

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL  
CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

**CABINET MEETING:**

**28 MAY 2015**

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**Library Services in Roath/Adamsdown**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &  
CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**AGENDA ITEM: x**

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**PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CO-OPERATIVES & SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISE (COUNCILLOR PETER BRADBURY)**

Appendices 2 and 5 are not for publication as it contains exempt information of the description in paragraph(s) 14 and 21 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**Reason for this Report**

1. To recommend proposals for the delivery of sustainable library services in Roath and Adamsdown informed by the newly agreed Libraries strategy and in light of the condition assessment of the current Library building in Roath.
2. To recommend that officers work to develop longer term options for a Community Partnership Hub in a potential building in the Adamsdown/Plasnewydd area and to report back to Cabinet for further consideration of such options.

**Background**

3. Public library services are regulated by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This requires local authorities to provide comprehensive and efficient library services. Within Wales, the Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport supervises the library services provided by local authorities through the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS).
4. A new strategy for library services in Cardiff was developed in 2014 in response to changing service demands and the challenging financial climate. The strategy was developed around 6 key themes :
  - Integration of library services within community hubs

- Mobilisation of services on a neighbourhood basis
- Community involvement
- Commercialisation
- Use of Technology
- Alternative delivery models

5. The new strategy was consulted upon as part of the “ Changes for Cardiff” budget consultation. 4,191 people took the time to complete the questionnaire, over 500 attended engagement events, and a large number of the public gave views via petitions, calls for community polls and through correspondence. The analysed results and supplementary information can be found on <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Council-finance/Council-Budget/2015-16/Pages/Consultation-results.aspx>. In terms of the petitions received the highest number of signatories opposing closure was 1,894 for Rhiwbina library and the lowest number was 29 in relation to Roath library.
6. As a result of the consultation, amendments were made to the libraries strategy. A key area of concern centred on the proposals for the current stand-alone branch libraries. There was significant support for the integrated approach to service provision through the ongoing delivery of hubs, in line with the formal Hub Strategy.
7. However, the lack of council funding to extend this approach to all branch libraries and the potential loss of well used and well loved facilities was a major issue. The original recommendations for each branch library were therefore amended so that, where a public service hub was not a viable option, community support would be sought to continue a library service alongside either community or commercial-led activity in a community hub. These hubs would receive continued council-funded support to meet the cost of the supply of books, ICT equipment (including self-service kiosks) training and professional librarian support from the Neighbourhood Development Librarian.
8. The amended strategy made it clear that the neighbourhood-based library service would still be delivered from existing stand-alone library buildings, supported by community or commercial involvement, except in those circumstances where condition or accessibility of the building made that objective unachievable. In those circumstances, alternative venues would be identified as a base for a similar range of community, commercial and library provisions.
9. On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015 the revised Libraries Strategy was presented to Council and agreed. This strategy can be found in appendix 1. Within the newly adopted Library Strategy, the council’s proposal for Roath was to: *“Actively seek commercial, community and partner involvement with continued supply of books, IT equipment (incl. self-serve kiosks) and support of the Neighbourhood Development Librarian in an alternative*

*location if the condition of the property means that retaining the existing library is unsustainable”.*

## **Roath Library**

10. Roath Library is situated on Newport Road, Adamsdown and is located approximately one kilometre east of Cardiff City Centre. It is on the Plasnewydd Ward boundary. The property is situated directly on the principal route connecting the city centre to the east of the city. Public transport is readily available, serviced by Cardiff Bus. The nearest rail link is Queen Street station to the west of the city centre.

11. Neighbouring Libraries include:

- **Splott Library** (current location until Summer 2016)
  - 0.5 miles – 5 minute drive and 11 minute walk.
- **Star Hub** (new Hub location from Summer 2016)
  - 1.1 miles – 4 minute drive, 22 minute walk and accessible from bus 11.
- **Penylan Library**
  - 0.9 miles – 4 minute drive, 18 minute walk and accessible from 52 bus.
- **Central Library**
  - 1.1 miles – 7 minute drive, 22 minute walk and accessible via buses 45, 30, 49 and 44.
- **Cathays Library**
  - 1.3 miles – 7 minute drive, 26 minute walk and accessible from 38(A) bus.

12. The new Star Hub referenced above, is a project that brings together leisure, libraries, advice and partner services in one multifunction location. The planned development is a major £6million investment in a multi agency facility that will ensure the sustainability of local service provision by aligning services to meet local needs more effectively.

13. Roath Library is freehold owned by Cardiff Council, this property has a designated D1 non-residential institutions use and in July 1997 it was designated a Grade 2 listed building.

