

Local Members' Interest
Lichfield City North – Caroline Wood
Lichfield City South – Terry Finn
Lichfield Rural East – Alan White
Lichfield Rural North – Janet Eagland
Lichfield Rural South – David Smith
Lichfield Rural West – Martyn Tittley

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 4th March 2016

The Relocation of Lichfield Library

Recommendation/s

1. To consider and scrutinise on the proposal to relocate Lichfield Library

Report of Cllr Ben Adams, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

2. To scrutinise the Outline Business Case for the relocation of Lichfield Library from the Friary to the St. Mary's Heritage Centre in Lichfield town centre.
3. The Library Service welcomes comments from the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee which will inform the delegated decision which will be taken in May 2016.

Report

Background

4. The Outline Business Case details a proposal to relocate Lichfield Library to the St. Mary's Heritage Centre (Church) in Lichfield, which will enable a disposal of the existing library at The Friary.
5. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 gives the County Council a statutory duty to provide "a comprehensive and efficient library service". The Council is also required to ensure that facilities are available for the borrowing of or reference to books, other printed materials, recorded music and films, of sufficient number, range and quality to meet the requirements of adults and children in the County Council's area. The Council must also encourage adults and children to make full use of library services, and lend books and other printed materials free of charge to those who live, work or study in the area.
6. The way people use libraries is changing and the Library Service has recently completed a review which has resulted in a remodelled library service across Staffordshire.
7. The County Council will continue to manage and deliver the full library service, sharing space where possible with a wide range of partners to facilitate access to extra services.

8. From April 2016, the Library Service will support a range of organisations who will take on the management and delivery of 23 Libraries that communities can manage, develop and localise to meet community need.
9. The proposal for Lichfield Library is therefore considered in the context of reshaping libraries in Staffordshire to ensure a sustainable library service for the future.
10. The project focus is to concentrate the library service in one open plan space reflecting how the service provided is changing. Already libraries are moving away from lending DVDs and CDs, and with increasing numbers of people reading books on their tablets and smart phones, it is likely that the need for space for physical books will decline over time. At the same time there is a need for increased access to PCs and the internet and this requirement needs to be reflected in the design of the new facility. By providing an open plan facility this will enable the Service to improve the visitor experience.
11. Key Drivers for the options appraisal that has been completed include:
 - a. an ambition for a more central location
 - b. a modernised and relevant service
 - c. a reduction in the cost of the backlog of maintenance on the existing building
 - d. efficiency savings achieved through a reduced footprint
 - e. cost effective facilities
12. The St Mary's Heritage Centre offers the following:
 - a. Lower cost than commercially available space
 - b. No repair and maintenance liability for St Mary's Centre and removes the county council from the maintenance back log at the Friary
 - c. Reduced running costs for Staffordshire County Council
 - d. Potential access to third party funding
 - e. A town centre location
 - f. Added value in terms of social and community benefit
 - g. Preservation of a Grade 2* listed building
 - h. Best value
13. The savings made as an outcome of this exercise will contribute to the MTFs which was agreed at Full Council on, 11th February 2016.
14. The Friary site comprises of The Lichfield Library and Records Office and the adjoining Art College with a library car park and landscaped areas. In June 2015 The Art College together with the car park and landscaped area was sold. The purchasers are now in the process of redeveloping the site for residential use.
15. Strategic Property will continue to liaise with developers in respect of the sale of the remaining/existing library building.

16. The project aims to:

- a. Create an accessible, vibrant 21st century library that is a flexible community space central to the Lichfield community offering an environment that will enable individuals and communities to access, explore and enjoy reading.
- b. Improve public access.
- c. Support the release of a Staffordshire County Council asset for disposal (The Friary).
- d. Make efficiency savings which will reduce the cost of running the library.
- e. Remove Staffordshire from the maintenance liability associated with The Friary.

Link to Strategic Plan – Libraries and Arts contribute to all of the County Council outcomes and sub-outcomes through improving and innovating the service to increase engagement and outcomes

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity – The ongoing transformation of the Library Service has been scrutinised by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee on 25 January 2015, 1 June 2015 and 12 October 2015.

Community Impact – A Community Impact will be considered to support the delegated decision to ensure that the council has a full understanding of the impact of a final recommendation and how any negative impact can be mitigated to ensure we meet our public sector equalities duty.

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