

Shropshire Newsroom

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## **New strategy for Shropshire Council libraries revealed**

Proposals to develop the services provided by Shropshire Council libraries to their communities are to be discussed by councillors on March 23.

Shropshire Council's Library Strategy looks to change the way the libraries operate to ensure every location provides an efficient and cost-effective service that meets the needs of the community.

A six-point plan has been proposed to transform services over a three-year period. The plan will see libraries:

- Improving opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity
- Improving health and wellbeing of communities
- Promoting economic recovery and growth
- Supporting communities that are resilient and inclusive
- Offering more innovative and sustainable services
- Enabling discovery of the digital world

Shropshire Council's library service currently operates through a network of 21 static libraries, a prison library, and three mobile libraries and while the mix of provision will continue, each location will be reviewed to maximise their potential.

Opportunities for co-location, where libraries will share space within other community locations, will also be considered to allow them to meet community need.

Changes to the current library service structure, supported by a clear workforce strategy, will enable staff to adapt and enhance their roles to become more pro-actively involved in wider community engagement.

In support of these proposals it is intended self-service kiosks will be installed in all libraries, along with contactless card-payments, and library opening hours will be tailored to reach people with the greatest needs.

Shropshire Council is also exploring opportunities to improve interaction with people and businesses in the county by extending Shropshire Local into libraries where appropriate.

The mobile library service will also pilot partnerships with the voluntary sector, health and local services to combat loneliness and isolation in the most rural and difficult to reach areas, meaning a wider range of services being brought to those communities.

The full report will be discussed by Shropshire Council's Cabinet at its meeting at 10am on 23 March.