

	<p><b>Policy and Resources Committee</b> <b>10 January 2017</b></p>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Future library provision in New Barnet</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Commissioning Director Children and Young People
<b>Wards</b>	East Barnet
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	<p>Appendix A – Consultation report on the future library provision in New Barnet</p> <p>Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment</p>
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## Summary

This report recommends that the opportunity is taken to re-provide the Partnership library in East Barnet as part of the proposed new leisure facilities in Victoria Park, due to be completed in 2019, subject to planning consent.

Residents and library users were consulted on this proposal to co-locate the library with new leisure and café facilities over an 8 week period from October to December 2016. Appendix A sets out the consultation responses provided through both a survey and a number of drop in sessions held in New Barnet and in the library in East Barnet. Through this consultation process, a number of residents expressed support for the opportunity whilst others, generally who lived closer to the current East Barnet library location were less supportive of the proposal.

Overall, in view of the opportunity of the proposal to provide modern, fit for purpose library facilities co-located with other leisure and café services (with increased footfall) together with the declining use of the current library in East Barnet and the age and condition of the current building, it is recommended to proceed with the proposal in order to provide 21st century library facilities in this part of the borough.

## Recommendations

- 1. That the Policy and Resources Committee note the results of the public consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment attached in Appendices A and B.**
- 2. That the Policy and Resources Committee agree that the Partnership library in East Barnet be re-located to the new leisure facility at the Victoria Recreation Ground (subject to planning consent)**
- 3. That the Policy and Resources Committee agree to fund the potential requirement for up to £500k capital contribution towards the cost of the new library, to be added to the council's capital programme for 2017/18.**

### **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

- 1.1** In April 2016, the Council approved the implementation of a new library strategy that will maintain all 14 sites whilst making significant savings to the annual budget. Part of this strategy is to also explore opportunities that arise for libraries to be re-provided in modern, fit-for-purpose facilities. In particular, the strategy set out that co-locating library services with other services would be explored where it could help to provide viable, sustainable library services.

## 1.2 The proposal

This report considers an opportunity to re-provide the library services currently offered at the library in East Barnet in a new, modern facility as part of the proposed new leisure facility at the Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet (subject to planning consent). The proposal to provide new library facilities in this part of the borough has arisen from the council's decision to invest in new leisure facilities to replace those offered at Church Farm in 2019. All libraries in Barnet have seen usage fall by more than 25% in the last 10 years, however the library in East Barnet has seen the greatest reduction in usage of 52% in this time period. The proposal offers a unique opportunity to provide new facilities co-located with leisure services that are well-used by residents; projected footfall at the new proposed leisure facility is more than 3 times that of the current library.

- 1.3 There are numerous examples of libraries having been successfully co-located with other community facilities, both in London and elsewhere in the UK. For example, Sutton Council has a library co-located with three other community-led services, including a leisure centre, now attracting more visitors, many of whom wouldn't have otherwise used a traditional, stand-alone library. Hillingdon Council, likewise, has a library in a building shared with a leisure centre. Here in Barnet, there are already a number of examples of libraries successfully co-locating with other facilities; for example with Customer Services teams at Burnt Oak, Barnet & Southgate College at Colindale and residential dwellings at South Friern.
- 1.4 Following formal public consultation from July to September 2015, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet should be the site for the proposed relocation of Church Farm Leisure Centre. When residents were consulted on the council's proposals for future leisure provision in Barnet, 65% of respondents said they would consider accessing library services from a leisure centre.
- 1.5 The new leisure centre is due to be completed in 2019 (subject to planning consent). Under the proposal, until it re-locates, library services will continue to be offered from the current location in East Barnet. From April 2017, as part of the wider library strategy, the library in East Barnet will be a community-led Partnership library. The Partnership library will be part of the wider Barnet network, with the services delivered by a community-based organisation. Ongoing financial and professional support from the Library Service will be provided.
- 1.6 As part of the wider library strategy, the current library in East Barnet will be delivered from a smaller footprint from April 2017, whether it remains on the current site or is relocated to the new proposed leisure facility. The proposed footprint of the library within the leisure centre is similar to the footprint that will be available in the current library building after April 2017.
- 1.7 The condition of the current library building in East Barnet means that it is likely to require significant maintenance and repair investment in future years. Re-locating to new, purpose built facilities will provide a structure built to

modern day standards for comfort and sustainability and will also enable the sharing of facility costs between services.

