Libraries, Learning Centre & Heritage Stakeholder Workshop Report

February 2024

Contents:

Moray Council, like many other Local Authorities across Scotland, must reduce their budget and find significant savings over the next few years. Recognising that the current provision of the libraries, learning centre and heritage services cannot be maintained, a public and staff consultation process was started in October, 2023.

When we use the word 'stakeholders' in this document, we are referring to national, regional and local partners, the public (users of the service), elected members, council service employees and managers.
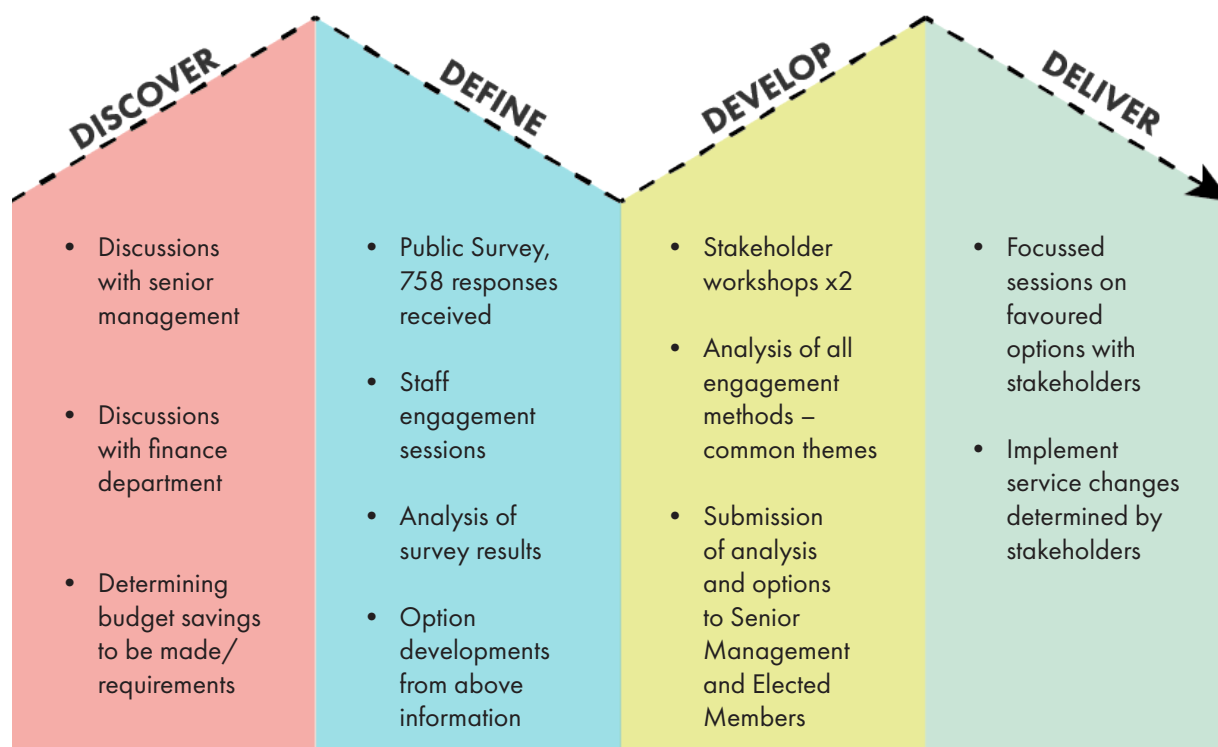
The intention of this report is to summarise the findings from the recent stakeholder engagement workshop, feedback recommendations produced during the session to attendees and to Moray Council senior management and elected members to inform their coming decision-making.

The Process:

The research and engagement process of this work has followed the 'Scottish Approach to Service Design' (SAtSD), as recommended by the Scottish Government. SAtSD sets out four stages for producing transformational change in local government public services. By following this approach, the intention is to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The four stages are; discover, define, develop and deliver. The below diagram maps what has happened at each stage of the engagement process. The process has utilised a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods.

We are currently in the develop stage of this redesign process (yellow column).

