

Appendix B

**Central
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Libraries**

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Amphill Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Ampthill Library is in a Victorian building, originally the Board Room of the Ampthill Poor House. It was converted into a library in 1994. The library is in need of internal and external decoration. The library has older shelving at a height no longer recommended by library suppliers. There is little space currently for activities, particularly children's activities.



People and Place

Ampthill Library is a very well used community library with a high number of active users and a high visitor count. It is the best performing library of the community libraries. It also has the joint second largest use of the People's Network in the authority.

Ampthill attracts comfortably well off older people and industrial workers and early to middle aged parents who are heavily involved with their children's education. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average.

Ampthill does not have any significant social deprivation issues. There is a higher proportion of people aged **65yrs+** than the Central Bedfordshire average and user analysis showed that there may be opportunities to market the service more to this age group as they are currently under represented.

The population is set to grow from **11,810** in 2009 to **12,280** in 2014 and **600** new dwellings are planned.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

59% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **17%** for an Information and Learning Library. The consultation also reiterated an interest in DVDs for loan.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials (**18%**) and improvements to opening hours (**13%**), there was also support for DVDs to borrow (**40%**).

Short term improvements

Amphill is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, and smaller scale activities.

The building would benefit from a refresh of decoration and layout and this could be achieved through installing RFID self service facilities and minor capital works. The community could be actively involved in this process. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of Facilities Management and the local community.

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Barton Library Road Map

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The library today

Barton Library is a single storey building opened in 1973. The building received some remedial repair in December 2012 and was refurbished internally in 2005. It is in an excellent site at the centre of village and close to shops. Barton Library is in a 'cold spot' for Central Bedfordshire Services so could provide a venue for C.B.C. outreach activities.



People and Place

Barton Library is functioning well within the community with the second highest number of active users of the community libraries and has a good visitor count.

The library largely attracts comfortable retired older people and some middle aged parents with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. There is a very active Children's Centre in the village.

There are no significant social deprivation issues in Barton.

There is generally a higher age profile in Barton than the Central Bedfordshire average but the library is underrepresented by older retired couples living in areas for retired people.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

47% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **20%** for an Information and Learning Library. The consultation also revealed an interest in DVDs for loan.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support

for the introduction of toilets (**28%**) and improvements to opening hours (**15%**), there was also support for the introduction of e-mail newsletters (**17%**). **27%** wanted more choice of lending materials.

Short term improvements

Barton is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, smaller scale activities etc. Older people are under-represented in overall library usage. Greater co-ordination is required with children's activities and other children's providers on the village.

The installation of a public toilet could be examined with the option of using capital funding in the future.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID service technology will provide an opportunity to review space layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. C.B.C. may also wish to examine Barton as a potential outreach location for information about Council Services. This could be examined with cross council departments, partners and the local community.

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Biggleswade Library Road Map

Find out more at:

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The library today

Biggleswade Library is situated in a building built in 1968 about a quarter a mile from the town centre. It is in need of external refurbishment. Internally the ground floor appears crowded and requires a new layout. The situation of the library outside the immediate town centre is a challenge when considering how to increase usage, although a free car park opposite the building is of benefit to visitors. The library may feature in town re-development plans in the future.



People and Place

Biggleswade has the highest number of issues of the current area libraries and average use of the Peoples Network Internet PCs. Biggleswade has fewer visitors than Flitwick Library or Houghton Regis Library.

Biggleswade Library serves villages to the east and west of Central Bedfordshire with higher proportions of users coming from Northill and Langford. It has a relatively large catchment area which may be due to the fact that it is the largest shopping centre in the east of the authority and also has additional facilities such as a JobCentre Plus. Northill ward has a 'comfortable' older demographic with no significant deprivation or unemployment issues. Stotfold and Langford ward has no significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. Biggleswade has some areas of social need including a higher proportion of people aged **65+yrs** living in income deprived households, more children receiving free school meals, more people with no access to a car, more young people aged **18-24** unemployed and, lower levels of skills and qualifications than the Central Bedfordshire average. The library needs to extend its reach to some of these groups and ensure that they are reflected in the library demographics.