1.8 Relocating the library to co-locate with the proposed leisure facility would enable the council to realise the following benefits:

- Create a modern, fit-for-purpose library facility that meets the needs of the local community
- Create a sustainable library offer whereby building costs are shared and footfall is greater than at present
- Avoid spending extensive capital funding on refurbishing the current site

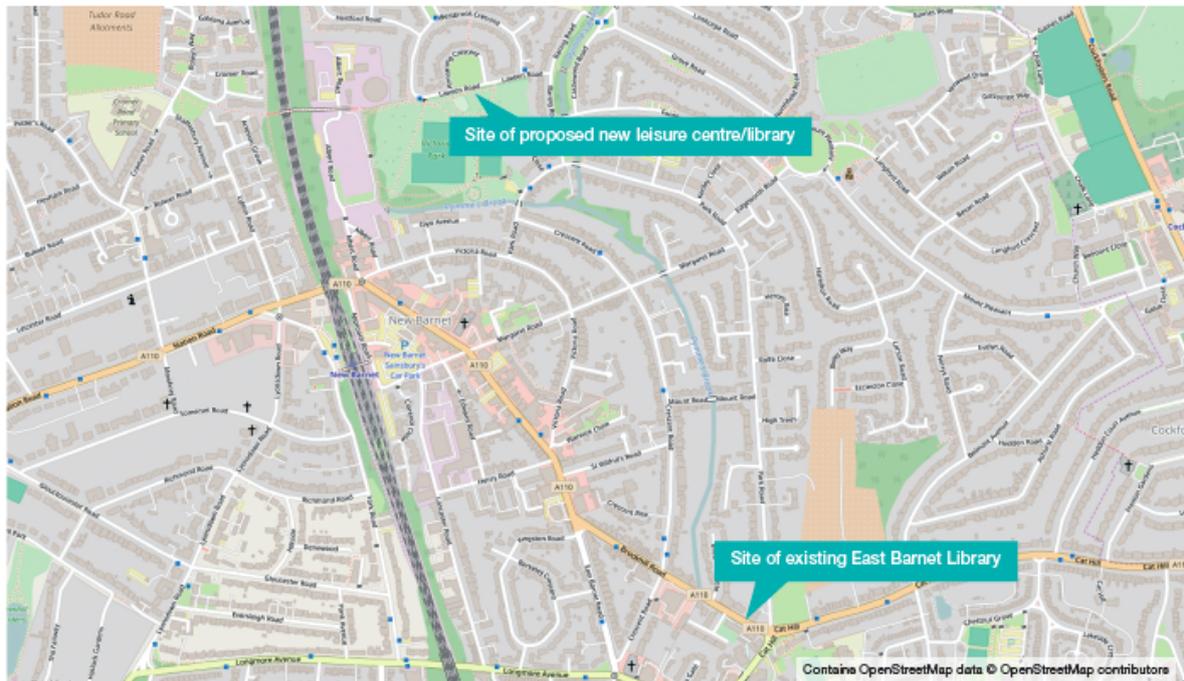
## 1.9 **Proposed future library location**

1.9.1 The proposed future site for library services in the New Barnet area is 0.9miles north-west from the existing building in East Barnet. There is a direct bus route (number 384) from Crescent Road near the current library to Lawton Road by the vehicle entrance to the proposed leisure centre, a journey taking approximately 10minutes. In addition to the 384, there are a number of other bus routes within a 5 – 10 minute walk of the proposed future location:

- **383** - The Spires to Woodside Park Station
- **307** - Barnet Hospital to Brimsdown Station
- **184** - Chesterfield Road to Turnpike Lane Station or Victoria Road
- **326** - The Spires to Brent Cross Shopping Centre
- **626** - Dame Alice Owen's School to Finchley Central Station or North Finchley Bus Station.

New Barnet train station is approximately a 10 minute walk away with connections into London and Welwyn Garden City.

The map overleaf indicates the current and proposed future location for the library.



1.9.2 Relocating the library to the new premises within the leisure centre would provide brand new library facilities with lower running costs for the Partnership Library organisation in addition to reduced maintenance costs for the council. In addition to the new location providing co-located leisure facilities, there will also be a cafe on site and more parking than at the present library site.

