

**APPENDIX 2****Scrutiny Review Panel on the Provision of Infrastructure Support for Community Partnership Libraries**

Feedback received

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**From: Beryl Lishman, Countesthorpe**

I am writing in my capacity of the U3A vice chairman. As an organisation we would be able to offer out help in the running of the library at Countesthorpe. We have discussed this issue at our meetings and I am in touch with the parish council with Alixe Bates. We as an organisation would form a Library Group and would be able to man the library for one session per week on a regular basis. We are very concerned that the library remains open for as many sessions as possible. Amongst our membership we have many people with what I believe have relevant experiences and expertise.

**Joint Feedback from Barrow Parish Council and BUSCA (Barrow upon Soar Community Association)**

1. Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns? **Many of them have helped**
  - a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?
    - i) Putting monetary values into 'financial support'**
    - ii) Greater clarity about timings, in particular, taking out 'up to' 5 years and instead referring to transitional period of 5 years . Even referring to beyond this time (eg 7 years)**
    - iii) Provision of templates for agreements, proformas, exemplar agreements, models etc (see App B Part 1)**
    - iv) All of Info Pack Part B)**
  - b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern?
    - i) No reference to provision of free emergency IT call out.**
    - ii) Our vision depends on us employing a paid manager of volunteers. Will Library Service support extend to such a paid person?**
    - iii) See ii) Could there be any transition support given to help us deal with employment issues etc ?**
    - iv) We hope our support and training will be Barrow-specific**
    - v) See C7): helpful to have promise of defined level of tapering from March 2017 to 22/23 but we will need clarity early on.**
    - vi) How long is 'on-going' support by named relationship manager for management committee? It is very likely that this would be needed for at least 5-7 years.**
  
2. Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support? (Appendix A, issue 5)
 

**To answer this, we need clarification of 'additional (professional) library support'. (wording in Feedback 2 and Appx A 5 are different.) It might mean making it possible for a group to pay the LCC for a qualified librarian to run their library. Assuming not, our answer is NO. There should be adequate free support for 5 years followed by tapered cost**
  
3. Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful? (Appendix A issue 7)
 

**NO**
  
4. Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs? (Appendix A, issue 9)
 

**Internal repairing basis, subject to expert advice when lease is drawn up**

5. Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body? (Appendix A, issue 10)

***In principle, NONE unless the alternative is library closure.***

6. Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing? (Appendix B)
- i) Suggest adding list of resources to help with recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers eg VAL, relevant VCS***
  - ii) Suggest adding list of resources that are to do with running libraries, both professionally-run and volunteer-run.***
  - iii) Our model includes employing a part-time manager of volunteers. We would like to see a source of guidance on employment issues offered in the pack.***
  - iv) C7) Costs analysis needs to itemise all costs that will be passed to us including telephone calls, data streaming and any associated WiFi costs.***
  - v) Include information on DBS processes and ways of achieving it for volunteers.***
7. What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel?
- i) We welcome this thorough and generous piece of work delivered in a short period of time. It represents a real step forward.***
  - ii) However, it is really important that the LCC continues to deliver quickly enough to enable us to maintain our momentum, especially with volunteers.***

**From: Kibworth Library Steering Committee****Re: KIBWORTH LIBRARY**

We are writing in acknowledgement of the Consultation Document on the future of libraries in Leicestershire. Following several meetings in the village during the summer, at which members of LCC provided outline information on the future organisation of village libraries, we can confirm that a small steering group has been established to consider how a community library might operate in Kibworth. The steering group has created a brand name, "Lark", Library and Resources in Kibworth, and will conduct all future activity under this name.

We are preparing to conduct a local survey of what resources are required by the community. The result of our enquiry will dictate how the project should develop.

One point on which we would like clarification concerns the point at which existing libraries could be retained. LCC terms of reference indicate that communities that are experiencing rapid growth should be allowed to retain their library. A large development of some 650 houses is currently under construction here as well as other smaller ones.

Regarding the specific questions from the Review Panel, we can only make general comment until detailed study has been undertaken. The alterations have clarified certain aspects of the terms of transfer. Our main concern is finance. While the changes have clarified some points, others will need much further clarification in order for us (and presumably other groups) to be able to prepare a realistic business plan. That plan will both determine and be determined by the level of finance we feel we will be able to generate on a regular basis. In this respect, it is likely we would prefer to see a long term below market level rent for the building. At present, we do not know the state of Kibworth library building and will need to make a structural survey in order to appreciate the level of expense we may be required to provide.

Library stock will be a problem if LCC cease to supply an acceptable level of book replacement, including the type of book and how often exchanged. Who will decide what is stocked in each library?

We would like to have long term guarantees that LCC will support all computer services, including introduction of new software programmes and replacement of hardware to meet changing requirements.

As you may appreciate, the steering committee is at the early stage of developing a realistic proposal for the future. We appreciate LCC have recognised that the situation in every village will be unique. We look forward to receiving a report of the consultation panel's proceedings.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Poyzer, Chairman of the steering group.

**From: Steve Mitchell, Rothley**

1. Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?

No. The proposals that were first outlined at the Consultation events in villages a few months ago are fundamentally the same. More detail has been added and more flexibility in funding has been woven in but there are no new options.

- a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?

See above

- b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof)  that remain of concern?

Lack of support / option for those villages who are experiencing problems in recruiting volunteers who are prepared to take on the onerous responsibility of running a community library. There are volunteers who are prepared to give up some hours in the library issuing books etc., but getting a group of volunteers with the necessary organizational / administrative / financial skills is going to effectively cause the community library movement to come to a halt, effectively bringing most village libraries to the brink of closure.

- 2 Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase  additional library service support? (Appendix A, issue 5)

This could have been one of the central options allowing Parish Councils to but back the whole local service. See below.

- 3 Would the option to capitalize the running costs into a single payment  be useful? (Appendix A issue 7)

No comment

- 4 Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to  plan and budget for maintenance and repairs? (Appendix A, issue 9)

No comment

- 5 Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body? (Appendix A, issue 10)

I cannot see any fairness in this proposal. The village libraries have been put

in a thoroughly invidious / disadvantageous already under the ONE proposal.

6 Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing? (Appendix B)

7 What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel?

The key message I have may well be inadmissible under your very harsh comments arrangement for the Scrutiny Panel, however I do wish to register some very strong comments regarding the proposals..... or rather lack of them, as there could have been a number of alternatives that would have given the survival of village libraries a much greater chance.

BUY BACK. This would have given Parish Councils the opportunity to fund some of the existing provision augmented with voluntary help. But this was never even mentioned. Parish Councils are the only councils that are not capped and with most villages experiencing rapid housing expansion the additional revenue that this would bring in could be put to good use to fund library services to varying degrees.

ACROSS THE BOARD CUT. This would be the fairest arrangement treating all libraries across the county in exactly the same way. Saving £800,000 is the principal objective so why not share the cuts equally across all communities? In harsh economic times people will accept cuts as long as they are applied fairly. The one existing proposal automatically puts villages at a huge disadvantage in that they have to set an organisation up with all the additional administrative / financial implications. This burden does not exist in the large towns in that they already have an existing structure that their staffs are all familiar with. An across the board cut of 15- 20% would mean all communities were being treated fairly. In Rothley, for example, this would mean a possible reduction in opening hours from the current 16 hrs. p/w to say 12- 13 hours. The prospects now are that there are many volunteers who would be prepared to assist their community with day to day librarian duties under the direction of a professional but who are either not prepared but more likely not confident/ competent enough to take on the huge administrative burden that would arise under the only proposal that the County Council have come up with.

These other alternatives have been suggested by many others across the County but the committee responsible for reorganizing libraries following the £800, 000 cuts seem to be myopic in their ideas.





## COUNTESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL



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Mrs. A. BATES Clerk of the Council and Clerk of the Burial Board

Cllr D Jennings  
Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Provision  
of Infrastructure Support for Community Partnership Libraries

9<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Dear Cllr Jennings

Countesthorpe Parish Council is disappointed about the short timescale of your request for comments on the proposed community partnership support package, which will be discussed at the Scrutiny Review Panel Workshop on 15<sup>th</sup> October. This timescale has not allowed time for the Parish Council working party to discuss the proposals in depth and produce a more comprehensive response. However, in response to your request for feedback the Parish Council would like to make the following comments:

1. The changes to the support package has not addressed the Council's concerns as the following key issues have not been considered within the proposals
  - There is no mention of the possibility of purchasing the building or the possibility of a long term lease. As the Parish Council's plan is to re-order the whole area of the building (village hall and library) what would happen at the end of the term of the lease, bearing in mind that potentially the Parish Council intends to make considerable improvements. The Parish Council would want continued discussions with Property Services due to the unique situation in Countesthorpe.
  - All the proposals are concerning volunteer staff, not employed staff. It would be the Parish Council's plan to employ staff
2. The Parish Council considers the provision to purchase additional services to be satisfactory
3. The option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment would need to be discussed further due to the unique situation of Countesthorpe Village Hall and library being one building
4. The lease options would need negotiation on terms agreed by both parties
5. The Parish Council thinks that market rent should not be charged, as the building would be run as a community facility

6. The Parish Council feels that the following information/advice is missing from the index supplied:
  - No advice/guidance regarding TUPE matters
  - A sensibly planned timetable to allow in depth investigation and a smooth transition
7. There are many issues in Countesthorpe that needs unique advice and negotiations and the current proposals do not adequately take this into account. The Parish Council feels that a sensibly planned timetable needs to be put in place to allow time for discussion within the Parish Council and to enable the Parish Council to consult with residents. The timetable needs to take into account time for Precept considerations.

We hope that due consideration is given to the Parish Council's concerns regarding the County Council's proposals for Community Partnership Libraries

Yours sincerely

Mrs Alixe Bates  
Clerk to Countesthorpe Parish Council

Thurmaston Community Centre  
Silverdale Drive  
Thurmaston  
Leicester

10/10/14

Please except this letter as part of evidence for the Scrutiny panel set up to examine and scrutinise Community Partnership Libraries and the level of support offered.

Thurmaston Community Centre is situated in the heart of the Dales Estate and is approx 500 yards from where the library is currently sited. We note that the loss of a library would be harmful to Thurmaston and as a responsible community trust we would be in a position to accommodate the library and computer hub along with a café and advice centre. The centre is currently being updated and extended so that it can continue to be an important meeting place for a diverse and changing community.

As the building is being extended now it would take limited funds to extend the extension to accommodate a library and this could be met through 106 section monies from several small developments within Thurmaston.

Our view is that a library housed within will add to our ambitious visions for this centre as an advice centre, a space to give small adult education classes, CV writing and interview techniques plus a small business postal drop and possible rented desk space for small and upcoming businesses. We want the centre to have a paid centre manager and that would make it easier to manage volunteers and have the necessary support and facilities for volunteers.

I hope the scrutiny panel can see that supporting this sort of enterprise would mean that a vital service would survive. The old library could be sold and any or some of the receipts could be used to ensure this project's longevity and see it evolve to adapt to current trends.

**Brenda Seaton**

on behalf of Tony Wilmot and the board of trustees at Thurmaston  
Community Centre

**From: Sileby Library Steering Group**

Numbers in brackets refer to issues as listed in Appendix A.