The population is set to grow from **16,420** in 2009 to **17,910** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

45% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **20%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. The library was deemed to be least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**21%**), more choice of lending material (**16%**), provision of toilets (**36%**) and **11%** for self service.

Short term improvements

Biggleswade is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, extend the user base, increase the number of activities and develop greater community participation. Older people with low incomes are under-represented in overall library usage as are people with other social requirements and this needs to be addressed. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, activities, IT sessions etc.

The installation of RFID, self service technology provides the opportunity to examine internal refurbishment and re-modelling and there is an empty garage area attached to the building which could be developed to house a heritage collection for Central Bedfordshire.

A feasibility study of the building is required in order to consider the long term capital investment required which is dependent on town planning. This will impact on the possible future use of the garage space and options for housing a Central Bedfordshire Heritage Centre.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community, especially as the Thursday closure is unpopular. As a larger library Sunday opening could be explored as a 'family day'.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of Facilities Management and the local community.

Long term opportunities

Town centre planning may result in possible new locations for the library in the future; this will require careful consideration in respect of capital investment in the building in the short to medium term.

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Dunstable Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Dunstable Library is situated in a two storey building opened in 1966. Externally the library looks very tired. The library is part of larger Council owned building, the adjoining offices are now vacant and require significant external maintenance. Dunstable Library currently forms part of a town centre re-development scheme, which is incorporated within the Dunstable Town Centre Masterplan and adopted in March 2011 by the Council.

The biggest challenge is the continuing need to maintain a building, which is looking increasingly in decay. Due to the town centre re-development it is financially prudent to carry out only essential repair work although this does not provide an enticing customer experience. The library is also in need of internal decoration and maintenance.



People and Place

Dunstable Library has the second highest number of active users within the authority and the highest visitor count. It has the joint second largest use of the People's Network Internet PCs in the authority. The library engages well with teenagers and has a good reputation for its work in this area (Dunstable has a higher proportion of teenagers than the Central Bedfordshire average).

The library is largely used by 'comfortable' families and older people and larger families living in deprived areas. Children aged **5-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not reaching older families on moderate incomes and older people on low incomes. Dunstable Library has a wide reach across the authority and extends as far as Ampthill and Millbrook in the north and Studham in the south. This may be because of the presence of Central Bedfordshire College and an Asda supermarket nearby. Caddington, Kensworth and Tottenhoe are areas of high usage.

Dunstable has some social issues including unemployment rates, benefit claimants, numbers of unskilled workers, children living in income deprived houses, residents with no access to a car, all of which are higher than the Central Bedfordshire average. Dunstable also has a number of areas that are amongst the most deprived in Central Bedfordshire. Levels of qualifications are lower than the Central Bedfordshire average for both adults and children.

Dunstable has a similar ethnic breakdown as the rest of Central Bedfordshire however in 2010/11 there were **1,504** applications to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) from postcodes in Central Bedfordshire and a cluster of these applicants were in the Dunstable area.

The population is set to grow from **35,120** in 2009 to **36,670** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

42% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **23%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. Respondents thought the library was best at providing a place to learn and study and least successful at providing advice and support services. Many respondents were in favour of café facilities and were in favour of zoning of activities.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials at **18%** and improvements in opening hours, **11%**. **44%** of respondents wanted public toilets and **17%** advice and information services.

Short term improvements

Dunstable is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. The planning of a new library offers opportunities for engagement with all sectors in the community – users, non-users, partners and stakeholders.

The building would benefit from a modest refresh of decoration and layout and this can be achieved through the installation of RFID, self service terminals which requires a re-modelling of space and minor refurbishment works.

There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community. The Thursday morning closure is unpopular with users. Sunday opening could also be considered due to the presence of the nearby Asda Store which is open on Sundays.

The library is considered to be successful at providing a place to learn and study and this should be extended to provide support for residents, particularly in view of the social requirements within the town. Joint working with the Central Bedfordshire College and other learning providers should be explored.

Work with teenagers and young people should continue and be extended.

Long term opportunities

The Dunstable Town Centre Masterplan offers an opportunity to provide a new library within the proposed redeveloped town centre. This provides opportunities to examine joint library facilities with Central Bedfordshire College and to share these facilities with the Council and other local organisations.

