



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held at
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on
WEDNESDAY 3 MAY 2017 AT 7.00 PM

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Published on 24 April 2017

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors

Simon Weeks (Chairman)	John Kaiser (Vice-Chairman)	Parry Batth
David Chopping	Lindsay Ferris	Michael Firmager
Kate Haines	Pauline Helliard-Symons	John Jarvis
Ken Miall	Philip Mirfin	Shahid Younis

Substitutes

Laura Blumenthal	Abdul Loyes	Beth Rowland
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey		

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
73.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
74.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
75.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
76.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any Member questions.	
77.	Wescott	CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION - RELOCATION OF WOKINGHAM LIBRARY To consider the Call-In of the Executive decision relating to the proposed relocation of Wokingham Library.	
77.1		Background In accordance with the Council's Constitution, five non-Executive Members of the Council have submitted a formal notice "calling in" the Executive decision to agree in principle to the relocation of Wokingham	

Library from its current site to the new Carnival Pool leisure centre.

The full decision made by the Executive was as follows:

Decision: That

- 1) it be agreed in principle to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site;
- 2) approval to relocate is subject to a full impact assessment and detailed business case being agreed by the Executive Member for Resident Services;
- 3) the proposal be publicised as soon as practical to enable feedback on these proposals and subsequently the design.

The decision has been called in on the following grounds:

- 1) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's constitution, in that the action being proposed is not proportionate to the desired outcome. It is not clear in fact what the motivation for the relocation or the desired outcome are. Is it to increase library usage? Is it to develop the existing library site to make money?

There is no indication at all as to cost, nor to what the success criteria for the project would be in assessing any business case.

- 2) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's constitution, in that due consultation has not occurred. There has been no consultation with library users or the public in general about relocation.

We believe members of the town council and ward members may have been informed in the last few weeks, but required to keep the information confidential. However, they were not consulted.

A consultation on the Library Offer was run in 2016. This consultation did not mention relocation of Wokingham Library. Nor did the Executive paper which launched it, in January 2016, make any reference to any need to relocate the library.

Consultation conducted in the past on the leisure uses of the Carnival Pool area did not include the possibility of relocation of the library.

- 3) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's constitution, in that openness has not been observed. There was no warning whatsoever about the proposal prior to it appearing in the Executive Agenda.

In addition, despite representatives of the Liberal Democrat group having regular meetings with members of the Regeneration team, and discussing all aspects of Wokingham town centre, including what leisure facilities would appear on the Carnival Pool site, no mention has ever been made on relocation of the library.

Members of the town council and Wokingham town borough councillors have also had such meetings. We do not believe this has been raised at those meetings.

Nor has it been mentioned at any of the SDL forums. Nor was it mentioned in the 2016 consultation on the Library Offer.

Nothing has been said in the report about the development potential of the existing site, nor about the finances of the redevelopment of the Carnival Pool area. Nor is the impact on the Denmark Street car park discussed in the report.

- 4) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes has not been achieved. There is no evidence provided to justify the sudden decision to move the library.

Money has only recently been invested in the existing building. There is criticism in the report of the fact that the existing library is "on the outer edge of the town centre" – yet the proposed location is further from the town centre.

The report talks about the space within the library, and compares the 1,324 m² of which 841 m² is currently available for books, with the 1000 m² potentially available at Carnival Pool. It makes reference to the existing café taking up space, but not to alternate uses for that space, nor to exactly how big a café might be provided at Carnival Pool;

it also mentions the 180 m2 used by Elevate – but does not explain what will happen to Elevate if the library is relocated. It talks about larger events being able to be held in a bigger undivided space – but does not take into account the fact that book shelves, counters, etc. will occupy the majority of the space, making it unusable in that way.

77.2

Reference Information for Consideration by the Committee

7 - 48

- 1) A copy of the Call-In notice and supporting information;
- 2) Report on the Relocation of Wokingham Library considered by the Executive on 30 March 2017;
- 3) Extract from the Draft Executive Minutes for 30 March 2017, including public questions relating to the issue;
- 4) Report on the Library Offer considered by the Executive on 30 June 2016;
- 5) Report by the Interim Director of Environment on the issues raised by the Call-In.

77.3

List of Witnesses and Indicative Timetable

49 - 50

A list of witnesses and indicative timings for the meeting are attached. The Chairman may vary the timings as necessary.

78.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee consider the Call-In and either:

- a) Confirm the decision of the Executive, or
- b) Recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the Executive, setting out the nature of its concerns.

79.

ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

CONTACT OFFICER

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 Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL CALL-IN OF DECISION

We 5 non-Executive Members of the Council wish to call in the following decision:-

Reference No: Executive Agenda Item 134 (30th March 2017)
Subject: Relocation of Wokingham Library

1.4.2 Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;
- c) Human rights will be respected and considered at an early stage in the decision making process;
- d) A presumption in favour of openness;
- e) Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- f) When decisions are taken by the Executive, details of the options which were taken into account and the reasons for the decision will be recorded.

Reason for Call-In

We wish to call in this item for the following reasons:

- 1 The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's constitution, in that the action being proposed is not proportionate to the desired outcome. It is not clear in fact what the motivation for the relocation or the desired outcomes are. Is it to increase library usage? Is it to develop the existing library site to make money?

There is no indication at all as to cost, nor to what the success criteria for the project would be in assessing any business case.

- 2 The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's Constitution, in that due consultation has not occurred. There has been no consultation with library users or the public in general about relocation.

We believe members of the town council and ward members may have been informed in the last few weeks, but required to keep the information confidential. However, they were not consulted.

A consultation on the Library Offer was run in 2016. This consultation did not mention relocation of Wokingham library. Nor did the Executive paper which launched it, in January 2016, make any reference to any need to relocate the library. Consultation conducted in the past on the leisure uses of the Carnival Pool area did not include the possibility of relocation of the library.

- 3 The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's constitution, in that openness has not been observed. There was no warning whatsoever about the proposal prior to it appearing in the Executive Agenda.

In addition, despite representatives of the Liberal Democrat group having regular meetings with members of the Regeneration team, and discussing all aspects of

Wokingham town centre, including what leisure facilities would appear on the Carnival Pool site, no mention has ever been made on relocation of the library.

Members of the town council and Wokingham town borough councillors have also had such meetings. We do not believe this has been raised at those meetings.

Nor has it been mentioned at any of the SDL forums. Nor was it mentioned in the 2016 consultation on the Library Offer.

Nothing has been said in the report about the development potential of the existing site, nor about the finances of the redevelopment of the Carnival Pool area. Nor is the impact on the Denmark Street car park discussed in the report.

- 4 The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes has not been achieved. There is no evidence provided to justify the sudden decision to move the library.

Money has only recently been invested in the existing building. There is criticism in the report of the fact that the existing library is "on the outer edge of the town centre" – yet the proposed location is further from the town centre.

The report talks about the space within the library, and compares the 1324 m2 of which 841 m2 currently available for books, with the 1000 m2 potentially available at Carnival Pool. It makes reference to the existing café taking up space, but not to alternate uses for that space, nor to exactly how big a café might be provided at Carnival Pool; it also mentions the 180 m2 used by Elevate – but does not explain what will happen to Elevate if the library is relocated. It talks about larger events being able to be held in a bigger undivided space – but does not take into account the fact that book shelves, counters etc. will occupy the majority of the space, making it unusable in that way.

Name (please print)

Signature

PRUE BRAY

P. Bray

CLIVE JONES

Clive Jones

IAN PITTOCK

[Signature]

LINDSAY FERRIS

L Ferris

Rachelle Shepherd-Dale

[Signature]

Date 3rd April 2017

TITLE	Relocation of Wokingham Library
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 30 March 2017
WARD	Wescott
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Resident Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The relocation of Wokingham Library to the Carnival Pool site will provide the Library Service with greater flexibility and adaptability in its service delivery. Residents will be able to combine visits to the library with a range of other activities. The Carnival Pool site offers better access and parking.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agree:

- 1) in principle to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site;
- 2) that the approval to relocate is subject to full impact assessment and detailed business case being agreed by the Executive Member for Resident Services.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

There is an opportunity for the Council to relocate Wokingham Library to a new site within the Carnival development. The new site will offer greater flexibility for the delivery of library services and provide improved access to other leisure and cultural activities. Opportunities for the redevelopment of the existing library site consistent with the vision for the town centre mean that the move could also deliver a financial benefit for the Council.

