

Caroline Ambrose 13 March 2017 B&NES Communities Meeting

As a resident and frequent library user, I've been shocked by misleading statements about site space. I've emailed Martin Veal, Councillor for Libraries more than once since January *without reply*. I find this astonishing and concerning. However, Ian Savigar, Divisional Director for Libraries *did* want to meet and we had a successful meeting last week concerning site options.

The Council has committed to the city's library being the equivalent size of the Podium site. This is also extremely important to the 600+ Save Bath Library members and 5,200 petition signers.

As a senior commercial sector manager for 20 years, most recently BAA plc's 500 retail sites across UK airports including Heathrow, I know about cost efficiencies. I know about maximising space. After examining scaled Lewis House and Podium floorplans with architects, I am 100% clear Lewis House does not have this space.

Here's why: the net Podium library site is **2,284 sq metres**. The net available space for library use across five floors of Lewis House is just **1,389 sq metres**. It's questionable but not unreasonable to add displaced local archive space and an *exterior* staircase would add a little more, but even with both, Lewis House is still a floor and a half short.

Getting the equivalent space will mean building up or out, adding greatly to the already £5.9m public cost. Further, multi-level sites are highly cost inefficient and insecure. Expect to multiply, not reduce the existing library staffing spend *and* plan for security staff on top of that. That £800k saving will not happen.

So, after Ian agreed we need other options, I looked at the Podium floorplan. Ian tells me the One Stop Shop's footfall has halved, and the space, could halve too. The Council's documents show the One Stop Shop footprint as 302 sq m. Neatly, releasing the local archives from the Podium to the Guildhall creates 150 sq m. So, moving a downsized Shop up to the Podium presents a highly efficient solution.

**No enormous capital cost. *Realistic* opportunities to save money. Leasing opportunities at Lewis House.** I earnestly hope the Council agrees to thoroughly researching options and working transparently with campaigners and librarians to find a solution Bath can be proud of.