


LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	Cabinet 17 July 2018	
Report Title	Library Local Improvement Programme – Wood Street and Lea Bridge	
Cabinet Portfolio	Councillor Claire Coghill, Leader of the Council	
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Wards affected	All Wards, in particular: Wood Street and Lea Bridge	
Public Access	OPEN	
Appendices	Appendix 1a - Library Locals Cabinet paper Appendix 1b – Library Locals Cabinet decision - 12 th July 2016 Appendix 2 - Libraries Consultation, including Executive Summary Appendix 3 - Summary table of consultation concerns and mitigations Appendix 4 - Wood Street Library Condition Survey Appendix 5 - Equalities Assessment	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 12 July 2016 Cabinet agreed in principle to a vision for Library Local Services. The agreement in principle included the relocation of three of the four Library Locals and refurbishment of the fourth, with all associated costs being funded from capital receipts achieved within the programme. The Cabinet report and decisions from this meeting are included as appendix one.
- 1.2 As a part of this decision Cabinet supported the undertaking of a public consultation which would build on the extensive consultation exercise undertaken in 2011. This Cabinet paper sets out the outcomes of that consultation, and proposes a revised plan which responds to its findings.
- 1.3 Specifically, this paper proposes recommendations in relation to the relocation of one Library Local (Wood Street) and the extension and refurbishment of another (Lea Bridge).

- 1.4 The recommendations for these two libraries are being brought for decision separately as the two programmes are intrinsically linked, with the proposals for Wood Street enabling the vision to be achieved in both libraries. Additionally, due to the nature of the proposals, there are specific time bound decisions which are required both in relation to the purchase of the Marlowe Road site and the match funding required for Lea Bridge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the relocation of Wood Street library from the existing site to three new units in the Marlowe Road development.
- 2.2 Approve the disposal of the current library building at Wood Street and agree that the capital receipt from this disposal will be used to fund the relocation of the existing library, and to provide the match funding required to take up the GLA grant funding for Lea Bridge. This project will be added to the capital programme.
- 2.3 Agree that the existing library in Wood Street will remain open until the new library is fully operational and that Lea Bridge will remain open during the refurbishment works and that all costs will be funded in advance of the capital receipt
- 2.4 Approve the establishment of community led engagement boards for both libraries to shape the design and facilities for each library.
- 2.5 Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead to develop and action detailed plans required to implement the recommendations in this report.

3. PROPOSALS

Background

- 3.1 In July 2016 Cabinet approved a new vision for Library Locals:

Libraries will be at the heart of Waltham Forest life, bringing people together through the joy of reading and lifelong learning to inspire and enrich the lives of all – whoever and wherever you might be

and approved in principle a range of activity to achieve this vision, informed by a public consultation exercise (appendix two).

- 3.2 Following this decision an extensive public consultation ran from 12 September 2016 until 31 January 2017. The consultation was run in two parts

covering both the vision for library locals and the specific proposals in relation to each library. A total of 2,249 responses were received for the first part of the consultation (1,066 library users and 1,183 non-users) and 1,284 responses were received for the second part (1,070 library users, 95 from non-users, and 119 unspecified). The full consultation is included in appendix two.

- 3.3 The consultation found that 82% of respondents supported the Council's vision for libraries. Although the consultation indicated some concern and opposition from Wood Street residents and library users to the proposal to relocate Wood Street Library to the new Marlowe Road development, the Council is in a position to make a number of key changes to the original proposal which addresses many of the issues raised by residents and library users as part of the consultation process.
- 3.4 The specific concerns raised in relation to Wood Street, and the amendments made in response to these, are included as appendix three. In particular, the proposals have been adjusted to purchase a third unit at Marlowe Road to ensure the proposed new library will be slightly larger than the existing library space.

