

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY, 23 APRIL 2018 AT 2.00PM

‘INSPIRING LIBRARIES’ – DELIVERING THE NEXT PHASE

Report of the Director of Resources

Agenda Item
No.

4

Author: Andrew Bignell – Head of Libraries and Heritage Services
(Tel: 01707 281559)

Executive Member: Terry Douris (Education, Libraries and Localism)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the results of work undertaken to explore the case for adopting an alternative delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries as the best means of delivering the ambitions of the ‘Inspiring Libraries’ strategy and achieving budget savings.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The [Inspiring Libraries](#) strategy is an innovative and ambitious programme, designed to ensure that Hertfordshire continues to be a leading library authority, providing high quality library services to meet the changing demands of the next decade.
- 2.2 In November 2017, [Cabinet](#) agreed the ambitions and priorities for the next phase of the ‘Inspiring Libraries’ strategy from 2018-2021, and asked for exploratory work to be undertaken to consider whether an alternative delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries would be the best way to achieve these ambitions.
- 2.3 A multi-disciplinary project group has been convened, and a successful application has been made to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Mutuels Support Programme to provide independent support and advice.
- 2.4 An initial options appraisal identified a Public Service Mutual, as the most appropriate alternative model for the delivery of library services.
- 2.5 A public consultation exercise in January and February indicates a high level of public support for the ‘Inspiring Libraries’ ambitions. The results show a range of views on the proposal to create an alternative delivery model. 30.9% broadly supported the proposal; 41.7% broadly opposed it, but the large number (27.4%) who expressed no preference meant there was no clear majority for or against. The principal concern for most respondents was maintaining the quality of the library service. Those who supported an alternative delivery model strongly favoured a Public Service Mutual as the preferred model.

- 2.6 The initial high level financial case for a Public Service Mutual indicates that it could be a financially viable model, and could achieve most, but not all of the £500,000 saving requirement without reductions in services. Maintaining the service 'in-house' would require significant service reductions in order to meet this target.
- 2.7 The Outline Business Case concludes that a Public Service Mutual is the model offering the greatest scope to continue to deliver an affordable, sustainable and responsive public library service to Hertfordshire residents now and in the future. However, more work is required to test this conclusion in a Full Business Case.
- 2.8 Although the County Council has not had experience in setting up a Public Service Mutual, it has a good track record in the successful development and implementation of alternative delivery vehicles tailored to meet the needs of particular services, such as Herts for Learning (HfL) and Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL).

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Education, Libraries & Localism Cabinet Panel will consider a report on this item of business at its meeting on 17 April 2018. The Panel will be invited to recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet:
- i. endorses the Outline Business Case, attached at Appendix A to the report, which has identified that the County Council should adopt a Public Service Mutual as the preferred model for the future delivery of library services, subject to the agreement of a detailed Business Case.
 - ii. delegates to the Director of Resources to proceed to developing the Full Business Case and detailed Business Plan to support the setting up of a Public Service Mutual for approval by Cabinet in the autumn of 2018.
- 3.2 The Panel's recommendations to Cabinet will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

4. Background – Inspiring Libraries Strategy

- 4.1 '[Inspiring Libraries](#): a new strategy for Hertfordshire Library Service 2014-2024' was adopted by Cabinet on 14 July 2014, following an extensive public consultation, to set the vision and direction for the service over the next ten years, and provide a framework for future decisions about service priorities. The vision that informed the strategy is set out in 4.2 below.

4.2

Inspiring Libraries Vision and Values

Our vision is to create inspiring library services that enable Hertfordshire citizens to enrich their lives.

- Hertfordshire Libraries will enable individuals to access knowledge, information and cultural resources for themselves, and provide support for those who may

need more help.

- Hertfordshire Libraries will provide safe spaces (both physical and virtual) where anyone can go, without judgement, to read, to borrow, to learn, to access information and online resources.
- Hertfordshire Libraries will enrich communities by fostering local culture and heritage, and providing opportunities for citizens to participate actively in community life.

4.3 The strategy focussed on three main themes:

- The library as a vibrant community asset
- The digital library
- The library as an enhanced gateway to reading, information and wellbeing

4.4 These themes were designed to ensure that the library service remained relevant to changing community needs and customer demands, and sustainable within a reducing local government budget. It set the following goals for the service in 2024:

- to have a network of libraries that are valued local assets at the very heart of the communities they serve.
- to attract more visitors (physical, virtual and outreach).
- to be open to residents for longer hours.
- to cost the taxpayer less.

