

Mobile Library Provision – Public Consultation August-October 2022

What is this consultation about?

Share your views to help shape the future mobile library service to meet the needs of residents.

The Library Service will be introducing a new modern mobile library in 2022. The new vehicle, which will replace the existing mobile library vehicle, will be fully electric and therefore much cleaner and greener. Other sustainable features include solar panels and LED lighting. There will also be improvements to services offered, such as an awning for summer activities and onboard Wi-Fi and digital access for customers.

Our last review of the mobile library service took place in 2016, when residents and stakeholders were consulted on proposed changes to routes and plans to review routes every six months. Since then, some minor changes have been made to mobile library stops. Over the past two years the service has been significantly disrupted due to the pandemic, with periods of no service and a period of temporary routes. However, the service is now running normally.

With the introduction of a new vehicle, we would like to take the opportunity to review existing mobile library stops and the activities held at some stops. We would like to understand the views of service users, residents, and stakeholders on the proposals for the mobile library service.

What is the Mobile Library Service?

The Mobile Library offers a wide range of stock, including adult and children's books as well as audiobooks. It also provides access to the Library Management System, enabling customers to have access to books from across the library service and to make reservations, as well as update their library accounts. Mobile Library staff can also provide online council information and a council enquiry service. Library members also have free access to a wide range of online resources, including eBooks via the Libraries website.

What are the proposals being considered?

1. Enhancing stops

We propose to enhance the mobile library services on offer at some stops, by adding in activities, for example a Storytime or Craft Session. Some of these could be offered in partnership with community centres or village halls, near to where the library stops.

The stops will need to fit the usual criteria for our stops.

Criteria for stops includes:

- Any enhancements will fit in with existing/proposed routes
- There is demand from the community
- There is no existing library provision nearby
- There is somewhere safe for the mobile library to park

They will also need to have a partner who will be willing to work with us so that we can deliver events in their facilities, such as a community centre or village hall. We are currently reviewing all stops against the criteria to make recommendations for where enhanced stops would be viable. These recommendations will be considered alongside suggestions for enhanced stops gathered via the consultation.

2. Reviewing stops

We propose that we continue to review stops on a six-monthly basis, based on the criteria listed below, to maintain effective service provision and ensure the service is responsive to community needs.

The criteria proposed for adding new stops includes:

- We can fit a new stop into existing routes
- There is demand from the community
- There is no existing library provision nearby
- There is somewhere safe for the mobile library to park

The criteria proposed for withdrawing stops includes:

- There is little or no usage at a particular stop
- It is no longer safe to park the mobile library at a particular stop
- Existing partner location can no longer provide access for the mobile library to stop at their location

Any residents affected by the proposed changes, with restricted mobility or access issues, will be offered access to the Home Library Service. This service delivers books to residents' homes. We will contact any affected residents directly to offer this service.

In the event of any changes to stops, the library service will communicate with effected users and stakeholders using a variety of methods, including email, phone, posters, social media and media release.

3. Proposals for stops

There are currently 76 public mobile library stops across Cheshire West and Chester and approximately 670 customers actively using the service.

Based on the criteria outlined above, the proposal is to maintain 74 mobile library stops, withdrawing 5 stops where they are not well used and adding 3 new stops where demand for a mobile library service has been identified.

The stops we propose to add and the reasons for adding the stop are:

- Backford – Five Village Hall
 - There is demand from the community
 - We can fit a new stop into existing routes
 - There is no existing library provision nearby
 - There is somewhere safe for the mobile library to park

- Eaton – Drays Coffee Shop
 - As above

- Tattenhall – Gifford Lea
 - As above

The stops we plan to withdraw and the reasons for withdrawing the stops are:

- Hartford – Booth Road
 - There is little or no usage at this stop.
 - There is an alternative stop in Hartford at Riddings Lane.

- Saughall – Chapel Close
 - There is little or no usage at this stop.
 - There are alternative stops in Saughall at the Vernon Institute and the Far East Takeaway.

- Backford – Church
 - There is little or no usage at this stop.
 - There is a new stop proposed in Backford at the Five Village Hall.

- Guilden Sutton – Hare Lane
 - There is little or no usage at this stop.
 - There are alternative stops in Guilden Sutton at Moorcroft Crescent and the Memorial Hall.

- Burwardsley Post office
 - There is little or no usage at this stop.
 - The nearest alternative service access is 2.2 miles away at Tattenhall Library.

Any residents affected by the proposed changes, with restricted mobility or access issues, will be offered access to the Home Library Service

As a result of these proposed changes, there may be some alterations to the times and days of some existing stops to allow for driving time and efficient routing. In particular the following stops will be affected by these changes: Huntington - Shops, Caldby Valley - Retail Park, Hartford - Riddings Lane, Greenbank - Community Hub, Saughall - Vernon Institute and Horton - Village Green.

Full details of the proposed changes to the mobile library routes can be found in the table of proposed stops inserted in the consultation booklet and are also available on the consultation webpage:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/mobilelibraryconsultation

How can I share my views?

The Council wants to understand the views of service users, residents, and stakeholders on the proposals for the mobile library service. What you tell us will be used to help shape future plans for the mobile library to meet resident's needs:

There are several ways to take part and share your views:

- Complete an online survey
www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/mobilelibraryconsultation
- Complete a paper survey on the Mobile Library or in any library across the borough. You can find your nearest library here: [Find a library | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)
- Email: libraries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0300 123 8 123 quoting 'Mobile Library Service Consultation'
- Write to: Ellesmere Port Library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG
- You can also request a copy of our consultation in alternative formats including paper using the contact details above.

- You can drop in to one of the following engagement sessions at the mobile stops below
 - Guilden Sutton Village Hall – Monday 22 August 10.30am-12noon
 - Kingsmead Dukes Way – Wednesday 24 August 3pm-4pm
 - Farndon Memorial Hall – Wednesday 31 August 1.10pm-1.45pm
 - Ledsham Village Hall – Friday 2 September 9.40am-10.10am
 - Burton Village Hall – Friday 2 September 11.10am-11.50am
 - Kelsall Community Centre – Friday 9 September 2.40pm-4.15pm
 - Elton Community Centre – Thursday 22 September 2.30pm-4.30pm

This consultation is open until 2 October 2022.

What happens next?

The feedback from this consultation will be considered by the Library service to help shape the future of the mobile library to meet resident's needs. The consultation findings will be available on the Council's website in November 2022 alongside an update on the outcome of any decisions taken and the next steps.