

Somerset Library Services Consultation 2018 Summary Proposal

**Tell us your views on how we are proposing to deliver future library services in Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and surrounding area - Area 5
Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster libraries.**

We'd like to invite you to tell us your views on some potential changes we are considering making to the future delivery of library services in your community and across Somerset.

Somerset County Council is fully committed to continuing to deliver a thriving, modern library service across Somerset. As with many Authorities, however, we continue to face challenging financial times. Somerset County Council received £90million in 2013/14 from central government to support our services. This has reduced to just over £26million for 2017/18 and is set to reduce to nothing by 2020/21- whilst demand for services has increased, particularly in adult and children social care. We have managed to reduce our library budget by 20% since 2011, whilst keeping all of our libraries open. Going forward, we may need to consider more challenging changes in order to keep the Libraries Service on a sustainable financial footing.

The following summary proposal provides **options** for the libraries in this area exploring how we might deliver library services in your community in future. There are another eight area summary proposals available to view, which include library proposals for the remaining areas of Somerset.

Please carefully read the following information, consider the three proposed options then complete the questionnaire, basing your answers on the library you visit most often.

We stress that no decisions about the future delivery of library services in any community have been taken at this time and the results of this consultation will be taken into account in our decision-making. No decisions will be made until the results of this consultation (now ending on 10 June) have been fully analysed and reviewed.

More detailed information is available online (www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries_consultation). You can also attend drop-in sessions taking place at some libraries during the consultation to discuss the proposals and give your feedback.

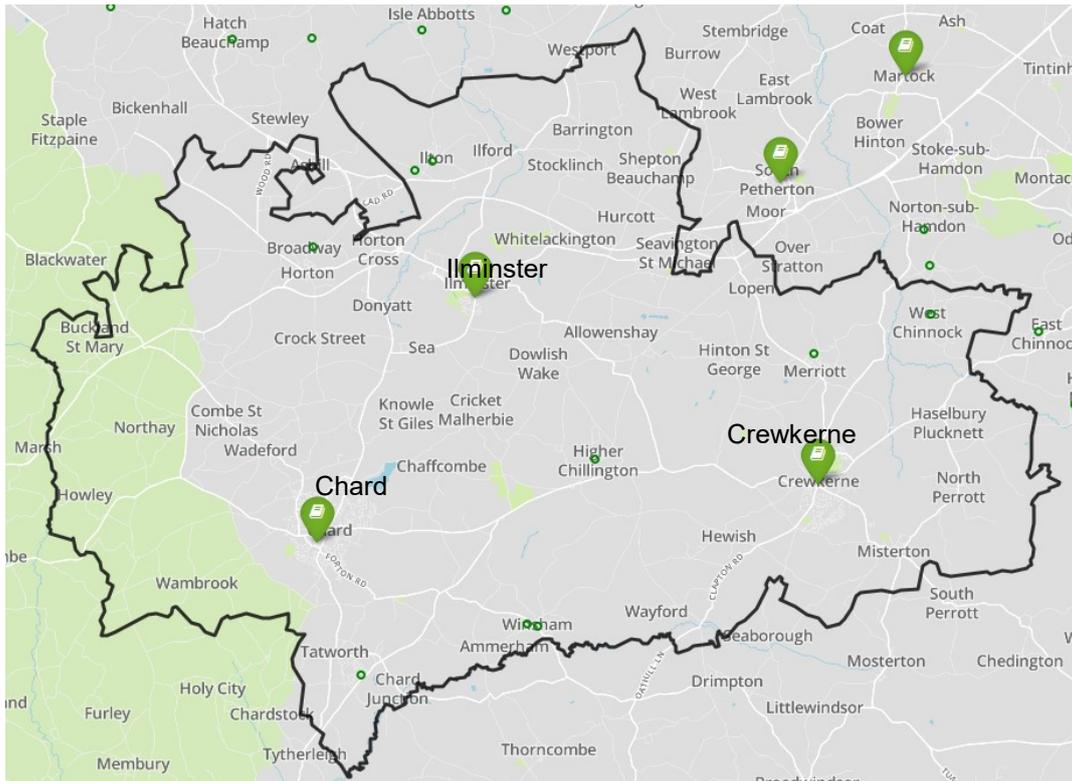
What are library services?