Background

In June 2016, the Council agreed the Library Offer for the borough. The Library Offer was developed to establish and promote the activities that our residents can expect when visiting or using our libraries, including a clear understanding of their contribution to the borough and how they will evolve within the future means of the Council.

The ambition is that libraries are welcoming and vibrant places that people are drawn to. They will protect the clearly valued heritage of our library services whilst evolving naturally to offer more and more opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in activities and access services. The libraries themselves will be flexible and adaptable in terms of their space and their uses, aligning seamlessly with other provision in their area.

Within the Library Offer there are specific statements about promoting and improving the access to library services and what our residents can expect when visiting our libraries. These are summarised as:

Access to Services

- The Library Service will adapt to meet the growing population and changing behaviours of our residents.
- The Library Service will utilise opportunities to provide residents with a flexible mix of physical and virtual options for accessing all services
- Improve access to other Wokingham Borough Council services in line with Customer Services vision
- Strong partnership working to ensure flexibility of delivery and access to library Services

Visiting and Using Library Buildings

- The environment within libraries will be welcoming and enjoyable
- Buildings will be flexible and adaptable to changing demands for their use
- Enable access to other types of services including other council services, health services and local community and voluntary services
- They will provide space for locally focused events and activities that develop a sense of community
- Actively identify events and services that support the broader Council vision

It is within this context that the Library Service is continually open to assessing its effectiveness in delivering the Library Offer and exploring new opportunities to improve its services for our residents. This includes considering alternative locations for the libraries across the borough.

Analysis of Issues

- **Wokingham Library**

The current library is a purpose built two storey library building built by Berkshire County Council in 1996. Based upon a standard of 28 sq. m per 1000 head of population, at 1324m² it is suitably sized to serve a population of 47,000 residents. The current space allows for different zoned areas to meet different library user's needs, such as children's

areas, space for events, computer usage areas and quiet study areas.

Broadly speaking the current building is in a good state of repair and is fit for usage for the foreseeable future. Overall, visits to Wokingham Borough libraries have been increasing in recent years; however, visits to the main Wokingham Library have reduced slightly over the past three years from 146,448 in 2013/14 to 142,900 visits during 2015/16.

It is currently located at the outer edge of Wokingham town centre, next to a Council car park with 46 spaces.

- **Carnival Phase II**

One of the objectives of the Carnival Phase II development is to support the arts and cultural activities in Wokingham, which complements the function and activities of the library service. The proposed design seeks to co-locate flexible spaces which support these cultural/arts activities. The proposed sports hall will have fold-out seating to enable performances to take place in the sports hall and there are two studio spaces which could be utilised for evening classes. The reception area has also been design to have some exhibition space within it.

The library could be located on the main pedestrianised route through the site, which links the new multi-storey car park in the south to the Elms Field development and the wider town centre. The current design for the library assumes a floor area of 1000m², which is similar to the floor area of the current facility on Denmark Street, on a single floor/storey.

- **Relocation**

It is clear that in its current location, Wokingham Library has been successful and continues to provide a range of well-used services and activities for people of all ages. However, the current library site does have its challenges and there are areas where improvements could be made.

A key limitation to the current site is the two storey layout and the location of the library meeting rooms. This necessitates additional staffing and reduces options for utilising the library space in different ways. Of the library's 1324m² of space, 170m² is taken up with stairs and entrance lobbies, the café area takes up 133m² and the Elevate Hub takes up 180m² of space. In total this comes to 483m² of space, leaving 841m² for library services. Therefore, the floor area of 1000m² available on the Carnival Phase II site represents a similar or possibly slightly larger amount of available flexible space.

Having the library on one floor will benefit the staffing and operation of the facility, with a clearer line of site across all the activities taking place. The proposed library would share a reception area and café with the leisure centre, which could result in economics of scale relating to staff.

The current library site is somewhat isolated from the rest of the town centre and has limited ability to align itself directly with other activities, or to utilise any extra space for larger events.

Within the Carnival Phase II site, high levels of footfall are expected along the main

pedestrian route giving the library an increased presence in the heart of the development. It would also increase the opportunity for “linked trips”, with visitors to the leisure centre or the other commercial use on the site, also combining this with a visit to the library. The proximity to substantial amounts of public parking close to the library and proximity to public transport will also improve access for visitors.

The proximity to other leisure and cultural activities also presents a positive opportunity to further enhance the usage of library services by children and young people.

The location of the library on the same site as the leisure centre and sharing facilities supports the wider principle of the co-location of Council services and the creation of flexible, multi-functional facilities. Co-location will enable residents to access more than one Council service on a single visit. There may also be opportunities to locate other Council services or advice points within the building which share similar facility specifications and/or there may be opportunities for the location of self-service machines for paying Council tax or collection of blue bags as an example.

The co-location of the library and leisure centre could result in longer operating hours for the library. The current leisure centre operates from Mon-Fri 06:20-22:30 and Saturday and Sunday 07:30-19:30 and it is likely that the new centre will operate similar hours. In this scenario, customers may be able to access library services for longer hours than is currently, including use of automated systems if implemented.

The Carnival Phase II development will also include provision for a café on site, meaning that people will still be able to enjoy drinks and snacks when visiting the library. The current café within Wokingham Library only provides a negligible amount of income for the Council each year; although this may be able to improve if a stronger commercial approach was adopted.

- **Costs of Relocating**

The capital costs of building the new library space are factored into the existing Medium Term Financial Plan allocation for the Carnival Pool Phase II scheme.

If the space within the development is used by the library service it is assumed that no rental income will be accrued as the building will be owned by Wokingham Borough Council and a Council service will operate from it.

As the building will be a new build, with a life span of circa 30 years and built to the latest energy efficiency standards, we would expect some reduction in running and maintenance costs than the existing Denmark Street facility, although costs such as business rates will be similar.

The relocation of the library to the Carnival site or an alternative site in the town centre would release the existing library site for an alternative use and/or redevelopment.

The following options have been identified:

- Reuse the existing building
- Redevelopment by WBC (knock down & rebuild)
- Sell site to private developer

Appraisals of the development value that could be generated from the existing site show that this value would be higher than the costs of building the new facility, and thus deliver a positive return to the Council overall.

- Other sites for Wokingham Library

An initial assessment of any other potential sites to locate Wokingham Library has been conducted using the following criteria:

- Within Wokingham town centre boundary
- Circa 1000m² floor area (ideally over one floor)
- Adjacent / close to public car parking
- Proximity to public transport links
- It is also advantageous that the site is within WBC ownership

A desktop assessment has identified that there are no suitable alternative sites within Wokingham town centre to accommodate a relocated library.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The capital costs of building the new library space are factored into the existing Medium Term Financial Plan allocation for the Carnival Pool Phase II scheme.

Construction of the Carnival Phase II development is expected to start in mid-late 2019 so construction expenditure will come through from financial year 2019/20 (year 4). It is expected that a relocated library would open in early 2021.

Cross-Council Implications

The opportunity to relocate the library to the Carnival Phase II site enables the co-location of Council services in one location, delivering service and cost efficiencies and a positive customer experience.

List of Background Papers

Library Offer 2016

Contact Mark Redfearn	Service Environment
Telephone No (0118) 9746012	Email mark.redfearn@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 20 March 2017	Version No. 1

Extract

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 30 MARCH 2017 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.25 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Keith Baker (Chairman), Julian McGhee-Sumner, Pauline Jorgensen, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards and Angus Ross

Other Councillors Present

Chris Bowring

Prue Bray

Richard Dolinski

Clive Jones

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

129. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

129.3 Peter Must asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Question

Since the proposed relocation of Wokingham Library, probably the major public community facility in the town, is posited on an improved service for residents, is it not vital to consult local people to discover their views on the proposal, a measure that could be achieved by for example amending the Recommendation to read: 1) that a public consultation be held about the proposal to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site: 2) that any proposal to relocate the Library be then submitted to the Executive by the Executive Member for Resident Services, with a summary of the responses to the consultation, together with a full impact assessment and detailed business case?

Answer

Firstly, I would like to preface this answer by saying that I would not support this proposal if I did not think it provided a real opportunity to further enhance our library offer and I hope that by the end of the process that we are going to go through, that residents will be as excited as I am about the opportunities that the relocation could provide.