DISCOVER

- Discussions with senior management

- Discussions with finance department

- Determining budget savings to be made/ requirements

DEFINE

- Public Survey, 758 responses received

- Staff engagement sessions

- Analysis of survey results

- Option developments from above information

DEVELOP

- Stakeholder workshops x2

- Analysis of all engagement methods – common themes

- Submission of analysis and options to Senior Management and Elected Members

DELIVER

- Focussed sessions on favoured options with stakeholders

- Implement service changes determined by stakeholders

The Workshop Session:

On Wednesday 7th of February, stakeholders of the Library, Learning Centre & Heritage service came together at Elgin Library to discuss a set of possible budget saving options in a creative workshop session.

The options were suggestions identified from the public, via the initial public survey, and from library, learning centre and heritage staff - both identified during the 'define' stage of this process.

The aim of the workshop was to consider the impact these options may have on people in Moray today and in the future. Attendees were directly invited and were representative of those in Moray who would be affected by service changes.

The subject of change to public services can be extremely emotive and all participants bring differing perspectives and opinions to the table. This key factor influenced the decision to use personas during the workshop which were developed from real Moray citizens that use the library service. The use of personas was to encourage empathy for other people and to reduce personal motivations that could influence group conversations.

The six personas were aged 16-83, resided in one of Moray's ASG areas and were selected because they represented some of the following attributes for diversity:

- Mental health

- School aged

- Older citizen

- Single parent

- Family

- Parent on low income

- Unemployed

- Disability/ ASN

- A non-English speaker

- Long-term health condition

The Personas:

Cassie
(16, Dufftown)

Sarah
(35, Rothes)

Mo
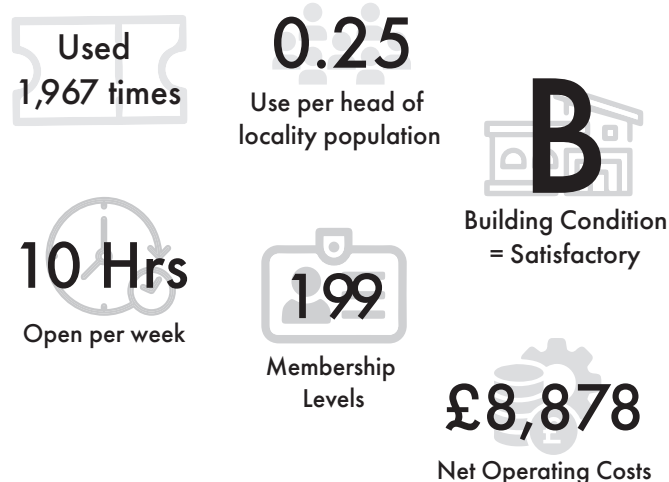(28, Forres)

Lauren
(47, Hopeman)

Will
(64, Buckie)

Omar
(83, Elgin)

The Session Set-Up:

The workshop lasted approximately two hours. Participants were assigned working groups to ensure each table had a mixture of partners, community group representatives and public users.

On the walls around the room, there were large posters with quotations and insights from the initial public survey. There were also area maps for each ASG with key information about the library facilities in that area; what was available, associated memberships, usage statistics, approximate costs to run the facility and income generated.

Example of the statistical information provided per facility:

Used 1,967 times

0.25
Use per head of locality population

B
Building Condition = Satisfactory

10 Hrs
Open per week

199
Membership Levels

£8,878
Net Operating Costs

The Workshop:

The groups were first asked to introduce themselves to each other and share their reasons for attending.

They were then asked to discuss each option through the lens of their persona. They were asked to consider the impact each option would have on their persona's use of the library, learning centre and heritage service in Moray and whether they would think it tolerable or unfavourable as a change.

Once each participant had the opportunity to discuss their thoughts, the group then mapped the option into these quadrants:

