

## LIBRARIES - MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY

<b>Cabinet Date</b>	19 June 2019
<b>Public Protection, Parking &amp; Libraries</b>	Cllr David Norman
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Background Documents</b>	<p><b>Library Strategy:</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Decision:</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 2 – Current users of the public mobile library service</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 3 – Maps showing Acorn &amp; Deprivation data; Users Access to Libraries by Car &amp; Public Transport.</b></p>
<b>Location/Contact for inspection of Background Documents</b>	<p><b>Library Strategy:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/3413/updated_strategy1_-_64623.pdf">https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/3413/updated_strategy1_-_64623.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Cabinet Decision:</b></p> <p><a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=264">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=264</a></p>
<b>Main Consultees</b>	<p>Current public mobile library users</p> <p>Relevant GCC Officers and internal support services</p>
<b>Planned Dates</b>	June/July 2019 – consultation with public mobile library users to determine impact of decision on their ability to access Library services

<p><b>Divisional Councillor</b></p>	<p>Cllr Brian Oosthuysen (Rodborough)</p> <p>Cllr Brian Robsinson (Mitcheldean)</p> <p>Cllr John Cordwell (Wotton under Edge)</p> <p>Cllr Keith Rippington (Bisley &amp; Painswick)</p> <p>Cllr Lynden Stowe (Campden-Vale)</p> <p>Cllr Nigel Moor (Stow-on-the-Wold)</p> <p>Cllr Patrick Molyneux (Sedbury)</p> <p>Cllr Paul Hodgkinson (Bourton-on-the-Water &amp; Northleach)</p> <p>Cllr Phil Awford (Highnam)</p> <p>Cllr Rachel Smith (Minchinhampton)</p> <p>Cllr Richard Boyles (Blakeney &amp; Bream)</p> <p>Cllr Robert Bird (Bishops Cleeve)</p> <p>Cllr Roger Wilson (Winchcombe &amp; Woodmancote)</p> <p>Cllr Shaun Parsons (South Cerney)</p> <p>Cllr Stephen Davies (Hardwicke &amp; Severn)</p> <p>Cllr Stephen Hirst (Tetbury)</p> <p>Cllr Steve Robinson (Nailsworth)</p> <p>Cllr Vernon Smith (Tewkesbury East)</p> <p>Cllr Will Windsor-Clive (Newent)</p>
<p><b>Officer</b></p>	<p>Jane Everiss, Head of Library &amp; Registration Services  01452 425027  Jane.everiss@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b></p>	<p>To seek authorisation from Cabinet to purchase a new small hybrid or electric delivery vehicle to provide a community pick up and drop off service.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p>To purchase a new small hybrid or electric delivery vehicle (rather than a new public mobile library vehicle) which can be used to deliver collections to customers and community pick up and drop off points.</p>

<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	<p>The recommendations set out herein would provide best value for Council financial resources when we consider that over half of the users contacted by the service can access an alternative library location. This recommendation will negate as far as is possible the adverse impact on the public mobile library users, as more particularly described in the main body of this report.</p>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	<p>The Library Service is liaising with GFRS to see if there is a vehicle within the GCC fleet that is no longer needed in the near future which would be suitable for the Library service to use temporarily.</p> <p>An estimated capital cost of up to £25,000 will be required for the purchase of a new delivery vehicle which will be funded through a combination of the first £10,000 of any capital receipts achieved through the sale of the current library vehicle and existing Library S106 contributions.</p> <p>Ongoing staffing costs will remain the same but it is anticipated that fuel and maintenance costs will reduce. Any savings made will be invested into the core library book budget.</p>

## MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

### 1. Background

The public mobile library service was identified in the 2012 Library Strategy as being used by 0.3% of the county population and an expensive means of providing a library service at £62 per opening hour. In 2012 the average cost of a physical library visit was £2.41.