Proposals - Wood Street and Lea Bridge

- 3.5 It is proposed that Wood Street Library be relocated to a newly developed community space at Marlowe Road. The new library facilities will be funded through the disposal of the Wood Street site.
- 3.6 It is further proposed to remodel and refurbish Lea Bridge Library to meet the standards set out by the Library Local vision. The extension and refurbishment of Lea Bridge would be part funded through a successful £411,000 funding bid to the GLA's Good Growth Fund. A condition of this grant is that it is match funded by the Council and it is recommended this is achieved through the capital receipt received from the disposal of the Wood Street site.
- 3.7 The sale of the current Wood Street site will fund both the new Library in Marlowe Road and the refurbishment of Lea Bridge. Lea Bridge residents and users were largely in favour of the proposals.
- 3.8 The opportunity to purchase the three units at Marlowe Road represents a time limited option to develop a new, modern library. There are no potential alternative sites in the Wood Street Ward. The site at Marlowe Road enables a new library to be sited at the heart of the community with better access to transport facilities such as Wood Street rail station, as well as access to disabled parking spaces.
- 3.9 Retaining the current Wood St site would necessitate significant capital spending to address a number of issues with the fabric of the building and to modernise the site. Initial surveys have indicated that to repair and secure the

library for the medium term approximately £2.3million would be required and there is currently no budget provision included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to fund these additional costs. The full condition survey is included as appendix four.

- 3.10 The Council has explored and exhausted options in relation to funding sources for the significant capital works required to bring the current site to the required standard and secure its future for the medium term.
- 3.11 The recommendations above enable two of the library locals to be developed according to the vision, creating modern, accessible and flexible community spaces. The development of these facilities enables the library to also create revenue streams, and any revenue generated will be used to fund enhanced library services, for example longer opening hours at both sites.
- 3.12 An update and report will be presented at a future Cabinet meeting in relation to the other Library Locals.

4 OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The table below summarises the options and the finances of each proposal for the three library locals which were consulted upon. This table was published in the additional survey that was issued for the extended period of the consultation.

	Option 1 – relocation	Option 2 – refurbishment and refit to Library Local	Option 3 – ‘do nothing’ (essential maintenance will still be needed to extend the life of the building for 20 years)	Recommended Option
Wood Street	Estimated cost of relocation £1.2 million, funded from sale of the current building - estimated value £2.6 million Please Note: The relocation cost for Wood Street has since been updated to £2 million in order to provide an additional unit.	Estimated refurbishment cost £2.3 million Estimated refit cost £200,000 Total estimated costs of £2.5 million	Essential building maintenance would still be needed at a cost up to the estimated refurbishment cost of £2.3 million	Option 1 Please Note: A number of key changes have been recommended following the consultation as set out in this report.
Lea Bridge	The building has a covenant that	Estimated refit cost £822,000, funded	No further essential building	Option 2

	restricts its use to being a library and had £1.1 million spent on building works in 2009/10.	from surplus of receipts from the sale of the other site and from the successful bid for funding from the GLA for Lea Bridge Library. This has enabled options for an expanded refurbishment of both internal and external library spaces.	work needed as this was carried out in 2009/10.	Please note this option is enabled by a grant successfully awarded in 2018 which requires match funding from the Council.
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- Estimated capital receipts are based on valuations in July 2018.
- Refurbishment estimates are based on high-level condition surveys carried out in November and December 2016.
- Refit costs under option 2 are to bring the library up to the Library Locals standard of branding, furnishing and modern equipment to meet the Library Locals Vision.

4.1 Cabinet may decide not to proceed with the proposal to relocate Wood Street Library. However, if Wood Street is not relocated, it will not realise capital receipts that would fund both the refurbishment of Lea Bridge Library or the establishment of a replacement library.

4.1 Any changes or delay in decision making will mean that some community libraries will continue not to meet the standard for the Council's vision. The decision to relocate Wood Street Library is contingent upon it being located within the Marlowe Road development which is a time bound opportunity.

5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

5.1 This project directly supports the Council's agreed priorities for:

- Regeneration;
- Building a strong local economy and thriving town centres;
- Housing; and
- Good quality of life

6 CONSULTATION

Members are referred to appendix two for the full Consultation report.

6.1 The consultation ran from 12 September 2016 until 31 January 2017 in two parts: Part 1 consulting on the Council's vision, people's aspirations for

libraries and the potential for community involvement in future; Part 2 consulting on the Council's proposals to relocate Higham Hill and Wood Street libraries and refurbish Lea Bridge library. The initial consultation survey remained available throughout the whole consultation period, and sat alongside the additional survey from 1 December onwards.

