

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 22 JULY 2021

**Question to Cllr Wilson
Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

By Cllr Hussain

Question

In her video on the Burton library consultation, respected Councillor Victoria Wilson, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, says that moving the library into the market hall would "create increased footfall into the town centre to grow and attract more businesses". On what statistics is this based? According to data from the Freedom of Information Act, the present market hall had a footfall of 249,083 in 2018/19. (the last full year not affected by Covid restrictions.) The Burton library had 276,156 visitors that year. Given that BOTH locations are in Burton town centre (they are less than 250 meters/ 275 yards away), HOW can shutting the market hall and relocating the library "create increased footfall into the town centre"? Without a doubt, it reduces footfall into the town centre by 249,083! Can I ask Cllr Wilson, what statistics did she depend on to make this assertion, or is it a mistake that may severely mislead people being consulted?

Reply

The Council are aware of the Market Hall footfall. At the point of submitting the Town Investment Plan to Government an uplift in footfall of 40% was proposed. The increase in footfall achieved in Lichfield was much higher than this (97%) but the projections were moderated down to take account of the footfall which would be lost because of the market hall closure.

The figures quoted in Cllr Hussain's question are just for the Burton library service itself. Cllr Hussain will be aware that the proposals are broader than moving just the library service. The consolidation of all County staff into the town centre and the footfall from the Registry Office will be moved on top of the library footfall.

In addition to the increase in footfall on the Market Place, the proposals which would follow on from this Council's move away from the existing library site will open up exciting new regeneration opportunities for redevelopment of the waterfront (known as project D – High Street Linkages). This project forms another of the seven inter-related projects contained within the Burton Town Improvement Plan submitted to Government. East Staffordshire Borough Council will lead a public consultation process on project D later in the summer.