

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: Executive

Date: 4 November 2009

Decision Type: Urgent Executive Key

Title: RELOCATION OF ORPINGTON LIBRARY

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Ward: Cray Valley East, Orpington, Petts Wood and Knoll

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals and rationale for the move of the existing Orpington Library into a newly-refurbished office building in the Walnuts Shopping Centre at the heart of Orpington.
- 1.2 The proposal to refurbish the existing Council-owned offices within the Walnuts Shopping Centre will provide a new community focal point, affording the opportunity to provide library services in Orpington fit for the 21st Century. A review of the library service was undertaken in 2006. A number of recommendations were made including: "The provision of a new library in Orpington Town Centre, in or near the High Street. At the Local Economy Portfolio Holder meeting on 12 April 2007 it was agreed that the potential for the relocation of Orpington Library to the Walnuts Shopping Centre be pursued as part of the Orpington Master Plan and that funding for the relocation costs be considered as part of the Master Plan process.
- 1.3 Furthermore, the report provides a range of options to manage the space released by the move of the library, recognising the strategic regeneration value of the area of the existing library and museum.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Executive is requested to recommend to Council that:

- 2.1 **Orpington library be relocated to refurbished accommodation within the current Walnuts building;**

- 2.2 a budget of £1.9 million be approved for the refurbishment and relocation of the library and office accommodation;**
- 2.3 the Chief Property Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to accept the tender which offers the best value to the Council subject to being within budget; and**
- 2.4 that officers further investigate the options for the future use of the existing library and report back their findings to Members.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Vibrant Thriving Town Centres.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost £1.944m
 2. Ongoing costs: Non-recurring cost.
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
 4. Total current budget for this head: £0
 5. Source of funding: LABGI £1.022m/Section 106 & TCI Fund £699K/Capital Programme £223k
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 71 ACS staff currently accommodated within the walnuts will be temporarily relocated to the Old Bromley Town hall. 35 CYP staff currently accommodated within the Walnuts will be relocated to the BTH pending a permanent move to the Civic Centre complex.
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-statutory - Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Library receives 217,000 visits a year with 287,758 items borrowed per year.
 2. As part of this relocation the existing Cash Office will be closed and alternative arrangements will be put in place for payments to be made locally.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Ward Members from Orpington, Petts Wood and Knoll and Cray Valley East were invited to a briefing session to look at the proposals for the new library on the 2nd November 2009.

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The existing Orpington Library serves a sizeable population and is the tenth busiest lending library in London. The service is heavily used by a slightly older than average population and it has a heavy use for recreational reading.
- 3.2 However, the Orpington Master Plan prepared in March 2008 recognised that it is no longer possible to provide a modern library service within the current library building or to improve access. To this end, it is felt that moving the library into more centrally-located Council offices within the Walnuts Shopping Centre creates an opportunity for a better library with improved community facilities, essentially becoming a major civic building of architectural merit in the town centre.
- 3.3 Whilst the existing open civic spaces within the Walnuts are a major focus for Orpington Town Centre, there are many fronts and backs of buildings with blank facades which reduce the opportunity for vibrancy and lower the character of the urban fabric. The existing building has two elevations, front and rear; whilst the rear overlooks a service area, the front faces a central square which forms a focal point within the town centre.
- 3.4 The square has no active edges and is dominated by a new large Sainsbury's store. Moreover, the existing building has an elevation to the square of stock London brick with brown window fenestration, all of which lack visual interest and appeal. The elevation to the square therefore forms a key element in the opportunity to enhance the vibrancy and character of the square and will compliment the proposed improvements to the footpaths and roads which are due to be upgraded from early 2010.

Current Building and Use

- 3.5 The building selected for the relocated library is a three-storey unit, sited opposite the police station and between the new Sainsbury's retail unit and a cafeteria on the corner of the block.
- 3.6 The building has a footprint of approximately 550 m² and is about 34 metres long and 13 metres wide. Over three floors this equates to a gross internal floor area of around 1600 m². The existing building itself is of a concrete framed construction; with a flat roof, masonry external walls and single glazed ribbon windows to the front and rear facades. The existing building is currently occupied by the Orpington Area Office, comprising teams from the Children and Young People, and Adult and Community Services Directorates, serving the east of the Borough. There are a reception, interview rooms and secure meeting room facilities at ground floor level; the first and second floors are predominantly offices (cellular and open plan) and associated storage rooms.
A Cashiers Office on the Ground floor is currently managed by Liberata under the Exchequer Services Contract and where 38,943 payments were made to LB Bromley and 22,741 payments were made to Broomleigh (separate agreement in place between LB Bromley and Broomleigh) in 2008/09.

Proposed Design and Use

- 3.7 It is proposed that the library will occupy the ground and first floors. There is a need to retain the reception and secure interview rooms for the Orpington Area Office at ground floor level, with the remainder given over to library use.
- 3.8 At first floor level there will be a small element of office space for the Orpington Area Office, with the remainder given over to library use. The third floor will comprise open plan office space with associated meeting and supervision rooms, plus touch down and study space for

the Orpington Area Office. The design and proposed use of this space will provide a flexible office environment, facilitating the take up of our Corporate Operating Principles, and creating an environment in which partnership working could be further developed.

