



Agenda Item

**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER DECISION – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, CULTURE,  
TOURISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**18 October 2021**

Report of the Executive Director – Place

**Changes to Library Opening Hours at Whaley Bridge Library**

**1. Divisions Affected**

1.1 High Peak.

**2. Key Decision**

2.1 This is not a Key Decision.

**3. Purpose**

3.1 To seek approval for changes in opening hours at Whaley Bridge Library in line with the Derbyshire Public Library Service Strategy and, to make changes to staffing levels to achieve required savings.

**4. Information and Analysis**

4.1 At its meeting on 20 December 2018, Cabinet gave approval to implement the Derbyshire Public Library Service Strategy (Minute No.300/18 refers). Included in the Strategy were proposals to transfer 20 libraries and the mobile library service to community management.

4.2 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the process for transferring 20 libraries to a community managed model was progressing via receipt of formal

expressions of interest; this originally included, Whaley Bridge but the initial expression of interest at Whaley Bridge has since been withdrawn.

- 4.3 In approving the Strategy, Cabinet agreed that where there were no expressions of interest from communities, the opening hours in those libraries would be standardised at 18 hours per week and that such a proposal would be subject to a further period of public consultation.

**5. Consultation**

- 5.1 A period of public consultation about proposed changes to opening hours at Whaley Bridge Library, commenced on 19 July 2021 and concluded on 29 August 2021.

- 5.2 The opening hours at the time of the consultation were:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
2pm - 7pm	10am – 5 pm	Closed	10am – 5pm	10am - 1pm	9.30am - 1pm	Closed

- 5.3 The consultation sought to obtain responses on two proposed options to reduce opening hours by 5 ½ hours, together with any other alternative suggestions that consultees wished to make.
- 5.4 A total of 29 responses were received to the consultation. Whilst the proposed reductions to opening hours elicited positive comments about the value of the library service, unsurprisingly a number of respondents were opposed to the proposed changes. However, there were no practical proposals put forward about how savings could be made from the library service budget without making changes to library opening hours. In summary:
- 5.5 Of those that disagreed with the proposal, some felt that ‘any reduction in hours would mean a reduction in use’ and some felt that ‘people would be excluded if the hours were cut further’. Others stressed that ‘libraries and their associated services were an important facility especially for those with less income’ and that they were a ‘key part of communities’. Another commented that ‘people use libraries as a mean of socialising, young mums with babies and toddlers visit. There is very little on offer for the likes of young parents and the elderly who do not have family or friends’.

## 6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The alternative options considered through public consultation were as follows:

### Option 1

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
2pm – 7pm	9.30am - 1pm	Closed	2 pm – 5 pm	9.30am – 1pm	10am – 1pm	Closed

Summary of changes:

- Change opening time on Tuesday from 10am to 9.30am.
- Change closing time on Tuesday from 5pm to 1pm.
- Change opening time on Thursday from 10am to 2pm.
- Change opening time on Friday from 10am to 9.30am.
- Change opening time on Saturday from 9.30am to 10am.

### 6.2 Option 2

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
2pm – 7pm	9.30am – 1pm	Closed	10am – 5pm	Closed	9.30am - 1pm	Closed

Summary of changes:

- Change opening time on Tuesday from 10am to 9.30am.
- Change closing time on Tuesday from 5pm to 1pm.
- Close the library on a Friday.

### 6.3 In summary:

57.1% of respondents strongly agreed with option 1  
21.4% of respondents agreed with option 2

6.4 Of those respondents that preferred option 1, respondents commented that it was better to be open more days a week, even if on reduced hours and that it would be better that the library didn't close on a Friday when people may be off work. Respondents preferring option 2 noted that the library needed to be open earlier on a Saturday and the opening hours were better for the respondents family. Other comments included that the library needs to be open for school children and working adults and that both options lose too many hours and opening hours should be increased.

6.4 Having considered the outputs of consultation and the inherent need to achieve budget savings in line with the Library Strategy, it is proposed that the following opening hours are implemented at Whaley Bridge Library (option 1):

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
2pm – 7pm	9.30am – 1pm	Closed	2pm – 5pm	9.30am - 1pm	10am – 1pm	Closed

## **7. Implications**

7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

## **8. Background Papers**

8.1 Report to Cabinet 20 December 2018 – Public Library Strategy (Minute No. 300/18)

## **9. Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 - Implications.

## **10. Recommendation**

10.1 That the Cabinet Member:

- a) Approves the implementation of the proposed changes to opening hours at Whaley Bridge Library, as set out in Paragraph 6.4 of this report.

## **11. Reasons for Recommendation**

11.1 Following consultation, the vast majority of respondents (57.1%) expressed a preference to the opening hours set out in Option 1; this enables the Library Service to not only manage public expectations following consultation, but also to meet the budgetary pressures set out in the Library Strategy.

## **12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?**

12.1 No.

**Report Author:** Michelle Parker

**Contact details:** [Michelle.parker@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Michelle.parker@derbyshire.gov.uk)

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<p><b>On behalf of:</b></p> <p>Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer Director of Finance and ICT Managing Executive Director Executive Director(s)</p>	
--	--

## Implications

### Financial

- 1.1 The reduction in opening hours is part of an overall package of opening hours reductions intended to realise approximately £100,000 of savings from the library service budget.

### Legal

- 2.1 The provision of public libraries is governed by various pieces of legislation, most notably The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Section 7 states: *“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof;”*  
*NB: the terms ‘comprehensive and efficient’ are not defined in the Act.*
- 2.2 In fulfilling its duty, the Council should have particular regard to the desirability of:  
*“i) Securing that facilities are available for borrowing books, records, films etc. sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the needs of all, and the special requirements of adults and children*  
*ii) Encouraging adults and children to make full use of the service and provide advice.”*
- 2.3 A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken on the whole of the Derbyshire Public Library Service Strategy from May to July 2018. An analysis of the results of this consultation were included in the report approved by Cabinet on 20 December 2018. The specific consultation exercise that took place between 19 July 2021 and 29 August 2021 regarding the proposed revision of opening hours at Whaley Bridge Library elicited 29 responses; these have been duly considered in preparing this proposal.

### Human Resources

- 3.1 There are no established staff at Whaley Bridge Library.
- 3.2 The changes to library opening hours may impact on cleaning and caretaking staff who currently undertake duties in libraries. Property Services managers are liaising with the Library Service to identify any possible impact on these staff.

### Information Technology

- 4.1 The proposed reduction in hours will not impact on information technology provision at Whaley Bridge Library but a reduction in opening hours may impact on the opportunities for access to computers at the premises.

## **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 A full Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) was included in the original report to Cabinet on 20 December 2018. The proposed changes to opening hours are in line with the overall assessments made at the time of the original EIA and therefore an additional assessment is not considered necessary at this stage.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 Implementing the Public Library Service Strategy is confirmed in the Council Plan as a priority and includes proposals to transfer 20 libraries, and the mobile library service, to community management.

## **Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

- 7.1 N/A.