1 Yes

1a

Amounts of money are specified for the financial transition support (1)

A single point of contact has been offered for the transition process (2)

There is to be a “relationship manager” for ongoing management support (11)

There is to be a free fast-track training programme for management committees as part of transition support (3)

1b

What will the tapering be? (7)

(9) is also a concern. Please see answer to question 4, below.

2 Yes

3 The Steering Group is not clear about what the advantages or disadvantages of capitalising might be (7).

4 The Steering Group is leaning towards the original proposal as described in the first paragraph of “Proposed changes” under (9). Please see answer to question 1b, above.

How would it be decided which partnership bodies could access any of the contingency fund?

Could any of the fund, if unused, be carried forward from year to year?

Could allocations for later years be used earlier if the fund for a particular year was exhausted and there was unmet demand?

5 A market rent would not be fair.

6 Details of an exit strategy for the Partnership in the event of project failure, for example a decrease in the number of volunteers such that the project was no longer viable.

A plan for the County Council to continue to provide a library service for Sileby in the event of project failure.

Will the Pack give an indication of other costs, such as insurance?

(Appendix B)

7 What is clear is what the County Council will give in terms of training and ongoing support for operating a library, and set-up costs support. However, more clarity and assurance are needed about ongoing costs, so that a realistic business case can be produced.

Julie Lovatt

Deputy Clerk, SILEBY PARISH COUNCIL

## **From: Stoney Stanton Library Steering Group**

Response to Scrutiny Panel consultation

The Steering Group welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Scrutiny's Panel's consultation. The Steering Group is at an early stage in its development having met only once so far. So these comments are based on our initial thoughts and the preparatory work done by the Parish Council.

1. *Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?*

The additional information is welcome but it would have been helpful to have seen a draft of the full package document.

- a. *Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?*

The arrangements for supervision of the work of the library are helpful.

- b. *Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern*

It appears to be the Council's position that the group should insure the book stock. This seems to us to be specialist insurance and it is not clear to us that we would be able to obtain insurance over assets which do not belong to us and which will be constantly changing as book stock is rotated. We feel that the Council should insure what are, after all, its assets. At worst it should arrange a group policy which we could buy into and the cost of this should be made clear early in the process.

There is still insufficient detail over what costs the Council will meet and which it will not between 2016/17 and 2022/23. We feel that it should be "All non-staffing related running costs based on the current number of hours of library use" (but also see response to 3 below for an alternative approach).

IT support : it is not clear whether the IT support includes repairs and hardware and software maintenance of the IT equipment nor any hardware renewal that maybe required.

Start up costs : groups taking on a 5 year lease with repairing obligations would be well advised to have a survey done and it would be helpful if these costs could be covered as part of the start-up package.

2. *Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support?*

Yes. It would be helpful if these costs could be made known to us at an early stage so we can assess whether purchase of further time would assist us. It is assumed that where we purchase such time it is at a straight hourly rate and that other employment costs and TUPE rights would remain with the Council. It is not clear whether this is limited to staffing or might include additional equipment.

3. *Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful?*

Yes, although we may not choose to take this option. This is because energy and other costs are likely to rise and the knowledge that the Council would be paying actuals provides greater peace of mind and certainly. An alternative option might be to determine what the Council currently pays as non-staffing costs and then to pay the group that sum as a grant, with a suitable inflation provision. This would enable groups to economise and to seek the best deals they could for the provision of services.

4. *Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs?*

Neither. The lease obligations and in particular liability for dilapidations remain a significant concern and some certainty is needed. We suggest that an initial 12 month licence is offered with the Council bearing all except wear and tear on the library related fittings. This allows an "easy in" and lets groups firm up their operations and assess properly the extent of repairing obligations. It could also be done more quickly. After the 12 months the expectation would be that groups would enter into a lease of 5 years minimum (this may vary from group to group). The lease would, perhaps, specify a maximum expenditure for groups beyond which the Council would cover the excess. We note that the building and its current fixtures remain the Council's asset and so it is assumed that it would want to make sure that its asset remained in good condition. So in principle we feel that the Council should remain responsible for all internal repairs except items in direct use (shelving, desks etc) to provide the library service.

The initial suggestion had been that the lease should be for 10 years. Given the Council has only set out its arrangements for 5 years we feel the lease should be for a similar period unless individual groups want a longer period.

5. *Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body?*

Only if a group had been so successful in attracting alternative commercial uses such that the main use of the building was no longer "library". It should be noted that groups are likely to be "not for profit" and so any surplus funds would be expected to be used to further library related objectives. The objective of both parties is to provide a free library service for the community and that ethos should underpin thinking throughout.

6. *Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing?*

No, the pack is welcome.

7. *What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel?*

The Council has recognised throughout that this is not a “one size suits all” process. Groups will vary in their experience and depth and premises issues vary. What may be comfortable for one group may be repugnant to another. So we await the detailed package and the opportunity to discuss and negotiate with officers the detail. But we hope officers will be given the maximum flexibility to vary packages to suit individual needs within the context of the Council's need to make savings whilst preserving a decent community lead service.

We need to remember that the main focus of this activity (and the objective of both parties) is to continue to provide a FREE library service to the community that we both serve. Wherever possible costs to the local community should be kept to a minimum as the ones that will most benefit from the service are the most vulnerable in the community.

Stephen Purser  
Acting Chair  
Stoney Stanton Library Steering Group

**From: Market Bosworth Parish Council**

Dear Mr Jennings

Thank you for your letter of 7 October 2014 regarding the above mentioned subject. I now write on behalf of Market Bosworth Parish Council with the following observations.

Firstly, the seven days permitted to return feedback illustrates a lack of understanding of Parish Council constitutional restrictions on public affairs and allows very little time to form a response.

However, the Parish Council would like to raise the following points:

- The facts are still too vague to be able to make a judgement. For example, is access to funds to be by grant or loan? And without knowing how much it will cost to insure stock, cover public liability and meet the cost of ongoing repairs it is not possible to know if the proposed fund would be adequate.
- Although the appendix provides a useful framework for groups to further explore the option of forming a community based operation, it does not address issues where the library is not situated in a building other than a purpose built library i.e. it is not site specific enough. The panel needs to be aware that whilst the framework is comprehensive it may well not have addressed all eventualities and ongoing support to address these may incur additional costs. For example, there could be difficulties in transfer of a lease for the Market Bosworth Library which is situated in the local Secondary School Academy which itself may wish to regain teaching space. This situation is further complicated in that ownership of the actual building is allegedly unclear.
- Items on library support are still vague. For example, for how long will refresher training be provided? How long will additional training last? Will additional training be subject to a charge? Is the additional training for new volunteers after the initial training or for when problems occur? And will there actually be any savings once the costs for training, guidance and management support are met? Totalling all this up, it may well be more economical just to keep the libraries open on reduced opening hours.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs C Monkman  
Parish Clerk  
Market Bosworth Parish Council  
01455 291867



# Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils

## Response to Call for Evidence: Scrutiny Review Panel on the Provision of Infrastructure Support for Community Partnership Libraries

*Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?*

*a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?*

*b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern?*

1. Yes.

A) The offer of assistance to the management committees in Appendix A, A 1-3.

B) Long term (beyond 5 years) support, though some support has been extended to 7 years.

*Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support? (Appendix A, issue 5)*

2. Yes. The needs will vary greatly from one community to the next (i.e. in terms of existing groups, experienced volunteers, active and empowered Parish Councils, etc.), and as such it may be the case that individual communities will wish to purchase enhanced support for years 1 and 2, for example. However the basic offer should be of such a level that even communities without existing Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure should be able to take on the library based on that support.

*Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful? (Appendix A issue 7)*

3. LRALC does not feel that it can offer a view on this question as views and needs will differ and vary between councils due to reserves (or lack of), desire to precept appropriately, etc. However we believe the option should be available.

*Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs? (Appendix A, issue 9)*

4. We would advise any Parish Council considering a “full repairing” option to commission an independent full survey of the building and engage appropriate legal advice on the agreement and as such would suggest a contribution towards these costs would offset the risk of a council (or other body) not undertaking these checks effectively.

*Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body? (Appendix A, issue 10)*

5. For a community facility such as a library we would not find it appropriate for market rent for premises to be charged under any circumstances. Even in the current financial climate, many principal authorities are still viewing community asset transfer as a way of supporting communities during periods of financial constraint. We would suggest that LCC could take a similar position by agreeing a set rent price for a minimum of 10 years rather than the current proposal of 7, thereby providing more long term security.

*Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing? (Appendix B)*

6. Some financial forecasts, even of a general nature (not library specific), would assist groups including PCs in understanding how costs may increase due to inflation, rising energy costs, etc. Also, we would suggest that in the generic part of the pack there are some links to sources of information and advice for bodies looking to take on a library, e.g. RCC, VAL, LRALC (for PCs), and also professional services such as solicitors (e.g. <http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>), surveyors, etc. Finally, for PCs looking to become involved in local provision we would suggest a summary of statutory powers open to them to use (and any limitations).

*What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel?*

7. LRALC is generally supportive of any Parish Council that is looking to support/deliver ongoing community library provision in their areas, providing that they take appropriate legal advice, and fully consider the costs, risks, and liabilities that the PC will face as a result. Equally, we believe that library service devolution cannot be considered by communities in isolation, and we would remind the County Council of two recommendations made in LRALC’s “Big Discussion” report from earlier this year, namely:
  - A consistent top down approach to devolved/joint service provision with local councils in Leicestershire, including LCC prioritising specific services considered to offer the maximum potential for devolution and those identified as being favoured at the “Big Discussion” events.

- A co-ordinated and timetabled process of engagement with local councils by individual County Council service sections around devolved/joint service provision in Leicestershire.

General comments:

- As previously advised by LRALC to LCC, any requirement to achieve charitable status (Appendix A(7)) would rule out a Parish Council being able to directly take on a community library as it is not possible for such bodies to acquire such status. This would mean that a separate charitable trust, etc., would need to be the body which took on the facility.
- LRALC has not taken a position on the general issue of Community Partnership Libraries, although we are aware that some Parish Councils have taken a formal position of opposing the proposals in their entirety, and our response should be received in this context. Therefore, this response does not constitute LRALC support, or otherwise, for the proposals in their entirety.

**From : Desford Parish Council**

I am not sure whether these have been collated by our County Councillor on behalf of Desford, so I thought it best to submit my comments

Q1. The changes to the support package are a step in the right direction.

(b) We still have concerns over (9) the Responsibility for Buildings.

We would expect LCC to maintain the roof, windows & gutterings

We would expect to be responsible for paintwork, inside & outside, and minor repairs

We would be willing to take on the boiler if we were to have a 25 (or 99) year lease, but not if only for 10 years

What thought has been given to offering the community groups the right to buy the building?

Q2. OK with this

Q3. Don't know!

Q4. The first option if the lease were to be longer (as above)

Q6. Can't think of anything

Q7. Be flexible on what you offer groups according to their individual circumstances. Allow more time for groups to get everything in place.

