COMMUNITY RESILIENCE UPDATE: LIBRARY SERVICE TRANSFORMATION AND COMMUNITY HUBS

To:	**Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee**
Meeting Date:	**14 March 2017**
From:	**Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment**
Electoral division(s):	**All**
Forward Plan ref:	**n/a** *Key decision:* **No**
Purpose:	**To update Members on the thinking on the development of libraries as community hubs.**
Recommendation:	**The Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee is asked to:**

> **a) Note the report and the work done to date and timescales for future engagement and public consultation**

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1   In January 2015, Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee (HCI) approved the draft strategy *Library Services in Cambridgeshire: Developing our approach for the Future* for public consultation. The strategy and the results of the consultation are published on the Council's web site.

1.2   One of the themes of the strategy was 'Maximising the use of our Assets', which set out a vision for sharing buildings –and in some cases staff - with other public sector partners (including Children's Centres, Adult Day Centres, District Council services, GP surgeries, town and village halls etc.) in integrated service centres or 'hubs'. These would accommodate the widest range of services in buildings that are well located and connected. They could also be used as touch down centres for mobile workers making use of the internet, WiFi and meeting rooms etc. The consultation response was broadly very positive about the idea of maximising the use of libraries and bringing services together.

2. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2.1   The vision for developing community hubs was then integrated into the Council's Community Resilience Strategy *Stronger Together,* published October 2015, under the theme of 'Community Spaces'. It states that developing a network of community hubs which '*will enable us to rationalise the use of our buildings, using very local knowledge to identify spaces which communities use most, and also will help to build the links between local public and voluntary sector organisations, local businesses and local people.*'

2.2   During 2016, officers began to draw together ideas around how the Council might develop a network of community hubs and 'pop up services' across the county, bringing together our universal, customer facing services and siting them in the heart of communities who need them, based on demographic and needs analysis data.   Early thinking is that these 'hubs' could combine with other public and voluntary sector services, where possible and would be a place in the community where people can access the widest range of information, advice and support - building on the strengths of Libraries as safe, trusted and neutral places used by people of all ages and abilities.

2.3   The Council may then use hubs to complement its Website and Contact Centre, making hubs the first point of contact for face to face service, assisting people to make digital transactions, providing information and being a focus for community development and volunteering.

2.4   This thinking is in line with the Department for Culture Media and Sport's *Ambition for Libraries* strategy, which states: '*Local libraries provide a 'cradle-to-grave' service. They offer significant reach into local communities and a cost-effective way of ensuring that people are connected to the services they need when they need them. This helps local councils achieve their strategic objectives and boosts communities' resilience and independence. Figures 1 and 2 (below) provide examples of the services that libraries and their staff provide to meet individual and community needs.*'
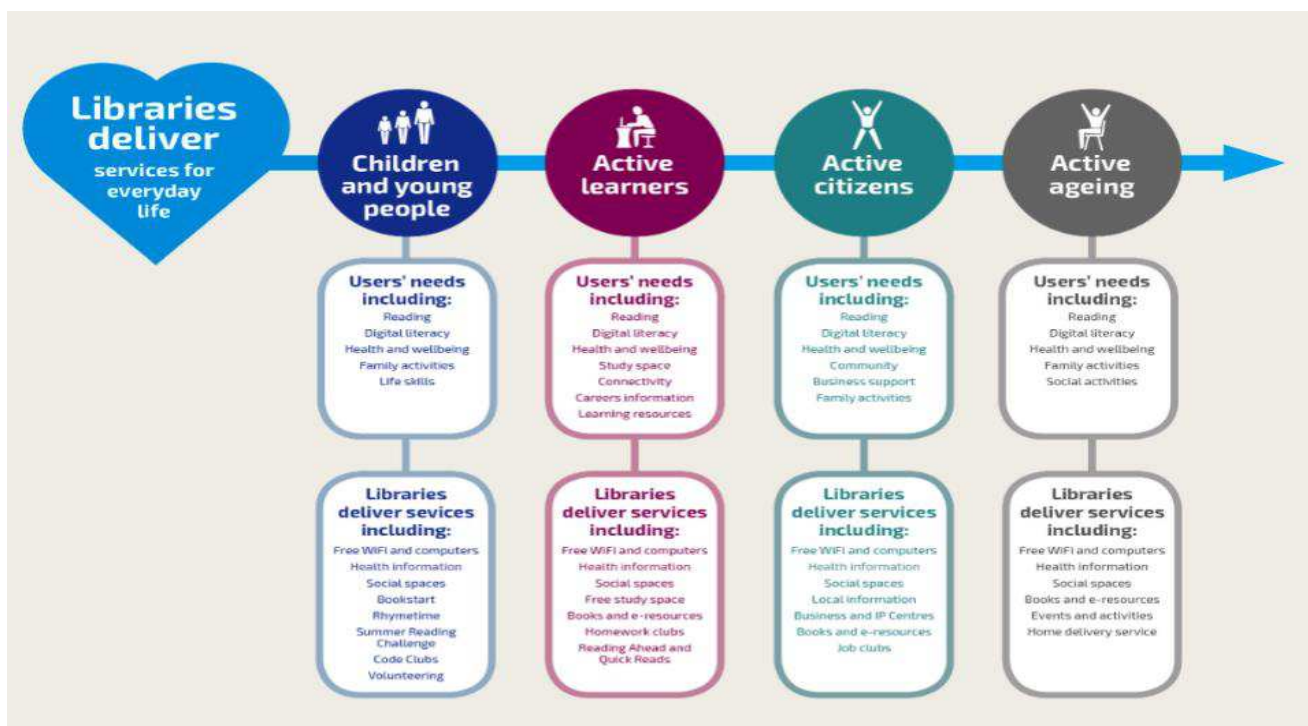
Figure 1: Libraries are for everyone, throughout their lives