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Flitwick Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Flitwick Library is situated in a single storey building opened in 1982. Some internal and external decoration is required with the carpet and shelving especially in need of replacement. Flitwick Town Council have a small office to the front of the building. There is a large community room for hire, which is close to an existing Community Hall.



People and Place

Flitwick Library has the highest number of active users of the area libraries and the second highest visitor count for the size of library.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library draws from a wide area in the mid part of the authority and includes areas such as Cranfield, Aspley Guise, Houghton Conquest, Barton and Chalgrave. There is a hotspot of users from Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield. This may be related to the Tesco store in close proximity. None of these wards have significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

Flitwick itself does have some deprivation issues and these are not reflected in the current usage of the library. In particular, the library is not currently attracting older people and families living in social housing.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

51% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **19%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed to be least successful at providing access to advice and support services.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**18%**) and more choice of lending materials (**17%**). **27%** of participants were interested to receive e-mail alerts and **18%** for more information and advice sessions.

Short term improvements

Flitwick is a well-used library but there is potential to increase users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. The planning of a new library offers opportunities for engagement with all sectors in the community: users, non-users, partners and stakeholders.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community. Wednesday closing is unpopular with library users. Sunday opening or late night opening could be examined due to the presence of a Tesco Store in the vicinity and the train station.

The building would benefit from a modest refurbishment, decoration and layout review which can be achieved through re-modelling works required to support the implementation of RFID self service technology and minor capital investments.

There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined. Shelving should be replaced as this could be moved to any new library building.

The meeting room generates income for the library service but duplicates the nearby Community Hall. A feasibility study of the use of this room needs to be undertaken to decide on best future usage.

Explore ways of targeting the Virtual Library facilities to local commuters using the railway station as a way of accessing library services.

Long term opportunities

Flitwick Library is subject to town centre re-development plans which involve the potential re-location of the library to a new site. This provides opportunities to examine joint library facilities with learning providers and partner organisations as Flitwick has been highlighted as a geography in Central Bedfordshire that is a cold spot for services.

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Houghton Regis Library Road Map

Find out more at:

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The library today

Houghton Regis Library is part of a new complex opened in 2009 with a health centre. The library has a medium sized meeting room for which there is high demand. Internally and externally the library is in excellent condition.



People and Place

This library has the highest visitor count for an area library and is greater than Biggleswade or Flitwick libraries. Of the area libraries Houghton Regis Library lend least books and have the lowest number of active users. Houghton Regis Library has a large and varied number of activities taking place on the premises and good relations with the Town Council.

The library serves large families living in deprived areas, low income families and individuals and families in cramped new homes. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not reaching people in social accommodation designed for older people.

Houghton Regis has a number of social issues amongst which are higher than Central Bedfordshire averages of unemployed people, benefit claimants, unskilled workers, children in income deprived households, older people live in income deprived households, residents with no access to a car. Levels of qualifications are lower than the Central Bedfordshire average.

Four of Houghton's ten lower super output areas are in the most deprived **40%** in England. Two of these are in the least deprived **10%** in England.

Houghton Regis has a more diverse population of people from ethnic minorities as the whole of Central Bedfordshire (**9%** not 'White' British). There is a higher proportion of young children (**under 11**) and fewer older people than the Central Bedfordshire average.

The population is set to grow from **16,670** in 2009 to **17,290** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

55% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **13%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to more choice in lending materials (**10%**). There was interest in DVD loan collections.

Short term improvements

Houghton Regis Library is a very well-used library but there is still potential to increase users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. There is a potential to improve usage by older people through outreach.

Investment in RFID self service technology.

The library provides a wide range of activities and events which are valued by the community. There is an opportunity for extending this work with the support of volunteers in areas such as IT sessions, children's activities etc.

The meeting room is in demand and a review of charges to internal CBC partners should be considered.

Houghton Regis has good opening hours compared to other Area Libraries but there is a potential to examine Saturday afternoons / Sunday afternoon and late evenings (in conjunction with the Health Centre). Changes in opening hours should be consulted on by the community.

Medium/long term opportunities

The Library is part of a joint building with the health centre and the possibility of closer working between the two could be considered in respect of health information and support, activities for the elderly etc.