4.5 Over the last three years, the implementation of the strategy has led to significant changes in the library service. Savings have been made in the revenue budget, but continuing investment in library buildings and technology has ensured that the service is equipped to meet future demands.

4.6 Usage statistics during this period indicate that the library service continues to be popular with Hertfordshire residents, with the total number of library visits (physical and online) increasing by 11.8% since 2014.

Figures in thousands

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 Projected
Physical visits	3,832	3,842	3,665	3,574	3,551
Online visits	1,279	1,549	2,045	2,055	2,162
Total Visits	5,111	5,391	5,710	5,629	5,713

Online Library visits include visits to the Libraries website, the library catalogue and online functions, the e-Library and the Online Reference Library.

Hertfordshire Libraries have a strong record of service delivery, and are signed up to all six of the Society of Chief Librarians' [Universal Public Library Offers](#) - Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning and Culture.

- 4.7 The Inspiring Libraries strategy supports all four of the ambitions of Hertfordshire's [Corporate Plan 2017-2021](#), offering residents opportunities to thrive, to prosper, to stay healthy and safe, and to participate in the life of their communities.
- 4.8 'Inspiring Libraries' also supports the 'prevention' agenda, enabling citizens to improve and enrich their lives through reading, learning, access to information and technology, and participation in community life, thus reducing dependence on expensive public sector support.
- 4.9 In November 2017, [Cabinet](#) agreed the following ambitions and priorities for the next phase of the 'Inspiring Libraries' Strategy from 2018-21:
- **Improving library buildings** – continuing the programme of improving Hertfordshire library buildings to ensure that they are bright, attractive, welcoming, flexible, tech-enabled spaces in convenient locations.
 - **Extending access to library services** - seeking opportunities to extend self-service access to libraries by rolling out swipe-card access and supported self-service initiatives.
 - **Developing technology** - continuing to invest in the development of technology to improve service delivery, to support digital inclusion, and to empower citizens.
 - **Maintaining service delivery** - continuing to deliver high quality services to contribute to the seven key social outcomes identified in [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021](#), published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in December 2016. This will be achieved through a workforce of skilled and trained library staff, supported, where appropriate by volunteers from the local community.
- 4.10 At the same time, ongoing pressures on the County Council budget mean that the library service is now required to make a further reduction of £500,000 in the annual revenue budget by 2019/20, over and above the £2.5 million in revenue savings already identified from the original 'Inspiring Libraries' proposals.
- 4.11 The requirement to save a further £500,000 means that, without a change in the way the service is delivered, the County Council would be forced to contemplate service reductions - library closures, reduced opening hours, and further reductions in staffing and the materials fund. This would certainly lead to a decline in usage, and make it difficult to deliver the 'Inspiring Libraries' ambitions.
- 4.12 Looking further ahead, the financial pressure on the County Council budget seems certain to continue, and the focus is likely to be concentrated on higher risk areas, such as social care and development, which could leave limited capacity to invest in the development of well-regarded, but lower risk services, such as public libraries.

5. An alternative delivery model

- 5.1 When proposals for '[Delivering the Inspiring Libraries Strategy](#)' were agreed in September 2014, the paper included the provision that *"the service will also consider the best operating models to deliver the strategy within a reduced budget."*
- 5.2 The national 'Libraries Deliver' document challenges local authorities *"to explore alternative forms of delivery and financing for library services before making any reductions in library services"*.

5.3 In November 2017, [Cabinet](#) agreed that:

- A multi-disciplinary working group should be established to further explore the business case for establishing an alternative delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries, including representatives from Legal Services, Finance and HR.
- An application should be made to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (“DCMS”) Mutuels Team for professional support and advice to inform this work.
- A consultation document should be published on the principle of creating an alternative delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries in order to seek feedback on the idea from customers, partners, stakeholders, library staff and volunteers.
- This work should inform a further paper to be presented to Panel and to Cabinet in the spring of 2018.