It was believed at that time that efficiencies would be achieved by providing a vehicle that would be shared by partner services. The partners mentioned were health and police and it was clearly understood that the partners would contribute to the running costs of the service. In the first year the police did contract with us for PCSOs to either travel with the public mobile library vehicle or join it at stops but this ended when the Police & Crime Commissioner bought a dedicated police information van. Health Watch did also join the public mobile library vehicle for a few days a year and we do hire the advertising space on the side of the vehicle to a range of partners including Foster Care and the 2Yr old funding programme, however the anticipated income has not materialised.

We recognise that mobile libraries are especially valued by people who can not easily access alternative library provision. Research showed us in 2012 that about 50% of registered mobile library users also use a static library; however based on our recent contact with customers that figure has risen to 66%.

Of the 1,215 borrowers registered as public mobile library users in 2018/19 only 437 (36%) have actively used the service in the past year.

The costs relating to the public mobile library in 2018/19 were £43,819 which equates to £101 per active borrower. Our cost per physical visit to libraries in 2018/19 was £1.78.

The costs associated with providing a public mobile library service to a declining numbers of borrowers is rising. This has an impact on staffing and number of stops. In 2013/14 we called at 56 stops equating to 21 hours service per week. By 2016/17 this had reduced to 51 stops with 16.25 hours service per week and in 2018/19 we now visit 50 stops with 15 hours of service per week. In order to make the service as efficient as possible and ensure we are meeting the needs of the rural communities we review the stops annually. We need to work within budget whilst also allowing time to carry out servicing and maintenance on the vehicle.

The vehicle was taken in for its 8 weekly safety inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019, whereupon several urgent defects were found. Investigations have subsequently revealed that repairs to the vehicle would be in excess of £28,000. Even if these repairs were undertaken there is also no guarantee that the vehicle would remain roadworthy for a further year.

## 2. Learning from Neighbouring Authorities

Information was sought from Library Authorities within the South West. Of those that responded, 3 authorities have ceased their mobile library service provision completely and 4 have retained a mobile library service with Somerset currently purchasing a new vehicle.

**Costs for new public mobile vehicle:** Based on the information provided by Authorities in the South West an approximate cost for a new vehicle of the current size would be between £115k and £120k. One authority costed a far smaller vehicle which came in at approximately £65K.

## 3. Mobile Library Service User Feedback

Current active public mobile library users have been contacted to discuss whether they require any temporary provision to be made in the absence of the service.

As at 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 360 Customers have been contacted since the vehicle was taken off the road in March 2019. We have been unable to contact 77 customers due to their contact details being out of date. Of the customers we contacted:

228 have been able to access their reservations or borrow stock from a static library.

73 have asked for their current items to be renewed until the mobile library vehicle returns.

12 are accessing stock from their own collections or community collections.

26 are not choosing to use the service but plan to use the mobile library vehicle on its return.

21 have asked for alternative provision

Whilst we are currently only providing a home delivery service to those customers who require alternative provision immediately we will need to determine longer term options for 132 customers who are not accessing our service through an alternative library service point.

#### 4. Financial Implications

The detail shown below shows the capital and revenue costs of a new mobile library vehicle with a lifespan of 10 years and assuming a capital investment of £115,000 based on the current specification. It demonstrates that this option would be far less cost effective than procuring a smaller delivery vehicle providing a community drop off and pick up service.

Revenue Costs (approximate)											
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Total Revenue costs
Staffing	£27,371	£28,478	£29,618	£30,210	£30,815	£31,431	£32,060	£32,701	£33,355	£34,022	£310,061
Fuel	£3,500	£3,574	£3,645	£3,718	£3,792	£3,868	£3,946	£4,025	£4,105	£4,187	£38,360
Capital cost	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£3,450	£34,500
Vehicle Maintenance	£5,000	£5,150	£5,305	£5,464	£5,628	£7,169	£7,384	£7,605	£7,834	£8,069	£64,606
<b>Total annual revenue costs</b>	<b>£39,321</b>	<b>£40,652</b>	<b>£42,018</b>	<b>£42,842</b>	<b>£43,685</b>	<b>£45,918</b>	<b>£46,840</b>	<b>£47,781</b>	<b>£48,744</b>	<b>£49,728</b>	<b>£447,527</b>
Capital investment (approximate)	£115,000										£115,000
<b>Total Capital and revenue cost whole life costing</b>											<b>£562,527</b>

