

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: North Prospect Library proposed relocation to Community Hub, North Prospect Road, North Prospect, Plymouth – Acquisition of lease

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 6 March 2012

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bowyer and Councillor Jordan

CMT Member: Director for Corporate Services and Director for People

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Ref:

Key Decision: Yes

Part: I

Executive Summary:

It is proposed the Council relocate North Prospect Library from its current freehold premises at Greatlands Place to significantly larger leasehold premises at the planned Community Hub complex to be constructed on North Prospect Road.

The new leasehold premises are proposed to be held on a ninety-nine year lease. In addition to operating costs of the Library premises the Council will be liable for a service charge contribution towards the costs of maintaining and operating the Community Hub complex including communal areas. Revenue costs will be met from the Library Service revenue budget.

The proposed relocation will enable the Library Service to provide an improved service from better quality more accessible accommodation in a customer friendly location. The proposal involves working with Plymouth Community Homes Ltd supporting them in the regeneration of North Prospect which is a Council priority supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan 2012-2015.

The new premises will need to be fitted out for use as a public library. The capital cost of the fit out is proposed to be met from within the Community Services Capital Programme.

Following relocation of the Library it is proposed to dispose of the Greatlands Place site.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015:

DELIVERING GROWTH

The proposed relocation of North Prospect Library is anticipated to secure existing jobs. It is proposed, subject to relocation of North Prospect Library facility, that the current library site will be disposed of.

The siting of the Library within the Community Hub is anticipated to increase the footfall and use of adjacent commercial premises within the Hub.

The Library will support access to information for job seeking and learning opportunities.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

The provision of an enlarged library facility in the Community Hub is anticipated to improve quality of life and satisfaction with the Library Service. It will provide information, advice and support for all ages, from babies to older people. There will be activities designed to develop reading and learning skills.

REDUCING INEQUALITIES

The existing North Prospect Library has accessibility improvements identified. New build accommodation will be designed and constructed to higher accessibility standards.

The existing Library is detached from other community facilities / services some of which it is intended will also relocate to the Community Hub.

The Library Service will support literacy and educational attainment in the area with free access for all.

PROVIDE VALUE FOR COMMUNITIES

The proposed relocation of North Prospect Library will involve working with Plymouth Community Homes Ltd to maximise resources to benefit customers with the aim of increasing customer satisfaction with the Library Service and offering value for money. The library will offer direct access to Council information and services as well as local venue for activities.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

There will be an estimated cost of £0.075m to fit out the proposed premises at the Community Hub complex for use as a public library. The capital cost of the fit out is proposed to be met from capital receipts or capital grants.

Removal costs from the current Greatlands Place site will be met from existing Library Service revenue budget.

Annual revenue operating costs for the relocated Library are to be met from the existing Library Service revenue budget.

Through ongoing discussion the staff (1.82 full time equivalent) at the current Greatlands Place site are aware of the proposed Library relocation to new premises in the planned Community Hub complex on North Prospect Road. Currently there are no plans to alter the terms and conditions or hours worked by the staff. Should any changes be proposed the staff, and where appropriate any trade unions, will be consulted before any changes are implemented. It is proposed the new premises will benefit from the installation of self service kiosks and provide a better, and safer, working environment for staff.

The fit out will include the provision of appropriate IT connection and services.

It is proposed, subject to relocation of North Prospect Library facility, that the current library site will be disposed of.

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:**Community Safety**

The current Greatlands Place facility is subjected to vandalism and graffiti. The facility is on the edge of a residential area with little passing pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The rear of the building is screened by mature trees and hedging to the perimeter of the site from both the nearby houses and Wolseley Road. The proposed new Library premises will directly front the busy North Prospect Road, a main route through the area, and adjoining uses including shops and community facilities are expected to generate passing traffic during the day, evenings and weekends reducing the opportunity for anti-social behaviour and encourage customers with any safety concerns to visit 'after dark' as well as increasing safety for staff.

Health and Safety

Relocation to new purpose built premises is anticipated to reduce any health and safety concerns and improve on the category C condition rating of the current facility.

Equality

The current facility has accessibility improvements identified suggesting a reduced service is provided to certain customers. The new premises will be constructed to higher accessibility standards improving equality.

Community Cohesion

By relocating the Library from a remote standalone site to adjacent to other uses within the Community Hub complex and working in co-operation with other Community Hub users it is expected community cohesion will be improved.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Cabinet is asked to approve the acquisition of a lease, for a term of ninety-nine years, of premises to be constructed within the proposed Community Hub complex on North Prospect Road for relocation of the North Prospect Library from the current premises at Greatlands Place. Agreement of detailed terms to be delegated to the Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the City Librarian.