- 3.9 The Orpington Area Office at the Walnuts currently comprises teams from both Children and Young People (CYP), and Adult and Community Services (ACS) Directorates, under the proposed scheme, the relocated library building will incorporate Service teams from the ACS Directorate. However, capacity will be retained to enable the CYP Directorate to offer front-line advice and support to service users through shared use of the facilities such as reception and interview rooms. In addition, CYP will utilise the dedicated Children and Family Centres in the area to provide aspects of social care support and intervention.
- 3.10 The central functions for the CYP Social Care services, previously located at the Walnuts, will be re-located to the Civic Centre. However, given the timescales for the phased programme of office accommodation changes, these services will need to be initially based at the former Town Hall in suitably adapted office areas.
- 3.11 The relocation of the library will result in the closure of the existing Ground floor Cash Office. Broomleigh and Liberata have both been informed of the Council's possible intentions to serve notice on the closure of this facility. There are a number of more cost effective methods available for residents to make payments to LB Bromley which are displayed on service bills, invoices and reminders and those local residents who wish to continue to make cash payments may do so at the Civic Centre and at the HSBC Bank in Orpington High Street without charge.
- 3.12 Those residents needing to make payments to Broomleigh HA can do so at 'Paypoint' facilities located in approximately 16 various shops within the wider Orpington area.
- 3.13 A public building should be a focus for the local community; the design of the elevation treatment sees to provide both visual appeal and interest, thereby enhancing both the character of the square and positioning the library at the centre of Orpington.
- 3.14 The proposed rainscreen cladding colour develops an architectural identity established with the development of the Biggin Hill Library, creating a 'civic brand' across the London Borough of Bromley. A strong modern design rationale underpins the design of the front elevation, looking to the future of Orpington with a strong emphasis on a choice of high quality materials and excellent detailing, enhancing both the library and the square. The palette of materials has been carefully selected to provide character and quality to the treatment of the elevations, with clean lines and reflective surfaces promoting a welcoming atmosphere and making activity within the library open to public view from the adjacent square. At night, visual interest will be maintained with the façade illuminated by lights recessed with the paving immediately adjacent to the building. A planning application was submitted on 8 September 2009 for the proposed changes to the front elevation. This application will be considered at the Plans Sub-Committee on 29 October.
- 3.15 Current library opening hours are listed below. Given the strategic importance of the proposed new library consideration is currently being given to amending the existing hours to provide a full library service across Monday to Saturday.

Current Opening Hours	
Monday	9.30am – 6.00pm
Tuesday	9.30am – 8.00pm
Wednesday	9.30am – 6.00pm
Thursday	CLOSED
Friday	9.30am – 8.00pm
Saturday	9.30am – 5.00pm
Sunday	CLOSED

- 3.16 It is proposed that the new library will utilise the radio frequency enabled self-service systems, resulting in:
- No longer a need for large IN and OUT counters.
 - Longer opening hours with minimal staffing levels at quieter times if there was a security presence.
 - The self-service element could easily be on the ground floor enabling more flexible use of the building.
- 3.17 There is level wheelchair access throughout the Library and Advice Centre with lifts refurbished to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Standards and ambulant disabled accessible staircases where possible.
- 3.18 The submission to refurbish the existing Council-owned offices within the Walnuts Shopping Centre to provide a new library with secure interview rooms on the ground floor will provide a new community focal point, affording the opportunity to provide a library service for the 21st Century. The proposed elevation treatment will enhance both the character of the square and position the Library, a civic building of architectural quality, at the centre of Orpington and this, in conjunction with a broader library offer and amendments to library opening hours, will provide a flagship facility for Orpington.
- 3.19 The proposed move of Orpington Library to the Walnuts Shopping Centre presents a range of options for the existing library building which was 1960s addition to the Grade II* listed Priory building which dates from the 13th Century.

Option 1

- 3.20 Relocate the Museum to the Central Library in Bromley and seek to dispose of both buildings on the open market.

Option 2

- 3.21 Utilise the existing library to manage the Council's book stocks, currently housed at Beckenham, Orpington and Central libraries.
- 3.22 This option would free up space at Beckenham Library which could be made accessible to general library users. Free space in the Central Library could contribute to the Council's broader accommodation strategy. This approach could allow for a slightly enhanced Museum by realigning the internal space which was poorly converted when the Library was constructed.

