

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**County Council  
23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Graham Brown, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for the Libraries Service**

**SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe**

**There is a great deal of local concern and confusion regarding the future funding of the Library services by the Council.**

**Regardless of who is to run them and where they are housed can you confirm the level of financing the library service will receive in the future from the Council relative to the present position, and for how long this will be sustained? This is particularly important if Town Councils and community groups are being encouraged to contribute to the running of the libraries as they need guarantees that Powys is committed to maintaining this statutory and vital local provision.**

Answer from County Councillor Graham Brown, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Libraries

Members will be aware that in working across 2016, the Library Service were looking to find new ways of working, based upon having to meet a budget reduction of £250k, spread across 2017-18 and 2018-19. In setting out possible ways of achieving this, Cabinet endorsed a community-delivery style approach to retaining branch libraries. As a result, the Library Service worked with town and community councils, and others, throughout 2016 to secure the long-term future of these local libraries, with local solutions now secured for almost all branches.

In receiving regular feedback on the difficulties and protracted timescales in concluding such local initiatives, Cabinet were mindful that to conclude changes and co-locations, etc. of all 11 branch libraries was a very significant challenge to meet by April 2017.

The current budget proposals now reflect the need to both make savings but also ensure the Service can be achieved and sustained, and as such the targets reflect £0 budget reduction in 2017-18 and £125k budget reduction in 2018-19.

As to the sustainability of joint commitments between Town and Community Councils and the County Council, the new budget proposals very much seek to make this more sustainable, but the matter of long-term funding will now be a matter for the new Council and Cabinet to conclude after May.