6. Project group – methodology

- 6.1 A multi-disciplinary project group was established in December 2017, chaired by the Assistant Director – Customer Service and Libraries and supported by the County Council’s Improvement Team. The group includes representation from Finance, HR, Legal Services, Property and Technology in addition to the Library Service.
- 6.2 The group set about exploring the business case for an alternative delivery model, following the methodology set out in the DCMS [Alternative Delivery Models Toolkit](#). This includes examples from three county councils, whose library service structure is similar to Hertfordshire, which have successfully implemented alternative delivery models – Devon, Nottinghamshire and Suffolk.
- 6.3 An Outline Business Case has been produced to set out the rationale for adopting an alternative delivery model for library services. It includes an options appraisal, a high level financial case, consideration of the technical features of an alternative delivery model, and a risk register. This Outline Business Case is attached at Appendix A.

7. DCMS Mutuels Support Programme

- 7.1 An application was made to the revised DCMS [Mutuels Support Programme](#), when this was relaunched at the beginning of January 2018. Following an assessment process, we were informed in February that this application had been successful, and we have agreed an initial Support Plan with independent consultants Mutual Ventures (who were appointed and commissioned by DCMS to deliver DCMS’s Mutual Support Programme and made available to County Council via the DCMS framework).
- 7.2 Mutual Ventures have provided an independent quality check of the options appraisal work and the Outline Business Case. If it is agreed by Cabinet to endorse the Outline Business Plan to adopt a Public Service Mutual as the preferred delivery

model for Hertfordshire Libraries, then Mutual Ventures will provide support and advice to draw up a detailed business case and implementation plan.

- 7.3 Whilst support during the Options Appraisal stage is financed by the DCMS, if it is decided that we should go ahead with the development of a Public Service Mutual, then the County Council is expected to contribute 25% in cash matched funding for this independent support. This match funding is included within the estimated implementation costs (see section 12.5).

8. Public Consultation

- 8.1 Between 8 January and 18 February 2018, a further public consultation exercise was undertaken to seek feedback on the County Council's ambitions and priorities for the next phase of Inspiring Libraries, and the principle of establishing an alternative delivery model for library services.
- 8.2 The consultation attracted 2060 responses.
- 8.3 The results confirmed the value that residents place on library services, and indicated a strong endorsement of the ambitions of the 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy, with 67.2% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with these ambitions, as opposed to 13.1% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 8.4 The results reflected a spread of opinion regarding the adoption of an alternative delivery model for library services. More people (41.7%) disagreed with the proposal than agreed with it (30.6%), but the large number who expressed no preference (27.7%) meant that there was no majority either in favour or against the proposal. The principal concern for most respondents was maintaining the quality of the library service, and the model that is best able to achieve this in both the short and the long term is the model that is most likely to win public support.
- 8.5 Most of those who agreed with the alternative delivery model proposal felt that it provided the best way of maintaining library services within a reduced budget. Some felt that it provided positive opportunities for the future development of the service.
- 8.6 Of those who disagreed with the proposal, many expressed opposition to the principle of outsourcing public services and did not want to see any change to the current delivery of library services. Some felt that an alternative delivery model would inevitably lead to a reduction in services, and some challenged the need for any further reductions in the libraries budget. There was particularly strong opposition to the outsourcing of the library service to a private company or profit-making organisation.
- 8.7 A clear majority (53.9%) of those who agreed with the proposal to adopt an alternative delivery model preferred the Public Service Mutual to any of the other models available.
- 8.8 If a Public Service Mutual is identified as the preferred model for the future delivery of library services, then In the next phase of public engagement, it will be important to communicate clearly both the rationale and mechanism for achieving this. In particular, there will be a need to demonstrate that we have listened to concerns

about outsourcing to a profit-making organisation and to reassure library customers that the new model is designed to protect library services rather than to reduce them.

- 8.9 The full report of the public consultation exercise is attached as Appendix B.

9. Staff Consultation

- 9.1 A consultation for Libraries and Heritage Services Staff was undertaken in parallel to the public consultation. 177 members of staff (out of a total of 526 staff) completed the questionnaire.
- 9.2 The results indicate a spread of opinion regarding the adoption of an alternative delivery model for library services. More staff (33%) disagreed with the proposal than agreed with it (25%), but the large number who expressed no preference (42%) meant that there was no majority either in favour or against the proposal.
- 9.3 Most of those who agreed with the alternative delivery model proposal felt that it provided the best way of maintaining library services within a reduced budget. Some felt that it provided positive opportunities for the future development of the service.
- 9.4 Of those who disagreed with the proposal, many were opposed to the principle of outsourcing council services, particularly to private companies or profit making organisations. Others felt that an alternative delivery model would inevitably lead to a reduction in services, or worried about the financial viability of an independent organisation.
- 9.5 Many staff expressed anxieties about reductions in pay and pensions, inferior terms and conditions of employment, and reduced job security in an alternative delivery model.
- 9.6 A clear majority of those who agreed with the proposal to adopt an alternative delivery model preferred the Public Service Mutual option.