14. The building opened 40.5 hours per week and ran the following classes:

- Informal English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for asylum seekers - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 2:00-4:00pm
- Watercolour class 10:00am-12:00pm every Tuesday during term time, organised by East Moors
- Reading Group on the second Thursday of every month at 11:30am

- A Knitting Group meets one Saturday every month from 2:00-4:00pm
  - Regular coffee mornings and occasional author visits
  - Storytime, Rhymetime or Language and Play (LAP) sessions for under 5s
15. The budget for the library is £102,000, which consists of £76,500 employee-related costs, £28,000 for associated building and facilities management expenses, less an income of £2,500.
16. The two wards that the library predominately services are Adamsdown and Plasnewydd. These areas have a high immigrant and refugee population. According to the 2011 census, 25.1% of Adamsdown and 23.6% of Plasnewydd residents state that their place of birth was outside of the UK.
17. The building is currently closed temporarily as it is not fit for public use. After the boiler failed, the temperature of the building was monitored on a daily basis and a temporary heating solution was not possible as the electrics would not support the number of temporary heaters required to heat the large open space. Therefore the decision was taken to close in November 2014.
18. Following the closure of the library a range of alternative provision has been put in place to support the community, this includes:
- Digital Inclusion and Into Work services from Plasnewydd Community Centre Mondays and Fridays 9am to 5pm.
  - Existing Storytime and Rhymetime classes have been moved to Star Library.
  - 4 additional open access PCs have been located in Splott Library.
19. A significant leak occurred in the Roath library building on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Patch repairs were carried out to make the building watertight at a cost of £2,500. The estimated cost to replace all the slates and lead flashing to the low-level, single-storey building where the roof is leaking is estimated at £28,300. The internal repairs and damage will be covered by insurance.
20. The maintenance backlog is estimated at £250,000. Appendix 2 (which is exempt from publication) provides a building condition report. In addition to this, the estimate works for the new boiler is estimated to be in the region of £50,000 and the current shelving and furniture would need replacing and this would be in the region of £35,000, based on other similar sized libraries.
21. All condition surveys carried out for the Council are high level and unobtrusive with repair costs estimated from a schedule. The true total required works cost for Roath Library would be dependent on carrying out a detailed design specification for the refurbishment of the building. Based

on refurbishment works to similar age and size properties the actual refurbishment costs have been significantly higher than that of the total backlog costs identified in the condition surveys.

22. The library strategy, approved by Council in February 2015, stated that an alternative location for the provision of the library service with either commercial, community or partner involvement should be sought if the Roath library building should be found to be unsustainable. The latest information on the condition of the building confirms that Roath library is not a sustainable option as a venue for a community partnership hub. Consequently both short and longer term options for the provision of library services have been investigated.

### **Short Term**

23. Investigations have taken place on a proposed short term location for the Library service; work has been carried out to identify potential sites, discussions have taken place with members and a cross section of library officers, in addition to collaborative work with the Neighbourhood Partnership lead in Cardiff South East and Communities First.

24. A wide range of options were considered and are attached in appendix 3.

25. After initial investigations it was decided to look further at St Germans Church Hall (Adamsdown Day Centre) as a potential alternative temporary site for the Library. This location scores better on a range of indicators.

26. Design work then took place on the building to see how a library could be positioned within the Day Centre building. The plans for this are attached in appendix 4. Unfortunately, certain building regulations and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) would require alterations to take place at an estimated cost of £120,000.

27. In the course of discussions with representatives of St Germans Church it emerged that there are proposals being considered for longer term and more significant development opportunities with a local registered social landlord. Whilst these discussions are at an early stage it is apparent that the longer term plans could potentially provide an opportunity to reshape the day centre provision including provision of a community café , community space and library services. In light of this possible opportunity it would not be prudent to invest in the existing day centre facility in the short term.

### **Medium Term Options**

28. To inform any potential decision on alternative options a valuation of the building has taken place, this valuation is exempt from publication and attached in appendix 5.

29. The condition of the building is such that retaining the building is not considered to be either sustainable or affordable. Therefore, the following options have been considered:

**Option 1** - Sale of Roath Library and residents to use surrounding libraries.

**Option 2** - Community Asset Transfer of the building.

**Option 3** – Sale of Roath Library and Increased provision of services throughout the area, with the view for a longer-term proposal.