The Council conducted its extensive consultation in 2016 about the proposed Library Offer for the Borough; I have got a copy of it here if you would like to see it, including the guiding principles of the service and the way it would be delivered. These views were the cornerstone of the new Library Offer that was adopted by the Council in 2016.

The proposed relocation of Wokingham Library to the Carnival Phase 2 site will not result in a reduction of service or fundamental change to the core services that are available to residents. From the consultation held last year, it was clear that residents wanted the library to retain books as a primary stock type, to offer facilities that support learning and achievement, and to continue to meet residents' expectations for utilising and embracing new technology.

The consultation also showed that there was overwhelming support for our libraries to be able to adapt to the changing needs of our residents and to offer access to other Council services and to broaden the range of activities and events that people can enjoy. Furthermore, there was strong support for collocating library services alongside other services, including sports facilities.

Over a thousand people responded to the consultation on the library offer and only 25% of them did not agree with colocation. Our residents have already provided the Council with a strong statement about their preferences and aspirations. The proposed new site for Wokingham Library will offer more usable space and greater flexibility being located on one floor, which means you only have one entrance and you have vastly improved parking facilities, being adjacent to a destination leisure facility. We think that will also attract people of all ages. Being able to offer all of these improvements on a site that is less than 300m away and clearly visible from the entrance of the current library is an extremely positive opportunity for the Council.

However, we still want to hear people's views as the proposals take shape. The actual library itself will not start build until 2021, so there is plenty of opportunity for people to give us their views now and through the period up to 2021. I would be really, really interested to hear particularly what the users of the library think about this, also particularly about what residents of Wokingham think. Hopefully we will be able to start communicating through the process following the agreement of this in principle to actually help explain to people what facilities will be there and the what the benefits are, and also listen to their feedback as to what they would like.

Supplementary Question

Might I confess to some confusion as to whether that is consultation or just telling people what you are proposing to do? You say you hope everyone will be enthusiastic about it, well why do you not ask them and find out before you start rather than at the end of it?

Supplementary Answer

The reason we are going for consultation now is because it is required as part of the planning process. That does not mean that we actually have to do the change, so what we are doing is putting the approval in principle to make the change in now as part of the kick off of the planning process which is part of the consolidation work around Wokingham town centre.

However, I am very interested to hear what people think. We will be actually asking. It is not a formal consultation because a formal consultation is not required if the services are actually being improved rather than reduced, but nevertheless to all intents and purposes it will be a consultation to listen to what people want and to try change the plans according to what people think.

Councillor Baker added that he as Leader would not add support to any proposal that reduced the quality of the current library services.

129.4 Keith Malvern asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Question

Agenda Item134 - Proposed Relocation of Wokingham Library

The first time I was aware of this proposal was when the Executive agenda was published last Wednesday although the Town Council and local members were made aware of this on the 22nd of February - more than a month ago.

Have you had any response from the Town Council or local members to give support to the view expressed at the start of the report that this proposal will offer better access and parking to existing users of the library, and will allow them to combine visits with other activities.

Answer

The Town Council and local Members were advised on 22 February as you say. Obviously quite a lot of people do ask Members for support for them, but in addition we have got a response from Lynn Forbes who is one of the independent Members from Wokingham Town Council who said that she was very happy to support the proposal

Supplementary Question

Obviously you have accepted the principle of consultation. It is unfortunate that you have not extended any further than that, giving people a wider opportunity. You referred already to the outcome of the library offer, which is an extract of the thing we have been sent, together with a bill for £2,000. This was published around the same time.

What I do not understand is why no opportunity was taken at this stage to notify people that there is a proposal to relocate Wokingham Library from where it is? You make an assumption and you make this statement that this will offer improved access without talking to the users. I am not a great fan of multi-storey car parks, for example. I am prejudiced - I drive badly so I do not want to park my car there. I would much rather have a one level car park. So it is no good for me. My mobility scooter which will coming soon I think, does it offer me better access? These are just examples where I feel you have given no thought whatsoever.

Supplementary Answer

As I said I have had a good conversation with you earlier and I am very interested in your feedback. The actual car park for the swimming pool will be single floor so you need not worry about your parking abilities or your mobility scooter. As I say, there will be plenty of opportunity both through the planning process and also prior to that, for people to provide views and ideas about the design and actually try and get some input as to what the future facility will look like. If we get this right it could really be an asset for the whole Borough and also Wokingham itself.

Councillor Baker added that a facility which was on one floor must be better than a facility which was on multiple floors for those with mobility issues.

130. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

130.1 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Question

Why the lack of consultation with residents on the proposed relocation of Wokingham Library?

Answer

I think I have answered that. We did a lot of consultation as part of the library offer and it was quite clear from that, that people were keen on collocation of facilities which allows us and will allow us to reduce the cost of running facilities and as we have done previously, just recently, increase the opening hours and increase the provision of libraries. We are one of the few councils in the country that has actually managed to improve our library service rather than reducing it or shutting libraries. You know I am very passionate about libraries. I believe this is a great opportunity and I look forward to emails from anybody and everybody, plus a proper opportunity to comment on the proposals as they become published in the next few weeks. Expect to have something on the Council's website in about a month's time which will give more detail.

Supplementary Question

The previous consultation did not refer to any specific library moving so perhaps you would like to comment on that. I think I would like to pick up the comment you made earlier this evening which is about this not being a formal consultation but informal consultation apart from the planning bit of it which is a formal planning consultation, which is an entirely different thing. How will library users know that there is a consultation and how to respond to it and will they actually be given an opportunity to influence the outcome?

Supplementary Answer

I can guarantee they will have the opportunity to influence the outcome. We will be putting posters up around the area and also within the libraries and we will be providing the opportunity for people to feed back. We will make sure it gets plenty of publicity as I am sure our friends in the Press will, and I am very much looking forward to people getting involved in the project and actually telling us a bit about what they want as well.

130.2 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question which due to her inability to attend the meeting was asked by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey:

Question**Agenda Item 134 - Relocation of Wokingham Library**

Why was this proposal kept secret from many Wokingham Borough Members until now?

Answer

I would like to reassure Members and the public that there has been no "secrecy" around proposals to relocate Wokingham library. The proposal to consider moving the library is a further step towards improving local services, and in line with the feedback we have received in support of exploring ways to provide greater flexibility within our library services whilst still retaining the core elements that residents clearly value.

This proposal is another step in the realisation of the Library Offer and the Carnival Phase 2 development, as the Council now begins to look at more detail at the land uses that could make up this exciting development and the proposed layout and design of the facilities.

The principal of moving the library has become public at the expected time and it is now the correct time to ask residents and users what they think. Everyone will have the opportunity to have their say on the detailed proposals for the Carnival Phase 2 scheme during next month's public engagement.

The decision to be taken tonight is one of a matter of principal and, should Executive agree this evening, this principal will be subject to further design and feasibility work. The library will not be moving until 2021 if the design and feasibility work is successful and there is plenty of opportunity for Members and the public to contribute to the detailed design processes between now and then.

130.3 Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Question

How much have you just spent on updating the existing Wokingham Library?

Answer

We have just put in four self-service kiosks and new RFID scanners for the staff, a new counter, and some associated installation and decorated works. In total these improvements are budgeted to cost £47,000.

In making this investment, it should be understood that it is expected that the self-service kiosks and the RFID scanners will still be in use in 2021 and will therefore be redeployed within the new library site in the Carnival Phase 2 development. The new library counter is a modular design and can also be reused in another location.

As is stated the adoption of the Library Offer saved us around about £130,000 per year and allowed us to increase our opening times by 17.5 hours a week. I think that is very important because I believe very strongly that libraries are used by large numbers of the population and I think that they are a very valuable asset, particularly for school children and also the elderly. So I am very proud of the fact that we have managed to increase the use of libraries and invest in new technology and move them forward and I am looking forward to this proposal and helping that further.

Supplementary Question

Do you think that it would have been better to wait until 2021 to spend the £47,000 and do you consider that this money has been well spent now that you are relocating the library, or do you think that it is a waste of the Council's scarce resources?

Supplementary Answer

I think it is the right time to do it. The only resources that we spent on Wokingham Library that will be 'wasted', is a bit of paint and that will probably be requiring repainting in 2021, so I think that what we have done is quite correct and I am quite happy to stand behind it and I am really looking forward to moving this project forward.