10. Options appraisal

- 10.1 The project group considered a range of possible delivery models, which had the potential to meet the needs of the library service:
- Retain the service in-house
 - Outsource to a third party (private company or not-for-profit organisation)
 - Joint Venture (JV) – in partnership with an external provider
 - A company wholly owned by the County Council known as a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)
 - Public Service Mutual (PSM) – ‘spinning out’ the service into an independent organisation, commissioned by the County Council.
- 10.2 These five options were evaluated against a range of criteria designed to assess desirability, feasibility and viability. The two highest scoring options were then selected as a shortlist for more detailed analysis in the Outline Business Case. These were:

- Preferred Option - Public Service Mutual
- Second Best Option – retain in-house with re-engineering to make savings

11. Anticipated outcomes of a Public Service Mutual (PSM)

- 11.1 Our vision for an alternative delivery model is a model that fulfils the County Council's statutory obligation to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service', and to deliver the ambitions of the 'Inspiring Libraries' strategy, while diversifying revenue streams and building a secure base for the development of services to meet future needs. Creation of a PSM is a strong and independent model which would be a bold and positive way forward for Hertfordshire – an expression of confidence in the future of the public library service in challenging times.
- 11.2 If the legal form and constitution of the PSM qualifies it to register for charitable status, then it will enable immediate savings to be made through NDR rate relief, without the need to reduce services. The PSM would also be eligible for grant funding opportunities not available to in-house council services.
- 11.3 A PSM would have a high degree of commercial freedom, allowing it to develop new sources of funding, such as sponsorship, donations, and payment for value added services.
- 11.4 A PSM may be able to work more easily with partners across county borders, enabling growth and potentially bringing efficiencies. For example, Libraries Unlimited (the PSM in Devon) is now delivering library services in Torbay.
- 11.5 A PSM may also be able to diversify by working more easily with partners across the cultural sector. For example, Suffolk Libraries works in partnership with Creative Arts East to use public library space to present digital screenings of arts performances.
- 11.6 Independence from the County Council and a clear focus on libraries may enable the service to be more flexible and responsive to customers, communities and partners while maintaining the public library ethos. Being one step removed from the local government structure may enable quicker decision making, encouraging greater innovation and more rapid response to market opportunities and changes in customer demand.
- 11.7 Depending on its legal form and governance structure, a PSM may provide an opportunity for community stakeholders to have a more direct voice in the development of the service, leading to greater engagement. In the public consultation process, those respondents who supported the proposal for an alternative delivery model clearly identified the PSM as their preferred option.
- 11.8 Similarly, depending on its legal form and governance structure, a PSM may provide an opportunity for library service staff to have a more direct voice in service development, promoting a positive organisational culture, and a greater sense of ownership, confidence and commitment. In the staff consultation process, those respondents who supported the proposal for an alternative delivery model clearly identified the PSM as their preferred option.

- 11.9 As a result of the options appraisal, officers view a PSM as the best way to deliver the County Council's ambitions for Hertfordshire Library Service and to secure the outcomes that it provides for Hertfordshire residents.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1 The key financial issues addressed in the Outline Business Case are:

- The achievement of the £500k savings target for the Library service
- Long term viability of library service delivery
- The liabilities remaining with the Council
- The costs of change

- 12.2 Initial modelling shows that the option to form a Public Service Mutual can achieve most, but not all of the £500k annual savings target in the Integrated Plan (IP) without the need for service reductions.

- 12.3 The table below shows the net financial benefits of a Public Service Mutual over the first five years when compared to the County Council's current financial baseline.