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Leighton Buzzard Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Leighton Buzzard Library is situated in a three storey building opened in 1979. There is a theatre and bar area on the second floor. Adult Skills and Community Learning have classroom space on the first floor. The building requires some internal refurbishment, particularly in the lobby area and stairwell. The biggest challenge this building faces are the high running costs.



People and Place

Leighton Buzzard Library has the highest number of active users in the authority and the highest number of issues. It has good usage of the People's Network Internet PCs.

The library mainly attracts 'comfortable' and high income families with children and prosperous older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. More deprived groups are under-represented in this demographic (one Leighton ward is the fifth most deprived in Central Bedfordshire). While the town does not have significant deprivation issues it is known that a higher proportion of children receive free school meals than the Central Bedfordshire average. The library is not currently attracting transient single people, older people on social housing estates and, less mobile older people.

The library catchment is quite wide and extends from Husbourne Crawley in the north-east to Studham in the south-east. The ward area of high usage is Heath and Reach and Stanbridge. This ward does not have significant unemployment or deprivation issues although the ward does have an older age profile than Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

48% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **19%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **20%** of respondents wanted improvements in opening hours. **38%** of respondents wanted self service technology and **33%** supported income generation initiatives.

Short term improvements

Leighton Buzzard is a well-used library but there is potential to increase extend the user base, increase the number of activities and provide advice and learning opportunities, particularly to socially excluded groups and older people with low incomes. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, activities, IT sessions etc.

The building would benefit from a decoration and review of space usage and layout and this can be achieved through the implementation of RFID self service technology and additional capital funding. The community should be encouraged to be involved in this process. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community as the Friday morning closing is unpopular with users.

Greater integration and working between the theatre and library could be investigated in order to drive down the building costs.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

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Potton Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

The Library is situated in the main Market Square surrounded by shops and small businesses. It is in the Clock Building and was converted to a library in 1956. Some internal and external maintenance is required. The second floor is leased by the Town Council. The biggest challenge for this building is the amount of available floor space in the building and the lack of disabled access to the second floor.



People and Place

Potton Library has a relatively low number of active users.

The library mainly serves 'comfortable' families with children and older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. There is no significant social deprivation in Potton. The building is used by the Children's Centre when the library is closed.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

63% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **13%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. DVDs would enhance service provision.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **21%** of participants wanted an increase in opening hours. **33%** of participants were supportive of income generation ideas and for advice and information.

Short term improvements

Potton is a valued community library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers and partnerships with the surrounding businesses.

Extension of opening hours could be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID service technology will provide an opportunity to review space and layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

The use of the second floor should be reviewed in view of the lack of space in the current library.

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Sandy Library Road Map

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The library today

Sandy Library was opened in 1965 and extended and refurbished in 2008-09. There are some issues with external maintenance. The library has a medium sized meeting room which is very well used.



People and Place

Sandy has the highest occupancy rate of the People's Network PCs in the authority but has the the lowest visitor count of the area libraries.

Sandy Library is mainly used by 'comfortable' families with school age children, families from deprived areas and some prosperous older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not currently reaching parents in later or middle age and older people in social housing.

The reach of the library includes surrounding villages with high usage coming from Moggerhanger, Blunham, Tempsford and Northill. These areas do not have significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

Sandy has some deprivation issues with unemployment rates and rates of older people living in income deprived households being higher than the Central Bedfordshire average.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

50% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **16%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. The library was deemed to least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs. There was interest in better provision of DVDs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**15%**). There was strong support (**75%**) for the re-introduction of the mobile library service.

Short term improvements

Sandy is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, visitor numbers, extend the user base and develop greater community participation. Older people with low incomes are under-represented in overall library usage as are older parents. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach and activities such as IT sessions etc.

RFID self service technology provides the opportunity to examine internal refurbishment and re-modelling. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. A retail approach to the entrance and window area needs consideration to make the library look more welcoming. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The meeting room is in demand and a review of charges to internal CBC partners should be considered.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross council departments, partners and the local community.

Medium/long term opportunities

The Virtual Library facilities could be targeted to commuters as a way of accessing library services given the close proximity of the railway station.

Potential to expand C.B.C. customer service pod services and CBC outreach in Sandy.

