
PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES AT CARDIFF ROYAL INFIRMARY

Purpose of report

1. This report assists Members in undertaking pre-decision scrutiny on proposals for the involvement of the Council in a partnership with the University Health Board at Cardiff Royal Infirmary, including the provision of library services.

Background

2. Roath Library has been closed to the public since November 2014 for health and safety reasons. A significant leak led to books and computers being removed from the building while the building was made water tight and a suspended roof removed. The boiler at the Library has also failed and in order to fix this, all associated pipework will need to be replaced.
3. Members of this Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise following the scrutiny of Quarter 3 performance in March 2015, requesting a briefing note on the current position of the Library. The following response was received:

“Unfortunately, Roath library does require substantial investment to bring it back into use [...] The immediate repair work has been carried out to ensure that the building is watertight and to reduce the chance of further damage.

“A temporary alternative location has been investigated in the area. However due to the costs to ensure the alternative building meets the building requirements, it has been ruled that capital investment is reserved for a permanent solution, whether this is to bring the current building back into use or an alternate delivery in the area. In the interim, extra computers have been located in Splott Library, the Story-Time class has also transferred to Splott Library and additional Into Work sessions have taken place.”

4. In July 2015, Cabinet considered a report ‘Library Provision in Roath/Adamsdown’. It was resolved that:

- i. The condition of the Roath Library building means that alternative temporary provision needs to be delivered in the area and that paragraphs 23 to 27 of the report are implemented.*
- ii. The existing building be advertised for Community Asset Transfer with the condition that a bid from an organisation will provide revised library services as per the Libraries Strategy. Acceptance of a preferred bid shall be undertaken by the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Director of Communities, Housing & Customer Services*
- iii. Alternative permanent options should be explored to mitigate the risk that no Community Asset Transfer solution can be found.*
- iv. In the event that no Community Asset Transfer solution is found, a future Cabinet Report be required for the long term library provision in the area.*

Draft Cabinet Report

5. On Thursday 19 January, Cabinet is scheduled to consider an item ‘Provision of Library Services at Cardiff Royal Infirmary’. A draft Cabinet report for this item is attached at **Appendix A**. This report makes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- i. Agree for a consultation to be undertaken on the re-provision of library services to be co-located within the Cardiff Royal Infirmary.*

- ii.* Delegate authority [...] to implement the proposals determined as a result of the consultation referred to in this report.
 - iii.* Delegate authority [...] to fully undertake the Community Asset Transfer process for Roath Library Building on new terms.
 - iv.* Note that a further cabinet report will be received if the Community Asset Transfer of Roath Library Building is unsuccessful.
 - v.* Note that further update reports will be received on other potential Council interest in service provision at the multi-agency Hub at Cardiff Royal Infirmary.
6. Paragraphs 7 – 15 of **Appendix A** provide an update on the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) for Roath Library. In summary, bids were received from five interested organisations, and following an evaluation process, two organisations were progressed to final bidder stage. One of these organisations then withdrew their interest in the building due to location and ability to recover investment. In light of the potential opportunity at Cardiff Royal Infirmary (detailed in paragraphs 9 – 14 and 16-21 of **Appendix A**) the CAT process has been halted and the remaining interested organisation is being kept informed of progress.
7. The Cabinet report identifies potential for library services to be co-located within the Cardiff Royal Infirmary café to create a ‘Reading Café’ environment with a range of services available. Proposed services include:
- Café – competitively priced drinks and light food.
 - library books and materials (commensurate with community requirements for a comprehensive library service)
 - PC’s – 12 (this is up from the 8 at the old Roath Library).
 - Self-serve kiosk.
 - meeting rooms / training spaces
 - Regular classes / reading groups – as per demand.
8. If this co-location is approved, the Cabinet Report identifies that the requirement to re-provision library services from Roath Library Building would be removed. Two options are presented for the building to be refurbished and brought back into use:

- Open Market Sale
- Community Asset Transfer (under new terms)

The preferred option identified in the Cabinet report is a Community Asset Transfer, re-advertised on different terms to seek a community or commercial interest with a definable community benefit. Bidders will be required to submit a sustainable business plan that includes the capital resources to bring the building back into use. It is anticipated that a full refurbishment of the building will be in excess of £700,000, dependant on the nature of the works.

9. It is noted in paragraph 25 of **Appendix A** that the remaining bidder in the current CAT process will be encouraged to resubmit their application on these new terms.

Previous Scrutiny

10. In July 2015 this Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny of a Roath Library Cabinet report which sought to advertise the potential Community Asset Transfer of Roath Library with the condition that a bid from an organisation will provide revised library services as per the Libraries Strategy.
11. Following this meeting, Members wrote to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise to highlight a number of concerns including engagement with local interest groups, signage placed on the Library building and ruling out the use Section 106 contributions for this building.
12. Members also had reservations on whether interested organisations would come forward and made the following recommendation:

“the Council should also be testing the appetite within the business community to take over this building, and exploring if the continued provision of library services alongside an operational business is a realistic proposition.”

13. The Cabinet Member responded on 15 July 2015, addressing the concerns raised by the Committee and stating:

“I agree that it would be worthwhile considering that we look at potential commercial operators to take over the library. I will consider raising a Prior Information Notice (PIN) that will look for commercial interest in running a library from the building, whilst being able to utilise the asset to make money.”

[...] I would just like to reiterate that the aim is to re-establish services and for a sustainable library service solution to be found for the area. I hope to come back to this committee with a positive outcome for either the CAT or alternative library provision in a partner building in the area.”

Way Forward

14. Councillor Peter Bradbury (Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise) has been invited to attend the meeting, and may wish to give a statement. Sarah McGill (Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services) will also be in attendance.

Legal Implications

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with

the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/ Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendations

17. The Committee is recommended to give consideration to the information attached to this report and received at this meeting and to submit any recommendations, observations or comments to the Cabinet Member, prior to a final report being taken to Cabinet on 19 January 2017.

Davina Fiore
Director of Governance and Legal Services
6 January 2017