PSM (savings)/costs	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Contract monitoring	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Loss of NDR	60,835	91,252	91,252	91,252	91,252
HCC savings	-1,450	-1,450	-1,450	-1,450	-1,450
HCC	74,385	104,802	104,802	104,802	104,802
Additional traded income	0	-4,803	-6,820	-8,877	-10,975
Additional grants / commissioned income	0	-30,000	-40,000	-40,000	-40,000
Additional management staffing	104,000	104,000	104,000	104,000	104,000
Traded income - additional costs	0	480	682	888	1,098
Grants / commissioned income - additional costs	0	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Governance costs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
NDR saving	-608,347	-608,347	-608,347	-608,347	-608,347
PSM	-494,347	-513,669	-520,485	-522,336	-524,225
Total savings (HCC + PSM)	-419,962	-408,867	-415,683	-417,534	-419,423

Notes

- *Contract monitoring – additional cost to monitor the contract once in-house expertise has transferred to new organisation.*
- *Loss of Non Domestic Business Rates (NDR) – the County Council retain a percentage of rates collected so any rates saving achieved by the PSM will be offset by a proportionate loss of income for the County Council. There would also be an impact on NDR income for the District Councils.*
- *Additional management staffing – one full time Finance / Business Manager.*
- *Governance costs – legal and statutory costs of PSM – audit etc.*

- *NDR saving – a charitable organisation is eligible to claim 80% rates relief.*

- 12.4 In order for the new model to deliver the required savings and achieve long term viability the following conditions must be met:
- New model must qualify for charitable status – in order to achieve NDR savings.
 - Future Government changes to NDR retention must not negatively impact on value of the County Councils retention.
 - Additional trading and grant income must be deliverable.
 - The existing budget gap must be closed through the roll-out of the remaining community libraries, and action to reduce the shortfall in the income target.
 - The cost of central support services (finance, HR, legal services, ICT etc.) must at least be cost neutral – more work will be required to apportion central support costs in the final business case.
- 12.5 The costs of transition are currently estimated at around £300,000 based on the experience of other authorities. Further work is required to firm up this estimate, depending on what support is available through the Mutuals Support Programme. An 'Invest to Transform' bid is required to meet these costs.
- 12.6 The County Council will need to consider as part of the full Business Case the payment provisions to the PSM (including any payments in advance of delivery and any reserves the County Council may be required to have).

13. Implementing a Public Service Mutual

- 13.1 Although the County Council has not had experience in setting up a Public Service Mutual, it has a good track record in the successful development and implementation of alternative delivery vehicles tailored to meet the needs of particular services. These include:
- [Hertfordshire Catering Limited](#) – an educational catering company limited by shares wholly owned by the County Council.
 - [Herts for Learning \(HfL\)](#) - the largest not for profit schools' company in the UK with a 19% shareholding by the County Council.
- 13.2 The Outline Business Case gives high level consideration to a number of technical features of 'spinning out' the service into a Public Service Mutual, which will be developed in more detail in the Full Business Case, but include the following:
- 13.2.1 **Governance and accountability** – all the research and learning indicates that form must follow function, so the decision on the specific legal form of the new organisation will not be taken until later in the process. Consideration will need to be given to the composition of the Board, and how to ensure appropriate community involvement, staff involvement, and County Council representation.
- 13.2.2 **Impact on staff** – details of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) process, pension provision, proposed staff transfer arrangements, and the formal consultation process with staff and Unison.
- 13.2.3 The anticipated **procurement route** for the new organisation – length of contract

and flexibility to extend the contract.

- 13.2.4 **Asset transfer arrangements** relating to property, equipment and other relevant assets (including maintenance responsibilities).
- 13.2.5 **Corporate support services** - Libraries currently pay approximately £2.6 million in central recharges to cover the costs of Corporate Support Services such as HR, Finance, ICT, Legal Services, Corporate Communications etc. These costs will need to be disentangled and apportioned in the Full Business Case.
- 13.2.6 **Contract value and specification**, including contract management arrangements, charging mechanisms, commissioning and quality assurance.
- 13.2.7 **Tax issues**, including implications for VAT and Corporation Tax.
- 13.2.8 **Implementation and transition plan** – including financial and non-financial commitments and the creation of a shadow board.

14. Key issues to be addressed in the Full Business Case

14.1 *Procurement /State Aid:*

Officers of the County Council will consider whether the PSM will be provided with a grant or contract for services and application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. In addition, advice will be provided by Legal Services with regard to any State Aid implications, which will form part of the Full Business Case. For information, the other library services that have 'spun out' into Public Service Mutuals, which officers have considered, have done so on the basis of a five-year initial contract, with an option to extend for a further period. The stability of a five-year contract is required to enable a start-up organisation to establish itself, develop partnerships, and build up a track record of efficient service delivery and financial management. In working to identify an appropriate grant, contract for services and potential procurement route, it will be important to consider the period required for a PSM to establish itself. Otherwise it could effectively be set up to fail.

