

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr David Dixon, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods Councillor Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 11th Aug 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2686
TITLE:	Consultation Outcomes For Radstock Library Move	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Consultation outcome analysis Radco design layout		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council has been consulting the residents of Bath & North East Somerset on the type of services they would like to see in a new library facility in the Radstock area, this decision takes into account the outcome of this consultation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Library facilities are re-located to new premises in the RADCO superstore
- 2.2 That the Library will be open to Customers during the opening hours of the store, through a mixture of staffed and self-serve provision
- 2.3 The new Library facility will take into account other requests made through the consultation process and be designed to accommodate as many as possible.
- 2.4 Concerns relating to Children Centre provision are noted and will be provided for.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Whilst Customer Services (including Libraries) along with all other services in the Council are faced with achieving savings targets, this decision is not specifically predicated on making significant savings, but enabling the Council to make better use of its assets and to enable value for money for its residents.
- 3.2 The property currently occupied by the Library is adjacent to the Radstock Children Centre and part of the Library space is currently used by Children Services to provide both services to children and young families as well as administrative office space. Sure Start funding of £30,000 was provided to extend the building and would need to be repaid or the space re-provided if it does not continue to be used for such purposes.
- 3.3 The Library building is owned by the Council and Library Services are responsible for repair and maintenance costs of £11,815. An all-inclusive rental for the space in RADCO will be charged and this will be in the sum of £15,000. Therefore there is a slight increase in annual costs for Customer Services.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that upon the Library Service vacating the building that Children Services will take over responsibility for the building in order to support the needs of Radstock Children Centre as it is designated as one of the main hubs for Children Services in the area.
- 3.5 Staffing costs to provide the current Library Service which is open for 23 hours per week (59 hours of staff time due to the need for double staffing), equates to £30,170. In the new Library facility we plan to introduce a system called Open+ supported by Library staff which will enable the Library to be accessible for 78 hours per week. In the new environment there is not such a need for double staffing so a saving of 21hours will be made and this equates to £11,537
- 3.6 There are no plans to make any staff compulsory redundant, all savings will be achieved through natural wastage.
- 3.7 There are no Capital costs for implementing Open+ but there is a monthly cost in the region of £500 - £600 per month. Therefore overall Revenue savings will be around £5,000 per annum, with a huge increase in opening times.
- 3.8 There will be Capital costs to fitting out the new space in RADCO and this work is currently on-going. It is anticipated with furniture and fittings included that the budget required may be up to £185,000 and this will be funded through Property Capital Support & Maintenance budgets
- 3.9 The new facility in Radco measures 143m², this compares to the current space of 153.33m². Details of the new layout can be seen at Appendix 2.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Consultation on this proposal has highlighted issues relating to the on-going provision of Children Services and there are statutory responsibilities relating to the provision of Library Services.
- 4.2 As indicated in the report the concerns relating to the on-going provision of Children Centre Services will be addressed and actually enhanced.

- 4.3 The library Service within Bath & North East Somerset is a statutory requirement under the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964 which sets out the following general duty of library authorities.

'It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'.

- 4.4 This proposal ensures commitment to the residents and users of Library facilities in this area of Bath & North East Somerset for continued provision of such services in a new modern environment.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Library Services across the country have been coming under mounting financial pressures from reductions in Government spending and in some areas there have been closures of facilities, often against the backdrop of public outrage.
- 5.2 In Bath & North East Somerset we have managed to avoid such drastic actions, although we have still made significant savings amounting to £250,000 in 2013/14, whilst at the same time developing new and exciting approaches with the introduction of 3 Community Libraries, a new facility in Paulton and the forthcoming opening of a new library and one stop shop in Keynsham.
- 5.3 Library usage in terms of book issues and footfall are declining nationally and this is no different in Radstock, (see table below) in response to this many Councils are seeking to review their strategies and are moving towards the creation of Libraries as community spaces providing a wider range of resources.

Table 1

	Avg Issues per month
2012	1703.5
2013	1581.5
2014	1325.5

- 5.4 The opportunity to re-locate the Library in Radstock was presented to the council almost 12 months ago when Radco started to refurbish its store. Members asked officers to review the option in early 2014 and it was felt that the idea should be progressed on the basis that the move in to a superstore would enable longer opening hours and the potential to increase usage.
- 5.5 The business case did show that there was potential for small revenue saving but that Capital costs would be required to make the new premises ready. It was initially felt that the Library premises could be vacated to deliver a capital receipt, but after listening to local concerns and understanding the role of the new Children's Centre Hub that this would not be possible in the short term. Although the wider regeneration plans for Radstock may provide future opportunities which the Council should be able to support.
- 5.6 At the end of April 2014, Ian Savigar, Divisional Director for Customer Services & Councillor David Dixon addressed a meeting of the Radstock Town Council to explain the proposals and to announce that consultation would take place in order to ensure that the needs of the community could be met within the new facility.

- 5.7 With any change of this nature there are mixed emotions and the Town Council officers expressed a range of concerns about moving the existing Library, with some Members keen to see the consultation and the plans. 80 residents signed a petition against the closure and their concerns are taken in to account within the consultation process (outlined at Section 8)
- 5.8 Whilst the detailed outcomes of the consultation process are covered in Section 8 and Appendix 1. It is clear that along with the provision of traditional Library services, people were keen that longer opening hours could be achieved with some people suggesting this would encourage them to use a Library for the first time. In order to do this we plan to implement a solution called Open+ which will give Members access to the facility during shop opening hours.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the move will be complete around November / December this year subject to recommendations being agreed and plans completed on time.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The re-location of Library Services into the Radco Superstore enables the Council to provide a big increase in its opening hours to local residents. It aims to use the new space to increase the number of issues and users from people who will not have used the facilities before. It will provide a wider range of services and improved digital access to services.
- 6.2 Co-location with Radco is in line with the Council's policy to work closely with partners and offers the potential for using this innovative solution to learn about how future provision may develop.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Maintaining the Library in its current location has always been part of the consideration and an issue which has been raised by some of the existing users, but given the opportunity to use the new innovative co-location with Radco to increase usage and provide extended opening hours this was not the preferred option.
- 7.2 A request has been made to consider the old Nat West Building as an alternative venue but again this would not offer the same level of opportunity.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 On the 18th June 2014 the Council opened consultation by asking local people about the types of services they would like to see available at the new Radstock Library. The consultation was conducted online and via paper forms at Radstock Library. The detailed responses to the consultation can be found at Appendix 1.
- 8.2 There were 102 responses received, with 77 people adding comments. The most popular requests for the new facility included the provision of Free wifi, longer opening hours, particularly for book returns. There was also a desire for greater access to Council services through the provision of a free phone service and a variety of surgeries.
- 8.3 As stated in the consultation process we are already committed to supplying the following services

- A wide range of books, spoken word books and DVDs for all ages
- Computers and printing
- Newspapers and magazines
- Library staff to help
- Local History books
- Photocopier
- Self Service kiosks to issue and return items and pay charges
- Flat access for disabled users

8.4 In addition to the public consultation a petition was received from Library Users and the responses to these are also contained in Appendix 1

8.5 The Section 151 Officer and Monitoring officer have been consulted in terms of the financial implications and the proper process respectfully.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

9.2 The Risks are being documented and mitigating actions recorded, issues raised in the consultation process are being taken in to account.

Contact person	<i>Ian Savigar, Divisional Director for Customer Services, Telephone: 01225 477327</i>
Background papers	<i>List here any background papers not included with this report, and where/how they are available for inspection.</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	