Thank you

Pat Crane

Desford Parish Council

**Kegworth Parish Council**

**Feedback on the amended proposals for the support Package for Partnership Libraries.**

*1. Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?*

*a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?*

**The changes do help to clarify the financial transition support which would be available.**

*b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern?*

**The sum of £2000 identified in 1) for legal advice on legal structure, partnership agreement and lease and promotional material, signage etc is unlikely to cover the costs associated with the work, and could potentially leave partnership groups with initial costs in excess of their ability to pay. All legal costs should be made available plus a small allowance of say £500 for signage, promotional material etc.**

**The costs of running the Summer Reading Scheme are not identified as potentially being incurred by the Partnership Libraries. In earlier consultations these costs were said to be the responsibility of Partnership Library groups managing Rural libraries, with LCC bearing the cost of the Summer reading scheme at the Libraries they continue to run and manage.**

**We consider this to be inequitable, and that the cost of the Summer Reading Scheme and all promotional materials should continue to be met by LCC into the future as part of the support package offered to rural Libraries.**

*2. Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support? (Appendix A, issue 5)*

**It is unlikely that the additional support could be afforded by Partnership Libraries in the initial period; LCC should anticipate that some groups would require additional [ad –hoc] support for at least an initial 2 year period, dependent on the make-up of the volunteer group running the library.**

*3. Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful? (Appendix A issue 7)*

**It would be useful to offer this as an option for each rural library partnership group to consider.**

*4. Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs? (Appendix A, issue 9)*

The preferred option is likely to be dependent on the current condition of each library building, fittings and finishes, and could potentially be a major deterrent in establishing the Rural Library Partnership if the fabric and finishes are currently in poor condition.

We are aware of current ongoing roof leaks and external timber repairs required to the fabric of Kegworth Library; the contingency fund of £150,000 divided between 36 rural libraries [£4166 each] will not address the work currently outstanding.

We have no way of knowing if Kegworth is typical of the rural library building stock.

Our preference would have to be for LCC to maintain the external fabric of the building unless the offer is linked to a minimum basic standard for the Library building and services at handover to a Partnership Group.

*5. Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body? (Appendix A, issue 10)*

In no circumstances would we consider it fair for a market rent to be introduced for the library premises or for rental costs to be transferred to the Partnership body.

In taking on the running of the library service the partnership body is assisting LCC to discharge the statutory requirement to provide a library service; it is likely that bearing the market rent of premises would not allow local groups to continue in the 'Partnership'.

*6. Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing? (Appendix B)*

**Costs of running the Summer Reading Scheme – as above.**

**Timeline re phasing of the transfer to 'Partnership' arrangements – initially said not all rural libraries would transfer together, the latest documentation would seem to indicate a speedy transition of all libraries, placing a huge burden on VAL and other 'support' organisations.**

**Any income from S106 funding – will this be forwarded to Partnership Groups?**

*7. What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review*

**This is a huge challenge for groups wishing to maintain rural library services. Flexible, fair, open and transparent transfer arrangements need to be apparent in order not to discourage groups during the process.**

Kegworth Parish Council,  
1 London Road,  
Kegworth,  
Derby,  
DE74 2DE.  
October, 2014.

13<sup>th</sup>

**From: Jeremy Prescott, Director, RCC (Leicestershire & Rutland)**

<p>1) Provide clarity on the financial transition support available</p>	<p>For each community library, the community will have access to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up to £ 1,000 for initiation costs (ie. local consultation, volunteer recruitment, business plan preparation)</li> <li>- Up to £2,000 for set-up costs (ie setting up legal structure, legal advice on partnership agreement and lease, promotional material, signage etc.)</li> <li>- Up to £5,000 for minor capital works that are essential to the delivery of the business plan (ie equipment, minor refurbishments)</li> </ul>	<p>This clarification of available funding is helpful and will assist other VCS organisation support the transition process</p> <p>The key factor will be the application process required to access the funding. Care must be taken that the costs of administrating the funding does not exceed the grants themselves.</p> <p>The Process to access funding should be a quick and simple tick box exercise rather than an in depth justification of funding need.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to allocating a set £8000 to each library project and allow local communities to decide how it is spent, rather than ring fence for initiation costs/capital cost etc.</p>
<p>2) Provide management committees with access to hands-on support and advice</p>	<p>Each library will have a dedicated County Council officer to advise and support them in developing a business plan and the transition process. Free hands-on support will also be available from Voluntary Action Leicestershire</p>	<p>The term dedicated suggests a single officer for each library, whose focus will be on the library only. Is this very likely or will one officer cover several ?</p>
<p>3) Provide management committees with access to appropriate training &amp; guidance</p>	<p>A free fast-track training programme will be available to provide management committee members with basic training in areas such as business planning, governance and legal structures, fundraising, managing and recruiting volunteers, community engagement, social enterprise and trading</p>	<p>This clearly will be of great benefit to communities and volunteers.</p> <p>Would this be LCC delivered or via the VCS.</p> <p>What costs are estimated for this element</p>



<p>4) Provide adequate training for volunteers in basic library procedures, the use of the Library management System etc.</p>	<p>Initial training sessions for local volunteers will be provided locally and agreed as part of the transition arrangements following acceptance of the business plan. Regular 'refresher' training will be provided on a countywide basis or locally if appropriate. Any additional training could be arranged, but is likely to be subject to a charge.</p>	<p>The timing schedule of free training and when it is likely to be charged needs to be notified to potential providers so this can be factored into their costings</p>
<p>5) Provide adequate hands-on support and advice from library staff</p>	<p>For day to day operational support, volunteers will have access to professional library staff via e-mail and telephone for assistance with any issues arising from the use of the library management system or library processes and procedures. We will also provide each partnership library with a named library liaison officer. Liaison officers will make regular visits to provide library professional support for training and management of volunteers, library operations and as an interface with ICT and property services. It is expected that Liaison officers will visit a library for 2 hours every fortnight. Should partnership bodies wish to, they would be able to purchase additional regular library professional support.</p>	<p>Does this liaison stop after the suggested 5 year period or is it ongoing ? It is our view that to ensure the standards and quality of the service are maintained that there will need to be an ongoing level of support indefinitely albeit on a reduced scale</p>
<p>6) Confirm its proposed offer with regards to operational support for library services, including book stock and ICT support for a minimum of 5 years.</p>	<p>ICT infrastructure, book-stock and library operational support will all be available for free for an initial period of 5 years, and then subject to review.</p>	<p>5 Years would seem a reasonable time in which to ascertain if a community library is likely to be able to self sustaining.</p>

<p>7) provide clear details of the financial contribution to be offered towards running costs</p>	<p>A clearly defined level of tapered financial support over 7 years for specific categories of premises and some operational expenditure including rent, rates, energy costs and telephone rentals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% contribution in 2015/16 and 2016/17;</li> <li>- The tapering of financial support for 'business rates' assumes groups will achieve charitable status;</li> <li>- Facilities management financial support (Cleaning and grounds maintenance) would cease when current County Council contracts end in March 2017;</li> <li>- From 2022/23, all costs will be met by the group;</li> <li>- Rent costs of leased buildings would continue to be funded in full for 5 years. A review of rent support take place in year 5.</li> </ul> <p>There will be a possibility to capitalise the County Council's property running costs contribution as a single payment.</p>	<p>A suitable Charitable Incorporated Organisation model should be developed to ensure all groups can achieve charitable status to attract business rates reduction.</p> <p>Currently this stands at only 80% mandatory for charities with 20% at the discretion of LA. Assurances should be sought from LA on provision of 100% rate relief</p>
<p>8) provide clarity over what will happen after the initial 5 year period and avoid a 'cliff-edge' situation in which all funding is withdrawn at once.</p>	<p>The offer of financial support over 7 years as outlined above provides clarity and avoids a 'cliff-edge' situation.</p>	<p>No comment</p>

<p>9) Provide clarity over the responsibility for buildings (in particular with regards to major repairs)</p>	<p>The original proposal was for Library buildings owned by the County Council to be made available for lease on an internal repairing basis for a term of no less than 10 years. This would mean that repairs to the structure of the building (ie Roof) would remain the County Council's responsibility, but repairs that result through use of the building are the responsibility of the partnership body. Such repair costs can nevertheless be quite considerable on occasion (ie boiler replacement)</p> <p>An alternative, would therefore be for the lease to be on a full repairing basis (where the partnership body is responsible for all repairs), but for the County Council to provide a contingency fund of £150,000 per annum for major premises repairs expenditure to which partnership bodies could apply for a contribution towards the costs.</p>	<p>If the sinking fund option is taken up, then funding should be made available for an independent building survey and 10 costs projection to ensure £150,000 is suitable amount</p>
<p>10) Determine if, after the 5 year period, it would charge a market rent for the library building.</p>	<p>Although it is difficult to give rock solid guarantees, the Council is not currently minded to introduce a market rent at any point in the future.</p>	<p>This should be avoided where possible. An introduction of market rents could prove a false economy as previous investment would be lost if libraries were forced to close due to increased costs.</p>
<p>11) ensure management committees of partnership bodies have adequate access to on-going advice and support.</p>	<p>The County Council will provide a named 'relationship manager' to support management committees with business planning, income generation etc. on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>This sounds fine, but people move on / leave etc. Better to have either an accountable department, or perhaps look to the VCS to have an accountable external organisation.</p>

## **From : Braunstone Town Council**

Braunstone Town Council wishes to make the following comments concerning the proposed support package for Community Libraries.

It is important to note that Braunstone Town Council remains of the view that the model, which was the subject of consultation earlier this year is not a strategic solution to managing a Library service both in the short and long term. Options such as a partnership or shared service with other library authorities would enable savings to be made without impacting on the front line service. The model also highlights the potential for double taxation, which Braunstone Town Council is opposed to.

While Braunstone Town Council is firmly of the view that alternative models and/or a different approach could have been by the County Council to address the funding shortfall, it is accepted that the County Council has determined that a £800,000 saving should be made from the Libraries budget. Therefore, should the County Council approve the proposed model, it is vitally important that the support package for Community Libraries is as flexible as possible to support and meet the needs of the County's diverse communities and that of the range of community partnership models, while meeting its primary objective of budget savings.

The areas affected range from large populated suburban areas, such as Braunstone Town and Burbage, through large villages and settlements such as Barwell and Thurmaston, to rural district centres such as Bottesford and Market Bosworth.

As part of the consultation, the County Council provided figures for each of the proposed Community Libraries, this set out property running costs, staff and other overheads and income. In simple terms, the County Council proposed to cover building insurance and reasonable property running costs along with infrastructure, IT and training. The County Council will have undertaken an assessment which would provide an estimate of the financial cost of such support in relation to each Library.

However, each community and the organisations within those communities will have different needs. Not everyone will need a building, for example some communities may choose to co-locate in another community building, while in others the Library already exists as part of another organisation's building. In such cases buildings insurance, management and maintenance of the building may not be required from the County Council. Others may have computers or wi-fi access or have access to alternative arrangements at a lower cost, again there would be no need for this support from the County Council. However, for some communities, access to professional library staff to ensure that the book stock and involvement of the library in the wider community is maintained will be important and equivalent funding from the County Council for provision of this service would be more value to that particular community partnership library.

In some cases the County Council will have legal and contractual obligations, such as a lease agreement, there is the potential to discuss the transfer of these or negotiation of terms in order to unlock the equivalent funding for other library services, should this be of value to a particular community partnership library.

Another community partnership library may value the professional expertise of the County Council, legal advice, financial services, professional funding and grant services.