- 6.2 2,249 responses were received for the first part of the consultation; 1,066 from library users and 1,183 from non-users. 1,284 responses were received for the second part of the consultation; 1,070 from library users, 95 from non-users, and 119 did not specify their usage.
- 6.3 69% of respondents disagree with the Council's proposal to relocate Wood Street library, including 63% that strongly disagree. 84% of users for whom Wood Street is their main library disagree, including 81% that strongly disagree. More non-users agree (42%) than disagree (36%), although the number of respondents is small (85).
- 6.4 52% of respondents agree with the Council's proposal to refurbish Lea Bridge library.
- 6.5 As set out in appendix two, there were a range of reasons cited for disagreeing with the proposal to relocate Wood Street library. These include; some emotional and practical attachment to the existing building and location, some opposition to selling community assets in principle and selling existing library sites for housing.
- 6.6 However, there are also a number of reasons cited which have been addressed in this report including the purchase of an additional unit to increase the space available in the library, confirmation that the Council owns the site at Marlowe Road, and a commitment to ensure there is no gap in the library provision with the old library remaining open until the new library is completed.

7 IMPLICATIONS

Finance, Value for Money and Risk

- 7.1.1 The proposal is to relocate the current library at Wood Street to the new development at Marlowe Road and refurbish the library at Lea Bridge; all costs will be funded from the disposal proceeds of the current library building at Wood Street and the GLA grant funding.
- 7.1.2 The current Library building at Wood Street will be available for disposal from 2020 and the anticipated receipts are £2.63 million assuming an unconditional sale. The table below outlines the projected receipts and all anticipated costs including the acquisition, refurbishment and fit-out costs for both Lee Bridge and Wood Street/ Marlowe Road;

	Lea Bridge	Wood Street	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Receipt from Property Disposal		2,630	2,630
GLA Good Growth Fund	411		411
Refurbishment Costs/ fit-out costs	(822)	(800)	(1,622)
Property Decommissioning Costs		(12)	(12)
Build / purchase cost for new Premises		(1,150)	(1,150)
Project Management			(240)
Net Surplus / (Shortfall) on Capital	(411)	668	17

- 7.1.3 The acquisition and fit-out costs for the new location at Marlowe Road are projected to be £2 million, which is £700,000 greater than the costs incorporated within the July 2016 Cabinet Report and will be funded from the disposal proceeds from the current library building at Wood Street. The additional cost of £700,000 is as a result of an additional unit of 173m² included within the revised costings. It is anticipated that the development at Marlowe Road will be completed during Spring 2019 and the new Library will be opened in late 2019. As the council owns the freehold of Marlowe Road, the acquisition value is based on the capital receipt of £1.15 million that the Council would be forgoing to provide it for Library use rather than disposing or leasing on the open market. The original business case for Marlowe Road included an assumption that the development of units would be funded from disposal proceeds.
- 7.1.4 The refurbishment of the Library at Lea Bridge is planned for 2018 at a total cost of £822,000; £411,000 of this will be funded from the GLA Good Growth Fund and the balance from the disposal proceeds from Wood Street. There is no budget provision for decanting the service to another location as this is not considered necessary for the project.
- 7.1.5 To manage the refurbishment of Lea Bridge and the fit-out of Wood Street, project management costs of £240,000 are anticipated. The planned costs for Marlowe Road and Lea Bridge, as well as the required project costs will require funding in advance of the disposal. Any surplus funding following the completion of this project will be return to the Corporate Capital fund and any additional pressures, including any costs in relation to the disposal, will be funded from the current capital provision for Libraries.
- 7.1.6 Any resources required supporting the further improvement, including the community engagement proposals for any of the local libraries or any other additional operating costs will be contained within the services current revenue budget.
- 7.1.7 The above financial costings do not include additional costs associated with converting either Libraries to a Library Plus status.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The Council's duty under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964 is to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service to those who wish to use it. This duty must be complied with alongside the Council's other statutory duties. In fulfilling its duty, a local authority must have regard to the desirability of:
- ensuring that facilities are available for the borrowing of and reference to books and other printed material and pictures and film to meet the general and special requirements adults and children;
 - encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service and of providing advice as to its use and information as may be required by users of the service;
- 7.2.2 Case law has considered the meaning of the duty, specifically Ouseley, J in *Bailey v London Borough of Brent* [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin), stated that:
- 'A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.'
- 7.2.3 The proposals are to relocate Wood Street Library, and use its capital receipts to refurbish Lea Bridge Library and replace it within the Marlowe Road development as set out in the body of this report.
- 7.2.4 In July 2016 Cabinet asked officers to carry out a consultation on the proposals to relocate Library Locals including Wood Street Library and refurbishment of Lea Bridge Library. The consultation was in the event conducted in two stages as set out in the report. The first survey sought consultation responses upon the Vision for Library Locals, a document that had been attached to the report to Cabinet in July 2016 and which set out the proposals for relocation as well as details of the Council's visions for its' libraries. During the initial period of the consultation it became clear that the initial questionnaire did not contain questions specifically seeking views on the proposed relocations. Officers remedied this by issuing a further questionnaire containing updated information and extending the period for responding to the consultation by a further two months.
- 7.2.5 The consultation process complied with legal requirements: it was undertaken at formative stage; officers responded to concerns raised during its initial phase; and has provided adequate information for an intelligent response and adequate time for this response. To complete this process, Members must conscientiously take into account the views expressed by those who have taken part in the consultation when making their decision. Consultation responses are not binding on members but must be taken into account