Cabinet is asked to approve the addition of the proposed fit out of the new Library facility to the Community Services Capital Programme.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

- A) To continue to operate from the current premises at Greatlands Place, North Prospect. The Library Futures strategy produced in 2004 included a recommendation (reiterated in the draft Library Review 2012) that the North Prospect Library be relocated due to its location and that this could potentially be achieved by working in partnership. The current premises are on the opposite side of, and screened by trees from, the busy Wolseley Road and the local shopping centre and other nearby community facilities, local shops and businesses. The current premises have been assessed as in condition category C (poor – showing major defects and/or not operating as intended) and accessibility improvements have also been identified which would require additional expenditure. The current premises provide approximately 105 square metres of accommodation compared to approximately 200 square metres proposed at the Community Hub complex.

- B) To acquire alternative premises, either freehold or leasehold from which to operate North Prospect Library. There is no capital provision in the current Capital Programme for 2010/11-2014/15 for the Library Service from which to fund acquisition of alternative premises. Relocation to the Community Hub is working in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes Ltd to support the regeneration of North Prospect.
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Background papers:

None.

Sign off:

Fin	CDR/Co SFLC 1112003/ 230212	Leg	13865AC	HR	MG 1202/001	Corp Prop	CJT/0 92/02 0212	IT	JN02021 2	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating SMT Member: Chris Trevitt and Sandra Pentney											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

1.0 Current Premises

- 1.1 North Prospect Library is currently located in a stand alone building with grounds at Greatlands Place with residential properties to the north, east and west and Wolseley Road to the South. The current Library building dates from 1933 and provides approximately 105 square metres of accommodation.
- 1.2 The Library currently provides books, free computer access, a fax service, exhibition and display space, notice boards for community information and jobs and careers information. Regular activities include an adult reading group, rhymetimes for children under five years of age and a friendship group for adults over fifty years of age.
- 1.3 A summary condition report dated June 2009 for the current North Prospect Library premises identified outstanding repairs.
- 1.4 Accessibility improvements have been identified in respect of the current North Prospect Library premises.
- 1.5 The Library Futures strategy produced in 2004 included a recommendation (reiterated in the draft Library Review 2012) that the North Prospect Library be relocated due to its location and that this could potentially be achieved by working in partnership.

2.0 North Prospect Regeneration

- 2.1 The £168m regeneration of the North Prospect area is a Council priority with Plymouth Community Homes Ltd being the developer. The regeneration area includes the current Library site at Greatlands Place.
- 2.2 As part of phase 1b / 1c of the North Prospect Regeneration, a Community Hub complex is proposed to be built on a site which has boundaries to North Prospect Road, Lark Hill, Foliot Road and Cookworthy Road. The Community Hub complex, which has received full conditional planning permission (planning application numbers 10/02065/OUT and 11/01384REM), is to include a multi-use community hall, shop units, a daycare nursery (to replace the facility currently operated by Sure Start North Prospect LARK Project Ltd on the former North Prospect Primary School site which is to be redeveloped with residential units as part of phase 1b / 1c), office space, residential flats and public open space.
- 2.3 Discussions / negotiations between the Council and Plymouth Community Homes Ltd have resulted in the approved design for the Community Hub complex including approximately 200 square metres of space identified for the provision of a public library (to replace the current approximately 105 square metre Greatlands Place facility).

3.0 Proposed Lease

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Council acquire a lease for a term of ninety-nine years of the space, which will front directly on to North Prospect Road, identified for the provision of a public library.
- 3.2 In addition to the rent and operating costs the Council will be liable to contribute to service charge costs including the maintenance and operation of shared common parts of the Community Hub complex.

3.3 The lease will be on effective full repairing and insuring terms (through the service charge).

4.0 Fit Out Costs

4.1 There will be an estimated capital cost of £0.075m to fit out the proposed premises at the Community Hub complex for use as a public library.

4.2 Funding for the fit out of the new library premises will come from capital receipts or capital grant.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The majority of the Library Service budget for North Prospect Library relates to staffing costs leaving the remainder to other operating costs. The operating costs allocation reflects that the current North Prospect Library is owned freehold by the Council so no lease costs are incurred.

5.2 In addition to the proposed lease rent there will be a service charge payable under the terms of the lease to contribute to shared expenditure and the running costs of the communal Community Hub. As the Community Hub complex will be new build property there is no historical information to estimate the level of service charge, however it is not anticipated to be significantly different to the operating costs of the existing facility.