In short, the one size fits all model is inflexible and could hinder the success of community partnership libraries. A pick and mix approach to support, where the elements of support that the County Council provide are attributed a value, enables each individual community partnership library to pick the support elements which meet their local needs and circumstances and present the best chances of success. It gives the partnership the autonomy and therefore ownership and motivation for the project to succeed in their area. Each community library would be able to pick elements up to the value equivalent to the originally proposed support package. Each individual community partnership could potentially pick a larger support package than the equivalent value and chose to pay the difference.

Equally, a pragmatic approach on the part of the County Council would be to continue to directly run a Library Service in an area where suitable partners, public sector, private sector, education establishments etc. can be found to co-locate services and save on fixed and operational costs to the mutual benefit of the partners. In reaching an agreement, consultation could take place with partners and the local community on how the service should operate, for example changed or reduced opening hours. Where such an arrangement resulted in the equivalent expenditure as highlighted above, the core objectives of service cost savings has been met by the County Council, while retaining the County run professional library service for the community and resulting in cost savings for the other partners.

Therefore, concerning the specific questions that the Scrutiny Panel have asked, Braunstone Town Council's response is as follows:

*1. Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?*

To some extent, the support package is wider and therefore will better meet to needs of partnership groups.

*a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?*

Each Library having a Named County Council Liaison Officer who will visit to provide advice and support on a regular basis. This person will undoubtedly be to many community groups, volunteers and partner organisations welcome support, particularly in the early stages.

*b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern?*

There is no recognition of the County Council's ability to reduce the overheads of Community Partnership Libraries beyond 5-7 years through its ability to act on their behalf and providing savings overall through economies of scale, for example costs for insurance, legal, maintenance, utility services.

2. *Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support?*

Yes and also the ability to choose additional support instead of the standard support.

3. *Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful?*

Yes, this should be an option.

4. *Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs?*

The partnership body should be able to determine from the lease options available at the outset.

5. *Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body?*

It would not be appropriate to levy a market rent or transfer the rental costs to a community library. However, if the organisation has developed other lines of business, which having funded the community library, is making significant profits for the business, rather than for the community, e.g. a Café business or retail outlet, then a market rent on the floor space of those businesses activities could be considered.

6. *Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing?*

Should the Panel agree to a "pick and mix" support model, part 1 needs to include a definitive list of support options with the cost of each option and part 2 need to include the attributed value of support for the specific Library.

7. *What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel?*

For any community organisation or partnership, particularly one formed of volunteers, it is vitally important that to be motivated and successful as a group that they feel supported by the County Council and that they are not constrained by a bureaucratic and one size fits all approach. Many community partnerships and volunteers will be presenting themselves to run their local Library rather than see it closed, they will be finding it difficult to recruit, train and retain volunteers and their view of the County Council will not necessarily be that complimentary. The County Council therefore needs to work hard to demonstrate that it is supportive, understanding and flexible to the needs of the various communities and partnerships who will be involved in making a success of their local Library service.

Braunstone Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on these proposals and is hopeful that the Scrutiny Panel will take a realistic and pragmatic approach to developing a support package and enabling the County Council to make savings while ensuring the continuation of services through both community partnerships and public/private partnerships.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Nick Brown  
Leader of Braunstone Town Council

## Anstey Library Interest Group

### FAO : Scrutiny Review Panel, Community Partnership Libraries

Please find below the response by the Anstey Library Interest Group to your request for feedback on the proposed changes to the support package (your document of 7<sup>th</sup> Oct).

Our comments are numbered as per the table on page 5 of your document.

1. a. No comment
  - b. Will 'provision of ICT infrastructure for relevant equipment' include repair and replacement of ICT equipment? Will the Library Service undertake to ensure that at the time ICT equipment is handed over to the partnership body that it is fully functional and has an appreciable expected lifetime remaining?
2. In addition to the services offered, we feel a successful transition to a volunteer-based service would be more likely if at least one professional librarian could be provided for an introductory period of perhaps 12 – 18 months.  
Beyond this, we welcome the proposal that it should be possible to purchase additional professional library services.
3. We do not anticipate wanting to capitalise the property running costs but at this stage, before we've had a chance to build a business case, it seem prudent to retain the option.
4. We feel the second option is preferable but clearly depends on the take-up from other partnership bodies. Also the 'contribution towards costs' needs to be quantified, presumably as a percentage. Accordingly we suggest this proposal is developed further.
5. Under no circumstances would we consider it fair to introduce a market rent
6. i Insurance of the loaned book stock (as mentioned in the original proposal may not be feasible. Can the Library Service advise of anyone prepared to offer this facility?
  - ii We feel the Information Pack should include a Service Level Agreement for the provision of services by the Library Service
7. i The existing library building in Anstey also houses Sure Start, and if the library closes Leics Council will have to make alternative provision for it; similar situations may well occur elsewhere. We would urge the panel to adopt a holistic approach when calculating cost savings to also take account of the additional expenditure arising from library closures.
  - ii Opportunities may arise for an existing, aging library to be replaced by a newer, more efficient building at a cost above the £5000 budget mentioned for minor capital works. Is there any possibility of larger capital sums being available for such developments?

Executive Committee, Anstey Library Interest Group  
12 Oct 2014

**From: Neil Fortey , Bottesford**

**Comments on Community Library consultation**

13<sup>th</sup> October 2014

I am providing these comments on my own behalf, as a Bottesford resident and library user who is willing to take part in setting up a community library within a reasonable and viable model, if that proves necessary. However, I feel that the case for closing Bottesford is poor and should be re-assessed, though my following comments are based on what I see as a realistic view of what is likely to happen. Any community library solution will require establishment of a management trust in Bottesford, which will require time and support from the library service to put in place.

My first point is to agree with the sentiment expressed at the open meeting in Bottesford that the County Council should be urged to continue to support the existing library, on the grounds that it is the only library in this large part of northern Leicestershire. If it closes it will increase rural and the sense that too many libraries are being kept close to the centre of the county while peripheral areas such as the Vale of Belvoir are regarded as unimportant. The only other accessible county public library is at Melton which is some fifteen miles away requiring an hour-long bus ride to reach it (and there is no guarantee that the bus service will be maintained in future years).

I would go further. My view is that the existing library should be made more viable than it is at present by broadening the range of services that it provides. One way forward would be if it could be developed as part of a 'community hub' with library, heritage, cultural, meeting and other services (parish office, facilities for Citizens Advice Bureau, etc.). The traditional view of public libraries run as enclosed facilities administered by a remote centralised authority is probably no longer viable, but this should be seen as an opportunity rather than a disaster.

In a community hub development it would be reasonable to ask the County Library Service to contribute some of the costs, not necessarily 100% as they do at present. This could be a long-term arrangement or could be subject to review as the financial structure of the Hub developed with time and experience.

In any new arrangement in which the community takes on the role of running the library and/or a Hub there will need to be a body established within the parish for this purpose. The location of the Hub would continue to be Bottesford Old School (unless an alternative was identified). This is the location of the present public library: is owned by the parish council and space is leased to the county library service. Therefore the PC would have to be a partner in the new body. However, it would not be advisable for the PC to make up the whole of the managing body (as a PC sub-committee) because that would limit its scope and ability to achieve charitable status. In addition, the PC is subject to periodic re-election and so its future policies and therefore its stability cannot be guaranteed. A degree of stability is necessary and this can be achieved by a managing body that works with the PC but is a separate entity, preferably a charitable trust that would enter into a service level agreement with the PC regarding issues such as rent, financial responsibilities, income and so on.



Another reason for having a separate management trust is that the County Council rightly expects there to be something of this sort (they refer to a 'partnership body' with a 'managerial team' in their recent paper) with whom they can establish a management contract for the new community library. At present there is no such 'partnership body' in Bottesford, and precious little time to set up one. I am aware that there is still in theoretical existence the 'Bottesford Institute', which was the charitable body established years ago to run the former Coffee House reading room and youth club. Apparently this is still on the Charity Commission's records, and it might be possible to revive it as a new Friends of Bottesford Old School (or some such title), but again there is little time to do this or momentum towards such a goal.

The existing public library in Bottesford is not used as much as we, or the County Library Service, would like. Is this because no-one reads books anymore? I am not convinced of this pessimistic view. The present library is allocated a poor selection of book stock, but the library also serves as a pickup point for the wider county library stock which can be accessed via their online catalogue-reservation service (which is itself accessible via the public computers in the library, though this is little help to people who are not familiar with PCs or the internet).

From these ramblings I think I can see three options:

- 1) Urge the county library service to maintain the library as a publically funded facility much as it is now.
- 2) Develop a partnership between the library service, our parish council (who own the premises) and a new management trust to develop a structure that will provide a wider range of services and fund-raising opportunities while maintaining a public library.
- 3) Accept that the county will cease to fund the present library and will instead provide a mobile library. This would leave the community free to develop a hub in the Old School by setting up a management trust to work in partnership with the parish council to create a multi-use community and heritage centre. Part of this could be a truly communal library with books donated by members as well as a commercial function selling books.

Option 1 should be pursued while it still possible to do so, though if it did succeed it might only keep the library limping on as a diminishing service for a few more years. Option 2 is a half-way house solution that might well become entangled in the bureaucracy of managing three major partners (library service, parish council, management trust). I think no.3 is the most interesting, because it offers a positive solution to what otherwise feels like a depressing end-game. It would also be a genuine community initiative that will draw in support from a wide range of people.

Bottesford should be prepared, if it proves unavoidable (as I suspect it will), to let the public library float free as a visiting mobile library providing a range of stock on its shelves and also, more importantly, acting as a pickup and return point for books reserved from the county stock. This would leave us free to establish a new communal centre to provide heritage, cultural and other things independently, that could be arrived at by agreement between the owners of the Old School building (the parish council) and a new management trust (that would with time achieve charitable status). The trust would consist of volunteers to establish a management committee and also draw in a wider membership from the community who would receive specific benefits in return for their membership fee.

Additional comments:-

Firstly, the parish council is already working on a bid for HLF funds to develop a community hub at the Old School that would specifically be allied to a programme of heritage activities and projects; in this the Old School itself is an essential part of the heritage that it seeks to conserve and research.

I am well aware that my ramblings have not addressed the financial cases for any of these options, which I have not felt able to think through at present. There are loads of things to consider and the whole needs careful management, and the estimates I have been shown indicate that a straightforward community library with volunteers replacing the present professional staff would require a high level of year on year fund raising just to remain financially stable. I have doubts as to the long term success of such an arrangement.

In a similar vein, I ask myself whether a volunteer staff would remain enthusiastic and professional enough in the long term. What would be in it for them? Are the existing library staff or other sites across the county offering to run the community library on an unpaid basis rather than see it close? I doubt it.

**From: Susan & Mike Meech, Bottesford**

Dear Scrutiny Committee

We are responding to your document dated 7 October 2014 on the provision of Infrastructure Support for Community Partnership Libraries. Our response is as interested individuals as there is no properly constituted community group in Bottesford which could consider the Community Partnership proposals.

