

**Report for:** Cabinet (15 Nov 16)

**Item number:** 9

**Title:** Muswell Hill Library – Next Steps

**Report authorised by :** Tracie Evans, Chief Operating Officer

**Lead Officer:** Zoe Robertson, Customer Services & Libraries

**Ward(s) affected:** Muswell Hill, Fortis Green

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

- 1.1 The Council has recently carried out a 12 week consultation looking at the option of moving Muswell Hill Library to a new location at 54/56 Muswell Hill (the site of the former Green Man pub). Over 1280 responses were received including 775 from the N10 area.
- 1.2 This paper summarises the results of this consultation and sets out the next steps for exploring the options for Muswell Hill library and 54/56 Muswell Hill.

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

- 2.1 The council is committed to Haringey's library service and investing in our network of nine libraries. We have invested £5m in transforming Marcus Garvey and Wood Green Libraries, integrating these key sites with Customer Service Centres, and we have committed a further £2.5m improving Hornsey Library and IT services across the libraries network.
- 2.2 It is a rare opportunity in the current financial climate for a council to look at reproviding a community library service in a modern, larger space without compromising service provision. As such, this was an important consultation for Muswell Hill and the majority of respondents were in favour of staying in the current building despite its limitations around access and state of repair.
- 2.3 It is clear from the consultation that there is a strength of feeling around the current library building and there is a distinction between this and the provision of the actual library service. Under the circumstances it is right to further explore the potential future uses of the building and also that of 54/56 Muswell Hill to ensure the future recommendations on the location of the library take into consideration the options for both these sites.

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To authorise the Assistant Director for Capital Property and Major Projects, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services & Culture, to explore potential options for future uses of Muswell Hill Library and 54/56 Muswell Hill to support the decision making process around the best options for both sites, including retention of the library service in the current building, or the ground floor of the new building.
- 3.2 Based on the findings of 3.1 above, for the Assistant Directors for Capital Property and Major Projects and for Customer Services & Libraries, to present a Cabinet Report in Spring 2017 which sets out a recommendation on the future location of Muswell Hill Library.

### 4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The consultation results and comments show that respondents feel strongly about retaining the current library building as a community asset. The consultation results are detailed further in section 6 and in the appendices.
- 4.2 There is a clear theme in the consultation responses around the value of the current library building as a community asset, given its listed status and architectural importance in Muswell Hill.
- 4.3 Given the strength of feeling around the current library building, it is recommended that further consideration is given to the possible future uses of both the current library building, and the new ground floor space at 54/56 Muswell Hill, including retention of the library service in the current building, or the ground floor of the new building.
- 4.4 It is recommended that a further Cabinet Paper be presented in spring 2017 which explores the options so for the current building and for 54/56 Muswell Hill. This means that a decision on the future location of the library can be taken in consideration of these possible options.

### 5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 **Do nothing.** As the consultation results were in favour of leaving the library service in the current building, there is the option of doing nothing and making no changes to the service. However, given the council have acquired the new space at 54/56 Muswell Hill and the opportunity to move the library service to this location, this option is not recommended at this point. Once full consideration has been given to the possible options for both the current library building and 54/56 Muswell Hill, then a balanced decision can be made on the future location for the library service.

- 5.2 **Make a decision now without knowledge of the future possible options for the current library building or 54/56 Muswell Hill.** It is possible to take a decision at this point on where the library service should be located without consideration for how the current library site or 54/56 Muswell Hill could be used. This is not recommended as it will be preferable to take this decision with full consideration of the options available for both sites, including retention of the library service in the current building, or the ground floor of the new building.