130.4 Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Question

Will the Elevate Hub be included in the proposal for the new Library site?

Answer

The honest answer Rachelle is I do not know yet. The Elevate Hub is funded by time-limited Government and EU subsidy funds. Work is ongoing to look at longer term options for this service in that context and the future funding availability and the 21st Century Council programme.

The specific details of which services will be available or located with the proposed library within the Carnival Phase 2 development is still to be determined. It is four years between this 'in principle' decision and the actual relocation. I think the Elevate Hub provides very important services for NEETs and to increase the employment in the area, but at the moment we just do not know. It depends on the funding.

Supplementary Question

Will the money made from selling the Carnival Pool car park and the library site itself be used for youth services or to prop up the Carnival Pool development?

Supplementary Answer

I cannot answer the question on the Carnival Pool development other than I think that it is funded and therefore does not require sale of other facilities. If anyone disagrees with it, could they possibly correct me? The long term options for the site really have not been looked at yet. There is no guarantee that we will sell it all. I do not know what we are going to do with the current site. Once we decide what we are going to do with the current site and I have a view about what we are going to do about the current site we will of course consult on that separately.

It was clarified that Councillor Shepherd-DuBey's supplementary question had referred to the car park on the current library site as opposed to the Carnival Pool car park. Councillor Pollock commented that the car park would continue to generate income via car parking charges until or unless it was redeveloped.

135. RELOCATION OF WOKINGHAM LIBRARY

The Executive considered a report relating to the Relocation of Wokingham Library to the Carnival Pool site which would provide the Library Service with greater flexibility and adaptability in its service delivery.

The Executive Member for Resident Services outlined the rationale for the proposed relocation.

Councillor Jorgensen advised that she wished to add a third recommendation which was asking the Executive to agree to the proposal being publicised as soon as practical to enable feedback on these proposals and subsequently the design. Feedback from users and other residents on what they would like to see was a vital part of the process.

Members agreed that the proposed collocation was an exciting proposal. Councillor Pollock commented that it would allow people to take advantage of the leisure offer and that the possibility of some business related work space could be considered.

Councillor Dolinski commented that he hoped that schools would be encouraged to participate in the consultation and that the opportunities which the proposal could bring would be highlighted. Councillor Jorgensen commented that continued good access to libraries was important particularly for young children and school children. Library staff had worked hard to improve footfall and initiatives such as 'Read with Dad,' 'Rhyme Time' and the 'Summer Reading Challenge' had helped contribute to this success. She went on to comment that the current library had a lot of wasted space as a result of the stairs and being on two levels and that access could be improved.

Councillor Baker emphasised that no other local authority in Berkshire had built a new library, increased footfall and put in new technology.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) it be agreed in principle to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site;
- 2) approval to relocate is subject to a full impact assessment and detailed business case being agreed by the Executive Member for Resident Services.
- 3) the proposal be publicised as soon as practical to enable feedback on these proposals and subsequently the design.

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TITLE	Library Offer
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 30 June 2016
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Resident Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Library Services support the achievement of vibrant and self-sustaining communities through the provision of materials and services for enjoyment, education, creative and engagement activities. The proposed Library Offer and Delivery Model present an exciting and sustainable solution for the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) agree the Library Offer for Wokingham Borough Council Library Services as set out in the report;
- 2) utilise up to £300K of S106 on the Library Service Delivery Model to implement Self-Service and increase opening hours;
- 3) amend the Library Opening Times to add an additional 17.5 hours opening per week.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report follows the January 2016 Executive Report that outlined the proposed Library Offer. Following an extensive consultation on the offer and proposed delivery models, this report now makes provision for implementation of the Library Offer and in particular the recommendation to extend opening hours through the implementation of self-service.

In implementing the Offer and driving improvements, the Library Service in Wokingham Borough will be on track to further embed itself as a central community facility fit to deliver broad 21st Century services, whilst offering exceptional value for money for Wokingham Council Tax payers.

BACKGROUND

The Library Offer and Delivery Model

The Library Offer has been developed to establish and promote the activities that our residents can expect when visiting or using our libraries, including a clear understanding of their contribution to the borough and how they will evolve within the future means of the Council.

The ambition is that libraries will be welcoming and vibrant places that people are drawn to. They will protect the clearly valued heritage of our library services whilst evolving naturally to offer more and more opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in activities and access services. The libraries themselves will be flexible and adaptable in terms of their space and their uses, aligning seamlessly with other provision in their area.

The achievement of the Library Offer is made possible through the adoption of a new Delivery Model for our Library Services. This model centres on the implementation of some self-service, alterations to staffing patterns, and gaining the maximum usage from the buildings in which each library is operated, which includes co-locating our libraries with other local services such as community centres, sports facilities and schools.

The central theme of the delivery model is that it enables those who live, work and study in the borough to have a greater choice in when and how they want to use the Library Service. Self-service and new staffing patterns enable the library service to extend its opening hours whilst making savings in its operating costs.

Details of the Library Offer are presented in Appendix 1.

Details of the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service are presented in Appendix 2.

Library Offer Consultation

Between February and April 2016, the Council conducted a consultation on the proposed guiding principles for the Library Service (The Library Offer) and the different options for delivering the service (The Delivery Model). This consultation included a general questionnaire, a specific questionnaire for local groups/organisations, the offer of direct discussions with local groups/organisations, and a series of public events held across the borough to engage with non-library users as well as existing library users. The proposals for the Library Service were also considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In total, the Council received 1,112 responses to the consultation questionnaire. Of these, 344 were completed online, with the remainder submitted in hard copy format. Some of the key findings and observations are presented below.

97.8% of respondents are a member of the Council's Library Service. This is not surprising as the vast number of questionnaires returned were done so in hard copy to one of the library sites. It was evident from the engagement sessions held throughout

the borough that once people understood that the proposals did not include the closure of any libraries (in contrast to proposals in neighbouring local authorities), the motivation from the wider population to engage with the consultation diminished.

It is clear that Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley libraries are the most used library sites, with Winnersh and Finchampstead libraries also proving popular. By far the most common reason to visit a library was to borrow books (95.4% of respondents), with a wider selection of books and more convenient opening hours being the key things which would encourage respondents to visit a library more often.

In terms of respondent's views on the Library Offer, the vast majority (over 70%) agreed with each of the proposals. The only exception to this was the proposal to enable people to buy other services and products within our libraries, where almost half were ambivalent and just over 30% were in agreement with the proposal.

There was also substantial support for the proposed delivery model of extending its opening times by implementing some self-service and unstaffed opening, with 53% of respondents agreeing with the proposal compared to 25% who did not agree with it. Again, the engagement with residents was helpful in understanding their views on this issue, with an analysis of the additional comments from those who responded positively to the proposal showing that respondents were mainly focussed on its ability to increase access and flexibility to the library service and the related benefit of increased library usage. Those responses that were broadly supportive are categorised in the table below:

Proposals would increase access to libraries and flexibility	64 comments
Proposals would increase library usage	62 comments
Conditional positive responses	25 comments
Non-specific positive responses	22 comments
Support as 'least bad' option / preferable to closure	20 comments

However, despite the generally positive response, the analysis of the comments received also highlighted some significant concerns over aspects of the proposal. In particular, approximately 60% (434) of those respondents who commented on the impact of the proposal raised concerns over the specific introduction of unstaffed hours. These concerns have been broadly categorised in the table below:

Concerns over security / safety of unstaffed libraries	208 comments
Concerns over loss of personal contact / general staff assistance	86 comments
General concerns about unstaffed opening	44 comments
Concern over impact on specific user groups (older people, children, vulnerable adults)	37 comments
Concerns for loss of community feel of libraries	24 comments
Comments questioning need for extended opening hours	19 comments
Concerns over operation/quality/reliability of self-service technology	18 comments
Concern that change would reduce library usage	8 comments
Concern over loss of staff jobs	7 comments

Research conducted has also shown that a number of local authorities who have piloted or have been early adopters of unstaffed opening have now implemented live monitored CCTV and/or 'assistants' on site to mitigate security, safeguarding and operational resilience issues. These remedial measures have the ability to significantly increase the operational cost of the service.

The consultation also included some other options for how the Council could continue to deliver its library service within the current financial climate. The responses show that whilst people are broadly supportive of having libraries in parts of the borough where they are most useful and located in buildings with other local services (such as community centres, sports centres and schools), there was strong disagreement with options to reduce opening hours, reduce the book purchasing budget or moving to a mainly online service with eBooks.