Figure 2: Examples of targeted services which libraries provide for specific life situations

3.   CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

3.1   To help shape their thinking officers have under taken a desk top analysis to consider, if this approach is taken forward, where hubs might best be located. Some outline discussions have been held with Members and local community groups to share initial thinking and find out how best we can engage with them in the future.

3.2 All work to date has been about developing ideas – there are no firm proposals as yet for the location or number of Community Hubs. Should Members agree to this work continuing, the way these facilities are developed, how many there should be, and where they should be sited, will come out of discussions with local people, users of our services, and elected Members.

3.3 It is envisaged that each hub would be part of a local community network and that we would provide 'pop up' services in others' facilities, especially in areas of high need. In addition to the network of hubs, it is expected that some specialist facilities will be needed to serve those with the highest needs (e.g. some dedicated Child and Family Centres).

4. LOOKING FORWARD

4.1 Officers intend to resume partner engagement in May 2017 so that the potential and appetite to share services can be more fully discussed at local level with Members, parish councils, community groups and user groups. All of this information and feedback would then be used to inform proposals for public consultation resulting in a final business case for agreement by County Council Committees in autumn 2017.

4.2 While the drivers behind this work are mainly around improving the offer to the most vulnerable people in our community – children, families, older people and adults with disabilities – and maintaining or even enhancing services in the light of growing demand, the council also has to factor in to any considerations for change and the need to deliver savings previously agreed by Members for 2018/19, including a target of £230k in 2018/19 for the Library Service (Business Plan Ref: B/R6.208).

5. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

5.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- Libraries have an important role in terms of developing people's skills and helping them to find employment or start their own business (see paragraph 2.4 fig2.) This is a part of the service offer which could be enhanced through working with partners in community hubs.

5.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- Libraries have a significant role in terms of supporting people to live healthy and independent lives, including providing and promoting public health information and 'books on prescription' (see paragraph 2.4 figs 1 and 2.) This part of the service offer would be further enhanced through working with partners in community hubs.

5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- Libraries are designed to be used by the whole community and specifically assist those who are disadvantaged e.g. through lack of internet access, equipment or skills. They

are often seen and used as a safety net service by vulnerable people, and this aspect of their work could be further enhanced by working with other agencies as part of community hubs.

6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Resource Implications

Although the detailed resource implications are not known at this stage, savings of £1.23m are identified in the Council's business plan from 2018 onwards from rationalising the use of buildings and from sharing staff roles attributed to Children's Centres and Libraries.

6.2 Statutory, Legal and Risk

It is anticipated that library services will be at the heart of the network of community hubs, and the final strategy will need to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service. There is a risk of challenge if final proposals are not deemed to meet this duty, or if public consultation is not carried out appropriately.

6.3 Equality and Diversity

Community Impact Assessments will need to be carried out on all proposals for change, once formulated.

6.4 Engagement and Communications

The report sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 4.1

6.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The report sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 4.1

6.6 Public Health

There are no significant implications in this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes. Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes. Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?	Approved. Name of Officer: Tamar Oviatt-Ham
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes. Name of Officer: Eleanor Bell
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?	Approved. Name of Officer: Tamar Oviatt-Ham
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes. Name of Officer: Iain Green

Source Documents	Location
Library Services in Cambridgeshire: Developing our approach for the Future **Stronger Together: Cambridgeshire County Council's Strategy for Building Resilient Communities.**	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20130/news_and_events_in_libraries/570/library_services_developing_our_approach_for_the_future http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4176/community_resilience_strategy