## 1.10 Consultation

1.10.1 Residents were consulted on the proposal to relocate the library over an 8 week period from 24 October to 19 December 2016. The consultation was published on Engage Barnet <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a consultation document which provided detailed background information about the proposal for relocating the library. Respondents' views were gathered via an online survey. Paper copies were also made available in the current Library in East Barnet and on request. Six drop-in sessions were held at the current library site in addition to venues in the vicinity of the proposed future location.

1.10.2 Analysis of the questionnaire responses demonstrated that just under half of residents supported the opportunity whilst others, generally those who currently walked to the current library building, were less supportive of the proposal. Twenty three individuals agreed with the proposal to re-locate and re-provide the library and 26 preferred for the library to remain in its current location and building. Three did not know. Respondents who welcomed the proposal generally cited improved location for themselves or their families to make use of the library services, and the benefits to them and other residents of co-locating multiple services on one site.

Respondents who preferred for the library to remain in its current location and building most commonly cited proximity of the current library building to their home as the reason.

1.10.3 Residents were also asked to give reasons why they would be likely or unlikely to use the library should it move to the proposed leisure centre. Twenty seven out of 52 respondents said they would be very likely or fairly likely to use the library. Six individuals, whilst disagreeing with the proposal, said they would be likely to use the library in its new location. Of those that were likely to use the library, the main reasons cited were proximity to residence or place of work and intention to use the library when using other facilities at proposed new leisure centre. Those that were unlikely gave increased inconvenience and increased distance to travel as the main reasons.

1.10.4 The reaction of residents at the face-to-face drop-in sessions also varied although having had an opportunity to see the plans and talk to officers about the potential opportunities for co-locating services, many appreciated the advantages associated with the relocation and some were excited by the opportunity to undertake numerous activities at one venue in the future.

1.10.5 Full results of the consultation can be found in Appendix A.

## **1.11 Conclusion and recommendation on the proposal to re-locate and rebuild East Barnet Partnership Library**

1.11.1 Colindale Library has recently been re-located and rebuilt in brand new premises and a similar scheme is nearing completion for Church End Library. The council is keen to pursue opportunities to replace poor condition library facilities with brand new library premises when the opportunity arises and it is cost effective to do so. The proposal set out in this report presents an opportunity to provide brand new library facilities in New Barnet through relocation of the current library within the overall project to provide new leisure facilities. Overall, residents who responded to the questionnaire were fairly evenly split as to supporting/not supporting the proposal.

1.11.2 The current library building in East Barnet is likely to require significant investment in order to successfully offer library services in the longer term. The proposal to provide a new library within the new leisure centre in the Victoria Recreation Ground (subject to planning) offers an opportunity to provide modern, fit for purpose library facilities co-located with other services in this part of the borough bringing significant benefits for residents and library users. Whilst some residents have expressed a preference for 'no change', given the declining use of the library in East Barnet, the age and condition of the current building and the unique opportunity to co-locate the library with leisure and café facilities with increased footfall, it is recommended to proceed with the proposal in order to provide 21st century library facilities in this part of the borough.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The reasons for the recommendation are set out in the paragraphs above.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.1 The alternative to relocating the library into new modern fit for purpose premises would be for it to remain in situ. The library in East Barnet has seen the greatest reduction in usage of all Barnet libraries and turning down this unique opportunity to co-locate with other well used services is not recommended.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 The leisure centre is due for completion in 2019 therefore, if agreed, the library would re-locate in line with the leisure centre opening.

4.2 Programme of implementation:

- Internal configuration of library space agreed according to timescales set by leisure centre development project.
- Procurement of furniture/shelving provider.
- Relocation of the library space.
- Further decision will be required on the future of the current East Barnet Library site – options will be considered by the council's Asset, Regeneration and Growth Committee.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 The Corporate Plan 2015-20 sets out the following priorities for Barnet:

- *responsible growth and regeneration – revitalising communities and providing new homes and jobs whilst protecting what residents love about the borough, such as its green spaces, and generating local revenue as Government funding reduces to zero.*
- *managing demand – working across the public sector and with residents to prevent problems rather than just treating symptoms.*
- *transforming services – redesigning services to make them more intuitive and integrated, and more efficient to deliver.*
- *more resilient communities – working with residents to increase self-sufficiency, reduce reliance on statutory services and tailor services to their needs.*

5.1.2 The vision for the Library Service is to provide a service that is in tune with the changing lifestyles of our residents. Libraries are recognised as a universal

and unique service, offering learning opportunities from the early years and through retirement. This includes maintaining a service that can withstand current and future financial challenges and safeguard services for vulnerable people.

