

Committee	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee		
Report Title	Libraries Saving Programme Update		
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services		
Date	4 July 2016	Item	3

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 30 November 2015, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee considered the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed changes to the Library and Information Service in the context of the Lewisham Future Programme that set out the Draft Savings Proposals for 2016/17, and made comments and recommendations to Mayor and Cabinet.
- 1.2. On 9 December 2015, Mayor and Cabinet resolved to extend the Community Library model to Forest Hill, Torrington and Manor House libraries and instructed officers to identify suitable partner organisations. Officers were also asked to bring back more detailed plans on the proposed reconfiguration of the library in the ground floor of Laurence House, Catford.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This report informs the Select Committee of progress in identifying partner organisations for the community libraries and of the reconfiguration of the ground floor of Laurence House, and invites comments prior to the report being presented to Mayor and Cabinet.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The report to Mayor and Cabinet will recommend that:
 - V22 is approved as the preferred partner for Forest Hill and that the Executive Director for Regeneration is delegated to negotiate a lease for the Forest Hill Library building for a minimum term of 25 years to enable the provision of a community library in partnership with Lewisham Council.
 - The Archibald Corbett Society working with the Corbett Residents Association are approved as the preferred partners for Torrington Road Library building and that the Executive Director for Community Services is delegated to negotiate a premises management agreement for an interim period whilst their business plan for the building is further developed in order to be considered for a lease.
 - Officers are instructed to carry out a further exercise as described in paragraph 8.7 to identify a suitable partner organisation for Manor House Library and that interim arrangements for the management of the building be put in place as described at para 8.8. An update on progress to be reported to Safer Stronger Select Committee in September and the final outcome of this to be brought back to Mayor and Cabinet for approval.

- The proposed arrangement for the provision of library services in Laurence House, Catford as described in section 10 is noted.

4. Policy context

- 4.1. Shaping the Future, the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy includes the following priority outcomes which relate to the work of the Library and Information Service and reflect the Council's aspirations for the service:
- Ambitious and Achieving – where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.
 - Empowered and Responsible – where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities.
 - Healthy, Active and Enjoyable – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing.
 - Dynamic and Prosperous – where people are part of vibrant localities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.
- 4.2. The Library and Information Service also contributes to the following Council Priorities:
- Community leadership and empowerment – developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community.
 - Strengthening the local economy – gaining resources to regenerate key localities, strengthen employment skills and promote public transport.
 - Active, healthy citizens – leisure, sporting, learning and creative activities for everyone.

5. The Proposal

- 5.1. The Budget Savings Proposal presented to the Select Committee on 16 September 2015 was based on:
- The creation of three Hub Libraries – Deptford Lounge, Lewisham and Downham Health & Leisure Centre—which will carry an enhanced role for face to face contact between the Local Authority and the public to support the digital by default agenda.
 - The extension of the Lewisham Community Library Model to Forest Hill, Torridon, and Manor House, in partnership with other council services and community organisations. And the integration of the library provision into the repurposed ground floor space within the Catford complex (Laurence House).
 - The review of front line staff to include new functions through the re-training and enhancement of front line roles
- 5.2. Implementation of this proposal will release revenue savings of £950,000 to the Library budget. The proposal also includes efficiencies to be realised on the Deptford Lounge budget which would produce savings of £50,000.

6. Identifying Partner Organisations

- 6.1. The Council conducted a soft market test to gauge the interest in the transfer of the Forest Hill, Manor House, and Torridon Road buildings to potential

partners. The Test attracted a number of organisations from the commercial, public, and voluntary sectors.