- 7.2.6 In deciding whether to agree the proposals, Members must also comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and Members are referred to appendix 5 (the Equality Analysis) that sets out the nature of the duty. The analysis identifies a negative impact which cannot be fully mitigated since the proposal inevitably means change for some users of Wood Street Library who may be within a protected group, and who may experience change. Members must be satisfied that any negative impacts on protected groups identified that are not fully mitigated is justified, and is a proportionate means of achieving the outcome sought, and that there is no fairer way of achieving the outcome. Equality monitoring should continue and steps taken to address any apparent as yet unforeseen impact on any group.
- 7.2.7 An application was made that Wood Street Library become listed as an “Asset of Community Value” (ACV) which was accepted in line with the requirements of the Council to do so under Section 88 of the Localism Act 2011. The impact of the building being listed as an ACV is that in the event the Council were considering disposal of the asset it must notify the Planning Policy Department in writing. There would then follow a 6 week period during which a local community interest group could make a written request to be treated as a potential bidder. If such a request is received in those 6 weeks then the Council could not dispose of the premises for a 6 month period during which gives such a group an opportunity to raise finances in order to submit a bid.

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 The Equality Analysis has concluded that overall, moving the libraries to a new location co-located with shopping facilities will improve access for a number of people.
- 7.3.2 However, potential negative impacts have been identified in the change of location in that some of the current users will need to walk further. However, at the same time the new locations will be closer to other current and potential new users. During any implementation there will be an inevitable disruption in services provided which may also adversely impact upon users within protected groups. As an example, this can be mitigated by further active promotion of the Home Book Delivery Service meeting the needs of residents who are unable to travel to the libraries and minimising the time the service is disrupted. In addition, Pop Up Libraries will be available at a number of locations across the borough.
- 7.3.3 In the longer term however, public transport access will improve, disabled parking will improve and accessibility of the buildings will improve both in terms of the design, access for those with mobility needs and in terms of the convenience of the location.
- 7.3.4 The newly designed modern buildings will provide opportunities to continue or improve access - in particular for disabled people, parents and carers of small children, for people with limited mobility, older people and pregnant women.
- 7.3.5 The information from the consultation undertaken has been used to inform the Equality Analysis and an updated version can be found in appendix 5.

7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

- 7.4.1 Proposals will be developed in accordance with national, regional and local standards for sustainable development and opportunities to exceed these will be explored. All new libraries will be designed to meet the Council's requirement to reduce carbon emissions by 35% below 2013 Building Regulations and comply with planning policy requirements for new build and refurbishment standards to meet BREEAM 'Very Good'. Details of specific measures will be included within the final detailed plans. Awareness raising campaigns will be carried out with library users to dis-encourage travel by car and encourage alternative means of transport such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- 7.4.2 Libraries have a number of health and wellbeing benefits, as they are a trusted place to go to for health support. They can also help reduce social isolation through the provision of a non-stigmatised community space with skilled and sympathetic staff.
- 7.4.3 Libraries provide safe community spaces and a supportive environment for both individuals and groups. Libraries are a legitimate space for young people to meet friends socially or to study, with a variety of learning and leisure opportunities.

7.5 Council Infrastructure

- 7.5.1 All work to achieve the proposed relocations and refurbishments will be undertaken within existing resources and use of specialist external agencies. Staff employed in the local libraries will move to the newly located libraries once complete. There are no indications of any reductions in library staffing as a result of these proposals.