These costs are based on the following assumptions:

- The cost of a capital scheme would be 3% per year as we would not borrow externally but use either internal borrowing or capital receipts to fund the purchase of a vehicle.
- The vehicle maintenance is based on approximately £5k maintenance costs in the first 5 years then £7k plus 3% inflation added each year.
- Staffing costs are based on the current level of staffing with a 2% increase each year.
- Historic Diesel fuel price per litre has increase 19.5% over the last decade – which averaging out could be 1.95% per year, therefore we have worked on an assumption of a 2% year on year increase as the best estimate currently.

The Library Service is liaising with GFRS to see if there is a vehicle within the GCC fleet that is no longer needed in the near future which would be suitable for the Library service to use temporarily.

An estimated capital cost of approximately £25,000 will be required for the purchase of a new hybrid or electric delivery vehicle which will be funded through a combination of any capital receipts achieved through the sale of the current library vehicle and existing Library S106 contributions.

Ongoing staffing costs will remain the same but it is anticipated that fuel and maintenance costs will reduce. Any savings made will be invested into the core library book budget.

## **5. Staffing Implications**

This proposal would affect the role undertaken by the current post holder. As the duties within this post would change we would look to avoid or mitigate the need for redundancy by seeking to identify a suitable alternative position through consultation with the employee and Trades Unions. Since the vehicle has been out of service the post holder has undertaken alternative duties, supporting customers' access to services.

## **6. Options**

### **Option 1 - Withdraw current mobile library vehicle**

Withdrawing the mobile library service as Authorities in neighbouring counties such as Swindon and South Gloucestershire have done, would be highly likely to lead to some customers in rural locations not being able to access library services at all. This option would not enable us to meet our equality duties for those customers with protected characteristics.

### **Option 2 - Invest in new mobile vehicle and continue with current service**

The capital costs associated with investing in a new public mobile library vehicle do not provide the best use of limited Council budgets when we consider that over half of the users contacted can access an alternative library location.

### **Option 3 - Invest in small delivery vehicle to provide community drop off and pick up points**

A new small hybrid or electric delivery vehicle could be used to deliver collections to customer and community pick up and drop off points. These collections can either be ordered online by customers who are able to do so or will be chosen by library staff based on customers preference. This will introduce a more cost effective and environmentally efficient vehicle

### **Option 4 - Invest in new mobile vehicle, and engage partners to expand the offer to rural communities**

The capital costs associated with investing in a new public mobile library vehicle do not provide the best use of limited Council budgets when we consider that over half of the users contacted can access an alternative library location. Additionally, we have historically tried to engage with partners to expand the offer provided through the vehicle without success.

Officer recommendation is Option 3.

## **7. Risk Assessment**

There is a risk that even with community drop off and collection points some customers may not be able to access these locations. This risk is likely to be higher for elderly customers and those in more isolated locations.

This risk may be mitigated by individual discussions with those customers and exploring what alternative arrangements could be put in place so that they can continue to access reading material.

## **8. Officer Advice**

The capital costs associated with providing a new public mobile library vehicle do not provide the best use of limited Council budgets when we consider that over half of the users contacted can access an alternative library location.

Therefore the recommendation is to consider the purchase of a new small hybrid/electric delivery vehicle which can be used to deliver collections to customer and community pick up and drop off points. These collections can either be ordered online by customers who are able to do so or will be chosen by library staff based on customers preference. This vehicle may also be needed to cope with the increase in deliveries that may be required through more people ordering online and reserving stock to static locations. An added benefit is that this will introduce a more cost effective and environmentally efficient vehicle.