- 6.2. A full tender pack was produced and made available through the London Procurement Portal and the Council website. Twenty organisations registered through the portal. Officers facilitated visits to the library buildings, responded to questions and met with interested organisations.
- 6.3. Potential partner organisations and their proposals were assessed using the following five criteria
- Proposed use of the building and associated community benefits including community library service
 - Organisational Capacity
 - Capital funding plan
 - Ability to take on financial responsibilities of running the library building including income and expenditure forecast
 - Plans to involve the community

7. Forest Hill

- 7.1. Two organisations developed proposals for the Forest Hill Library. One of these stated that they would require ongoing revenue support from the council and that proposal was therefore not taken forward.
- 7.2. The preferred bidder is V22, an arts organisation with a shared ownership model that specialises in the collection of contemporary art, the production of exhibitions and events, the provision of artists' studios, workspaces and artisans' workshops at affordable rates, and the running of community engagement and education programmes. V22 includes V22 plc, V22 London Ltd, and the V22 Foundation. It would be the V22 Foundation that would take on the lease for Forest Hill Library. V22 have extensive experience of managing buildings. They hold the lease for Louise House which is adjacent to Forest Hill Library and have successfully raised the capital funding to refurbish the building and create artist studios and community spaces. The bid clearly demonstrated that V22 has the organisational capacity to manage Forest Hill Library building.
- 7.3. V22 submitted a comprehensive and well-structured proposal aimed at creating "a community hub for the advancement of art, education, and the personal and physical wellbeing of local residents". V22 suggested to retain the fundamental role of the library building, to enhance it through the development of specific, art-related material and activities, and to integrate the building in the complex that includes Louise House and the Forest Hill pools. They would do this by:
- Developing a specialist art section
 - Hosting talks and symposia as well as small classes
 - Introducing The Philosophy Foundation as an anchor tenant to the building
 - Hosting activities on topics of interest to local residents, including ancestry, Lego clubs, Code Clubs, and others
 - Using available spaces other than the library for hireable studios and workspace areas
 - Reinstating the writer-in-residence programme, and

- Developing activities for children and young people
The proposed uses will complement and enhance the library services whilst providing an income stream for the building.

- 7.4. The income and expenditure plan submitted as part of the bid was realistic with the main source of income coming from studio rental income. The expenditure efficiencies will be realised through managing the Forest Hill Library building jointly with Louise House. V22 have demonstrated that they have the skills to attract and manage capital funding. It is proposed that V22 take on a full repairing lease. There would be no rent in return for working in partnership with the council to ensure the continued provision of a community library within the building.
- 7.5. The bid clearly showed that V22 had engaged thoroughly with the local community. A number of key local organisations are active partners in the bid. V22 propose to formalise their relationship with local organisations through a Management Agreement that will include the V22 Foundation as the proposed lessee and V22 London, the Forest Hill Society, the Forest Hill Traders Association, and the newly created Friends of the Forest Hill Library. The day to day running of the building will be overseen by this consortium of organisations bringing a great deal of local knowledge and community contacts.
- 7.6. It is recommended that officers work with V22 and others to progress the lease for the Forest Hill building and enable the extension of the community library model to Forest Hill.

8. Manor House

- 8.1. While a number of organisations expressed an interest in the Manor House building, only one proposal from Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) was submitted.
- 8.2. GLL is a national leading charitable social enterprise and large leisure and cultural service provider established in 1993. Their track record clearly demonstrated that they have the organisational capacity to take on the management of Manor House.
- 8.3. GLL's proposal looked at retaining the library space and using their own expertise in library management to enhance the community library offer in conjunction with developing strong income streams to support the running costs of the building. A key component of their income generation strategy was to create an Ofsted registered day nursery in the lower ground floor.
- 8.4. In order to fulfil Ofsted requirements the day nursery would need to have access to a dedicated outdoor play space for the children. This would have required the fencing off of part of the library grounds at the rear of the building. Manor House is a Grade II* listed building. Discussions with planning and conservation officers were held and although the required internal alterations could have been accommodated without damaging the historic fabric of the building it became clear that Listed Building Consent for the fence required to enclose the play area was unlikely to be forthcoming.