Our overarching comment on the future of the library in Bottesford is that the costs of running a comparable library service as a community partnership would seem to be much more than a village of our size could afford. Our projections based on the 2012/13 running cost figures excluding staff and premises costs (i.e. no staff costs and rent at zero from 2015/16 and zero cleaning costs from 2017/18) allowing for inflation at 3% suggest that running a library with its current service offer would accumulate a deficit of £36k after 5 years and £71K after 10 years. Some savings might be made: rates might be reduced by securing charitable status while contributions to maintain the book stock could be reduced. However, given that Bottesford library is housed in a building leased from the Parish Council that has relatively little under-exploited space there would seem to be little scope for a community partnership to develop an income stream to meet the prospective deficit. Before we even arrive at this stage, however, it is unclear whether Bottesford Parish Council (BPC) would or could afford to forego the rental income, currently £8K per annum or if Leicestershire County Council (LCC) would fund this. If not, the accumulated deficit could more than double. As owner of the existing library building the Parish Council would seem to have an unusually key say in the prospects for any community partnership proposals.

In response to the specific questions posed in the document of 7<sup>th</sup> October:

1. Changes to the support package could not be said to have addressed our concerns. The overall cost of running the library still looks to be more than the village could afford but there are gaps in the information to say this with great certainty.
  - a. We consider the clarity provided re: future funding and support/ liaison by LCC to be helpful in developing future financial forecasts but to be too generic and incomplete, particularly with respect to leasing of premises.
  - b. Items which remain of particular concern are:
    - i. Details of funds available to purchase expert support not being offered by LCC such as legal advice, financial advice, business mentoring etc.;
    - ii. Any 'strings' attached to the financial support inc. when and on what the money should be spent, whether any loans might be available and on what terms;
    - iii. A lack of information about how long current LCC contracts would need to be honoured for utility bills and cleaning and whether any community partnership would suffer from loss of economies of scale in future contracting. Also, how long any partnership would be expected to contribute to the book budget and what access to the county stock this would buy;
    - iv. Any minimum levels of library service expected by LCC to qualify a proposal as a community library e.g. opening hours, materials to be available to borrowers;

- v. Support available to libraries like Bottesford, which lease premises from a parish council, with regard to renegotiation of lease;
  - vi. When and for how much rate relief would a partnership be eligible if a community partnership did not decide to or could not become a registered charity; and
  - vii. What assets would the community partnership have at the end of the 5/7 phase-in years?
2. It would seem sensible for LCC to make provision for library partnerships to purchase additional support but not just on library issues. The community library would need support in other professional areas as stated in bi.
3. It would be useful to see what effect capitalising running costs would have on prospective deficits.
4. The comments on lease options are incomplete. In the case of Bottesford a prospective community partnership would be leasing a building from the Parish Council that is old and where repair and maintenance costs could be very high. A community partnership might welcome the opportunity to bid for funds for maintenance projects otherwise uncertainties (e.g. boiler replacement) might make the risks just too great.
5. On the basis of the figures before us, we cannot see that a community library would be able to earn enough income to cover this cost.
6. Information pack gaps:
  - a. Part 1
    - Minimum LCC requirements from the library e.g. opening hours, reference collection, IT access;
    - Details of what happens to the assets at the end of 5/7 years inc. furniture, books, computers, photocopier; and
    - A proforma manual containing drafts of the documents required for running a community library inc. all the necessary policies & guidance documents e.g. health & safety policy, safeguarding policy, environmental policy, volunteer management policy, building maintenance schedules.
  - b. Part 2
    - Stats on library users inc. postcode, age;
    - Library usage by age, type of material;
    - Breakdown of resources used/ borrowed e.g. DVDs, large print;
    - Estimate of use of e.g. reference material, local history collection;
    - Use of IT equipment/ photocopier;
    - Stats on use of library catalogue and on line reservation service by residents; and
    - Take up of activities which take place in the library e.g. Wriggly readers, summer reading scheme.
7. Key message to scrutiny panel:  
 Unless we have understood the figures incorrectly it is hard to see how a new community partnership could afford to run a comparable library service to that currently offered.

**From: Rothley Library Working Party**

In Rothley the Working Party of Parish Councillors and members of the public has the following comments to make to the Scrutiny Panel:

1. The changes to the support package have addressed some of our concerns, but have served to highlight the complexity of the start-up process for a newly formed volunteer group.

We are still concerned about sustainability despite detail of tapering.

2. The council should make provision for the purchase of additional library support.

3. The option to capitalise running costs into a single payment may prove useful in external funding bids.

4. We cannot comment on preferred lease options as premises are yet to be determined.

5. Neither can we comment on future rental agreements for the same reason.

6. There is no obvious omission to proposed information pack at this stage.

7. Our key message to the scrutiny panel is that whilst the additional detail about financial/professional support is welcome, we would have liked to see evidence of a more flexible approach to, for example, number of opening hours and floor area requirements. So we look forward to seeing the outcomes relating to alternatives to the proposed community partnership libraries to be considered by the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.

Cllr Olwen Jones  
Rothley Library Working Party

**From: Castle Donington Parish Council**

I have now had chance to look at the documents and they look good in the main.

It seems quite clear as to what is being offered and the fact that there is the scope to adapt for the different libraries too.

There are a number points / questions that probably need to be addressed, but these are probably specific to Castle Donington if it is that the Parish Council takes it on.

My main issue for everyone is that I can't seem to see where the LCC is going to assist Parish Councils (or other groups) to work through the hoops of a legal entity to run the service. As you are aware, Parish Councils do not have the legal power to run libraries. Some may be able to use the Power of Competence, but even with this there are grey areas and advice will need to be sought.

I am not sure in the LRLAC if looking in to this, but couldn't see any info in the information that has been circulated.

There are mentions of minimum opening hours and offers of grants?

Who will set the hours of opening of the library as this will be individual to the locality and potential the staff /volunteers who are going to run them going forward.

With regard to the one- off grants; it is hoped these are not like the SHIRE grants, but actual one-off payments? It will be difficult enough to take over the running aspects without having to go through hoops to get the necessary money.

With regard to the legal advice for the legal entity, is this included in one of the payment amounts being offered (transition support)? Again not too clear.

It is good to see that the existing computers will be retained, but what happens to these if they fail? Who will have to replace them? Computers and IT are obviously a big thing going forward, so the level of support needs to be high and confirmed.

Advice/training will need to be front loaded as it will be a very steep learning curve for the parish council/group and volunteer / staff. Has this be accounted for in terms of capacity for training being offered.

In terms of the end of the 5 year period for funding and assistance; this really needs to be addressed at year 3 so that the correct lead in times and ability to precept/ obtain additional funding etc can be worked in to the project.

The document talks about the leasing of the library building, but what if the group does not want to lease the building and use an existing, or if it wanted to buy the library building so that it can make better use of joined up working – i.e. in terms of a One Stop Shop facility with the Police and Volunteer Bureau? Has the purchase of buildings been agreed?

The information pack looks fairly full, except for the legal advice bit as above and also information regarding staff arrangements/ TUPE etc and how if the PC/group wanted to employ people, not just volunteers, how this could be done legally and correctly without actually having to take on existing staff (just in case it doesn't want to).

Feedback on specific questions:

- 1) a) The fact that it set out in a more clear manner. Outlining the various processes and giving more detailed information.  
b) In points above.
- 2) Purchase of other books may be difficult due to the necessary legal powers required needed to provide the actually library service. Perhaps the LCC should look into the legal powers that are necessary for another body to do this.

- 3) Yes.
- 4) Both seem complicated and expensive; a lot would depend on how the process for applying for the additional funding that will be necessary to have the repairs done and possible timescale. For this reason, potentially option 1, but I think that some more work on this is needed, more in favour of the Parish Councils/ local groups who are going to run the facility going forward.
- 5) No particular situation as the cost would make the new service viable, particular in the short term. Potentially at the review time and if sufficient time and notice and the new process is actually working a review of the rent and other things could be potentially considered. Poverty indicators,
- 6) Looks good except for the comments made above.
- 7) The Parish Council feels very strongly that the library should be retained. They are (it is) a vital resource which is open and useable by the whole community. It feels that LCC should retain the libraries, but will work with whoever, to ensure the facility is retained in some form. The pleasure and excitement of books for all generations is paramount, particular for those that cannot travel to other libraries. This Parish has a high level of young and elderly and a deprivation indicator and level of poverty due to its locality to the in the district and county. With such a high level of elderly and poverty, there is strong need to have the high levels of IT and computers, so that not only the young people can have access for homework, but also for those seeking employment. The access of such a facility is not only for the book service, but the community spirit and access for other facilities (things such as Wiggle Worm readers); the ability for young families to have access to information and a meeting place. Castle Donington library has a unique location, being down the road from the upper school, who itself is going through change from ages 10-14 to 11-16, so there will become a greater need for access to books and eLearning. Options can be explored as how to make the facility a self-service one (to save money), but it is clear that the library (in whatever form) should be manned with real people as this is the best option and will allow the service to continue to be, and expand, in to a real hub for the community. It is hoped that any changes will allow the new facility to become a local service for local people. The Parish Council, if the LCC decides to the closures, will be looking at ways to ensure the facility is maintained for the betterment of the local community. The Parish Council is working with other partners to this aim in a bid to provide a One stop Shop for the local community. Having said all this, the preferred option is that the LCC continues to maintain the local Libraries.

I am hoping to get to the meeting on Wednesday so hopefully will catch up with.

Kind regards

Fiona

Mrs Fiona Palmer  
 Clerk to the Council  
 Castle Donington Parish Council

**From: Measham Parish Council.**

1. Have the changes to the support package helped to address your concerns?

a. Which changes do you consider particularly valuable?

b. Are there any aspects of the support on offer (or lack thereof) that remain of concern?

***As far as we are concerned, the set up allowances are insufficient to convert the existing library into premises which are commercially viable. From the figures that we have been given, the activities at the library will need to be expanded, with little chance from existing buildings of what was a purpose built library.***

2. Should the Council make provision for partnership libraries to purchase additional library service support? (Appendix A, issue 5)

***We believe that, during the period of support, all extra support required should be provided free of charge.***

3. Would the option to capitalise the running costs into a single payment be useful? (Appendix A issue 7)

***We believe that the running costs of the library should be provided in a single payment at the start of each accounting year during the period of support.***

4. Which of the lease options would best enable the partnership body to plan and budget for maintenance and repairs? (Appendix A, issue 9)

***Neither option would be acceptable in its present format.***

5. Under which circumstances would you consider it fair for the County Council to introduce a market rent for its library premises and/or transfer rental costs to the partnership body? (Appendix A, issue 10)

***During the period of the 10 year initial lease, we believe that the support package should be increased, to provide the premises of Measham Library rent free.***

6. Looking at the index of the Information Pack to be made available for each library - is there any particular information or guidance missing?

***The information of Costs and Income analysis should be extended from one year to either 3 or 5 years, to give a more balanced record, for Due Diligence to be effected.***

7. What key message would you like to convey to the Scrutiny Review Panel

***Should any of Leicestershire Libraries face closure, and attempt to find voluntary help to run a Partnership, it should be noted that the examples given of "successful partnerships" have in excess of 50 volunteers in order to be run efficiently. Should Measham Library remain under threat of closure, then it would be preferred to have support at 100% for the 5 years, rather than a reducing support for 7 years. We can see little savings to be made by closing Measham Library, other than to staffing costs.***

**Dawn Roach**

**Parish Clerk, Measham Parish Council**



# THURMASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Future Libraries  
Leicestershire County Council

11<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Thurmaston Library**

Thurmaston Parish Council have considered the potential changes to the support package and are of the opinion that there is insufficient support available to realistically enable Parish Council's to adopt Library facilities and provide a professional service. Additionally, there is no guarantee of continued support after the five year period.