**Option 1** - Sale of Roath Library and residents to use surrounding libraries.

30. The considerations that support this option;

- Regeneration and commercial investment of a building in an area of deprivation, and on a main road that acts as one of the principal gateways to central Cardiff.
- The Welsh Public Library Standards state that residents should be within a 2-mile radius of a static library provision. If Roath Library closes without a static replacement, no additional residents will be more than 2 miles from another provision. The map of the impact of the closure is attached in appendix 6.

31. The negative impacts:

- Residents who wish to access a static Library services from a council-owned building would have to travel further. Potentially, some may choose not to, or may not be able to, and may subsequently stop using a library service.
- The communities that this library previously served are some of the most deprived in Cardiff.

32. Potential mitigations:

- The creation of a Neighbourhood Development Librarian (at a cost of £33,000) to provide outreach links with local community groups, schools, partners and individuals. Creative and imaginative delivery of reading, ICT and information sessions in the community.
- Adamsdown/Roath could be added to the mobile library route for residents to be able to access the library service.
- Additional digital inclusion and Into Work services could be provided in partner or other council buildings in the area.

33. This option would save the full site budget of £102,000. This represents a 5-year saving to the council of £510,000 with the additional benefit of the capital receipt. If the mitigation was taken, the saving would be reduced to £69,000 and £345,000 over 5 years.

**Option 2 - Community Asset Transfer of the building.**

34. The considerations that support this option:

- As previously mentioned, Roath Library is supported by 4 other static library points. If it were to close, no one would be more than 2 miles from another provision. Users have continued to use Cardiff Council Library service from other sites.
- Depending on the nature of the organisation that takes on the running of the building and the community benefits they would bring the trade off of this additional organisation against the extra distance to another library service may prove more beneficial for residents in the area.

35. The negative impacts;

- In order for a Community Asset Transfer any organisation would need to provide a business case that included meeting the substantial maintenance and refurbishment works required for Roath Library.
- Whilst this process was being undertaken, without the guarantee of a successful outcome, the building would remain empty. During this time some facilities management costs would remain and the condition of the building may further deteriorate.
- There would be no capital receipt to reinvest in alternative provision.

36. Potential mitigations

- Implementation of a robust Community Asset Transfer process to ensure that the building is awarded to an organisation that has maximum benefit for the community.
- Additional digital inclusion and Into Work services could be delivered in partners buildings in the areas.

37. This option would save the full site budget of £102,000. This represents a 5-year saving to the council of £510,000.

**Option 3 – Sale of Roath Library and increased provision of services throughout the area with potential for a longer term community partnership hub development.**

38. The considerations that support this option includes opportunities for increased provision in the area. For example:
- Drop off and collection point for Library books at Adamsdown Day Centre.
  - New mobile van to provide outreach in the Adamsdown and Plasnewydd Wards.
  - Digital Inclusion and Into Work services from Plasnewydd Community Centre Mondays and Fridays 9am to 5pm.
    - During this time a pop-up library provision will also be run, where people can access library services.
  - Existing Storytime and Rhymetime classes that have been moved to Star Library to continue.
  - 4 additional open access PCs located in Splott Library to continue.
  - Work with partners in the area to locate a library within their future plans – including the proposed redevelopment of Adamsdown Day Centre and/or future redevelopment plans by YMCA for Plasnewydd Community Centre

39. The negative impacts:

- Residents who wish to use static Library services from a council-owned building would have to travel further. Potentially, some may choose not to, or may not be able to, and may subsequently stop using a library service.

40. Potential mitigations:

- The creation of a Neighbourhood Development Librarian (at a cost of £33,000) to offer professional support, such as Storytime and Rhymetime sessions. The role would require the provision of professional outreach support to develop links with local community groups, schools, partners and individuals. Creative and imaginative delivery of reading, ICT and information sessions could be delivered in the community.
- It is proposed that £40,000 of the capital receipt from the sale of the building is retained to support the reinvestment in the area. This will include the purchase of self-serve kiosks, additional IT equipment and books.

41. This option would save the full site budget of £102,000. This represents a 5-year saving to the council of £510,000. If the mitigation was taken, the saving would be reduced to £69,000 and £345,000 over 5 years.

### **Long Term Plan**

42. As mentioned previously in the report St Germans Church have indicated future plans to develop a future community hub type facility in partnership



with a Registered Social Landlord. These plans include the potential for community space including a café and library.

- 43. Additionally, the YMCA has recently acquired Plasnewydd Community Centre. They also have indicated longer term plans to redevelop the site to make the best use of the space. Their aim is to increase footfall to the site, particularly during the day, by increasing their community offer and this could include library services
- 44. Options for the delivery of a Community partnership hub will be progressed but given that discussions in relation to both potential schemes are at an early stage it is important that a decision is made on the medium term provision of library services for the area so that services can be maintained as effectively as possible.
- 45. Once the longer term options have been fully assessed a further report will come back to Cabinet with recommendations in relation to further community consultation.