Option 3

- 3.23 Seen to enhance the use of the area for small professional business uses as already in existence in the Priory out-buildings.
- 3.24 Following some initial research a local firm of structural engineers who are currently located in the Priory out-buildings have expressed interest in relocating to the existing library building should this be vacated as part of the proposals set out in this report.
- 3.25 This option, in addition to retaining local employment, would potentially act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the immediate area around the Priory and gardens, through potential financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. In parallel to Option 2, this option would allow for an enhanced museum space, perhaps supported through a purpose-built visitor centre in the grounds maintenance depot in the Priory Gardens. This could have the affect of creating an arts and heritage zone at the southern end of Orpington High Street.
- 3.26 Both Option 2 and 3 seek to address a range of Members views that were expressed at the meeting of the Executive on 3 September 2008, as whilst there was broad support in favour of moving the Library in line with the Master Plan for Orpington, there were a number of concerns expressed around relocating the Museum. There was opposition to the loss of two public amenities at the southern end of Orpington High Street.
- 3.27 The relocation of the Orpington Library from its current location to the Walnuts Shopping Centre further contributes to the Council's aim of creating a Vibrant and Thriving Town Centre by providing a flagship building with fully accessible services that meets the needs and requirements of the local communities.
- 3.28 It is proposed that if the relocation of the existing library is agreed that Officers will further explore all three options with a view to bringing a further report back to members on the outcome of this work.

Temporary Relocation of Orpington Area Office

- 3.29 In order to facilitate a timely and cost effective conversion of the existing building to form the relocated library, the existing occupants will need to be decanted, giving the successful contractor the freedom to work throughout the building.
- 3.30 Space within that part of the Old (Bromley) Town Hall, previously occupied by Bromley College, has been identified as suitable to provide temporary decant space.
- 3.31 In addition, temporary touch down space (somewhere for staff to access their email and other line of business systems) has been identified within St. Paul's Cray, at the Midfield Centre on

Chipperfield Road. This will allow staff working in the east of the borough to remain in that locale, instead of travelling between the Old Town Hall and the Orpington area to log into council systems.

- 3.32 If the opportunity is not taken to use the Old (Bromley) Town hall for decant space, the works to the new library and offices would be dependent on the accommodation works in the Civic being in place to be used as temporary accommodation. Early programming suggests that this would delay the completion of the library until 2011.

Programme of Works

- 3.33 The indicative project plan would have the Walnuts office building decanted over two weekends in January 2010. This would allow essential enabling works to be undertaken in advance of the major remodelling project, timetabled to commence in February 2010 and completion in August 2010.
- 3.34 The fit out of the new library facility and transfer of existing stock will happen thereafter, with the opening of the new Orpington Library anticipated for late September 2010.
- 3.35 Adult and Community Services staff temporarily decanted to the Old Town Hall would then move back into their new office environment.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed relocation of the Orpington Library originally arose out of the 2006 review of the borough's library service. This was further endorsed when it was formally agreed at the Local Economy Portfolio Holders meeting on the 12 April 2007 that the relocation of the Orpington Library be included within the Orpington Master Plan supporting the Council's broader objectives around vibrant and thriving town centres.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The reasons for the proposals in this report are mainly non- financial factors. The report identifies the benefits the move of the library as part of the Orpington Master Plan and also potential benefits as part of the Council's mobile and flexible working plans which will provide financial benefits in the longer term. The report also highlights the strategic regeneration value of the area of the existing library and museum
- 5.2 The one off cost of the proposals, if approved, will form part of the Council Capital programme. The total one off cost of the works are £1,944k including all decant costs relating to the temporary transfer of staff to Bromley Town Hall as detailed in Appendix 1 in the confidential (Part II) of the agenda. Members should note that provisional estimates are included within the Appendix and are subject to the outcome of tendering of works.
- 5.3 A sum of £2m was included in the Council's 2009/10 for the funding of capital works and other initiatives which is planned to be utilised for other schemes, including the Orpington Area. There remains funding available from previously received Local Authority Business Improvement Scheme, Section 106 funding (Nugent monies) and the Town Centre Improvement Fund as detailed below:

	£'000
LABGI funding	
- LABGI monies received in 2007/08 to 2009/10 (excluding monies set aside for Building a Better Bromley)	1,222
- Less agreed drawdown for TC Development (Executive)	-200

Sub total	1,022
Section 106 monies (incl interest)	474
Balance remaining from town centre improvement fund	225

Sub total	1,721
Balance to be funding from capital programme	223
Total funding required	1,944

- 5.4 The above table identifies potential funding of £1,721k available with further funding of £223k required from the Council's Capital programme i.e. funded through capital receipts. The equivalent loss of investment income from utilising these resources, based on investment rate of 1.25% per annum is £24.3k per annum.
- 5.5 The report also identifies three options for the existing library. These options will be further investigated and a report brought back to Members with the resultant financial implications.
- 5.6 There are no revenue implications currently anticipated to impact on either the Walnuts Office Building or the Surplus Property budgets as all decanting costs will be capitalised.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The staff at Orpington Library have been fully consulted on the proposals to relocate the Library and a number of them have been involved with the Project Team in looking at the mix of services, layout and management issues of the proposed new library.
- 6.2 Staff from both Adult and Community Services and Children and Young People Departments have been fully consulted on the proposals and have input into the design and layout of the new accommodation and also the proposed temporary relocation.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	ACS PDS – 21 November 2006 ACS PH – 6 December 2006 ELS PDS – 23 November 2006 LE PDS – 28 November 2006 LE PH – 25 January 2007 LE PH – 12 April 2007 Orpington Master Plan document Planning submission – Plans Sub-Committee – 29 October 2009 Executive – 2 September 2008