

## **SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL**

Meeting	Policy and Resources Committee item 6.10
Date	17 November 2020
Author	Project officer
Subject	Library Project

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update councillors on the plans for Shepton Mallet library.
- 1.2 For councillors to agree the terms of the funding agreement.
- 1.3 For councillors to nominate two councillors to act as signatories of the funding agreement along with the town clerk.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Following ongoing discussion with Somerset County Council (SCC)'s Library Services team and the Friends of Shepton Mallet Library group, it was agreed at an extraordinary meeting of the council on 06 August 2019 Shepton Mallet Town Council contribute £15,000 per annum for a period of 5 years towards the running costs of the Shepton Mallet Community Library Hub. This funding was agreed on condition that the library remain in its current location and to cover additional hours of library staff each week. As part of the agreement, the Friends of the Library group committed to developing an offering of community activities outside of the library's usual opening hours.
- 2.2 Subsequently, the Friends of the Library group established a Community Interest Company (CIC) - the '7 Starlings' – with responsibility for delivering on the community hub element of the arrangement.
- 2.3 Since the summer of 2019, the project officer has attended regular project board meetings with representatives from the SCC Library Services and the 7 Starlings. At a full council meeting on 08 September 2020 it was agreed that Councillor Sharon Hale would act as a lead councillor on the library project and would attend project board meetings. To date there have been three project board meetings, in September, October and November 2020.
- 2.4 The current timeline for this project provided by SCC Library Services sees works beginning in late February and lasting in to April. This is dependent on the signing of a new lease agreement with the building landlord. The library will need to be closed during the works and a mobile library service will be provided instead. The SCC Library Services team are also aware of the planned resurfacing works to the town centre and have liaised directly with the SCC project manager leading on the resurfacing project.

2.5 In order to finalise the agreement, the town council need to sign a five-year funding agreement with SCC. A separate partnership agreement will be signed between SCC and the 7 Starlings covering the 7 Starlings use of the library space. The town clerk and RFO have reviewed the funding agreement and are satisfied that it fulfils the resolutions of the town council meeting on 06 August 2019 and this council's policies. The funding agreement has been shared with councillors confidentially along with this report.

### 3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The town council has agreed to fund £15K per annum for a period of five years.

### 4.0 TOWN PLAN REFERENCE

#### 4.1 Placemaking

Ensure the town centre is attractive and welcoming	Invest in improvements in the Market Place, in partnerships with others  Support the retention of the Library in the centre of town and its development into a wider Community Hub  Improve the signage, information boards and street furniture to make the town more welcoming
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### 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 For councillors to agree the terms of the funding agreement.

5.2 For councillors to nominate two councillors to act as signatories of the funding agreement along with the town clerk.