

Local libraries – have your say today

Local people are being asked for their views on the future shape of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Library Service.

The Council is running a public consultation with library users, communities, businesses and town and parish councils to gauge opinions on proposals for how the service could be delivered in light of reductions in government funding.

It follows a public survey carried out across Bath & North East Somerset Council's libraries in September, which asked questions about what services people value, how they rate particular services, and those services they consider most essential.

The consultation will ask for views on proposals including saving £159,000 by withdrawing the mobile library service in Bath and North East Somerset and moving resources into increasing the opening hours of the Council's part-time libraries across the district and extending the Home Library Service.

Councillor David Dixon (Lib-Dem, Oldfield), Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, said: "It is clear that to achieve the required level of savings changes are needed to library service provision. However, Bath & North East Somerset Council remains firmly committed to a library service which provides excellent service, good value for money, and is fit for purpose.

"We aim to achieve the required saving whilst at the same time enabling the Library Service to respond to particular needs. Our current Home Library Service, run by volunteers could be expanded to far more customers who find themselves house-bound, or for some reason cannot access their local library. We are also very keen to recruit volunteers to enable our smaller libraries to open for longer and provide a better value of service within local communities.

"We need to hear from as many library users as possible before 20 January so that the right decisions can be made. Therefore I encourage anyone with an interest in their local library service to take part in the consultation."

Anyone registered with the mobile library will receive a consultation questionnaire in the post. You can also complete the questionnaire online at www.bathnes.gov.uk/librarynewsandevents or pick one up from your local or mobile library.

Questionnaires must be returned by Friday 20 January 2012. They can also be posted to the Library Customer Services Manager, Bath Library, The Podium, Bath, BA1 5AN.

In addition to the questionnaire, public meetings will be held during January in the Chew Valley, Peasedown and Batheaston areas. Venues and times will be posted on the website www.bathnes.gov.uk/librarynewsandevents. Information will also be available from the mobile libraries or by calling Council Connect on 01225 394041.

Results from the public consultation will be considered at a subsequent meeting of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Cabinet.

ENDS

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