High Impact/ Unfavourable

High Impact/ Tolerable

Low Impact / Unfavourable

Low Impact / Tolerable
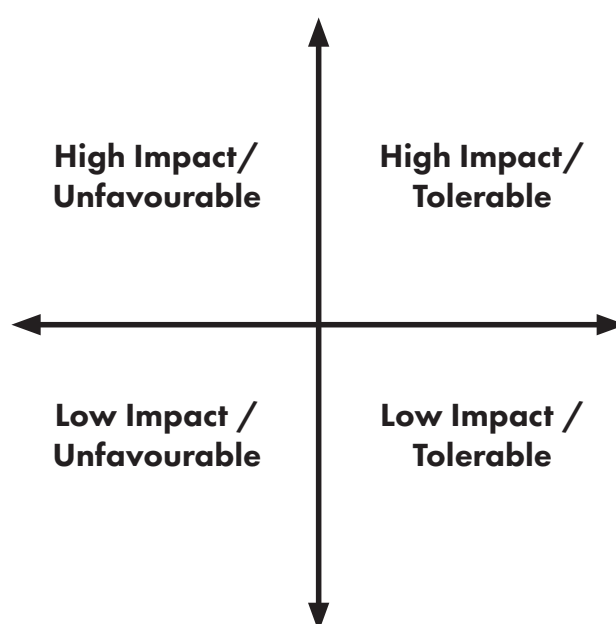
Groups were asked to capture recommendations, issues and unexpected solutions on post-it notes during their discussions.

After mapping each option on a large table top worksheet, participants were asked to 'RAG' rate each option, keeping it within the previously agreed quadrant. The worksheet gave the following key:

Red: **This option should not be considered under any circumstance.**

Amber: **This option could work but would require consideration to other factors.**

Green: **This option could work and should be taken forward.**
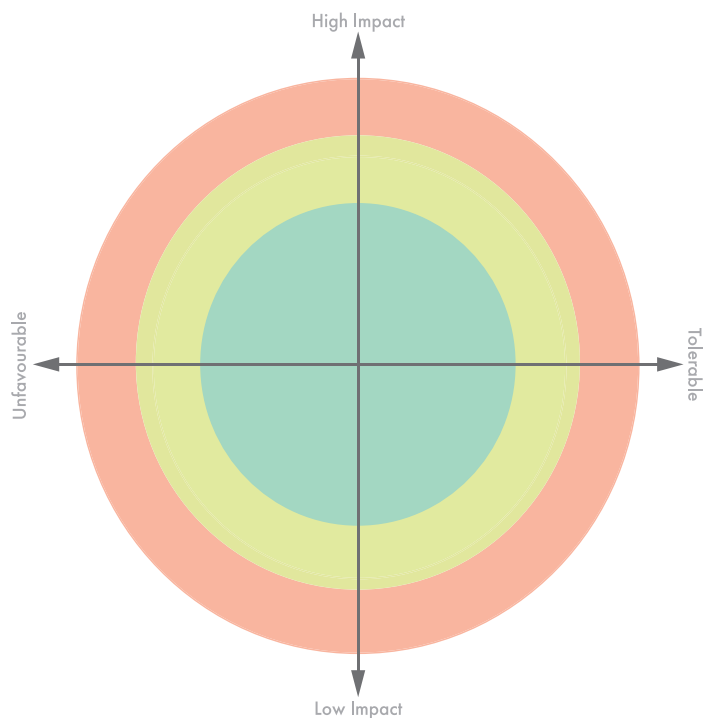
Workshop Results:

The following results have been summarised from the participant workings at the session on the 7th of February.

There were six working groups at the session, with four to six stakeholders in each group. They were asked to agree a RAG status (**Red**, **Amber** or **Green**) for each options. The result of each group's decision is shown in the results by a coloured bar under the option title, like this...

RED	RED	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN

This example bar shows that two of the groups decided the option was **Red**, two groups decided it was **Amber** and two groups decided it was **Green**.

The combined RAG rating of each option is used to compare the tolerability of the options being discussed in the summary of this report.

It is important to remember participants were rating these options through the lens of their persona (a genuine Moray resident) but it may not reflect their personal opinion or experience.

The key issues and recommendations presented are a product of a thematic analysis from the conversations captured on the table worksheets and from post-event feedback from facilitators. It is important to note that the following findings are subjective to the particular stakeholders present - their thoughts and experiences. However, as they were invited as a representative body for the Council library service, the results can be accepted as representative of stakeholder opinion whilst acknowledging there will be other public opinions whom may not have not engaged with this research process.

OPTION 1:   Reduction of opening hours

AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Distance to closest facility.

- Will affect low income and those without transport the most.

Key Recommendations:

- Flexible/ varied hours.

- Protect weekend availability.

- Balance needs of individuals and of groups.

- Public transport to meet opening hours.

- Link to other opening / operating hours of public services - i.e. bank, swimming lessons.