We are opinion that the County Councils proposals re provision of volunteer help is totally unrealistic. The Parish Council appreciates & promotes the support of volunteers, however through experience we have established that there are few volunteers available with the necessary skills, and consider that it is very unlikely that the professional skills of a Librarian will be volunteered. If the Library remains open this would ensure continuation of employment for the Staff and maintain a professional provision of services.

Thurmaston Parish Council objects to the proposed closure of Thurmaston Library and the loss of this valuable service for the community of Thurmaston. While we appreciate that savings are necessary, we consider that the Library is a valuable asset to our community and provides an essential service for residents especially the elderly and young children.

**Thurmaston Parish Council feel that the decision on the future of Thurmaston Library should be deferred until a decision has been made on the proposed development of 4500 houses and associated facilities and services North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension.** If the application for this development is approved, the demand for Library services in the area of Thurmaston will be hugely increased.

Furthermore, Thurmaston Parish Council does not wish to take over the running of the Library and burden the community of Thurmaston by raising the Parish Precept to provide a service which should be provided by County Council

Yours faithfully

**Tracey Kunne**  
**Clerk to the Council**

# Future Libraries – Ratby Library Group’s Position Paper

## Introduction

The group assumes most, if not all residents would prefer there to be no change to library provision, with the full cost being met from their council taxes. But in these austere times, with deficits to be neutralised and debts to be cut we understand the need for cuts but many see libraries as a ‘soft’ target.

At the same time we hope that Leicestershire County Council has been and is doing everything possible through its procurement team to trim costs paid to its suppliers, so making cuts to services less likely.

The Ratby Library Group was established because it wants its library to continue and flourish, rather than be lost entirely and substituted by a mobile facility, visiting once weekly. The library is a place where reading, learning, culture and gathering together underpin our village life. Our parish council has failed to engage with the village, beyond asking for volunteers and events at the most recent meetings have not been encouraging. However it’s not impossible that the two groups might, at some stage, come together but we haven’t yet reached that position.

## Membership of the Ratby Library Group

The group comprises a mix of life, management and teaching experiences –

- **Graham Stanley** - Lead & previously a procurement manager with UK and European businesses
- **Peter Hooper** - Rector, Bradgate Team & previously a managing director
- **Bryan Lewis** - Retired & previously a head teacher
- **Atul Jobanputra** – JP & currently owner of Ratby’s Post Office
- **Neil & Susie Ackland** – Concerned local residents
- **Douglas Harwood** – Retired & previously a head of department teacher; currently leads Ratby’s Local History Group

## Timeline of information re libraries placed into the public domain

Some residents have commented upon the lack of local publicity concerning the issue of Ratby’s library amenity but the following table suggests our County Councillor has done all within his power to make residents aware of the issues and the process.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment</b>
February 2014	County Councillor's report in 'Your Local' magazine on the libraries issue.
March 2014	Leicestershire Matters magazine, p8-p9, delivers a major article on the future of libraries as part of the County Council's reduced budget to 2018.

April 2014	County Councillor's 2nd report on the issue in 'Your Local' magazine, giving dates of local workshops.
May 2014	County Council Libraries booklet placed on the admin desk in Ratby library for anyone to take away.
May 2014	County Councillor's 3rd report in 'Your Local' magazine, also giving a link to County Hall's consultation process.
Mon 19 May 2014	Workshop at County Hall; only RLG attended for Ratby.
June 2014	County Councillor's 4th report in 'Your Local' magazine, also giving details of the date and location of Ratby's local consultation.
Mon 16 June 2014	Ratby's local consultation in the church rooms; 19 attend from a village of over 4000 inhabitants. Comments made about poor local publicity. Various sub-documents issued including numbers and FAQs.
July 2014	County Councillor's 5th report on the issue on 'Your Local' magazine.
August 2014	County Councillor's 6th report in 'Your Local' magazine, of a general nature, identifying the County Council's strategy of support for communities to manage / control their own amenities.
August 2014	Leicestershire Matters magazine, p4, briefly reviewing the results of the public consultation and outlining the continuing process.
October 2014	County Councillor's 7th report on the issue in 'Your Local' magazine, outlining the outcome of the September Cabinet meeting and the work of the Scrutiny Review Panel.

So, prior to the local consultation in Ratby, there were 6 pieces of publicity material identifying the possibility that Ratby might lose its library unless people get involved in the process. Hopefully now Ratby residents are more, if not fully aware that the danger of closure actually exists.

### **Ratby Library Group's starting position prior to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Our budget discussions have been predicated on the following assumptions –

- We've used the 2013-14 numbers as our base line.
- We've assumed an inflation rate of 2% per annum compounded throughout.

The table below highlights the financial position i.e. deficit on operations, should nothing change and with no support.

Years 1-5	Years 1-10
<b>-£128,998</b>	<b>-£271,422</b>

The parish council could, of course close this funding gap by increasing its precept by £69 per household during the first 5 years with an additional £76 per household to cover years 6-10. But given that 75%-80% of the village, who are aged 18+ ( and therefore could be council tax payers ) are neither registered members nor users, they might not support their taxes being increased to pay for an amenity they don't use.

### **Meeting with Paul Love, County Hall, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

A number of concerns were raised by members of the Ratby Library Group and a meeting was requested at County Hall to try to answer them. Our main concern lay with the publication of two budget documents; one for 2013-14 (actual outcome) and another for a provisional budget for 2014-15. Published at about the same time there was a 42.8% differential in the total net numbers, with some lines showing differentials as high as 125%. **See Appendix A, pages 5-6.** Paul Love indicated that there were 'issues' with the 'provisional 2014-15' numbers and we would be advised to use the actual numbers for 2013-14 as our base line.

At this meeting Paul Love also indicated that we would be wise to consider the current position of the County Council as regards transitional support –

- There would be no support for paid staff. Having paid library service assistants (LSAs) was discretionary and would be entirely within the control of the community group. ( At the meeting at County Hall, 19<sup>th</sup> May staffing costs were indicated as the principle source of the £800,000 savings. )
- We would be wise to consider that non-staff support would be fixed at 100% for the first 2 years, subsequently tapering during years 3-5 after which it would be 0%.
- Paul intimated that revised County Council proposals might include a 'clean break' clause at the end of year 5, the time when County Council funding dropped to 0%; this would avoid any group being impacted by 'cliff edge' budget shortfalls.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Formal meeting of the Ratby Library Group, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

Four members of the group attended. In preparation I had prepared a provisional 5-year and 10-year budget document, which incorporated the following assumptions –

1. 2013-14 numbers as our base figure.
2. Inflation rate of 2% per annum compounded.
3. Non-staff cost support would be 100% in years 1 and 2, 75% in year 3, 50% in year 4 and 25% in year 5.

On this basis the numbers improved but the group remained faced with significant deficits in its net forecast finances -

Years 1-5	Years 1-10
<b>-£61,996</b>	<b>-£204,420</b>

These numbers drove our discussions during the rest of the session. We identified some cost items and revenue opportunities and agreed to meet again 29<sup>th</sup> October to see if we'd been able to close the gap between costs and revenues and what more might need to be done. Our objective, being risk averse, is to identify a balanced budget, with all the possible changes negotiated, by the time formal proposals have to be tabled.

We have invited Voluntary Action Leicester to our next meeting (29<sup>th</sup> October) to provide some insight into our direction of travel, to help put some costs to additional items as well as target us towards the source of additional grants / funds. However some fine detail could not be made available to us by the County Council e.g.

electricity and gas usage, details of LCC's public and employer's liability insurance provider.

### **Ratby Library Group's suggestions for the Scrutiny Panel to consider**

#### **1. Contract / Agreement Duration**

It has always seemed inappropriate that the County Council should expect any group to agree to a contract that wasn't an equal commitment for both sides i.e. the 5 years of support against a 10-year commitment from any partnership group. Indeed this could be interpreted as an unfair contract clause.

That the County Council has relented, at least partially and under revised proposals has extended its period of financial support to 7 years, is encouraging. However there remains a 3-year differential between the contracting parties and this should be eliminated.

#### **2. Level and duration of tapering support**

Whether at our meeting with Paul Love or in the revised latest transitional support proposal no details have been given of the total level of support as a percentage of total non-staff costs. I will demonstrate at the Evidence Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October that this can have a significant impact on any group's budgets and financial management going forward.

Most new enterprises that fail do so within their first 2 years, so 2 years of 100% support is most important. However Ratby Library Group looks to the County Council to be generous in its transitional support for non-staff costs in the period beyond year 2. Again I will make suggestions to the Scrutiny Panel on the 15<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **3. Receiving the transitional support as a single contribution / payment**

A key cost reduction opportunity, already identified by us is to apply for 'charitable status' and be recognised by the Charities Commission as a 'not-for-profit' organisation. This would allow us to cut the rates bill significantly and about which we've already spoken to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's Business Rates section..

We shall be investigating, with the assistance of Voluntary Action Leicester how such an up-front payment, which might impact our P&L 'profitability' and therefore our 'not-for-profit' status.

#### **4. Project review timetable**

In order to be successful, especially in the earlier stages, formal reviews of operational and financial performances against business plans are essential; indeed they would be a key feature of our team's strategic management.

Ratby Library Group appreciates that the appointment of a libraries liaison person from LCC would be a valuable resource but we believe equally important would be the holding of business performance reviews with a County council

libraries business manager. If held every 6 months for the first 2 years and then annually thereafter, but before the anniversary of the contract date, they could offer community groups experienced and ongoing advice and support ( see item 5 below ).

#### **5. Agreement termination**

Leicestershire County Council must understand that it is asking volunteers to undertake strategic and operational management of important library resources that are presently undertaken by professionals with experience of the libraries business.

Inevitably Ratby Library Group's management team will include individuals who have full time jobs already and would be undertaking library management / oversight in their spare time. Hence the project reviews and support from a libraries business manager, mentioned above.

But it makes sense to us that there should be 'clean break' opportunities at intervals during the first contractual period ( say at 3, 5, 7 and 10 years ) if it is determined that independent groups find their plans develop critical / terminal budget issues. Likewise if critical events arose suddenly that could not have been anticipated and that negatively impact the budgeted programme, it would make sense for County Council to agree to step in to provide grant funding cover or secure an alternate service provider. It is essential to us that as volunteers we carry no personal financial liability.

#### **6. Upgrades to ITC equipment and software**

We assume that the full costs of upgrades or replacements to software, hardware and configuration will be met from the County Council's ITC ( or other ) budget, not ours.

#### **7. Rent**

We understand the Council will propose a peppercorn rent, at least for the first 5 years but no indication has been suggested as its size or of that beyond. It is essential to any financial planning that the County Council establishes a first-period rent together with any expected increases beyond the peppercorn period.

#### **8. Fabric of the building**

The County council will be covering insurance for the fabric of the fabric of the building but we understand that the County Council 'self-insures' the first £500k of claim costs and effectively therefore would not be paying an insurance premium for Ratby Library.

If the County Council wishes the Ratby Library Group to take over the responsibility for 'repairs and maintenance' from year 3 we shall insist that the building is subjected to a thorough and robust building's fabric inspection prior to any 'taking over'. The inspector, to be identified and agreed with the Ratby Library Group shall issue a report detailing all known and all latent / perceived defects.

