**Why are ceasing the mobile library service and the reduction in opening hours being proposed?**

West Sussex County Council is in a position where it needs to make savings of £75.5 million over the next four years. We propose to achieve savings from the library budget by ceasing the mobile library service and reducing evening opening hours where they currently apply. Some operational logistical changes have also been identified but these will not impact frontline services to customers.

Total revenue savings year on year as a result of the proposals will be £175,000 from 2020.

**How many mobile library service vehicles are there?**

We currently have two mobile libraries: Community Library 1 (CM1) based at Bognor Regis and Community Library 2 (CM2) based at Horsham.

Unfortunately following its pre-MOT in June 2019, we were advised that repairing CM1 would cost more than the vehicle was worth so reluctantly the vehicle had to be taken off the road and sold. Unfortunately we are now in a similar position with CM2.

Since CM1 had to be withdrawn existing mobile library users have already started gravitating to their nearest static library. Currently 51% of CM1 borrowers now hold dual membership so are in fact using the mobile but also travelling to a static library.

The failure of CM1 has given us a unique opportunity to discuss the future delivery with customers and identify those most vulnerable and isolated, giving us a good idea of those who choose to use the mobile but who could visit a static library and those who need a service that delivers directly to them.

**What areas does the mobile library service currently cover geographically?**

The mobile library service serves the communities of West Sussex which are not local to a library building. Across the two vehicles the service was visiting 116 different stops.

**What alternative options will be available for those people who currently use the mobile library service?**

There are a range of library services that currently reach out to the vulnerable or isolated that we can offer to residents who use the mobile libraries and are unable to travel to their nearest static site. These include the 'home library direct' service, ‘Digital Library Plus’ and the eLibrary offering access to eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers and eBooks.
Why is it proposed to reduce the evening opening hours in the four main libraries?

The four largest libraries (Chichester, Crawley, Horsham and Worthing) are currently open five nights a week until 7pm, but use between 6pm and 7pm has been declining. It is in all libraries the quietest hour of the day. However, buildings on more than one floor require a staffing presence to maintain customer and staff safety and wellbeing, so per customer this is an expensive hour to offer. Evidence shows the peak times for library use are during the day, generally between 9am and 4pm, with a peak around 11 am.

We have five smaller libraries that open one night a week until 7pm. We would propose to adjust, but not reduce, their opening pattern so that no library is open beyond 6pm thus maintaining a consistent offer.

What alternatives will there be for people if the decision is taken to move the library closing time to 6pm?

Experience shows that many people remaining in the library until 7pm have been in the library for a considerable time prior to that and are not just visiting within that hour.

Residents can join, request, enquire and borrow digital books, magazines and audio 24/7 via the Library App or website.

Are there plans to close any libraries within West Sussex?

There are no current plans to close any of our libraries.