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Stotfold Library Road Map

Find out more at:

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The library today

Stotfold Library is in a leased single storey building shared with the Town Council offices. Externally the building looks rather tired – there are no building maintenance issues. The biggest challenge for this library is the limited space available in the library and the potential increase in population.



People and Place

Stotfold has a relatively low number of active users for a smaller community library but a significantly higher visitor count than either Toddington or Potton libraries.

Stotfold typically caters for 'comfortable' families with children and older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average.

Stotfold has no significant deprivation issues.

The population of Stotfold and Langford is predicted to increase from **12,000** in 2009 to **14,030** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

64% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **16%** for 'Read and Relax' Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services. A DVD collection would be appreciated as a stock addition.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **50%** of respondents wanted e-mail alerts and newsletters.

Short term improvements

Stoffold is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, smaller scale activities, IT sessions etc. Promotion of the service to older people should be improved.

The building would benefit from a refresh of layout and this can be achieved through the installation of RFID self service technology. Small capital works could be considered to improve external appearance.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council Departments, the Town Council and the local community.

Medium/long term opportunities

A building feasibility study is required to explore the options for the existing building to deal with planned growth.

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Shefford Library Road Map

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The library today

Shefford Library is in a leased building opened in 1990. Significant cracks to the floor have recently been identified and are currently being monitored. The building looks very dated internally and requires some interior and exterior refurbishment. The site does not have high visibility but benefits from being on the main route between the car park and the nearby supermarket.

This libraries greatest challenge is the cost of the rental for the number of active users.



People and Place

Shefford has the third number of issues of the five area libraries. People's Network Internet PC use is average.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library does not elderly and young single people on low incomes. Shefford has some moderate deprivation issues.

The library reach includes neighbouring villages of Haynes, Clophill, Southill, Henlow, Meppershall and Stondon. Deprivation and unemployment are not issues in these areas.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

70% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **15%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials (21%) and improvements to opening hours (8%).

Short term improvements

Shefford is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, footfall, learning activities and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach and smaller scale activities such as IT sessions. Promotion of the service to older people and groups with some social needs should be improved.

A building feasibility study is required to explore the options on the existing building and the lease arrangements need to be reviewed.

The building would benefit from a refresh of decoration, layout and use of space and this can be achieved through implementation of RFID self service technology and minor capital works. The community could be involved in this process. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

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Toddington Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Toddington Library is a two storey building on the village green. Some internal and external redecoration is required. A small office is situated at the back of the library but this does not have any toilet facilities thus limiting its use.



People and Place

Toddington has a relatively low number of active users and the biggest challenge for this library is to drive up the number of users and develop a community engagement strategy to increase visitor numbers.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' families and older people. There is a slight over representation from families from poorer social backgrounds. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The female age profile shows fewer users aged **20-35** and **50-59** compared to the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

Toddington does not have any significant deprivation issues.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

68% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **11%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. DVDs would enhance service provision. The library was deemed least successful at providing advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **18%** wanted improvements in opening hours, **35%** wanted to see more advice and information sessions and **25%** the use of volunteers in the service.

Short term improvements

Toddington is a valued community library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers.

Extension of opening hours could be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID self service technology will provide an opportunity to review space and layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross council departments, partners and the local community.

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**Central
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Libraries**

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Library Cold Spots and Library Access Points (LAPs) Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Cold Spots

Library usage is lowest in the areas of Cranfield, Marston Moretaine, Lidlington, Aspley Guise and Woburn matching areas in the authority which have barriers in access to a broader range of Council services.

There are currently libraries in all communities with a population of over **5,000** people in Central Bedfordshire. Toddington is the exception with a population of **4,370**.

Areas of Central Bedfordshire with a population of over **3,000** without a library are: Caddington (**3,750**), Cranfield (**5,210**), Henlow (**4,400**), Langford (**3,180**), Marston Moretaine (**4,580**) and Maulden (**3,150**).

The Libraries for the Future consultation invited local communities to come forward if they wished to explore Library Access Points in their villages / towns.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas. The population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 as will the age of the population. By 2021 **19%** will be classed as older people as compared to **15%** in 2010.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

The consultation asked if there was an interest in supporting Library Access Points. **84%** of respondents said they would support this initiative. There was no difference in the levels of support by age groups.