Prior to 'taking over' known defects will be rectified at the County Council's cost and by a subcontractor agreed with us and the County Council will make provision for the future cost of repairs, which fall under any inspection's 'latent / perceived defects' category. The workmanship of such repairs shall be inspected as necessary and the costs of inspections and works borne by the County Council.

### Position Paper - Appendix A

DESCRIPTION	2013 / 14 Actuals			2014 / 2015 PROV BUDGET			Total	
	C & W	Central	Total	C & W	Central	Total		
<b>DIRECT EMPLOYEES</b>								
Salary, NI & Pension	£7,354		£7,354	£10,886		£10,886	48.0%	#
<b>Total =</b>	<b>£7,354</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£7,354</b>	<b>£10,886</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£10,886</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	
<b>Premises Insurance</b>								
R(epair) & M(aintenance) of Buildings		£2,105	£2,105		£4,685	£4,685	122.6%	#
Grounds Maintenance		£799	£799		£799	£799	0.0%	#
Electricity		£688	£688		£1,040	£1,040	51.2%	#
Gas		£1,145	£1,145		£1,163	£1,163	1.6%	
Rent			£0			£0		
Rates		£6,344	£6,344		£6,344	£6,344	0.0%	
Water Charges		£353	£353		£296	£296	-16.1%	
Cleaning Materials			£0			£0		
Contract Cleaning	£472	£3,194	£3,666		£2,961	£2,961	-19.2%	
Premises Insurance	£137		£137	£150		£150	9.5%	
Other Premises Expenses		£186	£186		£175	£175	-5.9%	
<b>Total Premises =</b>	<b>£609</b>	<b>£14,814</b>	<b>£15,423</b>	<b>£150</b>	<b>£17,463</b>	<b>£17,613</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	
<b>SUPPLIERS &amp; SERVICES</b>								
Operational Equipment	£68		£68			£0	100.0%	#
Books ( incl book fund Allocation )	£2,147		£2,147	£3,744		£3,744	74.4%	#
Printing	£451		£451	£600		£600	33.0%	#
Telephone	£144		£144	£306		£306	112.5%	#
Other Expenditure	£6		£6			£0	100.0%	#
<b>Total Premises =</b>	<b>£2,816</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,816</b>	<b>£4,650</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£4,650</b>	<b>65.1%</b>	
<b>Total Direct Expenditure =</b>	<b>£10,779</b>	<b>£14,814</b>	<b>£25,593</b>	<b>£15,686</b>	<b>£17,463</b>	<b>£33,149</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	
Share of Museums & Heritage Operating Costs				£4,443		£4,443	#DIV/0!	#
<b>DIRECT INCOME - FEES &amp; CHARGES</b>								
Overdue Fees & Charges	£679		£679	£1,300		£1,300	91.5%	#

Sales of Surplus Stock	£68		£68			£0	-	100.0%	#
Reservations	£81		£81			£0	-	100.0%	
Lettings	£0		£0	£1,500		£1,500	#DIV/0!		
Computer Charges	£8		£8			£0	-	100.0%	
Retail	£102		£102			£0	-	100.0%	
Other Fees & Charges / Recoverables	£231		£231	£100		£100	-56.7%		
Enterprise Income	£122		£122			£0	-	100.0%	
<b>Total Premises =</b>	<b>£1,291</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£1,291</b>	<b>£2,900</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,900</b>	<b>124.6%</b>		#
Section 106 Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	#DIV/0!		
Other Grants & Contributions	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	#DIV/0!		
<b>Total net Expenditure / Income =</b>	<b>-£9,488</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£17,229</b>	<b>£17,463</b>	<b>£34,692</b>	<b>42.8%</b>		#
	<b>£14,814</b>	<b>£24,302</b>							

Position Paper Ends



**From: Geoffrey Smith, Quorn**

**LEICESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY LIBRARIES SUPPORT PACKAGE – WORKING PAPER**

**PREFACE**

This is a source paper for contributions to discussions of the LCC proposals. To avoid misunderstandings it should not be seen as being on behalf of the Quorn Old School Trust.

The Council has to deal with a difficult financial challenge. The County Library is a greatly appreciated statutory Council service, particularly in the Leicestershire villages. The response to the LCC Consultation and media coverage indicates the need to reconsider the proposals. Since they were prepared the report on Rural Library Services commissioned by DEFRA and the Arts Council has provided information and analysis and further information has come from decisions in other areas.

**PRINCIPLES**

I suggest that the revised Support Package should:

- Be ‘co-produced’ with Parish and Local Councils and community groups.
- Safeguard the quality and consistency of the statutory service delivered by the community libraries under the ‘County Library’ brand
- Ensure its sustainability in the medium and long term.
- Make effective use of paid staff in partnership with volunteers.
- Be seen to deliver an integrated service of Town and Village library services.
- Respect the social value of village libraries in contributing to social cohesion.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Co-production of the Support Package is ‘good practice’ in governance and preferable to just asking for responses to new County Council proposals. It would ensure mutual understanding of the financial and other data. It is more likely to avoid conflict and to produce a sustainable outcome. Proposals produced in partnership are a foundation for good relations in the future.

There is an increasing amount of experience from other areas of the importance of support for Community Libraries and ways in which it can be delivered while reducing the cost to the Council of providing community libraries. The Support Package is likely to be a critical factor in securing consistency of the County Library ‘brand’ and minimising potential reputational damage to the Council.

I suggest that the Council reviews the recent decisions of Oxfordshire, Devon and other Councils to explore the potential of developing a partnership between staff and volunteers in delivering the service. Such a partnership could be appropriate in Leicestershire; it would safeguard the quality and consistency of the service and its compliance with Council and statutory requirements including data protection. It could also ease the difficulties of recruitment, selection (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service checks), training, management, leadership and support of volunteers. It could also be important in encouraging wider community activity using the libraries and their use by other organisations.

The use of new technology could be considered in 'Invest to save and improve' for the introduction of 'self-service' systems to make the work of volunteers less complex, and 'keycard' open access to enable community libraries to be available for longer opening hours, so meeting latent demand.

At present the town and shopping centre libraries appear to make little use of the potential of volunteers in enhancing the services provided during their reduced opening hours. Experience elsewhere indicates that recruitment and retention of volunteers is easier in towns and larger communities. Such partnerships between staff and volunteers can also assist 'work experience' for people returning to employment, community service for young people and community cohesion. They have the potential to free staff to enhance the support to community libraries and possibly reduce costs. It is not clear why this approach has not yet been developed in Leicestershire.

Carrying through a county-wide implementation of the Community Libraries proposals presents risks. I suggest that a phased implementation, say an initial six or eight villages, would allow the exploration and sharing of experience of the challenges and benefits, the requirements imposed on the communities by the legal agreements, alternative ideas for staff/volunteer partnerships, 'self-service' and other factors. This would facilitate the 'roll out' to the remaining communities of support packages tailored to their specific circumstances.

The term of the Council support for the premises costs of community libraries is shorter than is necessary for communities to develop sustainable ways of fund-raising. A tapered approach over a longer period is more likely to secure sustainable services.

My knowledge of the Heads of Terms of the proposed contracts for Community Partnership Libraries is limited (the Trustees of the Quorn Old School found some of the content of those proposed by the Council very demanding) and the Parish Councils and Groups interested in the contracts should have seen what is required and reviewed the potential obligations and performance indicators.

#### **COMMENT**

LCC Adult and Communities has an excellent record in co-production of service changes and developments. The timescale set by the Cabinet is demanding but the prize of a sustainable and mutually supported partnership would be well worth the work it requires from Members, officers and the Parish Councils and Community Groups.

Geoffrey Smith

**Source notes**

## A Primary

LCC Cabinet papers, consultation information, report on responses

## B Secondary

1 CPI consultancy reports and seminar reports

2 Public Libraries News updates

3 Council web sites

4 Rural Library Services in England – report and Case Studies Annex

5 LISA and literature searches

6 CAPITA Panlibus

7 Voices for the Library

8 Library Campaign

9 Kavanagh Dissertation

10 Anstice paper on Volunteer Libraries

11 Bibliotheca paper

12 Locality Community Libraries Hub and reports

13 WI volunteer Libraries report

14 Future Libraries reports and papers

15 LGA web site

16 Suffolk information

Version 6 updated 051014

## Scrutiny Review Panel on the Provision of Infrastructure Support for Community Partnership Libraries

### Further comments received (after deadline for responses)

**Newbold Verdon Parish Council** wish to make the following comments.

Having looked through the proposed changes to the support package , and have the following comments to make, mainly around financial nos.

Point A Transition support - okay with this.

B Library support services - Any additional training could be provided , but likely to incur any extra cost . **This needs to be clarified and quantified , as I think we will be in a chargeable extras regime very quickly.**

**B5** able to purchase additional regular library professional support, **again this needs to be clarified with clearly defined rates of charge.**

C7 is the difficult one . **Would like some idea of costs from 2017. As from 2023 all costs to be met by the group , and this is partly put on the precept will be a major problem. If councils are to capped after the general election , there will be little leeway for NVPC to provide any support.**

**I do believe we need further details on all these costs to enable parish's to try and plan accordingly. I cannot remember the costs of the library when the original consultation meeting took place at the library but I think it was over £30k . We really do need more detail on these areas , and surely the County Council cannot expect any voluntary body to commit to any of this until more detail is provided.**

**NVPC cannot commit to this , with potential capping in the future . We do need more substance on all this , not the general comments listed in the proposed changes to the support package.**

Kind regards  
Rick Bell  
Clerk to NVPC

## ANSTEY LIBRARY

Anstey Parish Council considered the future of the Library in Anstey at its meeting in July 2014. The Council **RESOLVED** not to directly run the Library in Anstey and would look to support any community body that is interested in doing so . . .

The information that was available in July has altered and the Parish Council would like to make the following comments on the present situation with the Library in Anstey. The Parish Council would like to see the continued service of the Anstey Library in its present format and strongly oppose any considered closure.

We understand that LCC Cabinet have agreed to postpone a decision about the future of Leicestershire and community libraries to its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and that communities are making representation to you about the need for the Library in their area. Due to the timescales involved it has not been possible for APC to submit this response to you within your deadlines. As mentioned within your email dated 30 September, all stakeholders will be invited to submit written responses by 5pm on October 13<sup>th</sup>, the first opportunity that APC have to make a decision on this is today the date of their meeting.

Anstey Parish Council object to the planned closure on the following grounds and would like these comments to be considered by the Scutiny Review Panel:

- Within the Local Plan Anstey is designated as a 'Service Centre'. It is recognised as supporting not only the current population, but also the surrounding smaller villages of Newtown Linford, Thurcaston and Cropston.
- Anstey has a growing population and concerns have repeatedly been raised by the Parish Council about the service provision in the village for an increased population.
- Withdrawal of the library will compound the problems for all residents especially the vulnerable who rely on local services.
- Anstey Library is situated in Paper Mill Close next to the sheltered accommodation for the elderly, removal of the Library would leave these residents in particular feeling the loss of a local service.
- Anstey Library is the home for 'Sure Start' if the Library were to close what would become of this group?
- Activities for youngsters during school holidays are provided at the Library.
- Ulverscroft Large Print Books Ltd are located in Anstey they service the needs of the visual impaired. Anstey Library could become a centre for their specialist service.

