LIBRARIES

Following an extensive period of public consultation in 2014/15 about proposed changes to the North Yorkshire County Council Library Service the decision was made in July 2015 to implement the strategy.

The key objectives of the proposals are to:

- Achieve budget savings of £1.4m
- Retain current service provision through partnership working with communities and other agencies
- Minimise the impact on communities through the development of community libraries

From April 2017, three categories of library will exist – core, hybrid, and community managed. All will be part of the North Yorkshire 'family' of libraries and all will need substantial volunteer involvement. The Stronger Communities team is working with the Library Service supporting the transition of 21 libraries into community management, 5 libraries into hybrid form, and recruiting additional volunteers to support the 7 core libraries.

The *core libraries* will be in **Harrogate, Malton, Northallerton, Richmond, Scarborough, Selby and Skipton**. They will be staffed by a combination of paid library staff and volunteers. The core libraries will provide professional support to all the libraries in their District.

There are a further 5 *hybrid libraries* in the new model in **Filey, Knaresborough, Pickering, Ripon, and Whitby.** These are large and busy libraries catering for significant day-time populations. The building management will remain with the council and the hybrids will have a full time staff member supported by volunteers.

An additional 21 **community managed** libraries are being developed. The community libraries will be staffed by volunteers and managed by a charitable trust or similar organisation with on-going professional support from the core libraries. The community libraries will be in **Bedale, Bentham, Boroughbridge, Colburn, Catterick, Crosshills, Easingwold, Eastfield, Helmsley, Ingleton, Kirkbymoorside, Leyburn, Norton, Pateley Bridge, Scalby, Settle, Sherburn, Starbeck**, **Stokesley, Tadcaster** and **Thirsk.**

The Library Service has undergone considerable changes in the last few years. Following the previous consultation in 2010/11, the service embarked on a journey of greater involvement of communities in the running of their local libraries. Since 2012 the Library service has been delivered through 33 county run libraries (nine of which have additional opening hours provided by volunteers recruited by the local community library group); 9 community managed libraries; a Supermobile and the Home Library Service. The service, supported by the voluntary sector through its Active Communities project, worked with local community groups who were passionate about retaining their local library. Good working relationships have developed between these groups and the supporting library staff and the groups and their libraries have gone from strength to strength, expanding the range of services offered to local communities, beyond the core library services. This mixed model of county run and community run and supported libraries has been a successful model to date, delivering a range of services directly to customers and communities in localities and is a solid foundation on which to build.

Failure to transition the libraries into community management and recruit sufficient volunteers will mean library closures or significantly reduced hours. Libraries are trusted, welcoming and warm public spaces providing a wealth of information and access to now vital IT equipment, Wifi and broadband as well as books. Often they are the hub of the community. The impact of losing the library on local communities, especially rural communities that are losing other services (e.g. banks / post offices / job centre outreach / advice services), and those unable to afford to purchase books, PC's and broadband, would be significant.