

S40

Out of Scope

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] S40 <[REDACTED]@westberks.gov.uk>  
Date: 4 March 2016 at 09:29  
Subject: RE: West Berkshire library service proposals  
To: [REDACTED] S40 <[REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk>

Thanks for this [REDACTED] s40

In regard to the impact on the present consultation, unless Members decide otherwise, I'm advised we could delay the decision on changes to the network until after the Needs Assessment. A new favoured option is appearing around a total of 5 service points – Newbury. 3 other branches and a mobile. I'm still hoping we'll get a bit more, but of course much will depend on the Needs Analysis.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED] s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

[REDACTED] s40

[REDACTED] s40

---

**From:** [REDACTED] S40 <[REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 04 March 2016 08:05

**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: West Berkshire library service proposals

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your e-mail.

We are aware that some Authorities have used independent organisations to conduct / assist with a needs assessment - the following are the ones that we are aware but there may well be others as this is not information that we routinely collect. Unfortunately I don't have contact names for these Authorities but I am assuming that through your network of Head of Service you will have appropriate details. I would hope that they will be able to provide advice on the specific questions you have raised.

Lincolnshire - Lincolnshire Research Observatory and Experian

Central Bedfordshire - Red Quadrant

Cheshire East - Red Quadrant

York - Mutual Ventures

In terms of the exercise you are intending to undertake and the timescale involved i.e. at least 3-4 months it would be helpful to know how this will impact upon the current consultation / overall process and what decision the Council will be asked to make on the future of the library services at its meeting on 24 March?

Look forward to hearing from you and thanks.

[REDACTED]  
s40

4th Floor

100 Parliament Street

London

SW1A 2BQ

On 2 March 2016 at 12:56, [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@westberks.gov.uk)> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

**We're still alive and fighting!**

[REDACTED]  
Section 35

[REDACTED]  
s35

[REDACTED]  
s35

[REDACTED]  
s35

I'm asking, can you or  
2 of 21

someone in the office point me toward anyone who might be available to carry out a Needs Assessment? What roughly might we need to pay them, and is three months a reasonable timescale? The alternative (eg if we don't get funding for this) would probably be for me to put together a report over an estimated 3 or 4 months.

Kind Regards

s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

RG14 5LD

s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

---

**From:** [redacted] s40 [redacted]@culture.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 23 February 2016 11:24

**To:**

s40

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Re: West Berkshire library service proposals

s40

Thank you for taking our call earlier and it was good to speak with you and to find out the latest position with regard library service proposals in West Berkshire. I promised to forward to you a couple of documents that may be useful for your on-going discussions and deliberations.

Attached is a copy of the Sue Charteris report on the Wirral inquiry conducted in 2009. I would draw your particular attention to the Executive Summary as well as Section 6 - Assessment of local needs.

In addition please find attached a copy of the Needs Assessment conducted by Lincolnshire County Council in relation to changes to their library service provision. This may be a helpful example of a needs assessment in practice.

I hope this detail and our conversation are helpful and please do keep us updated with developments

s40

4th Floor

100 Parliament Street

London

SW1A 2BQ

On 22 February 2016 at 17:11

s40

@culture.gov.uk> wrote:

s40

----- Forwarded message -----

From: s40 @westberks.gov.uk>

Date: 22 February 2016 at 14:38

Subject: RE: West Berkshire library service proposals

To: s40 @culture.gov.uk>

Dear

s40

Very pleased to hear from you, as s40 s40 gave me s40 number just last week and I was planning to call the office.

There have been developments here, but I can put you in the picture. I can take a call tomorrow. Shall we say 9.30am?

Kind Regards

s40

Council Offices

Market Street

Newbury

RG14 5LD

s40

---

**From:** [REDACTED] s40 [REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 22 February 2016 14:04  
**To:** Library; [REDACTED] s40  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] s40  
**Subject:** West Berkshire library service proposals

Dear [REDACTED] s40

I am writing to seek further information about West Berkshire Council's library service proposals.

We understand that West Berkshire Council is consulting about the proposals from 15 February to 7 March (three weeks) and that a final decision will be made by the Executive on 21 April.

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=32165>

As you will know, the Secretary of State has a statutory duty of superintendence of the public library service provided by local authorities in England, and to secure the proper discharge of the local authorities' statutory duties. The legislation gives him the power, for instance, to make a remedial order against a library authority following a local inquiry. A local inquiry can be commenced either on receipt of a complaint that a local library authority is failing to carry out its statutory duties or of the Secretary of State's own motion.

While DCMS has not yet received a formal complaint calling for a local inquiry, we have received correspondence, with a number of concerns being raised, and to assist the Secretary of State to carry out his statutory duty, we are monitoring development carefully.

