

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 8 June 2015

Wards: Colliers Wood

Subject: Colliers Wood Library Development

Lead officer: Simon Williams and Chris Lee

Lead member: Councillor Nick Draper

Contact officer: Anthony Hopkins

Recommendations:

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1. That Cabinet agree that the existing lease of Donald Hope Library be surrendered and the Council take a new lease to develop the Cavendish House site to provide improved and efficient library facilities in the Colliers Wood area subject to final terms being agreed by the Director of Environment and Regeneration under his delegated authority.
 2. That Cabinet replace the existing capital scheme of £550,000 for Colliers Wood Library provision with a new scheme of £200,000.
 3. That Cabinet agree, subject to the authority of the Director of Environment and Regeneration, that a lease of temporary library facilities is taken on the main terms identified within the body of this report whilst the library site is developed.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides recommendations on how library services can be improved in the Colliers Wood area whilst delivering ongoing efficiencies in the way services are provided.
- 1.2. The current library provision in Colliers Wood (Donald Hope Library) is leased from Urb Group Property Development. The lease is due to expire in May 2017. Since acquiring the building in May 2014 Urb Group have been actively seeking to develop the Cavendish House site in order to provide new and improved library facilities along with additional housing and retail accommodation.
- 1.3. The development proposal was approved at Planning Committee on 26 March 2015 subject to Section 106 obligation or any other enabling agreement. This report outlines the timeframes involved in the construction, what the new facilities will consist of and proposals for temporary library facilities during the interim.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Work is scheduled to begin on construction of the Cavendish House site in summer 2015. The new library facilities will be spread over 3 levels and will consist of significantly increased community facilities, improved floor space and services. The library will also have within it coffee shop facilities.

- 2.2. During the construction period, which is estimated to be up to two years, temporary library facilities are proposed to be hosted at Merton Vision's Guardian Centre for the Blind, Clarendon Road and within close proximity to the High Street (see Appendix 1). These library facilities will utilise existing Library Connect equipment (Merton's pop up library solution) to provide an efficient alternative to regular library facilities.
- 2.3. Following extensive negotiations with the developers refurbishment costs have been reduced from the original £550,000 included in the capital scheme to a revised scheme of £200,000. The floor space has also been increased to accommodate additional community space and coffee shop facilities. Both of these additions will provide improved facilities and act as additional income streams.
- 2.4. The development has significant support from the local community and the new library facilities have been consulted on at public meetings with further meetings scheduled shortly.
- 2.5. The main terms of the new lease include:
- a) Property. 536 sqm over three floors (lower ground, ground and upper ground) plus two car spaces (existing lease 409 sqm on ground floor plus four car spaces).
 - b) Term 25 years (existing lease expires in 2017).
 - c) Rent review at five year intervals (existing at five year intervals).
 - d) Repair. Council responsible for all repairs except to main structure (existing Council responsible for all repairs except to main structure).
 - e) Fit out. The new library will be fitted out to a specification that has been agreed, subject to funding and authority, with the Head of Library and Heritage Services and Facilities Management.
- 2.6. As stated within paragraph 2.2 the following main terms have been agreed subject to authority for temporary accommodation to be used during the redevelopment period. Public consultation has been undertaken on the proposed temporary library facilities and there are high levels of community support for the option proposed:
- a) Property. Approx. 120 sqm on ground floor with use of communal spaces including car parking.
 - b) Term. Rolling one year lease with three month mutual break.
 - c) Fit out to be completed by the Council.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. Close the library

3.2. There is strong resident and member support to retain a library presence in the Colliers Wood area. Colliers Wood is one of the fastest growing wards in terms of population and demand for services is expected to increase.

3.3. Relocate to the Brown & Root Tower

- 3.4. £550,000 is assigned for relocating the library to the Tower complex in 2017. The library facilities are wound up in phase 2 of the development works, which haven't been formally approved and are unlikely to happen before 2019. The Cavendish House site provides a more cost efficient library solution with assurances around delivery and quality of service.
- 3.5. **Move the library to another venue in Colliers Wood**
- 3.6. Extensive research has been undertaken into other suitable venues along with consultation with local residents. Residents are keen to see the library retained along the High Street and have identified the current location as their preference. There are limited alternatives in the Colliers Wood area and all of them would likely increase cost.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. A detailed analysis of sites was conducted in 2010 along with public consultation on preferred sites with the Colliers Wood Residents Association. Ongoing consultation takes place through meetings with the Colliers Wood Residents Association and Friends of Donald Hope Library.
- 4.2. Public meetings have also taken place with Urb Group Ltd. regarding the wider development and initial views have been fed into the development plan.
- 4.3. Following Cabinet approval of the scheme it is proposed that an additional round of consultation will be undertaken to seek detailed requirements for the new library. Ongoing updates and public meetings will continue throughout the duration of the project.

5 TIMETABLE

Cabinet approval of Colliers Wood Library scheme	8 June 2015
Public consultation regarding new library facilities	May - June 2015
Closure of Donald Hope Library	28 July 2015
Opening of temporary library facilities	30 July 2015
Development works to begin on Cavendish House	September 2015 – April 2017
Practical completion of development works	April 2017
Opening of new library facilities	July 2017

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. **Revenue**
- 6.2. There will be no increase in the revenue budget for the new Colliers Wood Library. The slight increase in the new lease will be offset by increased income from the letting of space and reduced operating costs. The inclusion

of coffee shop facilities should also assist with generating increased income and will be included in future MTFs savings.

- 6.3. The lease as detailed in the report would be an operational lease. The developer's contribution to fitting out the library is included under the terms of the lease. The lease can be agreed under delegated responsibility to the Director of Environment & Regeneration.
- 6.4. Temporary library solutions identified are within budget and the remaining revenue budget will be used to store existing equipment whilst the new library is developed and to promote the temporary facilities available.
- 6.5. **Capital**
- 6.6. Ongoing negotiations have led to a significant decrease in the Council's contribution towards the scheme. £550,000 sits in the capital programme for a new library scheme in 2016/17. The budget for this scheme is proposed to be replaced with a new scheme of £200,000 to reflect the actual cost contribution required to enable this development. The adjustment to the Capital Programme is included in the June 2015 Financial Monitoring Report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The Council is required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service, addressing the 'needs of adults and children', according to the Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1964. Local authorities have a statutory duty to make provision for a library service but may decide on how this is to be done.
- 7.2. Certain aspects of the service must be provided for free including free lending of books, free access to information and free library membership.
- 7.3. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a local authority to dispose of land in any manner they wish provided they obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable. A disposal under the 1972 Act would include the surrender of a lease.
- 7.4. Section 120 (1) of the 1972 Act allows a local authority to acquire any land whether situated in their area or not for the purposes of any of their functions. Entering into the proposed lease would be an acquisition for the purposes of the 1972 Act and fall within section 120 (1).

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Temporary library facilities will ensure that the residents of Colliers Wood retain a library service whilst works take place. The temporary library facilities will include a book lending service with free public access to computers and Wi-Fi. Provision has also been provided to ensure that the diverse range of activities currently provided in Donald Hope Library continue in its temporary location.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None identified.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. A detailed risk management plan will be assembled as part of the construction and development of the new library.

10.2. Full Health & Safety audits with new risk management plans will be devised for both the temporary library facilities and the new library.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1 – Map of services in the Colliers Wood area
- Appendix 2 – Images of the new library including proposed layout

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None included.

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