## **9. Equalities considerations**

It is likely that a small number of older, disabled, children and young people are more likely to be affected by this proposal. Through consultation the Library Service will aim to identify those individuals who may not be able to access a service through the use of customer access points. Individual conversations will be had with those people who have been identified in order that we can explore alternative provision for them to continue to access library services.

Cabinet Members should read and consider the Due Regard Statement in order to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

## **10. Consultation feedback**

If provisional agreement is reached, the Library Service will undertake a comprehensive customer engagement with the current public mobile library users in order to inform the future service. We will talk to local community venues to identify pick up and drop off points. For those customers who cannot easily get to an identified venue we will endeavour to find an alternative provision that suits their needs and ensure they can continue to access library book stock.

## **11. Performance Management/Follow-up**

The library service will continue to monitor the provision of services to those that have been identified in order to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of those customers.



<b>Report Title</b>	Mobile Library Service Strategy
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	Public Library & Museums Act 1964
<b>Relevant County Council policy</b>	Library Strategy 2012
<b>Resource Implications</b>	<p>We are currently liaising with GFRS to see if there is a vehicle within the GCC fleet that is no longer needed in the near future which would be suitable for the Library service to use temporarily.</p> <p>An estimated capital cost of approximately £25,000 will be required for the purchase of a new delivery vehicle which will be funded through a combination of any capital receipts achieved through the sale of the current library vehicle and existing Library S106 contributions.</p> <p>Ongoing staffing costs will remain the same but it is anticipated that fuel and maintenance costs will reduce. Any savings made will be invested into the core library book budget.</p>
<b>Sustainability checklist:</b>	
Partnerships	There will be a need to engage local community venues to become drop off and pick up points for customers. We have investigated a partnership with RVS to deliver books to those who cannot easily leave their homes but this is cost prohibitive. We may need to engage partners or volunteers in the delivery of services to those who may not be able to access the community locations.
Decision Making and Involvement	The Library Service will undertake a comprehensive customer survey in order to inform future use. Local representatives will also be engaged with in order to represent the concerns of their constituents.
Economy and Employment	If we are able to identify local community venues as drop off and pick up points this may encourage more people within their local communities to use these venues. There is unlikely to be a significant impact however on the economy or employment through this option.
Caring for people	The Library Service will undertake a comprehensive customer survey in order to inform future use and ensure that the needs of customers are met as far as is possible. Local community

	<p>drop off points will allow people to be able to access Library stock within their community environment. The Library Service will endeavour to make alternative arrangements for those customers who may be unable to access any new collection or drop off points.</p>
Social Value	<p>If we are able to use local community venues as drop off and pick up points this may encourage more people within their local communities to use these venues.</p>
Built Environment	<p>Not applicable</p>
Natural Environment' including Ecology (Biodiversity)	<p>If we purchase a small delivery van we aim to procure an electric or hybrid vehicle that will bring positive environmental benefits . The current mobile vehicle is a large diesel HGV and due to it's age is likely to have high levels of emissions.</p>
Education and Information	<p>We will liaise with our Communications team to ensure that a full communications plan is in place to keep customers fully informed about the changes. The library service will support customers who may need help in accessing our services online. This may include teaching them how to use a digital device to order physical stock for collection or delivery, or to download our e-stock.</p>
<b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	<p>Carbon Emissions Implications? Positive Vulnerable to climate change? Yes</p>
<b>Due Regard Statement</b>	<p>Has a Due Regard Statement been completed? Yes Yes - considerations included in main body of report</p> <p>A copy of the full Due Regard Statement can be accessed on GLOSTEXT via <a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1</a></p> <p>Alternatively a hard copy is available for inspection from Jo Moore, Democratic Services Unit, e-mail: <a href="mailto:jo.moore@gloucestershire.gov.uk">jo.moore@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<b>Human rights Implications</b>	<p>None identified</p>
<b>Consultation Arrangements</b>	<p>Current public mobile library users are being contacted individually in order to ensure they can continue to access services whilst the vehicle is off the road. If provisional agreement is reached the Library Service aims to undertake a comprehensive customer survey in order to inform future use.</p>