

<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Libraries Savings Programme Update		
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	Item No.	
<b>Ward</b>	Forest Hill, Catford South, Rushey Green and Lee Green		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Community Services, Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date:	13 July 2016

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. On 9 December 2015, Mayor and Cabinet resolved to extend the Community Library model to Forest Hill, Torricon 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 provides information about progress in identifying partner organisations for the community libraries and of the reconfiguration of the ground floor of Laurence House.

## **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. The Mayor is recommended to:

- 3.1.1. Approve V22 as the preferred partner for Forest Hill and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director for Community Services and the Head of Law, to negotiate the terms of a lease for the Forest Hill Library building with V22 for a minimum term of 25 years at a nil rent to enable the provision of a community library in partnership with Lewisham Council.
- 3.1.2. Approve The Archibald Corbett Society working with the Corbett Residents Association as the preferred partners for Torricon Road Library building and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Community Services to negotiate the terms of 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.
- 3.1.3. Instruct officers 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.
- 3.1.4. To note that an update on progress of the exercise for Manor House Library will be reported to Safer Stronger Select Committee in September 2016 and the final outcome will be reported back to Mayor and Cabinet for approval.

- 3.1.4. Note the proposed arrangement for the provision of library services in Laurence House, Catford as described in section 10.

#### **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 Mayor and Cabinet in November 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:

6.4.

- 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:

7.4.

- 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

- 7.5. The proposed uses will complement and enhance the library services whilst providing an income stream for the building.
- 7.6. 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.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. 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:
- 10.2.
- 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.

10.3. 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, and 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. Comments of Regeneration and Asset Management**

12.1. The Market Rental Value of Forest Hill Library is assessed as being £50,000 per annum. A 25 year lease at nil rent would therefore result in the Council foregoing a total rent of £1.25m. However it is noted that the Council will also benefit from the reduction in property related management and staff costs which result from progressing with this proposal.

## **13. Equalities implications**

13.1. 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.

13.2. 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.

## **14. Legal implications**

- 14.1. 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 securing ....by 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 of .....any person providing library facilities for members of the public”.
- 14.2. This report recommends that a 25 year full repairing and insuring lease of Forest Hill Library is given to V22. The final terms of the lease will need to be agreed with V22. However, the lease will contain obligations for V22 to deliver agreed community library services in the form of specified outputs, failing which the Council will have the ability to terminate the lease and take the property back.
- 14.3. Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council may not dispose of non-housing land otherwise than for the best consideration reasonably obtainable except with the consent of the Secretary of State. The Council will not be receiving best consideration for the lease. However the Secretary of State has issued a general consent under Section 123 which applies where:
- (a) the authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area, or all or any of the persons resident or present in its area:
- the promotion or improvement of economic well-being  
the promotion or improvement of social well-being  
the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being; and
- (b) the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000.
- The Mayor should therefore be satisfied for the reasons set out in this report, the grant of the lease to V22 will contribute to the improvement of the social well-being of persons resident in the borough.
- 14.4. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

14.5 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and
- other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

14.6 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

14.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value.

The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>

14.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision making
3. Engagement and the equality duty
4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
5. Equality information and the equality duty

14.9 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

## 15. Financial implications

15.1. 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.

**16. Crime and disorder implications**

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

**17. Environmental implications**

17.1. There are no direct environmental implications in this report.

**18. Conclusion**

18.1. 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](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.