the building works and M&E installation required to the Dolphin Centre has been considered by the Corporate Procurement Unit and assessed as non-strategic.

153. It is anticipated that works will commence in summer 2017, Building Services will deliver the works and will procure those packages of works, which it is not delivering in-house, in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules to ensure that value for money is obtained into the expenditure.