The consultation did show some support for making more use of volunteers within the Library Service.

The consultation asked people whether the library they used was the one nearest to them. On this, 82.5% of respondents stated that the library they used was the nearest to them. Further analysis shows that whilst people may make use of their local library, they also use other libraries across the borough. The tables below show the responses for people who used Wokingham, Woodley, Lower Earley and Winnersh and the other libraries that they visit. This shows clearly that people are making use of a range of different libraries across the borough.

Library	No's		Library	No's
<u>Wokingham</u>			<u>Lower Earley</u>	
Woodley	149		Woodley	119
Winnersh	106		Wokingham	80
Finchampstead	93		Maiden Erlegh	52
Lower Earley	80		Winnersh	35
Twyford	39		Finchampstead	22
Maiden Erlegh	24		Spencers Wood	19
Spencers Wood	18		Twyford	14
Wargrave	10		Wargrave	5
Arborfield	7		Arborfield	2
Total	526		Total	348
<u>Woodley</u>			<u>Winnersh</u>	
Wokingham	149		Wokingham	106
Lower Earley	119		Woodley	63
Winnersh	63		Lower Earley	35
Twyford	56		Finchampstead	24
Maiden Erlegh	42		Twyford	24
Finchampstead	25		Maiden Erlegh	16
Wargrave	17		Wargrave	6
Spencers Wood	7		Spencers Wood	5
Arborfield	2		Arborfield	3
Total	480		Total	282

Implementing the Library Offer and Delivery Model

It is clear from both the usage statistics and the consultation responses that Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley libraries are the most well used libraries within the borough. Usage statistics and consultation responses also show that Winnersh and Finchampstead libraries are also well-used libraries, each with over 30,000 visits a year. Winnersh Library is currently open 30 hours per week, with Finchampstead open for 18 hours a week. Winnersh Library is located in a separate building within the Forest School site with approximately half of its usage currently being school pupils, and the Finchampstead library being located within the large FBC Centre which is also home to a range of community and sports facilities, including a Children's Centre.

Deployment in other libraries will be considered on a case by case basis.

Self Service

Although self-serve and unstaffed opening were both broadly supported through the consultation process, a number of concerns were raised about the unstaffed element of the model. This together with the uncertainty of the long term success of this emerging model means that the recommendation at this stage is to simply move to increased self-service within libraries. This enables extended opening hours but with reduced staff presence. To some extent, the Library Service already has a substantial amount of self service capability with its range of online services. Users can search, reserve and renew items, download eBooks and e-Audio items, find out about the range of activities

that are happening in each library, and keep up to date with all the library news via the regular Facebook and Twitter updates. The proposal to extend the self-service capability to those visiting a library is an extension of some things that a lot of library users are already familiar with.

Introducing self-service will enable members of the library to both check out and return items and pay fines in addition to searching for and reserving items in each of the selected libraries.

The key requirements of self-service and the supporting software will be that it is intuitive and easy to use, and that it is suitably resilient to be relied upon by both service users and staff.

It is advisable to have a small number of staff available to assist people with any difficulties they may have with the self-service function.

New Staffing Patterns

The introduction of Self-Service means that fewer staff are needed for the core elements of the library service, namely the checking out and returning of books and other items. At busiest times, the hub libraries will have up to six members of staff on duty to serve customers and provide advice and support for people wanting to make use of the other services available. Following the introduction of self-service, the library can be operated with fewer staff on duty.

In order to still provide residents with a choice of using self-service or traditional style of library service, it is proposed to implement a reduced staffing regime for 40% of the opening times for those libraries with self-service.

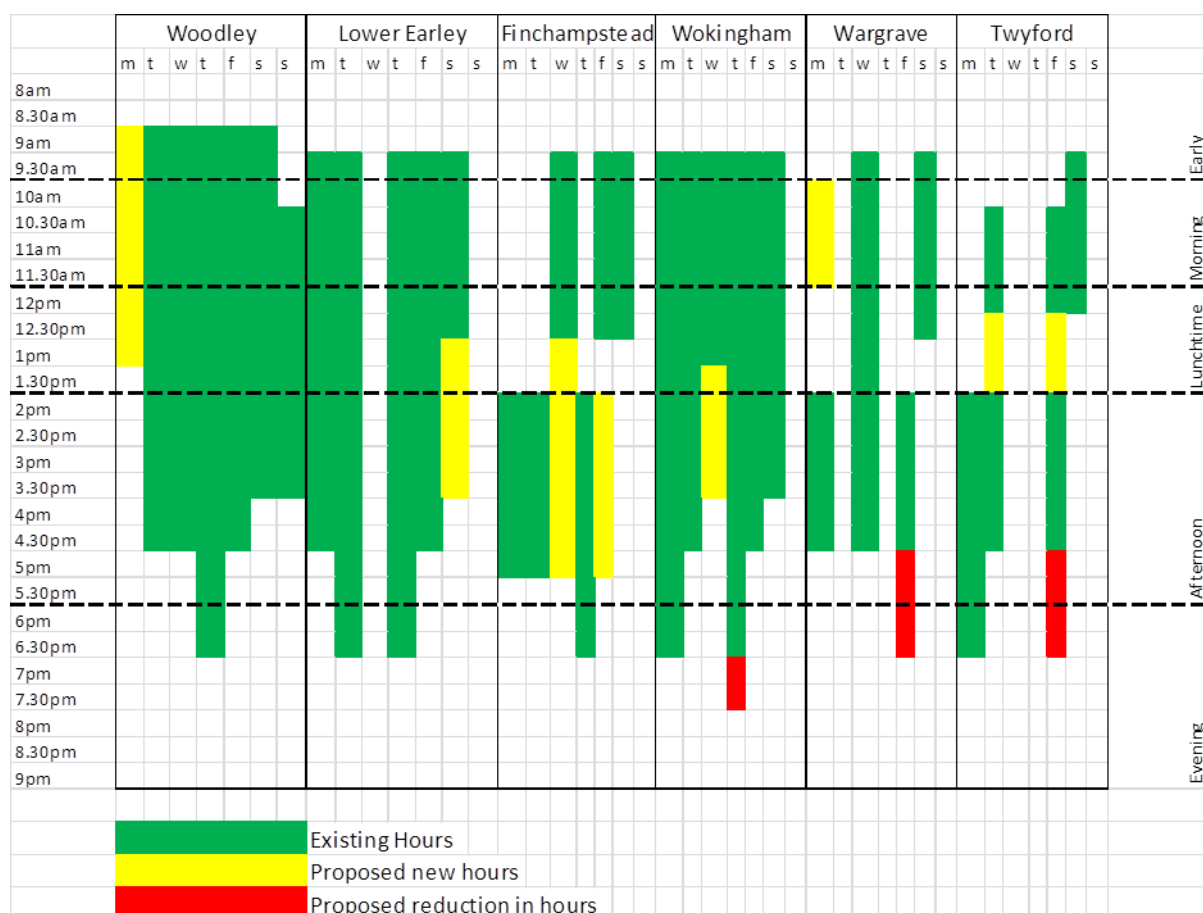
Extending Opening Times

In order to increase access to the Library Service, it is proposed to introduce the following new opening times:

- Woodley Library - Monday morning - 9:00am - 12:00am
- Wokingham Library - Wednesday afternoon - 1:00pm- 4:00pm
- Lower Earley - Saturday afternoon - 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- Finchampstead- increase 7 hours per week during afternoons
- Twyford: Increase by 1 hour per week to enable opening at lunchtimes
- Wargrave: redeploy opening hours to open on Monday mornings

This is illustrated in the diagram below:

Changes to Wokingham Borough Council Library Opening Times



Ongoing Operational Costs

The introduction of the new Delivery Model will enable the Library Service to reduce its operational costs by approximately £130,000 p.a. These savings are based upon the proposal of operating a skeleton staff in self-service libraries for 40% of the current opening hours, whilst still incorporating an increase in opening hours across the service.

Financial Investment to Deliver the New Delivery Model

Wokingham borough is a mix of urban and semi-rural neighbourhoods with its population centres spread across a relatively dispersed geographical area. In providing a comprehensive library service for the borough, the Council has located a library within most of the populated areas so that people can directly access these services.

