

Checklist for transfer to Community Library Management for Northamptonshire Libraries

Initial considerations

Communities may wish to consider:

- what they are trying to achieve
- the needs of local residents
- the level of local community support
- the view of the town or parish council
- the main issues which need resolving
- the costs of the library now and in the future
- where future funding will come from
- whether the current building is suitable and affordable
- talking to or visiting existing community managed libraries
- the difference between a statutory and non-statutory/independent library (see [Services Offered](#) section)

Communities should ensure:

- there is an initial project leader and team
- a formal expression of interest is submitted to Northamptonshire County Council

Formal organisation

The group will need to consider the most appropriate organisational form for the community library. Matters to be considered will include:

- the organisation's constitution
- charity registration (if appropriate)
- HMRC registration (if appropriate)
- trustees, officers, meetings and minutes
- running a bank account
- accounts, annual report and independent examination

Funding sources

There are a number of sources of funding available to community libraries. These include:

- town or parish councils for example [Section 137](#) of the Local Government Act 1972
- resident donations - 'Friends of the Library'
- local fund raising and crowdfunding
- [Public Works Loan Board](#)
- grants
- local businesses

- sundry income for example room hire, vending machines, items for sale and a café
- till income (fines, DVD hire charges, book and sundry sales)

Know and manage your costs

Communities looking at taking on the running of a library are advised to obtain the library's current costs and establish how these will change with community management. This can be used to prepare a budget.

Local running costs may include:

- rent
- business rates
- insurance
- utilities
- telephone
- safety checks (water, fire safety etc.)
- volunteer costs (expenses)
- locally purchased stock
- magazine and newspaper subscriptions if required
- marketing (notices, posters, displays)
- stationery
- general supplies
- cleaning
- maintenance
- repairs
- refurbishment

Volunteers

Community libraries may wish to consider:

- what volunteer positions are required including supporting roles
- the number of volunteers required, taking into account the opening hours
- the length of the average volunteering session
- determine how often people want to volunteer
- whether there are enough volunteers
- recruitment and vetting
- the best way to fill, amend and communicate the volunteer rota, it may be useful to have a rota manager
- contingency back up in support of the volunteer rota
- availability for training in basic library work and the library management system

Volunteers could sign off for basic responsibilities such as:

- safety
- data protection

- equality and non-discrimination
- computer security

After the start up period community libraries could:

- buddy less experienced with more experienced volunteers
- look at building up the confidence of new volunteers through helping with specific tasks
- consider the best way to communicate with the volunteers - email, telephone, forums

Stock

Sources of book stock include:

- council provided (existing stock, new stock)
- local purchases (to be self-managed)
- self-managed donated books

Other things to consider:

- disposal of books
- DVDs (beware rental vs retail versions) and audio books
- magazines - could they be on subscription or donated
- stocking the local newspaper
- additional stock - items for sale and leaflets

Services offered

There are a variety of services which could be run to meet local needs. These include:

- a good up to date range of adult and children's books and audio books
- access to computers, WiFi, office software and e-reference materials
- the Summer Reading Challenge
- children's activities such as story time, chatterbooks and craft sessions (locally led and delivered)
- Adult activities and computer taster sessions (locally led and delivered)

There are two options available for community managed libraries:

Statutory

Continuing as part of the county's Statutory offer with access to the existing library infrastructure including:

- Fully serviced book stock – both current stock and a proportion of the ongoing new stock

- Distribution of stock and book reservations through the Business Support Team
- Use of the existing Library Management System (Galaxy) including support from Axiell
- IT support from LGSS
- Use of the Get Involved Hub for Volunteer Recruitment
- Self-service machines
- Public Network Computers
- Visitor counters (where fitted)
- Summer Reading Challenge resources
- Bookstart resources
- Books on Prescription
- Training and Library Handbook
- Library Policies and Procedures

This would be subject to a Service Level Agreement with NCC and must be open for a minimum of 12 hours per week, including 2 hours during the weekend. These libraries would not be expected to deliver Blue Badges or Bus Passes and there would be no contribution from NCC to the building or staffing costs.

Independent

These libraries would sit outside the county's offer and would have no infrastructure support. Only current book stock would be gifted.

In either option, opening hours should be appropriate to the community and be for as long as possible. Community libraries can also look to maximise the community use of the building for example, meeting councillors, the local MP or the community police.

Marketing

The local community must be informed and regularly updated about the library's services and events. Marketing actions by community libraries may include:

- making sure the public knows about the library, its services and when it is open
- publicising library events and enhancements via email, local websites and social media
- placing notices in the library and local shop windows
- using the local newspaper (human interest stories work well)
- setting up a library website and social media
- newsletter (locally led and delivered)
- arranging author talks and outings

Management

Community libraries may wish to consider:

- a management person or group to supervise the library day-to-day
- health and safety compliance
- keeping the library clean and tidy with decor and furnishings in good order
- continually reviewing performance - visitor numbers / lending stats / stock usage etc.
- encouraging and carefully considering suggestions and feedback from users and volunteers
- connecting with the local community whenever there is an opportunity
- connecting with local schools and playgroups and encouraging class visits to the library