Our 34 Somerset libraries deliver a range of library services including book, audio book and DVD loans, public computer access, reading and support groups, digital skills support, a range of digital resources (such as 3D printing, Microbits and Raspberry PIs), events and activities, business support - and lots more besides.

Many services are available online or through a network of mobile library stops. In addition, we provide a home delivery service for customers unable to visit a library for themselves.

Area 5: Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and surrounding area

The map below shows the three existing library buildings (green pins) in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster and the existing mobile library stops (green dots) - 7 stops in this area per month.



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- The area includes the western part of South Somerset District.
- It has a mixed urban and rural population (total pop. 43,853) The main towns are Chard (pop. 13,074), Crewkerne (pop.7,826) and Ilminster (pop. 5,808). Other sizeable communities include Tatworth to the south of Chard (pop. 2,259) and Merriot (pop. 1,979) to the north of Crewkerne.
- Commercial bus services run between Chard and Ilminster and onwards to Taunton. Other bus services in the area are less frequent, but do connect Crewkerne with Chard and Yeovil, providing access into the towns from some of the surrounding villages. The area is reasonably well served by community transport, centred on Chard and Ilminster in the west, and generally serving Yeovil from the east of the catchment. The urban areas are small enough for walking and cycling access to town centres.
- The south-western part of the area around Chard is some distance away from the major towns of Somerset, with drive times to Taunton and Yeovil of approximately 25 minutes. Crewkerne and Ilminster and their surrounding rural

areas are nearer to Yeovil and Taunton respectively, with driving times of approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

- Levels of deprivation are relatively high in Chard, with one neighbourhood in the 20% most deprived nationally, and several other neighbourhoods with higher levels of deprivation than the average for Somerset. Less significant areas of deprivation also exist in Crewkerne and Ilton in the rural north of the area. Employment and income levels are higher than elsewhere in Somerset in many of the rural areas, with the exception of the rural district to the north of Ilminster where income is lower than the Somerset average. Crewkerne has a higher proportion of older people than the average for Somerset.
- Educational attainment and school readiness also tends to be higher in the rural parts of the area, with pockets of low attainment in Chard and Crewkerne. Social isolation and digital exclusion are significant issues in Chard, with a smaller pocket of social isolation / digital exclusion in Crewkerne. The rural areas to the south of Chard and west of Ilminster also contain populations that are likely to be digitally excluded.

	Chard Library	Crewkerne Library	Ilminster Library
Catchment population	27,502	24,051	13,132
Opening Hours per week	31.5	29	21.5
Active borrowers*	2,612	2,262	1,141
Annual footfall	85,713	60,223	24,980

Further evidence of need (including deprivation and usage), access to alternative libraries and value for money, which we have used to develop our proposals can be found online at www.somerset.gov.uk/librariesconsultation .

The detailed impact assessments can also be found here. We are seeking your views on all of this information, and would encourage you to look at this further detail.

Proposals

The following options demonstrate the aim to keep as many library buildings as possible open. The options highlight, however, that for a number of libraries we may require community support to help us achieve this. We stress that library services will continue across Somerset, whatever the outcome of this consultation.

If we are unable to keep library buildings open in communities, we will deliver library services in other ways, such as through outreach (i.e. in alternative venues within communities), online or mobile library services.

Please now consider the following **option proposals** and complete the questionnaire, basing your answers on the library you visit most often.

CHARD LIBRARY	PROPOSAL
Option A	No change to existing library services.

CREWKERNE LIBRARY	PROPOSALS
Option A	No change to existing library services.
Option B	Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Crewkerne (supported by some funding from the County Council).
Option C	Provide library services by delivering outreach library services (events and activities for children and adults, and public internet access) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Crewkerne (at least twice a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

ILMINSTER LIBRARY	PROPOSALS
Option A	No change to existing library services.
Option B	Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Ilminster (supported by some funding from the County Council).
Option C	Provide library services by delivering outreach library services (events and activities for young children, and health, wellbeing and reading activities for adults) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Ilminster (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

For further detailed information on the proposals, please visit www.somerset.gov.uk/librariesconsultation