

Information

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for County Councillors

From:	Mickey Green – Strategic Manager Commissioning Jan Stafford – Strategic Manager Customers and Communities
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Date:	17 December 2015
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To:	All County Councillors
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Listening, Learning, Changing – The future of hubs & libraries

Summary

This provides Members with information about the recent Cabinet decision to proceed with a Listening, Learning, Changing joint engagement exercise with Somerset residents about shared buildings (hubs) and the library service.

Update

The way the way people use libraries is changing and we have a plan for the future of the service, which sets out how we will do everything we can to keep all libraries in Somerset open. This includes a change in library opening hours.

With partners we are creating a number of hubs, which will reduce building running and maintenance costs, making financial savings and help to make services more sustainable and fit for future use. The hubs will be modern, flexible spaces that will bring several local services together, including libraries, in a single building. There is no one size fits all solution, so we will work with local partners to find solutions, which work for local communities.

The first hub will open at Orchard Court (Glastonbury Library) in autumn 2016, with services including the library, children's centre, Citizens Advice, registration services, Mendip District Council and a nursery.

Cabinet considered and agreed proposals on 9 December to proceed with an eight-week engagement exercise, which will commence between 17 December and 11 February 2016. We are seeking feedback from residents to help us understand more about how and when residents access public services, including libraries, and how they could meet resident's needs in the future. This will help us to provide an improved and more efficient customer experience.

As part of the engagement proposal a number of drop in sessions for the public have been arranged at local libraries where members of staff will be on hand to answer any queries. Please could you help us by promoting the engagement exercise in your local area and please let us know if you or anyone else with an interest would like to attend a session. Details of the drop-ins is available via the website www.somerset.gov.uk/hubsandlibraries

Once we have the results from the engagement exercise, we will continue to gather feedback from local communities and will keep local members updated as plans progress.

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