14.2 *Income*

A Public Service Mutual model would offer opportunities for the library service to reduce its reliance on County Council funding by accessing grants, sponsorship and donations, and by delivering services commissioned by other bodies. However, none of this funding is guaranteed. The income projections in the outline business case are deliberately cautious, as there is a risk that the long term financial viability of the service would be threatened by a failure to meet income targets. The mitigation is to work with Mutual Ventures, who have advised other authorities on financial modelling, to provide a more detailed, robust and realistic growth model for the final business case.

14.3 *Central recharges*

Other library services that have 'spun out' into Public Service Mutuals have been able to make savings over time by reviewing administration and support costs. The financial model for a Hertfordshire Libraries PSM has not assumed any savings from central recharges. However, there is a risk to the long term viability of a PSM, if there is not a fair apportionment of central recharges, and the autonomy to explore procuring its own support, where appropriate.

14.4 *Future Liabilities*

There is more work to be done to ensure that pension and redundancy liabilities are fairly apportioned, and appropriate transfer arrangements are in place. Otherwise there is a risk that these liabilities would threaten the long term financial viability of the service.

14.5 *Access to Capital*

A Public Service Mutual would require access to the capital bidding process, and to Section 106/CIL funding that is allocated for the improvement of library services in order to support future investment in library buildings and technology. Without such access, there is a risk to the long-term viability of the service.

14.6 *Staff buy-in and skills*

In order to be successful in delivering library services, a new Public Service Mutual would need to retain key library service skills, and also to develop or recruit new skills in financial and business management and fundraising. There is a risk that if a Public Service Mutual cannot create a positive organisational culture, where staff feel a sense of ownership and commitment, then the service will be unable to recruit and retain key skills. The mitigation is to work with Mutual Ventures to identify how staff buy-in has been achieved in other library service mutuals, and to maintain staff engagement throughout the process.

14.7 *Heritage Services*

Some of the Public Service Mutuals delivering library services also deliver archives and heritage services, others do not. If a PSM is adopted as the preferred delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries, then consideration must be given to the pros and cons of including Heritage Services in this model.

14.8 *Timescale*

The proposed timescale for the project is that Cabinet endorses the Outline Business Case which sets out the preferred model for the service in April 2018. A detailed business plan would then be prepared for Cabinet to consider and agree in the autumn of 2018, with a view to the County Council launching the new model in April 2019. The advice from Mutual Ventures is that this timescale is achievable if all milestones are met, but that it is very tight. There is a risk that unforeseen issues lead to a delay in the implementation date, which would mean that the full saving could not be achieved by 2019/20.

15. Next steps

- 15.1 If the recommendation is agreed by Cabinet, the next step will be for the project group to work with Mutual Ventures to draw up a final detailed business case for the establishment of a Public Service Mutual for presentation to Cabinet Panel and Cabinet in the autumn of 2018, with a view to launching the new model in April 2019.

16. Equalities implications

- 16.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are

fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, the equality implications of the decision that they are making.

- 16.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 16.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- 16.4 An overarching [Equality Impact Assessment](#) for the next phase of the 'Inspiring Libraries' Strategy was produced in November 2017 to accompany the Cabinet paper 'Inspiring Libraries – The Next Phase'. A separate [Equality Impact Assessment](#) was produced to cover the public consultation exercise.
- 16.5 A high level Equality Impact Assessment for the delivery of library services through a Public Service Mutual is attached at Appendix C. This will be kept under review throughout the next stage and implementation process.

17. Background papers

[Inspiring Libraries: A new strategy for Hertfordshire Library Service 2014-2024 \(2014\) https://beta.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/libraries/libraries-strategy-2014-2024.pdf](https://beta.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/libraries/libraries-strategy-2014-2024.pdf)

[‘Delivering the Inspiring Libraries Strategy’ \(2014\)](#)

[Inspiring Libraries – the next phase \(Nov 2017\)](#)

<http://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/DocumentSearch.aspx>

[An alternative delivery model for Hertfordshire Libraries \(Nov 2017\)](#)

<http://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/DocumentSearch.aspx>

[Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 \(2016\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021>

[Alternative Delivery Models Toolkit \(2017\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-alternative-delivery-models-toolkit>