At this stage, we have been unable to find any more details other than those on the consultation page. For instance, there appears to be only limited details available there about the proposals, about consideration so far, proposed next steps after a decision at Executive on 21 April, and any other documentation that may have been produced such as a needs assessment and any other analysis.

To assist us in our monitoring and understanding of the situation in West Berkshire could you let me know if you have any other documents and information that you can share with DCMS? Has there been any consideration to other options? Are you expecting to carry out further consultation on any library service proposals before implementing any changes?

To help me better understand the current proposal, the process and proposals, I would find it helpful to arrange a phonecall to discuss further. I'd also be able to explain the process of consideration for DCMS were a complaint to be made, or were we to decide ourselves that further consideration may be needed.

For your information, in determining whether to order an inquiry the Secretary of State will carefully consider a number of factors, these are set out in the decision letters which are published on the GOV.uk website, with a recent example of a decision being in respect of Sheffield Library Service see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-inquiry-into-library-provision-in-sheffield> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/decision-letter-on-local-inquiry-into-library-provision-in-sheffield>

I am in interviews this afternoon and most of Wed 24 Feb, but have good availability to speak tomorrow (23 Feb) or the afternoon of Thurs 25, if you let me know when you would be able to speak.

I look for hearing from you and receiving any further information and documents that you are able to provide.

Yours sincerely

s40

s40

out of scope

s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

s40 @culture.gov.uk>  
To: s40 @westberks.gov.uk>  
Cc: s40 @culture.gov.uk>

8 March 2016 at 09:38

s40

I just wanted to let you know that we have started to receive correspondence addressed to Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and Digital Economy, regarding the proposed changes to the library service provision in West Berkshire. To date the letters are drawing the Ministers attention to the actions by the Council and indicating that they would like him to intervene. We will be preparing our replies in the coming days and can provide a copy of one of our replies if that would be helpful.

s40

s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: [redacted] s40 westberks.gov.uk>  
Cc: [redacted] s40 culture.gov.uk>  
[redacted] s40 @culture.gov.uk>

8 March 2016 at 09:46

Thanks for this [redacted] s40 Yes, please send me a sample reply.

Members have assured me that they have listened to the messages they have been receiving from DCMS and from the public consultation, which closed yesterday.

I am progressing the Needs Assessment [redacted] s35  
[redacted] s35 Both these developments have been assisted by DCMS guidance.

Kind Regards

[redacted] s40

---

**From:** [redacted] s40 @culture.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 08 March 2016 09:39  
**To:** [redacted] s40  
**Cc:** [redacted] s40

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: s40 @culture.gov.uk>  
s40 @westberks.gov.uk>

14 March 2016 at 15:52

Hi s40

I hope you're well. I am on the libraries team at DCMS and am currently dealing with some correspondence from West Berkshire residents.

I am writing to seek further information about the alternative proposal to which you refer (around a total of 5 service points). Could you clarify when the alternative option will go public and whether it too will be consulted on? Also, I was seeking clarification on what decision the Council is being asked to make at the meeting which takes place next week on 24 March.

If you could let me know I would be very grateful.

Thank you,

s40

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: s40 westberks.gov.uk>  
s40 @culture.gov.uk>

15 March 2016 at 16:09

Hi s40

Council will announce after their meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> the decision on a wide range of proposals across the services.

We now think the Libraries proposal will be;

- to keep the current network of 11 service points (9 branches, 2 mobiles) open for up to 6 months pending the Needs Assessment, *and*
- possibly a statement of Members' preference for the new network, (likely to be 7 branches, 1 mobile).

We've also spoken to reps from all parish and town councils with static libraries at present and all are interested in helping to retain their local branch, which means we'll probably be working with them at

- how to channel in financial support from them to help maintain the new service network while achieving something close to the original savings target
- how to support a community run facility in the two closed branches

s35

Regards

s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

RG14 5LD

s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

---

**From:** [REDACTED] s40 [REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 14 March 2016 15:53

**To:** [REDACTED] s40

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

@culture.gov.uk>

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

s40 culture.gov.uk>

17 March 2016 at 08:21

To: s40 @westberks.gov.uk>

Hi s40

Thank you getting back to me and informing me of the new proposal.

Kind regards,

s40

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

To: s40@westberks.gov.uk> 17 March 2016 at 09:32  
s40@culture.gov.uk>

Hi s40

The 7 + 1 proposal looks confirmed now. Section 35  
s35

Regards

s40

Council Offices  
Market St  
Newbury  
RG14 5LD

s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

out of scope

s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: [REDACTED] s40 @culture.gov.uk>  
[REDACTED] s40 @westberks.gov.uk>

18 March 2016 at 14:34

Hi [REDACTED] s40

Thanks for the update.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
s40

out of scope

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] s40 [REDACTED]@westberks.gov.uk>

Date: 21 March 2016 at 15:09

Subject: RE: West Berkshire library service proposals

To: [REDACTED] s40 [REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk>

Many thanks [REDACTED] s40

It seems we won't be closing any libraries until after the Needs Assessment has been completed and its content absorbed, which is another helpful turn of events.

