Information

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

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for County Councillors

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| From: | Oliver Woodhams & Sue Crowley |

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| Date: | 25 October 2018 |

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| To: | All County Councillors |

# Somerset Libraries Service Recommendations

Scrutiny for Policies and Place met yesterday to review the recommendations for the future of Somerset’s Libraries Service.

The report, published online last week, shows our aim of striking the right balance in delivering a strong, thriving and comprehensive library service, whilst still meeting our statutory obligations and living within our financial means. The recommended libraries redesign enables us to modernise the Libraries Service and meet local needs.

In summary, Somerset County Council is recommending retaining 19 of its 34 library buildings. These are: Bridgwater town centre, Burnham-on-Sea, Chard, Cheddar, Crewkerne, Dulverton, Frome, Glastonbury, Ilminster, Langport, Martock, Minehead, Shepton Mallet (likely to move to a new location, which would be determined next year), Taunton town centre, Wellington, Wells, Williton, Wincanton and Yeovil town centre.

For the remaining 15 library buildings, we would now seek to develop ‘Community Library Partnerships’ (CLPs) where communities support library buildings in partnership with the County Council.  These are: Bishops Lydeard, Bruton, Castle Cary, Highbridge, Milborne Port, Nether Stowey, North Petherton, Porlock (with the aim to continue their existing Community Library Partnership in its present format), Priorswood (Taunton), Somerton, Street, South Petherton, Sunningdale (Yeovil), Watchet and Wiveliscombe.

We have been speaking to communities for almost a year who are well prepared for the recommendations contained within the report. We are inviting communities affected to submit ‘Community Library Partnerships’ expression of interests by 15 November. This is where communities form partnerships with us to run library buildings themselves. If not forthcoming or if we are unable to agree CLPs, alternative library services as set out in the report would be implemented (such as outreach services and mobile van library stops) and library buildings in these communities could start to close from early 2019.

A final decision is expected to be made at Cabinet on 5 November.

The Cabinet Report contains a lot of supporting information and detail. A link to the report is available at: <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=184&MId=651&Ver=4>

Further information about Community Library Partnerships and other background papers can be found here: <http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the recommendations for your area in more detail, please contact either Ollie Woodhams or Sue Crowley or email [librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk)

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| For more information please contact: | Name: Oliver Woodhams, Strategic Manager, Community and Traded Services  Email: [OWoodhams@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:OWoodhams@somerset.gov.uk)  Tel No.: 07977 400667  Name: Sue Crowley, Strategic Manager, Library Service  Email: [SACrowley@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SACrowley@somerset.gov.uk)  Tel No.: 01823 355429 |



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