## 6. Background information

- 6.1 The London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy (LCCCP) was originally proposed to be located at 54/56 Muswell Hill. Subsequently a Council building in Coppetts Road was identified as a more appropriate building for the special needs of their clients than 54/56 Muswell Hill. A Cabinet decision was taken in October 2015 to approve a land-swap agreement with the LCCCP to allow them to acquire the freehold of Coppetts Road from the Council and for the Council to secure the long lease (999 years) on the site at 54/56 Muswell Hill.
- 6.2 As part of this deal, the council acquired the ground and first and second floors of the site to 'shell and core', with the upper floors being developed into affordable residential flats. The space is subject to a small area of the ground floor being sub let to the LCCCP.
- 6.3 This presented the Council with the opportunity to relocate the library into the ground floor space, which is 25% larger than the current library. The fit out specification is likely to result in a more modern space with better heating, cooling and lighting than the existing building. The site is totally accessible being all on one level with modern, accessible toilets and baby change facilities.
- 6.4 The current library building needs significant adaptations and repairs. It is a listed building, and there is currently no lift providing access to the children's library on the first floor, and no accessible toilets for library users or staff. The only disabled/pushchair access to the ground floor entrance is provided by a limited and unreliable elevated platform lift at the side of the building. The children's library on the first floor is only accessible via a staircase. There is poor heating, cooling and lighting and wider works are required to bring the building up to modern library standards.
- 6.5 As a result of a Library Review, conducted by independent consultants Activist in 2013/4, a commitment was made to undertake a Feasibility Study of Muswell Hill Library, particularly around making the building more accessible for library users. This was completed in 2015 as part of the Face to Face Programme, within the overarching Customer Service Transformation Programme.

- 6.6 The Feasibility Study found that making adaptations to the building to make it more accessible, and to make some improvements to the building around lighting, electrics and heating, would cost between £680,000 and £1,650,000. There is no budget available for making significant adaptations.
- 6.7 The Feasibility Study also identified that there is no scope to make the existing main entrance DDA compliant; all options would therefore need to retain the separate automated platform lift for wheel chair users. Furthermore, given the Grade II listed nature of the building it is anticipated that all options would require a formal application for listed building consent.
- 6.8 The Council held a 12 week consultation about the proposal to move Muswell Hill Library, which included the following two options:
- Option 1:** Stay in the same building  
**Option 2:** A brand new library in the centre of Muswell Hill – larger space and modern facilities, with level access for wheelchair and pushchair users.
- 6.9 The consultation ran for 12 weeks between 31 May and 25 August 2016. The responses to the consultation are attached as Appendices A and B. A variety of engagement sessions were held before and during the consultation, including drop-in sessions at the library, on-street engagement, visits to local groups and social media / web activity. Consultation leaflets and/or booklets were also delivered to every house and business within the immediate area of the library, with a total of 8,600 properties receiving notification of the consultation in this way. Paper copies of the consultation booklet were also available in the library and the consultation was run on our website and promoted using online channels.
- 6.10 We received 1,282 responses the results of which are summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table1: Results of consultation**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Respondents who agree/strongly agree with this option</b>	<b>Respondents who disagree/strongly disagree with this option</b>
Option 1: Stay in current building	71%	20%
Option 2: Move to a new library	27%	63%

- 6.11 Table 2 below shows the age breakdown of respondents. This shows a low response rate for people under 25 years old at just 4%, and the majority of respondent being over 45 (62%). The pattern of responses

in favour of options 1 and 2 did not vary significantly according to the different age groups.

**Table 2: Age breakdown of respondents**

16-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Prefer not to say	No reply	Total
49	315	486	310	75	47	1282
4%	25%	38%	24%	6%	4%	100%

6.12 Extensive comments were received as part of the consultation which are available in Appendix B. The comments reflect two distinct areas – the library service and the library building.

6.13 Some of the detail around the key themes emerging from the comments is below:

6.13.1 The current library building is a listed building which is an important asset to the Muswell Hill community and there is strength of feeling that it should retain a use as a library or a service with community access.

6.13.2 There were mixed opinions about the suitability of the current library service in this building with comments received about the:

- Accessibility of the library, particularly the children’s library upstairs;
- Poor toilet provision and no accessible toilets;
- Lack of space in the library for students, study and quiet work;
- Library space feeling cramped, unattractive and dingy;
- Too hot and stuffy in the summer and too cold in the winter;
- Not enough books and range of books limited.

6.14 Whilst many people clearly feel that the current library building should be protected for the use of the community, this is distinctly different to the discussion around the actual library service, what this should look like and where this should be based to best serve the community. This will be examined further in the spring with full consideration of the options available for both sites.