A consequence of this is that people have a degree of choice about which library they use, with most residents having at least two libraries within a few miles of their homes. Analysis shows that most library users make use of two or more libraries across the borough.

The Council's current Local Plan includes the provision of around 13,000 new homes within the Borough by 2026, which will significantly increase the local population and therefore the demand for library services. From the current housing developments that are happening across the borough there are contributions to the local infrastructure from developers allocated for the provision of library services to the residents of these areas.

The increased access to library services to be delivered within the Library Offer will provide more capacity and services to meet the growing demand from the increasing population, and therefore the delivery of the library offer will be funded by utilising the existing S106 contributions for library services.

Impact on Residents

It is clear from the increasing number of visits and level of usage that the Library Service continues to make a substantial contribution to the lives of people who live, work and study within Wokingham Borough. This impact includes the use of the library buildings for a growing variety of uses by other local authority services, community groups and commercial activities.

It is clear that finding ways to increase the opening hours at key times will provide more opportunity for residents to make use of library services and the library buildings. However, there is currently a perceived difference between the impact of implementing self-service and implementing unstaffed opening, with the latter generating substantial concerns over the usage by school-age children, the elderly and those with additional needs, on issues such as safety and anti-social behaviour.

Given that Wokingham Borough is one of the few areas in the country where library usage is still increasing, it is advised that further analysis and consideration be given to implementing unstaffed opening, especially the expected impact on those residents who make regular use of the library service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Up to £300K	Yes	Capital - S106
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	(£130,000)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	(£130,000)	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers

None

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Date 9 June 2016	Version No. 1

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LIBRARY OFFER**Access to Services**

- The Library Service will adapt to meet the growing population and changing behaviours of our residents.
- The Library Service will utilise opportunities to provide residents with a flexible mix of physical and virtual options for accessing all services
- Improve access to other Wokingham Borough Council services in line with Customer Services vision
- Strong partnership working to ensure flexibility of delivery and access to library services

Library Stock

- Maintain the approach of books being the primary stock type
- Stock purchased will be responsive to the behaviour and needs of our residents
- Increase the numbers of items available in other formats
- Continue to ensure that we hold the books that people most want

Visiting and Using Library Buildings

- The environment within libraries will be welcoming and enjoyable
- Buildings will be flexible and adaptable to changing demands for their use
- Enable access to other types of services including other council services, health services and local community and voluntary services
- They will provide space for locally focused events and activities that develop a sense of community
- Actively identify events and services that support the broader Council vision

Technology

- The Library Service will continue to grow its online services to provide more opportunity for residents to access services when they want them.
- Invest in technologies that support learning and self-sustaining behaviours in residents.
- Increase the range of services within libraries by enabling payments for other Council services.
- Respond to natural opportunities to deliver a greater range of Council services within libraries.

Income Generation

- Income generation ideas will feel a natural extension of our services and activities
- Where opportunities for investment present themselves we will look to gain the most value from them so as to minimise the need for further investments in the future

Supporting Wokingham Borough Council Vision

- The library service will continue to identify ways to directly support Wokingham Borough Council's vision for the borough
- Maintain or improve on the usage of library services so that they remain a valuable method of supporting and promoting other Council services.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICE

Wokingham Borough Council operates ten libraries and a Home Library Service within the Borough. Last year the libraries had over 470,000 physical visits and a further 90,000 online contacts, which is part of an increasing local trend in library usage against a national picture of declining usage.

The ten public libraries operated by the Council are located in each of the main population centres across the borough and are provided in a mix of purpose built and shared buildings.

The Home Library Service is operated from Woodley Library and provides to residents from all across the borough who are unable to visit a library in person.

Statutory Requirements

The Public Libraries & Museums Act (1964) sets out the requirement for all local authorities to provide a public library service in their area.

The Act requires the Council to:

- Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it.
- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

Aside from this general requirement for local authorities there are very few additional regulations which dictate what and how local authorities are required to provide.

The key elements that have to be included within a library service can be summarised as:

- Lending of books has to be free.
- Internet usage should be free of charge.
- Lending of eBooks should be free.
- Be able to obtain books we don't have in stock.
- A duty to encourage usage.

Whilst we are unable to charge for library membership or for the loan of books, we are not restricted in generating income through libraries in other ways.

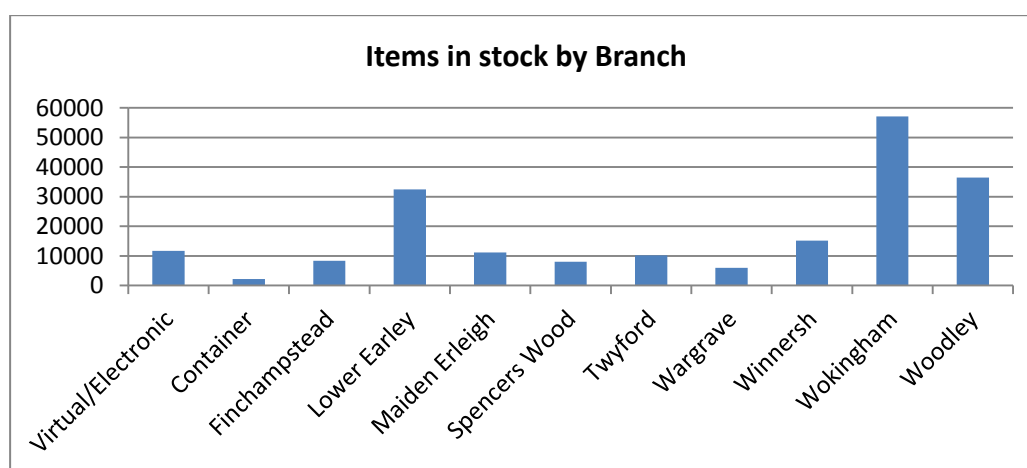
Our Library Service has a long history of implementing this statutory duty robustly, economically and flexibly. For many years, we have developed creative ways to not only encourage users into the Libraries themselves, but also to take the Library to those who cannot always make a physical visit.

Library Stock

The Library Service currently holds the following items within its stock:

Stock Type	Items
Books - Adult fiction	53056
Books - Adult Non Fiction	43960
Books - Children's & Young People Fiction	53747
Books - Children's & Young People Non fiction	16965
Audio visual material (DVD, CD & Cassette)	10584
School stock at dual usage libraries	1592
Non loan reference material (dictionaries, encyclopaedia, etc.)	4400
Misc.	2956
Total	187260

The chart below shows the number of item in stock within each branch.



Usage

Items loaned from libraries were increasing up until 2010/11, but since then there has been a decline in the number of items issued. This change in trend of items issued broadly coincides with changes in visiting trends. In 2010/11 after a period of multiple years of declining visits, physical visits to libraries started increasing.

This suggests a change in the way libraries are used by Wokingham residents in that they are using them a little less for traditional book borrowing services and a little more for the other services on offer. The table below shows the issues/loans for hard copy and eBooks over the past three years:

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Hard copy loans	850348	813510	783864
e-loans	2500	12064	15603
Total	852848	825574	799467
e-loans as %	0.29%	1.46%	1.95%

Services Available In Each Library

All of the libraries within the borough provide a core service to residents of being able to borrow books and other items and providing a space for reading, research and learning. However, the expectations of a modern library go beyond this and as such the Wokingham Borough Council Library Service offers a much greater range of services and activities. These are summarised below:

- Specialist areas for children & young people
- Reminiscence services for older residents
- Free Wi-Fi access and the use of computers
- Copying and printing facilities
- Meeting space for hire
- Café facilities
- Research facilities (including ancestry searches)

Library Activities

Wokingham Borough Libraries are home to a wide range of activities each month that support enjoyment, learning and achievement for all those that attend. This includes Rhymetime sessions for children under 5, craft groups, historical societies, adult learning courses, local business training, and reminiscence groups for older residents.

The table below provides a sample of the activities delivered within Wokingham Borough Council Libraries during October 2015. This shows both the significant number of events held within our libraries, the similar proportion of events for adults and for children & young people, and the usage of the Council's libraries by voluntary and community groups for their events.