- Better understanding of hours.

OPTION 2:   Stop digital learning and ICT support

AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Will affect those with lack of connection at home and digital literacy issues the most.

Key Recommendations:

- Deliver community ICT support in schools/ community hubs/ warm spaces with support from volunteers and third sector agencies.

- Volunteer ICT buddies to provide support at specified times at libraries if devices and PCs available.

- Local 6th years to support digital drop-in at libraries.

- Create a very clear, step-by-step guide on how to log in and print. Info displayed around the library if less staffing.

OPTION 3:   Stop heritage service

RED	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Heritage provision is important to small, rural communities like those in Moray.

- Some heritage visitor sites are ticketed entry e.g. Morayvia £8 and Elgin Cathedral (£) which may seem inaccessible.

- Perception that heritage services are available from third sector or community organisations but it was pointed out that these groups often rely on library heritage service.

Key Recommendations:

- If localised heritage service to be removed then the centralised service must still be available.

- Service still needs staffed in some capacity to support heritage network in Moray, even if it is reduced.

- Local transport to a centralised service would need coordinated.

OPTION 4: Introduce charges for clubs

RED	RED	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Financially prohibitive for many.

- Mental health implications to those who were using clubs for social purposes.

Key Recommendations:

- Option to donate, pay what you can, rather than bringing in fees.

OPTION 5: Close the local library facility

RED	RED	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- More likely to affect older people/ vulnerable adults/ pre-5s and their families as perception was that most young people access library facilities in school.

Key Recommendations:

- Needs to be concentrated engagement around how you deliver a satisfactory service in a different way.

- Generate more income from external lets.

- Promote hire of facilities, offer price lists etc.

- Consideration of transport links and times need to be coordinated between local areas.

- Diverse offering of opening times that suits the needs of many. Use pre-existing data to justify reduced hours or closures.

OPTION 6: Stop support services from libraries

AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Reduction would affect older people, those with rural broadband issues or lack of suitable tech devices

Key Recommendations:

- Support relocation to local warm hub or community space if possible

- Improvements required to local broadband and broadband in village halls

OPTION 7: Move the library to a multi-functional site i.e. local school

RED	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- May prohibit people from visiting who have had a negative experience of school. Perception that these were most likely to be vulnerable people.

- If in a school – safeguarding issues need to be considered.

Key Recommendations:

- Create a safe space to encourage young people to use the facility.

- Integrating libraries into a community setting such as a hub or well-being centre.

- Enable access to multiple public services in one site.

- Needs to be in a community wing – not inside a school.

- Transport links need to be considered.

- Consider accessibility of site as well as building - not up a hill like Lossiemouth.

OPTION 8: Move more services and orgs into libraries to make them more efficient

AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

Key Issues:

- May reduce public or community access to meeting rooms and spaces during day

- Not if this will put community centres at risk – work together.

Key Recommendations:

- Meeting spaces need improved with upgraded Wi-Fi for services using facilities.

- Access multiple services in one site. Look at Westhill or Pollok Library model.

- Integrate libraries into a community setting such as community health and well-being hub.

- Co-habitants need to be suitable.

OPTION 9: Close the local library facility and deliver outreach in community

RED	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	AMBER

Key Issues:

- Most community outreach services are daytime/ weekday services, how do teens and those working access this service?

- Wheelchair users may not be able to access the outreach alternative.

- Early years benefit from look and touch of books, how could you facilitate this in a community setting?

Key Recommendations:

- Teens and those working would most likely be able to access a digital service if tech was up to standard.

- Enhance the offering in neighbouring facilities.

- Surplus savings should be re-invested in service.

- Programmed community pop-up instead of book drop-off service.

- Use M connect to take people to libraries rather than deliver outreach.

OPTION 10:   Reduce staffing levels

RED	RED	RED	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN

Key Issues:

- 'People' part of service delivery is important and contributes to users' confidence and capability when using a service.

- Consistency is particularly important to vulnerable people.

Key Recommendations:

- Technology such as self-service or self-scan could reduce staff but there must still be a staff member available.

- Look at combining with other staff resources such as Health Point or youth work.

OPTION 11:   Sponsorship / advertising for companies in facilities

AMBER	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

Key Issues:

- Needs to be appropriate advertising.