### **Recommendation**

- 46. It is recommended that option 3 Sale of Roath Library and increased provision of services throughout the area with potential for a longer term community partnership hub development.
- 47. The increased provision can be implemented almost immediately following decision and the first £40,000 capital receipt to be re-invested in the providing this additional provision.
- 48. It is also proposed that the Council will work with partners in the area, including the two mentioned to explore the potential of including a Community Partnership Hub within their redeveloped sites.
- 49. This recommendation requires the deletion of the current staffing structure in relation to Roath library (1 full time equivalent Grade 6 Branch Librarian, 1 FTE Senior Library Assistant G4 and 1 FTE Library Assistant G3) and the creation of a qualified Neighbourhood Development Librarian. A significant number of employees with the library service have expressed a desire to take voluntary severance, therefore it is anticipated that those based within Roath Library and wish to remain employed will be offered other opportunities within the service at another location.

### **Trade Union Consultation**

50. Employee and trade union consultation .....

### **Local Member consultation**

51. Local members have been advised of the proposal .....

## **Scrutiny Consultation**

52. This report went to Economy and Culture for pre-Cabinet scrutiny.....

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

53. To ensure the delivery of sustainable library services in Roath and Adamsdown informed by the newly agreed Libraries strategy and in light of the condition assessment of the current library building in Roath and to avoid the financial liabilities associated with the retention of an empty building.

### **Financial Implications**

54. The Councils Budget report highlighted the significant financial challenges and risks to the Council including the need to make significant revenue budget savings in 2015/16 and the medium term.

55. It also highlighted the pressures on the Capital programme and the consequential effect on the Council's revenue budget of additional borrowing to undertake capital schemes.

56. Open Market disposal of the Roath Library site will result in revenue savings outlined in the report as well as capital receipt, which is requested to be earmarked for re-investment in the locality. Any such re-investment is proposed to be limited to the first £40,000 receivable and expenditure incurred only following the sale of the site.

57. Prompt disposal of the building and any re-provision will avoid costs of the building whilst empty and also avoid any liabilities in terms of the backlog of maintenance as identified in the report. Whilst the report quotes potential costs of over £300k based on high level surveys, detailed surveys could result in far higher costs as has been seen in similar age and condition buildings.

### **Legal Implications**

58. There are a number of options set out in this report. These legal implications only deal with the recommended option/proposals. The statutory provision in relation to provision of libraries is set out in the body of the report.

59. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics

60. Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

61. As such decisions have to be made in the context of the Council's equality act public sector duties.

62. The report identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended at Appendix 7. The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty.

63. The decision maker must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision.

64. The report also sets out the consultation undertaken with the public. Any consultation must be adequate and fair. The decision maker should also have regard to such consultation when making its decision.

65. In respect of the sale of Roath Library the Council is under a duty to achieve 'best consideration' pursuant to s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

66. In respect of the proposal to work with partners then further legal advice should be sought on the specific arrangements prior to implementation.

### **HR implications**

67. Consultation has taken place with trade unions and employees on the proposal and this will continue as outlined in the body of the report. Corporately agreed processes will be followed to accommodate the displaced employees once their preferences are known.

### **Equality Implications**

68. The equality implications have been considered and the equality impact assessment on the proposals is attached in appendix 7.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended:

1. To agree that the condition of the Roath Library building means that retaining the existing library is unsustainable.
2. To agree to the sale of Roath Library and to the reinvest of the first £40,000 from the sale of the building to support the additional provision in the area as outlined in the recommendations of the report.
3. To agree in principle to exploring with partners options for a future community partnership hub in the area
4. To agree that work is carried out on longer term options for a Community Partnership Hub in a potential building in the Adamsdown/ Plasnewydd area and that this is reported back to Cabinet prior to community consultation.

**SARAH MCGILL**

**Director for Communities, Housing and Customer Services**

May 2015

*The following Appendices are attached:*

Appendix 1: Future provision of Libraries Services - Strategy paper

Appendix 2: Property Condition Report - **CONFIDENTIAL**

Appendix 3: Temporary Options

Appendix 4: Adamsdown Day Centre Alterations

Appendix 5: Property Valuation - **CONFIDENTIAL**

Appendix 6: Impact of Roath Library Closure on residents within 2 mile radius

Appendix 7: Equality Impact Assessment