Category	Adults	Children and Young People	Total
Events run or commissioned by WBC staff	57	55	112
Events run by volunteers	18	20	38
Events run by community groups	3	0	3

(Source: One month sample – Oct 2015)

Library Users

The tables below show the breakdown of age, gender and disability for people who have borrowed an item during the past year and how this compares with the demographics of the borough as a whole:

Library Users	
Age	%
0-17	43.91
18 - 24	3.40
25 - 34	6.18
35 - 44	16.14
45 - 54	10.47
55 - 64	6.01
65+	13.98

Wokingham Borough	
Age	%
0-17	22.97
18 - 24	6.98
25 - 29	5.23
30 - 44	21.86
45 - 59	21.45
60 - 64	6.11
65+	15.41

Gender	Library Users	Wokingham Borough
Female	52.30%	50.5
Male	32.66%	49.5
no data	15.03%*	

(* some library users joined the service before gender was recorded)

Disability	Library Users	Wokingham Borough
	Library Users identifying as having a disability	Residents declaring that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot by their health
	1.91%	4.7%

(Source: Library Usage Statistics (2015/16) & Census Data 2011)

This shows that a substantial proportion of the library users are children and young people, and that overall the Library Service is used by people of all ages.

Library Choices

Wokingham borough is a mix of urban and semi-rural neighbourhoods with its population centres spread across a relatively dispersed geographical area. In providing a comprehensive library service for the borough, the Council has located a library within most of the populated areas so that people can directly access these services.

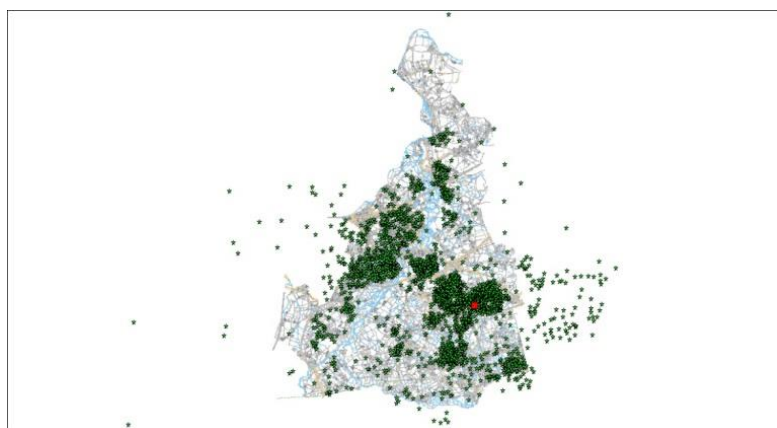
A consequence of this is that people have a degree of choice about which library they use, with most residents having at least two libraries within a few miles of their homes. The table below shows the percentage for each library of the different distances that people have travelled to use them.

	0 - 1 miles	1 - 2 miles	2 - 3 miles	3 - 5 miles	5+ miles
Wokingham	35.98%	29.53%	13.22%	15.94%	5.33%
Woodley	53.71%	23.16%	13.15%	7.86%	2.12%
Lower Earley	62.63%	22.31%	7.65%	6.55%	0.86%
Winnersh	45.27%	21.44%	15.42%	14.64%	3.23%
Finchampstead	50.68%	18.16%	16.18%	12.39%	2.60%
Twyford	81.67%	9.92%	2.85%	4.51%	1.05%
Maiden Erleigh	82.65%	9.59%	2.14%	4.08%	1.53%
Spencers Wood	60.77%	20.58%	8.92%	6.04%	3.70%
Wargrave	69.10%	14.61%	6.37%	5.99%	3.93%
Arborfield	50.62%	9.88%	20.99%	14.81%	3.70%

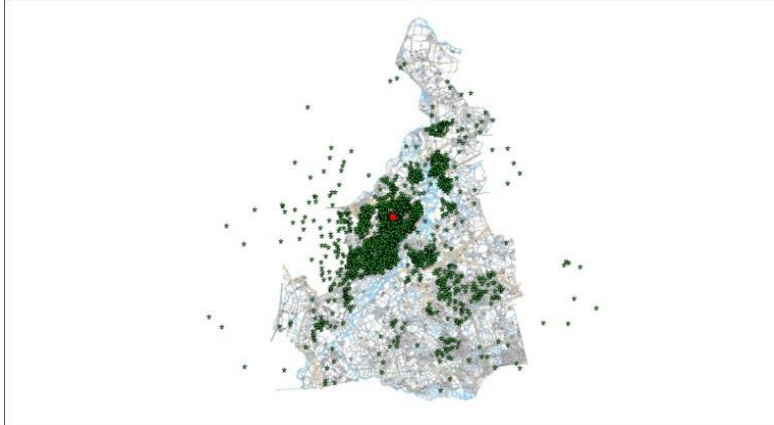
(2015/16 Data)

We can understand this further by mapping the home postcodes of the users of each library to show the catchment area of each library. Below are maps showing catchment areas for boroughs most well-used libraries:

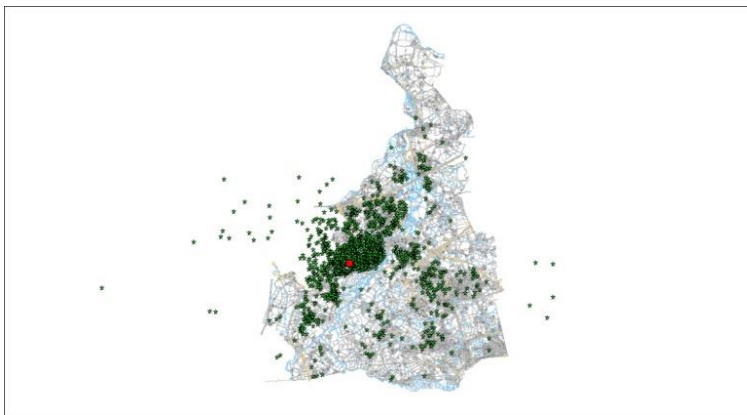
- Wokingham Library



- Woodley Library



- Lower Earley Library



From this we can see that each library is being used by residents from all over the borough. It is also clear that Wokingham Library, which offers the largest range of services and includes a café, has by far the most active usage from all parts of the borough.

Opening Times

Across the Borough the Library Service is open to the public for a total of 259 hours per week across its ten libraries. The table below shows how this relates to each library for each day of the week:

It is worth noting that between Monday and Friday there is at least one library open between 9am and 7pm and that there are libraries open on both days each weekend.

[illegible]

TITLE	WOKINGHAM LIBRARY CALL-IN RESPONSE
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 3 May 2017
WARD	Wescott
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The relocation of Wokingham Library to the Carnival Pool site will provide the Library Service with greater flexibility and adaptability in its service delivery. Residents will be able to combine visits to the library with a range of other activities. The Carnival Pool site offers better access and parking.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee uphold the decision of the Executive Committee:

1. it be agreed in principle to relocate Wokingham Library to a new building on the Carnival Phase II site;
2. approval to relocate is subject to a full impact assessment and detailed business case being agreed by the Executive Member for Resident Services;
3. the proposal be publicised as soon as practical to enable feedback on these proposals and subsequently the design.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The in principle decision to relocate Wokingham Library has been called-in by five non-executive elected Members. This report provides clarification on the points raised within the call-in.

Background

There is an opportunity for the Council to relocate Wokingham Library to a new site within the Carnival development. The new site will offer greater flexibility for the delivery of library services and provide improved access to other leisure and cultural activities. Opportunities for the redevelopment of the existing library site consistent with the vision for the town centre mean that the move could also deliver a financial benefit for the Council.

The in principle decision to relocate Wokingham Library has been called-in by five non-executive elected Members. Within the call-in, the following four specific grounds relating to the Councils decision making principles have been stated:

1.4.2 Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;
- d) a presumption in favour of openness;
- e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

Analysis of Issues

Below are the stated reasons for the Call-In and a response to clarify the Councils actions in taking this decision.

Reason 1:

The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's constitution, in that the action being proposed is not proportionate to the desired outcome. It is not clear in fact what the motivation for the relocation or the desired outcomes are. Is it to increase library usage? Is it to develop the existing library site to make money?

There is no indication at all as to cost, or to what the success criteria for the project would be in assessing any business case.

Response:

The summary of the Executive Report states:

The new site will offer greater flexibility for the delivery of library services and provide improved access to other leisure and cultural activities.