Opportunities to develop the service

As a result of the consultation two parishes came forward and there is an opportunity to pilot Library Access Points in these areas.

The Library Service has access to some S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) finance which may be used to seed some Library Access Points (LAPs).

Taking the service forward

In order to take this initiative forward the service has identified the following priorities:

- A requirement to produce a mini LAP strategy to include aims, objectives, review processes, Service Level Agreements (SLA) etc.
- Feasibility studies for the two parishes that offered themselves as pilots for LAPs
- Investigation into the options that will exist from S106 and CIL funding

**Central
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Library Link and Housebound Services Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The service today

The Library Link service is based in Flitwick Library. Housebound Services are run from all libraries.

Library Link has a mobile 'walk on' vehicle and a transit van. The service utilises a mix of volunteers and library staff. The mobile is due for replacement in Autumn 2014; the cost of a replacement vehicle will be in the region of £100,000.

Usage

The Library Link and Housebound Service is available free to all elderly and disabled people who cannot get to the library or have no one to get books for them. This encompasses frailty, disability, mobility, visual impairment and other limiting health conditions. The service is also available to carers who may be classed as 'housebound' due to the nature of their caring duties.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural authority with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas. The population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 and, the population will age, by 2021 **19%** will be classed as older people as compared to **15%** in 2010.

Opportunities to develop the service

Many library services currently work in partnership with the voluntary and third sector to deliver services to people in their own homes. This should be explored further with potential partners; the service already has a successful history of working with volunteers.

Other partnership opportunities may exist with Village Care schemes, Community Transport schemes, C.B.C. transport strategy and fleet policy and links with Social Care Services and Health.

The 'Libraries for the Future' Consultation recognised that the service is expensive to run and requires a further detailed review. The biggest challenge is to maintain the quality of a service, with increasing customer numbers whilst reducing costs.

Taking the service forward

It is recognised that the service requires a fundamental review in order to meet the challenges of cost and growth in demand. A review of the service will be undertaken in 2013-14.

**Central
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Virtual Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Virtual Library

The Virtual Library is online library run by both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Libraries, with elements that shared by the Luton Cultural Services Trust delivering libraries in Luton.

The Virtual Library is accessible at: www.centalbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The Virtual Library aims to replicate in the online environment all the services and facilities that a library user would find in a physical library building.

Usage

In 2010-11 the site received **8,970,623** page hits a **12.25%** increase on the previous year. **35%** of item renewals and **27%** of item reservations are now done online by Central Bedfordshire library members. The most popular areas of usage on the site are local information and the library catalogue. More detailed information about the use of the Virtual Library by customers is required in order to evaluate the service.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural authority with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas, the population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 and, the population will age by 2021 when **19%** will be classed as older people compared to **15%** in 2010.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

The provision of downloadable e-books was seen as an important key area for development. The current issues with e-publishing and the withdrawal of some of the main national publishing houses from library products may make this a more difficult problem for the service to resolve.

'The Big Library Debate' – what people said

Market research carried out in the summer of 2012 revealed that while there was good usage of the Virtual Library but there was still limited knowledge of the service and the online offering.

Opportunities to develop the service

New Axiell 'Arena' software will be introduced in 2011/12 that will enable the Library Service to further develop the Virtual Library functions to include blogs, wikis etc. The aim is to increase interaction with users, create online communities of interest and refresh the look and feel of the site.

Central Bedfordshire Council Channel Shift programme will present opportunities to create targeted e-mail news communications to library users.

Taking the service forward

The following areas have been identified as priorities for the Virtual Library:

- A proactive marketing campaign to increase awareness, particularly in rural areas and service 'cold spots'. This could include the use of volunteers to promote the Virtual Library and e-mail communication opportunities provided by the Channel Shift programme
- A greater understanding of the use of the Virtual Library by Central Bedfordshire customers and the need for more statistical information
- The development of a modernised 'front end' with the institution of the Arena software to provide an improved customer environment online

Central Bedfordshire will need to work closely with its partners in Bedford Borough Libraries and Luton Cultural Trust in order to take these priorities forward.