Key Recommendations:

- Social enterprises could have a pop-up selling space.

- Offer options for advertisers, for example: pop-ups on computers or e-advertising on app.

- Make it a space for community group advertising.

'Golden Nugget' Ideas:

During the session, we asked participants to capture any ideas or solutions generated during the workshop discussions. We referred to these as 'Golden Nuggets'.

Here are the golden nuggets from the session that could be considered as options in the redesign of the libraries service:

Look at west Norwood library in Lambeth, it co-located a picture house cinema and café into the local library.

National E-library

DIY Book Service – scan/self service

Automatic entry – flexible entry

Linking up with close local authorities for sharing digital resources

Move Library to School / Shopfront and create a One-Stop Shop (more convenient for folk who do not have their own transport)

Co-working space for hire

Create community offices in libraries. Keith – REAP host a variety of community services such as the Trust Development Officer, CAB, and Credit Union.

Makers space for hire

If moveable shelves the space could be flexible enough to make multi-purpose event space for hire.

In-post lockers for books or other

Donations boxes with qr codes to donate - similar to museums give people the option to contribute what they can.

For free but ticketed events, give people the option to offer a ticket donation at time of booking and make it easy!

Issues Raised By Participants

These comments were captured by participants on the large ASG maps that were displayed around the room. They relate to Moray generally and are not specific to one ASG.

Affordability

Extending the rich – poor gap if you introduce charges for extra clubs and services as only middle and upper class with income will be able to pay = no equity.

Accessibility

Libraries inside schools – safety of children? Some offenders would not be able to visit

Safety

If moving into multi-use site, such as a school then need to have separate entrance to school for security purposes. Some facilities are not available during the day in multi-use sites.

Multi-purpose

Supporting collaboration with other organisations across region built into strategic role of libraries.

Borrow of hand-held medical devices/ condition monitoring (equipment could be held at the library)

Skills

Concern about staffing and professional skills. Cannot be substituted by volunteers

Staff become more generic – shared skills/experiences

Staffing

Heritage and archive – difficult to access across region without dedicated service to access regional records.

Concern about staff being more generically skilled is the loss of the library professional standard. Library staff are information professionals (chartership etc).

Summary:

Using the RAG rating of each option, we can score them into the following order in accordance of tolerance for users. The most tolerable is at the top (Option 11) and the least tolerable is at the bottom (Option 10).

The scoring system that has been used to order these options was:

1 Red =   **-1**
1 Amber =   **0**
1 Green =   **+1**

(OPTION)   MOST TOLERABLE

Option							Description
11	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Sponsorship / Advertising for companies.
8	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Move more services and orgs into libraries to make them more efficient.
3	Red	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Stop heritage service
1	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Reduce opening hours
2	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Stop digital learning/ ICT support
4	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Introduce charges for clubs
6	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Stop support services from libraries
7	Red	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Move the library into multi-functional site
9	Red	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Close the local library facility and deliver outreach in community
5	Red	Red	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Close the local library facility
10	Red	Red	Red	Amber	Amber	Green	Reduce staffing levels

EQUAL SCORE (grouping options 1, 2, 4, 6)

EQUAL SCORE (grouping options 9, 5)

LEAST TOLERABLE

As you can see the most tolerable option was introducing advertising opportunities for companies and community groups in library spaces to generate additional income.

The lowest scoring option was reducing staffing levels. This concern and of 'loss of skills' has came through strongly in both the public survey, staff sessions and this engagement workshop.

The following issues and recommendations were recurring themes across the options considered;

Issue - Any change will affect the more vulnerable members of society the most.

Recommendation – Availability of public transport needs to be factored into changes.

Recommendation – Requires a diverse offering of opening hours.

Recommendation – Facilities require to be functional for all requirements/services – i.e. sufficient Wi-Fi, up-to-date technology, meeting spaces.

Recommendation – Income generation/ donation options should be considered.

Recommended Next Steps:

1. Service Managers, Senior Management and Elected Members should use this information to inform their decision making going forward regarding any changes to the library, learning and heritage service.

2. Any proposed changes should be subject to further discussion and deliberation in focussed sessions.

3. Continue to communicate decisions or changes with stakeholders and enable them to influence outcomes.

Community Support Unit