## 7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 The table below highlights some of the ways in which our libraries support the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

**Table 4: Contribution of libraries to strategic outcomes**

Corporate Plan Priority	How Libraries contribute to this priority
<p>Priority 1 – <i>enable every child and young person to have the best start in life with high quality education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries enable every child and young person to have the best start in life through their literacy intervention programmes, via Bookstart, Story &amp; Rhyme Times, Book Clubs, and the annual Summer Reading Challenge;</li> <li>• All Libraries have regular invited class visits from local schools at least once a term;</li> <li>• Libraries encourage and support ‘Reading For Pleasure’ and initiatives such as ‘Read On. Get On’ by the National Literacy Trust and Save The Children;</li> <li>• All Primary Schools are invited to join The Summer Reading Challenge – the UK’s biggest reader development programme.</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 2 – <i>empower all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult reading groups running in all Libraries, helping to reduce social isolation and foster lifelong learning;</li> <li>• Books on Prescription at 3 Main Libraries;</li> <li>• Libraries host a wide variety of wellbeing activities including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age Concern advice sessions</li> <li>- Yoga classes</li> <li>- Pilates classes</li> <li>- Tai Chi &amp; Chi Kung classes</li> <li>- Fitness for Life classes</li> <li>- IAPT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy NHS support)</li> <li>- Alcohol Recovery</li> <li>- Stroke Information</li> <li>- Smoke free life Haringey</li> <li>- Sexual health advice</li> <li>- BUBIC – peer support for drug users</li> <li>- Venture club for blind &amp; partially sighted</li> <li>- Alzheimer’s Society Haringey</li> <li>- Meditation classes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Priority 3 – <i>a clean and safe borough where people are proud to live</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of our Libraries have attractive outside spaces and gardens for the public to use and enjoy;</li> <li>• Libraries host regular environmental advice drop-ins providing energy saving information and advice sessions;</li> <li>• Libraries offer venues for Safer Neighbourhoods are meetings and Residents Association surgeries.</li> </ul>

Corporate Plan Priority	How Libraries contribute to this priority
Priority 4 – <i>drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We offer SMEs space, IT facilities and support through the Business Lounge at Wood Green library, facilitating advice sessions, networking activities and other related events.</li> </ul>
Priority 5 – <i>create homes and communities where people choose to live and are able to thrive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries provide signposting to Housing Support Services, and the integrated CSCs in libraries offer housing advice.</li> <li>Libraries are an active part of local communities, as demonstrated by the priorities above, which support local communities in many ways, and provide spaces to meet, learn, study and relax.</li> </ul>

## **8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

### **Finance and Procurement**

- 8.1 The work to explore the future uses of both sites will be contained within existing budgets. As such, there are no new financial considerations, at this stage. Future uses of both sites will need to represent value for money for the Council, and this will be taken into consideration by the service area as they explore the possibilities.

### **Legal**

- 8.2 S7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes it a duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use of it. This imposes an implied duty on a library authority to make a reasonable assessment of need and to make a value judgement about whether, in light of that assessment, the service is comprehensive and efficient. A 'comprehensive service', been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies.
- 8.3 A consultation on the proposed changes to Muswell Hill Library has been carried out. Consultation on changes to service provision must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response; adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals. The results of the consultation exercise are addressed in this report. The Council must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees during the consultation before making its final decision on the

proposals. The report at section 6 and Appendix A and B sets out the responses to the consultation.

- 8.4 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation. The council also has a duty to advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not and to foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is required to give serious, substantive and advance consideration of the what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place where needed.
- 8.5 Compliance with the equality duty should result in better informed decision making and can lead to services which are more appropriate to users and services that are more effective.

## Equality

- 8.6 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
  - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 8.7 An equality impact assessment is being undertaken and will continue to be updated as the Council further explores options for future uses of Muswell Hill Library and 54/56 Muswell Hill. The EqIA will accompany and help inform any final decisions taken by Cabinet in spring 2017.
- 8.8 Physical accessibility issues have been identified for the existing Muswell Hill Library site, and have an impact on equality of opportunity to make use of library facilities. The entrance to the building is not compliant with disability access standards, and the only disabled and pushchair access to the ground floor of the library is provided by a limited and unreliable elevated platform at the side of the building. There is no lift access to the children's library on the first floor, and no accessible toilets for library staff or users. In contrast the site at 54/56 Muswell Hill has a very good

level of accessibility, being based all on ground floor with modern facilities.

- 8.9 The final decision on the future uses of the Muswell Hill Library and 54/66 Muswell Hill sites should be informed by the views of a wide range of different groups and people who share different protected characteristics.
- 8.10 An EqIA will be completed to accompany the decision making Cabinet paper to follow in spring 2017.

## **9. Use of Appendices**

- 9.1 Appendix A: Results of Muswell Hill consultation.  
Appendix B: Comments received as part of the consultation.

## **10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- 10.1 Libraries Review – click [here](#)
- 10.2 Feasibility Study for Muswell Hill Library – click [here](#)