5.1.3 For residents, co-locating library services with well-used leisure facilities will mean easier access to multiple services in one place. These services support the vision and objectives of one another through aiming to improve both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents, thus also supporting the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Barnet.

5.1.4 The relocation of the library would enable residents to access highly valued leisure and library facilities on one site whilst driving efficiencies for the council by having a single, modern, fit-for-purpose centre and supporting the priorities of the Corporate Plan

## 5.2 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 The construction of the library space within the new leisure centre will be funded through the overall construction cost of the centre. There will be some additional costs in providing library specific requirements including, for example fixtures and fittings, up to a maximum of £500k. It is proposed that this is an addition to the council's capital programme for 2017/18.

5.2.2 IT hardware will be transferred from the current site, however some resource from IT will be required to design and fit the cabling in the new library space. The cost of this will be included within the £500k capital contribution referred to above.

5.2.3 There will be a requirement to procure a specialist provider to design and fit-out the internal space

5.2.4 Should the re-location proceed, options for the future use or disposal of the vacated library building will be prepared and presented to the Asset, Regeneration and Growth Committee for consideration.

## 5.3 **Social Value**

The social value implications, in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013, are being considered as part of the procurement process to secure a strategic partner to deliver the council's new leisure centres and school buildings.

## 5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides a general duty for library authorities. Section 7 makes it a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for the borrowing of books and other materials. The

duty is owed to all persons desiring to make use of the service whose residence or place of work is within the borough and those who are undergoing full time education within the borough. As well as this duty there is a power to make these facilities available to any person.

- 5.4.2 It is not expected that relocating the library will impact upon the service provided to residents that was agreed through the Library Service Review in April 2016. The library will continue to:
- be delivered as a Partnership library by the successful community-led organisation
  - operate from a space of at least 185m<sup>2</sup> as a minimum, the size agreed through the Library Service Review
  - deliver the same core services and stock as outlined in the product catalogue appended to the report to CELS Committee in March 2016.

The impact of the change in location on those groups with protected characteristics has been explored in the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix B) and it is deemed that sufficient mitigations are or will be in place to minimise the impact on certain groups.

- 5.4.3 Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, sets out the terms of reference of the Policy and Resources Committee and states that 'if any report comes with the remit of more than one committee, to avoid the report being discussed at several committees the report will be presented and determined at the most appropriate committee. If this is not clear, then the report will be discussed and determined by the Policy and Resources Committee'.

- 5.4.4 In this case the report's recommendations cut across the Adults and Safeguarding Committee, whose commissioning plan contains the project for the relocation of Church Farm leisure centre and the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee.

## 5.5 Risk Management

There is a risk that the future re-location of the library will make it less attractive to potential partner organisations to operate the Partnership Library. The proposal to relocate the library was highlighted throughout the procurement process with organisations expressing an interest and subsequently submitting business cases to deliver the service from the library in East Barnet. Therefore, the successful partner will be aware and prepared for the potential relocation. The council will cover the additional costs associated with moving the library in 2019.

## 5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 In line with the 2010 Equality Act, an Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this proposal to relocate East Barnet Library. The full report

can be found in Appendix B. When considering the groups with protected characteristics, it was evaluated that the relocation might impact older people or those with disabilities who currently walk to the library (or travel a very short distance) and school children attending schools neighbouring the library. Public transport routes provide good access to the proposed new site and following consultation with residents, it is clear that residents living close to the Victoria Recreation Ground who currently have to travel to either East Barnet or Chipping Barnet will benefit from the relocation.

- 5.6.2 If the recommendation to relocate the library is approved, the Library Service will investigate the option of providing a new stop for the mobile library in East Barnet to mitigate the impact on those who will find the distance to the proposed new site prohibitive.

## 5.7 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.7.1 See paragraphs 1.10 above. Full results of the consultation can be found in Appendix A.

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

*Barnet's Future Library Service* Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 23 March 2016

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s30694/Barnets%20future%20Library%20Service.pdf>

*The relocation and redevelopment of Church Farm Leisure Centre and the redevelopment of Barnet Cophall Leisure Centre* Policy and Resources Committee, 16 December 2015

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s28130/The%20relocation%20and%20redevelopment%20of%20Church%20Farm%20Leisure%20Centre%20and%20the%20redevelopment%20of%20Barnet%20Coph.pdf>