- 8.5. The requirement for external play space surrounded by a high level, close-boarded or opaque enclosure would obscure the views of the building from the Garden. This barrier would detract from the overall aesthetic quality of the rear of the building and its relationship with Manor House Gardens. Had the proposal presented a high quality enclosure of reduced height, which allowed greater views of the building, this may have been supported. However it was not possible to secure this given the operators requirements and the time restraints of the tender process.
- 8.6. Without being able to develop the income stream from the Day Nursery it was felt that the GLL proposal was not viable. Officers were therefore unable to support this proposal but would be happy to discuss alternative suggestions from GLL should they come forward.
- 8.7. There is therefore not a preferred bid for Manor House Library Building. Officers feel that given that the partnership arrangement could be for 25 years it is important that time is taken to ensure the right proposal is taken forward that works within the restrictions of the Grade II* listing status. Feedback from potential bidders suggests that the prospect of taking on the responsibility of a lease for such an important building has proved to be a disincentive. It is therefore recommended that officers undertake a further exercise to identify suitable partner organisations for Manor House building but include a clear option to occupy the building with a premises management agreement, where the partner organisation would have responsibility for the day to day running costs and the council would retain responsibility for the statutory maintenance. Officers will also engage the services of a specialist agency to broaden the search for a suitable partner.
- 8.8. The search for a new partner will re-commence immediately and an update on progress will be provided to Safer Stronger Select Committee in September 2016. The timetable for the service wide staff reorganisation will remain unchanged. Implementation will take effect in mid-September and from that time the library service will no longer be responsible for the day to day management of the building. The council however, will retain this responsibility and will put in place alternative building management resource. The building will continue to open to the public on a reduced number of hours. Library services will be available on a self-service basis, supported by visits from the peripatetic library team that supports the community libraries and there will be the possibility of accommodating community uses. Further details of these interim management arrangements will be reported to Safer Stronger in September and the period for the interim arrangements will be kept as short as possible.

9. Torridon Road

- 9.1. GLL also submitted a proposal for the Torridon Road building that they would have managed in tandem with Manor House. They did not think it was feasible to manage Torridon Road in isolation and therefore this proposal was not taken forward for the reasons outlined above.
- 9.2. However, a number of local organisations led by the Archibald Corbett Society expressed an interest in the building but, being themselves in a development phase at the time of the procurement, were unable to submit a full bid.

- 9.3. The Archibald Corbett Society and Corbett Residents Association have since contacted the council reiterating the interest of their in taking on the management of the library building in Torridon Road. The initial proposal has been assessed against the five criteria and it is considered that there is a strong enough case to take the proposal forward although further work will be required before a full lease could be negotiated.
- 9.4. It is proposed that the Archibald Corbett Society and the Corbett Residents Association work together to establish a Community Interest Company to manage the Torridon Rd Library Building. The two partners have a wide range of skills sets between them, including community development, finance, fundraising, community assets and managing volunteers. Officers will need to do further work to establish the exact governance arrangements but the track record of the two organisations and key individuals suggest that sufficient organisational capacity could be developed to support the management of the building.
- 9.5. The proposal is to retain the library as the core of the building, but to develop additional services that would make the organisation sustainable in the longer term. These services may include a café, developing existing office spaces into work spaces for renting out to local business people, afternoon music recitals with cream teas from the café and evening jazz and music recitals with a bar, digital inclusion to include IT for children and the older people, a Kumon educational centre, childcare and children's activities, film shows, healthy eating cookery clubs and an arts, heritage and history centre. The proposed activities would complement and enhance the community library whilst offering opportunity for income generation. One of the strengths of this proposal is that it has grown from two of the key local community organisations. The proposed activities have come from the interests and needs of their memberships who are all local residents. The continued involvement of local residents is an integral part of the project.
- 9.6. A detailed business plan has not yet been fully developed but it is felt that the proposed activities could provide sufficient income streams to sustain the building in the long term. It is recommended that officers work initially with the Archibald Corbett Society and Corbett Residents Association to put in place a premises management agreement enabling them to take on the day to day management of the building, but with the council retaining responsibility for statutory maintenance of the building. This would be an interim arrangement whilst the business plan was further developed prior to a lease being negotiated. There would be no rent payable in return for working in partnership with the council to ensure the continued provision of a community library within the building.
- 9.7. It is recommended that officers work with the Archibald Corbett Society and others to develop a Premises Management Agreement for the building to enable the extension of the community library model to Torridon Road.

10. Catford

- 10.1. Officers have further developed proposals for Catford Library as part of a newly integrated ground floor space within the Laurence House building. Some agreed principles include:

- The integration of receptions and the relocation of the main reception area.
- The opening up of the ground floor space as one public area but with the majority of the library floor space remaining unchanged.
- The introduction of a comfortable self-service lounge area where residents can use technology to access services for themselves.
- The increased opening hours for the library using self-service terminals from 8am.
- The allocation of two full time equivalent Library Assistants and the support of the Community Engagement Team to support the library provision in the space.