Anstey Parish Council believes that the County Council has carried out a flawed consultation with the local community about the future library provision and that greater efforts have not been made to work together for the benefit of the people.

The Parish Council recognise the 'Friends of Anstey Library' who have been formed to investigate the future of the Anstey Library and believe that they could benefit from:

- Increased support from LCC by providing a fully qualified member of staff to oversee the running of the Library in Anstey.
- Help in organising a bank of willing volunteers.
- More information about the training that volunteers can expect to receive.
- Assistance in putting together a business plan than could help sustain the library.

Yours Truly

Liz Hawkes  
Clerk to the Council

# Evidence Day 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## Composite response from the Ratby Library Group

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Copies to –

Mr D Jennings CC - Chairman  
 Mrs R Camamile CC  
 Mr J P O'Shea CC  
 Dr S Hill CC  
 Mr R Sharp CC

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### Introduction

The group assumes most, if not all residents would prefer there to be no change to library provision, with the full cost being met from their council taxes. But we recognise the need for cuts in expenditure and welcome the community partnership approach as an alternative to having no library at all. Nonetheless we hope that Leicestershire County Council has been and is doing everything possible through its procurement team to use its huge leverage to trim costs paid to its suppliers, so making cuts to services less likely.

The Ratby Library Group was established because it wants its library to continue and flourish, rather than be lost entirely and substituted by a mobile facility, visiting once weekly. The library is a place where reading, learning, culture and gathering together underpin our village life.

Our parish council has failed to engage with the village, beyond asking for volunteers; and events at the most recent meetings have not been encouraging. However it's not impossible that the two groups might, at some stage, come together but that position has not yet been reached. The majority of material placed into the public domain has come from our county councillor.

### Membership of the Ratby Library Group

The group comprises a mix of life, management and teaching experiences –

- Graham Stanley - Lead & previously a procurement manager with UK and European businesses
- Peter Hooper - Rector, Bradgate Team & previously a managing director
- Bryan Lewis - Retired & previously a head teacher
- Atul Jobanputra – JP & currently owner of Ratby's Post Office
- Neil & Susie Ackland – Concerned local residents
- Douglas Harwood – Retired & previously a head of department teacher; currently leads Ratby's Local History Group

#### 1. Contract / Agreement Duration

- a) Any contract / agreement between the Leicestershire County Council and the partnership body must be for a duration that represents an equal commitment by both parties. An agreement where the partnership body is bound for a longer period than the partnership body would be an unfair contract.

- b) The length of the initial formal contract / agreement should be no longer than the period for which Leicestershire County Council agrees to financially support the arrangement.
- c) Before the end of the formal contract / agreement period the partnership body should be presented with terms of continuance from Leicestershire County Council; this would give us time to assess the likely impact of any changes and give us the right to withdraw.

## 2. Level and duration of tapering support

- a) The period of financial support from Leicestershire County Council should equal the period of contract / agreement.
- b) If new businesses fail they tend to fail within 2 years of their formation. The fact that Paul Love indicated - 15<sup>th</sup> September - that during years 1 and 2 the grant would be 100% is seen by us as a valuable starting position.
- c) Any calculations from the Ratby Library Group use 2013-14 actual accounts - suggested by Paul Love 15<sup>th</sup> September - together with an inflation figure of 2% pa compounded.
- d) The table below gross value of all costs and non-staff costs over periods of 5, 7 and 10 years -

Year	£ Total Costs	£ Total Costs Cumulative	£ Staff Costs	£ Non-Staff Costs	£ Cum Non-Staff Costs	£ Average Annual
1	£26,105		£7,501	£18,604		
2	£26,627		£7,651	£18,976		
3	£27,159		£7,804	£19,355		
4	£27,703		£7,960	£19,743		
5	£28,257	£135,851	£8,119	£20,138	£96,816	£19,363
6	£28,822		£8,282	£20,540		
7	£29,398	£194,071	£8,447	£20,951	£138,307	£19,758
8	£29,986		£8,616	£21,370		
9	£30,586		£8,789	£21,797		
10	£31,198	£285,841	£8,964	£22,234	£203,708	£20,371
	£285,841		£82,133	£203,708		

- e) The table below shows the suggestions from Ratby Library Group as to how financial support from Leicestershire County Council should be structured / tapered over 3 periods.



Average Annual Value of Non-Staff Costs Over 5 Years		Average Annual Value of Non-Staff Costs Over 7 Years		Average Annual Value of Non-Staff Costs Over 10 Years	
<b>£19,363</b>		<b>£19,758</b>		<b>£20,371</b>	
<b>Value of 5-Year Support Sought from Leicestershire CC</b>		<b>Value of 7-Year Support Sought from Leicestershire CC</b>		<b>Value of 10-Year Support Sought from Leicestershire CC</b>	
<b>£77,452</b>		<b>£98,790</b>		<b>£122,226</b>	
Year	5-Year Option 3	Year	10-Year Option 3	Year	10-Year Option 3
1	100%	1	100%	1	100%
2	100%	2	100%	2	100%
3	80%	3	80%	3	90%
4	70%	4	70%	4	80%
5	50%	5	50%	5	70%
	400%	6	55%	6	55%
		7	45%	7	45%
			500%	8	30%
				9	20%
				10	10%
					600%

- We believe this calculation approach could be replicated across many libraries.

f) In the table below find –

- The original full cost to Leicestershire County Council
- The GBP Pounds saving our scheme delivers over each of the 3 periods of 5, 7 and 10 years
- The percentage saving that our scheme delivers to Leicestershire County Council
- Because Ratby Library Group would be picking up an increasing proportion of non-staff costs and Leicestershire County Council would also be losing staff costs the saving to Leicestershire County Council gathers pace across the sample agreement periods, just as it sought to do.

Item Description / Period	5 Years	7 Years	10 Years
Full cost without support	£135,851	£194,071	£285,841
Full non-staff cost without support	£96,816	£138,307	£203,708
Suggested % LCC support over 5, 7 & 10 years	400%	500%	600%
Suggested £ total LCC support	£77,452	£98,790	£122,226
£ saving to LCC over the period over full costs	£58,399	£95,281	£163,615
% saving to LCC over the period over full costs	43.0%	49.1%	57.2%

g) We believe the Council should focus on the total value of support, identified as a percentage of total non-staff costs. We believe these levels of financial support above make it more likely that an independently-managed Ratby library could become a longer-term viable public amenity business.

- h) We believe the Council might consider allowing partnership groups some flexibility as to how they might draw down the financial support. Appendix 2 shows a reducing percentage figure against each line year but the groups might elect to change the proportions within a range agreed with the County Council.

### 3. Receiving the transitional support as a single contribution / payment

- a) At this stage we are not sure if or how a single transitional contribution / payment from Leicestershire County Council, with its effect on P&L accounts would impact our 'profitability' and therefore our status as a charity / not-for-profit organisation, should we seek to apply for / be granted charitable status.
- b) The flexibility suggested by point 2g above could avoid significant cash outflows from County Council funds in addition to the flexibility it offers to independent groups.

### 4. Project review timetable

- a) Ratby Library Group strongly suggest the involvement of a libraries business manager in reviewing performance progress at timely intervals e.g. 6-monthly for the first 2 years and annually thereafter. This would be additional to any management reviews we would undertake ourselves.
- b) Leicestershire County Council libraries people could help partnership groups share best practice from other groups and the 16 'safe' libraries. Through such knowledge sharing, activities that are generating library attendance and revenue could also help the harmonisation of library services across the county. Otherwise each library management group is likely to be undertaking the same trials and making the same mistakes, rather than benefiting from those libraries, which have already travelled along the learning curve and deployed beneficial practices.

### 5. Agreement termination

Ratby Library Group is working towards a positive outcome re taking over the management of Ratby's library resource; hence the work it is undertaking around the budget. However -

- a) We are mindful however that we are not experts in the business of library or public amenity management, though we have members who have carried significant management responsibility for commercial businesses.
- b) We will do everything in our power to develop a budget, which, at worst, is cost neutral and if that is the case it is likely we would table a proposal to take over Ratby's library.
- c) We also recognise that we are risk averse volunteers with a management team, which includes individuals who have full time jobs already and would be undertaking library management / oversight in their spare time.

On this basis we feel justified in suggesting that Leicestershire County Council acts as a financial back stop if any partnership group's operations looks like getting or gets into financial difficulties; this would allow libraries to continue whilst alternate groups come forward. Such decisions might be made at 3, 5, 7 and 10 year reviews, prior to the anniversary contract dates.

## 6. Upgrades to ITC equipment and software

- a) We stress our assumption that the full costs of any upgrades or replacements to software, hardware together with configuration and training thereof etc., determined by Leicestershire County Council's ITC people, will be met from the County Council's ITC ( or other ) budgets.

## 7. Rent

- a) We were advised that a peppercorn rent would be charged for the first 5 years; we have assumed a nominal £1 per annum.
- b) But no indication has been given as to the number beyond this first 5-year period, for which groups should budget. It is essential to any financial planning that the County Council gives some indication what a commercial rent might be from year 6, to allow us to make budgetary provision for it.

## 8. Fabric of the building

We restate our view re the fabric of the building -

- a) If the County Council wishes the Ratby Library Group to take over the responsibility for 'repairs and maintenance' from year 3 we shall insist that the building is subjected to a thorough and robust building's fabric inspection prior to any 'taking over'. The inspector, to be identified and agreed with the Ratby Library Group shall issue a report detailing all known and all latent / perceived defects together with the costs of their rectification and the timescales for doing so.
- b) Prior to 'taking over' all known defects will be rectified at the County Council's cost and by a subcontractor agreed with us. The County Council will make financial provision for the future cost of repairs, which fall under any inspection's 'latent / perceived defects' category.
- c) The workmanship of such repairs shall be inspected as necessary and accepted by us before being 'taken over' with the costs of inspections borne by the County Council.

## 9. Other operational support and financial issues

Our group remains concerned re –

- a) Levels of operational training support for LCC's book system and its cost beyond year 5 -

We believe training for LCC's book management system should be at the cost of the County Council in perpetuity, especially when many partnership groups will be faced with using volunteer labour and the turnover of available people that is likely to ensue. Or perhaps the County Council is considering the establishment of a free-phone helpdesk and / or the training of 'super users' i.e. able to train volunteers. Some clarity is needed here as is the issue of charging for training after the first 5 years, which will need to be applied to our provisional budget so we can assess 'viability'.

- b) On-site availability of the liaison officer –

It is believed a couple of hours on-site fortnightly may not be sufficient at least for the first year. Again the helpdesk or 'super user' training could help.

c) Financial responsibility for the provision of new book stock –

Book stock, which is likely to be decided by others, should be the financial responsibility of the County Council. We recognise however our responsibility for its insurance.

d) Existing County Council contracts affecting Ratby Library -

We are not aware of any contractual commitments, entered into by the County Council on behalf of Ratby Library. If there are such contracts we would need to assess their scope and impact on our budget. If their costs exceeded those we had decided upon, their costs would have to be negotiated down, or the addition to our costs paid to the Ratby Library Group ( over and above the financial support detailed in 2e above ) or the contract terminated. If terminated the County Council would have to meet any costs of termination, prior to us taking over.

**Composite Presentation Paper Ends**