Within the detail of the Executive Report it states that the proposed library site will provide more useable space for the delivery of library services and provide greater flexibility so the library can adapt to the changing needs of its users. This is consistent with specific elements of the Library Offer that are also presented within the Executive Report:

Access to Services

- *The Library Service will adapt to meet the growing population and changing behaviours of our residents.*
- *The Library Service will utilise opportunities to provide residents with a flexible mix of physical and virtual options for accessing all services*
- *Improve access to other Wokingham Borough Council services in line with Customer Services vision*
- *Strong partnership working to ensure flexibility of delivery and access to library Services*

Visiting and Using Library Buildings

- *The environment within libraries will be welcoming and enjoyable*
- *Buildings will be flexible and adaptable to changing demands for their use*
- *Enable access to other types of services including other council services, health services and local community and voluntary services*
- *They will provide space for locally focused events and activities that develop a sense of community*
- *Actively identify events and services that support the broader Council vision*

The report also highlights the declining usage of the current library site and perceived benefits to library visits of being located next to a destination leisure facility and vastly improved parking.

Overall, visits to Wokingham Borough libraries have been increasing in recent years; however, visits to the main Wokingham Library have reduced slightly over the past three years from 146,448 in 2013/14 to 142,900 visits during 2015/16.

Within the Carnival Phase II site, high levels of footfall are expected along the main pedestrian route giving the library an increased presence in the heart of the development. It would also increase the opportunity for “linked trips”, with visitors to the leisure centre or the other commercial use on the site, also combining this with a visit to the library. The proximity to substantial amounts of public parking close to the library and proximity to public transport will also improve access for visitors.

The proximity to other leisure and cultural activities also presents a positive opportunity to further enhance the usage of library services by children and young people.

The Executive Report states that the costs of Carnival Phase 2 are contained within the MTFP and that an initial assessment of the value of the current library site indicated that the relocation could be self-financing.

At the Executive Meeting on 30th March, the Lead Executive Member for Residents Services clarified this point by stating that the Council would keep its options open on the utilisation of the existing site so as not to limit the possible ways it could deliver a benefit for residents and the Council. All future uses of Council Assets are subject to the same assessments and decision making process to determine their potential value and agree their future use.

Reason 2:

The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's constitution, in that due consultation has not occurred. There has been no consultation with library users or the public in general about relocation.

We believe members of the town council and ward members may have been informed in the last few weeks, but required to keep the information confidential. However, they were not consulted.

A consultation on the Library Offer was run in 2016. This consultation did not mention relocation of Wokingham library. Nor did the Executive paper which launched it, in January 2016, make any reference to any need to relocate the library. Consultation conducted in the past on the leisure uses of the Carnival Pool area did not include the possibility of relocation of the library.

Response:

The proposed relocation of Wokingham Library to the Carnival Phase 2 development essentially just moves the existing library service 207 meters into a different building. The core elements of the library service will remain the same.

The Duty to Consult specifies when the Council should consult. The test as to whether local authorities should to consult (in non-statutory cases) is based on whether residents' have a 'legitimate expectation' that consultation would take place.

This is set out by case law and it has been established that legitimate expectation exists in cases where:

- There is a reduction in service
- There is a major change in service
- The local authority has consulted on the issue or similar issues before
- If the local authority has promised to consult.

In summary, no further consultation on the proposed relocation of Wokingham Library was necessary because:

- The proposed relocation of Wokingham Library will not result in any reduction of service for library users.
- The new proposed new location for Wokingham Library is only 207 meters from the existing location, and the core elements of the Library Service won't change.
- The Council consulted extensively on the new Library Offer and Delivery Model in 2016.
- No further commitment to consult was specified within the implementation of the Library Offer.

Detailed responses to questions about consultation were addressed in the Questions to Executive on 30th March 2017.

Reason 3:

The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's constitution, in that openness has not been observed. There was no warning whatsoever about the proposal prior to it appearing in the Executive Agenda.

In addition, despite representatives of the Liberal Democrat group having regular meetings with members of the Regeneration team, and discussing all aspects of Wokingham town centre, including what leisure facilities would appear on the Carnival Pool site, no mention has ever been made on relocation of the library.

Members of the town council and Wokingham town borough councillors have also had such meetings. We do not believe this has been raised at those meetings.

Nor has it been mentioned at any of the SDL forums. Nor was it mentioned in the 2016 consultation on the Library Offer.

Nothing has been said in the report about the development potential of the existing site, nor about the finances of the redevelopment of the Carnival Pool area. Nor is the impact on the Denmark Street car park discussed in the report.

Response:

The proposed relocation of Wokingham Library was added to the Executive Forward Programme in accordance with the requirements contained within the Council's Constitution.

A confidential briefing was circulated to local ward members in the broader Wokingham Town area on 22nd February 2017. The briefing was also circulated to Wokingham Town Councillors.

The briefing included details of how to obtain more detailed information about the proposed relocation.

Details of the Library Offer consultation have been covered above.

At the Executive meeting on the 30th March 2017, the Lead Executive Member for Residents Services and the Lead Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance provided further information on the potential uses for the existing site, the Carnival Phase 2 development and the Denmark Street Car Par.

Reason 4:

The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes has not been achieved. There is no evidence provided to justify the sudden decision to move the library.

Money has only recently been invested in the existing building. There is criticism in the report of the fact that the existing library is "on the outer edge of the town centre" – yet the proposed location is further from the town centre.

The report talks about the space within the library, and compares the 1324 m2 of which 841 m2 currently available for books, with the 1000 m2 potentially available at Carnival Pool. It makes reference to the existing café taking up space, but not to alternate uses for that space, nor to exactly how big a café might be provided at Carnival Pool; it also mentions the 180 m2 used by Elevate – but does not explain what will happen to Elevate if the library is relocated. It talks about larger events being able to be held in a bigger undivided space – but does not take into account the fact that book shelves, counters etc. will occupy the majority of the space, making it unusable in that way.

Response:

The June 2016 Executive Report included a section on the implementation of the Library Offer and named the libraries where this would have the most benefit. This included Wokingham Library.

The proposal is to relocate the library in 2021. The in principle decision has been sought now to provide enough time to go through the planning application, Compulsory Purchase Order and build processes that will be necessary for Carnival Phase 2.

At the Executive Meeting it was clarified that the majority of the £47,000 of investment in Wokingham Library would be moved with the library to its proposed new location in four years' time.

At the Executive Meeting it was also clarified that the new location would be more prominent in the redeveloped Elms Field area.

The Executive Report is clear in the ambition to create more flexible space within the library, meaning that the some elements of the library can adapt over time to meet changes in demand. At the Executive Meeting it was clarified that the detailed specification for the new Carnival Phase 2 development had not yet been agreed, but that there would be a series of engagement events for people to input into this process.

The bookshelves will be on wheels so that they are easily movable and the library counter will be located so that usable space can be created within the library.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The capital costs of building the new library space are factored into the existing Medium Term Financial Plan allocation for the Carnival Pool Phase II scheme.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

The opportunity to relocate the library to the Carnival Phase II site enables the co-location of Council services in one location, delivering service and cost efficiencies and a positive customer experience.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

Executive Reports – Library Offer (June 2016), Relocation of Wokingham Library (March 2017), Questions to the Executive EM1, EM2, EM3, EM4, EP3, EP4 (March 2017)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CALL IN MEETING – 3 MAY 2017

RELOCATION OF WOKINGHAM LIBRARY

Indicative List of Witnesses and Timetable for the meeting

Item	Name/Role	Time
1	Councillor Simon Weeks (Chairman) opens the meeting and explains the procedure for considering Call-Ins	7.00 PM
2	Councillor Prue Bray explains the reasons for the Call In Committee Members question Councillor Bray	7.10 PM
3	Mark Redfearn, Service Manager, Libraries and Community Development (witness) addresses the Committee Committee Members question Mr Redfearn	7.40 PM
4	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment (witness) addresses the Committee Committee Members question Mrs Wragg	8.00 PM
5	Councillor Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member (witness) addresses the Committee Committee Members question Councillor Jorgensen	8.15 PM
6	Summary Session – witnesses provide clarification in relation to points raised by other speakers/witnesses	8.30 PM
7	Conclusions – the Committee discusses the written and verbal evidence and considers any appropriate recommendations	8.45 PM
8	Councillor Simon Weeks (Chairman) closes the meeting	9.00 PM

Notes:

- 1 The Chairman may decide to invite further witnesses and amend the indicative timings (above).
- 2 Written submissions from witnesses will be considered during the relevant part of the meeting.

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