Regards

[REDACTED] s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

RG14 5LD

[REDACTED] s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

---

**From:** [REDACTED] s40 [REDACTED]@culture.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 21 March 2016 10:37

**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: West Berkshire library service proposals

[REDACTED]

Apologies for the delay in replying

However I note the recent announcement from the Council about transitional funding being provided to the library service which will ensure that all but two branches remain open. This will also involve libraries moving to a self-service model allowing seven branch libraries and one mobile library to remain open with only Wash Common and Theale libraries closing completely unless communities find the resources to take them on. This is obviously a significant change from what was originally being considered.

In terms of the specific questions [REDACTED] but my view would be yes a needs assessment would still be required. The key with any change to the library service provision is to be able to demonstrate that the Council has considered the needs of the community, explained why changes are required, set out clearly the criteria to assess the performance of all statutory libraries and by doing so the Council is able to demonstrate that it has evidence to support its decisions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

by closures to ensure that vulnerable groups are not disproportionately affected. In my view the answer to these questions will to some extent provide the basis of the Council's assessment of need, although there are likely to also be other factors.

I trust this is helpful.

[REDACTED]

On 15 March 2016 at 14:05, [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@westberks.gov.uk)> wrote:

[REDACTED]

Not sure if you can offer an opinion, but here goes?

We're fairly committed to the idea of a Needs Assessment, but if the proposal was to reduce from 9 branches + 2 mobiles to 7 + 1 would that require an NA? Maybe it would if the style of service changed too, ie introduction of self service/unstaffed?

I'm asking off my own bat, but it may be that Cllrs would like to achieve the saving faster by



closing the 3 smallest SPs.

Regards

s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

RG14 5LD

s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

---

**From:** [redacted] s40 [redacted]@culture.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 08 March 2016 09:39

**To:**

**Cc:** [redacted] s40

**Subject:** Re: West Berkshire library service proposals

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: s40 @culture.gov.uk>  
s40 @westberks.gov.uk>

13 April 2016 at 10:17

Hi s40

How are you? I hope everything is going well.

I've had a few bits of correspondence about the proposed changes to the library service in West Berkshire and the needs assessment. I thought it might be helpful to share with you what I've been saying. In addition to paragraphs about the 1964 Act and the role of Gov/local authorities, I have the following lines on West Berkshire:

With reference to the proposed changes to the library service West Berkshire, many local authorities are currently faced with significant financial challenges and as a result are having to reconsider how best to deliver council services in the coming years. I can confirm that the Department has discussed with the Council their proposed changes as set out in their 2016/17 budget consultation and commented upon the importance of demonstrating that their proposed changes are based upon an assessment of local needs. You are no doubt aware that the Council's three week consultation, that set out various savings options, including on the library service, closed on 7 March, and received over 2,500 responses. Further to the consultation and in response to the feedback received, together with the availability of transitional funding, the Council announced that seven libraries and a mobile library would no longer be closed. As you are aware, the library service proposals were discussed by the Executive on 24 March and it was confirmed that no libraries will close until after the Needs Assessment has been completed and the findings fully considered. The conduct of the Needs Assessment is a matter for West Berkshire and not for DCMS to direct on its content or handling. With this in mind it would be appropriate for you to direct your questions relating to the Needs Assessment and the self-service model to West Berkshire Council. However, DCMS will continue to monitor closely developments concerning West Berkshire's library services.

If you have any thoughts please feel free to let me know.

Thanks,

s40

s40

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

@culture.gov.uk&gt;

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

s40

@westberks.gov.uk&gt;

13 April 2016 at 10:39

To: s40 @culture.gov.uk&gt;

Hi

s40

Thanks for this.

S35

WBC is not intending to close any libraries until after a Needs Assessment has been done and has been used to inform the new structure.

s35

We had over 2,600 responses to public consultation on Libraries alone – It was over 7,000 across all savings proposals. Libraries accounted for 46% of all responses that made comments, ie excluding where people treated the exercise as a petition and simply put their name.

We hope to appoint a contractor to do the assessment later this month. I'm focussing now on briefings and consultation meetings with staff and with local communities.

Kind Regards

s40

Council Offices

Market St

Newbury

RG14 5LD

s40

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

---

**From:** s40 @culture.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 13 April 2016 10:18

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

s40

@culture.gov.uk>

---

## Fwd: West Berkshire library service proposals

---

To: s40 @culture.gov.uk>  
S40 @westberks.gov.uk>

13 April 2016 at 11:38

Hi s40

Thanks for the update.

Kind regards,

s40

[Quoted text hidden]