10.2. Appendix 1 offers a draft layout for the space.

11. Stakeholder Engagement

11.1. Officers have worked with local community stakeholders in developing the library proposals. Meetings were held to discuss the draft tender pack and ideas and information about the kinds of community activities that stakeholders felt would be appropriate were included.

11.2. It was initially intended to hold a community stakeholder event so that officers could obtain feedback on bids. However, it was decided due to the small number of bids that individual meetings for each library would be more productive. Officers met with ward councillors and representatives from local community organisations (where they were not directly involved in a bid). In some instances there was still concern about how the community library model would work in their locality but there was also a great deal of support particularly with the strong involvement of local community organisations within the two preferred bids.

11.3. In addition officers attended the Lee Green Assembly stall at the Manor House Gardens Festival on 18 June, the Forest Hill Assembly and the Rushey Green Assembly on 28 June. Unfortunately Catford South Assembly did not have a meeting that fitted within the timetable of the tender process.

12. Equalities implications

12.1. Partner organisations working with the council to enable community libraries are required to have comprehensive equalities policies and procedures to ensure that library services remain accessible to residents from all protected characteristics. V22 and the Archibald Corbett Society are able to demonstrate that they meet this requirement.

12.2. The reduced interim opening hours at Manor House Library will make it more difficult for residents to access library services. However, this is intended to be a short-term measure and officers will consider the pattern of opening hours that ensures a range of users with different needs are accommodated.

13. Legal implications

13.1. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes provision for regulating and improving library services.

Section 7(1) sets out the duty of every library authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”.

Section 7(2) provides that, in fulfilling its duties, a library authority should have regard to the desirability “of securingby any other appropriate means” that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, pictures, records, films and other materials in sufficient number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements of adults and children.

Section 9(1) provides that “a library authority may make contributions towards the expenses ofany person providing library facilities for members of the public”.

14. Financial implications

- 14.1. This report relates to savings proposal L6 considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 16 September 2015. The proposal is for a reduction of £1m against the current net library budget of £4.18m, phased £400k in 2016/17 and £600k in 2017/18.

15. Crime and disorder implications

- 15.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

16. Environmental implications

- 16.1. There are no direct environmental implications in this report.

17. Conclusion

- 17.1. Good progress has been made on implementing the libraries savings programme. The local community led approaches for Forest Hill Library and Torridon Road Library will ensure that those buildings continue to provide an important resource within their communities whilst ensuring access to library services. The scale and historic importance of Manor House Library has made it a more challenging proposition, but with the proposed changes to the tender pack and support from a specialist agency to broaden the search it is anticipated that an appropriate partner will be identified.

Background Papers

30 November 2015 Safer Stronger Select Committee Proposed changes to the Lewisham Library and Information Service
http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s40112/4_LibrariesConsultation2015Update_30112015.pdf

9 December 2015 Mayor and Cabinet Revenue Budget Savings Report
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s40314/Appendix%20i%20-%20SSSC%20libraries%20consultation%20outcome.pdf>

Resolved:

(2) For saving L6 – Libraries and Information Services the recommendations set out in the separate full report and appendices at Appendix 1 be approved; namely:

- the results of the consultation set out in sections 6 and 7 of the report and in appendix 1 be noted;*
- the proposed saving of £1million from the Library and Information Service budget be approved;*
- the retention of three hub libraries at Deptford Lounge, Lewisham and Downham Health and Leisure Centre as set out at paragraph 5.1 be approved;*
- the Lewisham Community Library model as described in paragraph 5.1 be extended to Forest Hill, Torridon and Manor House libraries and for a formal tender process to be undertaken to identify partner organisations to work with the council to deliver this. The council will work with local stakeholders as part of this process;*
- the development of detailed plans for the reconfiguration of the library and public reception area at the ground floor of Laurence House in Catford as set out at para 5.1 and 6.10 be approved;*

For further information please contact
Liz Dart, Head of Culture and Community Development on 020 8314 6115.

Appendix 1

**Laurence House – Ground floor
Sketch plan (to be tabled at the meeting)**