



## Willesden Green Library Centre Redevelopment Scrutiny Report

<b>1.</b>	<b>Delegation of authorisation of detailed design (recommendation 2.4 in the report): it is appropriate that a decision of this significance is signed off by members, especially if the consultation process or other pressures result in a need to reconsider elements of the scheme or choose between options.</b>
	<p>In February 2011 the Executive gave their approval in principle to the comprehensive redevelopment of the entire Willesden Green Library Centre (WGLC). At the same time, the Executive authorised Officers to call off the Homes and Community Agency Developer Partner Panel Framework (HCA DPP) to test the market and establish if the redevelopment of the WGLC site could be delivered at zero net capital cost to the Council without exhausting the Council's valuable resources.</p> <p>The subsequent procurement process resulted in the developer partner preparing concept design proposals for the Council Works to RIBA Stage B. These designs were reviewed and evaluated by an independent technical design advisor as well as Officers during the tender evaluation process.</p> <p>The design proposals will now be developed in consultation with WGLC staff, users and residents. The detailed design proposals will then be submitted for planning approval. The application will go through a full and proper planning process and be considered by the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Delegation of authorisation of detailed design accords with standard protocol. It is common practice for the final design to be signed off at Officer level across all our capital projects from the Civic Centre, South Kilburn through to Schools and transport improvement works.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Interim service delivery strategy (recommendation 2.5)</b>
	<p><b>a) Lack of clarity over important aspects of the alternative provision including the size of the premises at Grange Road and details of other premises in the Willesden Green area being explored.</b></p> <p><b>b) Lack of serious consideration of the use of available closed libraries to aid the delivery of services as evidenced by the</b></p>

	<p><b>perfunctory nature of paragraph 6.29 in the report.</b></p> <p><b>c) It is incorrect to state that the provision of transport services to aid access to alternative study space is outside the council's powers (para. 9.23). The council has a number of potentially relevant powers including the power of well-being.</b></p>
	<p>The interim service delivery strategy is thorough and comprehensive. It maximises opportunities to test new innovative ways of working and to reach as many new customers as possible with the aim of enhancing service provision. There will be a blend of traditional and new services including providing library and museum services through outreach, home visits and 'pop up' venues for events. It is also an exciting time to explore new ways of enhancing cultural diversity and increasing participation across the area. In the nine months before the redevelopment starts the detailed plan will be further refined. There will be a wide reaching communications plan to keep customers, stakeholders and partners informed about the interim services and excited about the redevelopment of the current centre. The Executive reports sets out the plan in detail in sections 6.4 to 6.36.</p> <p><u>a)</u> The premises at Grange Road are 147m<sup>2</sup>. The redevelopment is still 7 months away and officers are actively investigating the best solution for alternative premises in the Willesden Green area. At present the plan is to adapt the current library offices in Grange Road to house a temporary library space, archive research space and study space for 10 people. Paragraphs 4.3 to 4.15 above give a detailed explanation of proposed alternative provision.</p> <p>In addition, officers are currently considering a number of other possible venues in the Willesden area to provide additional library facilities within the existing revenue budget. The specific details of the locations cannot be released at the current time as it may compromise our negotiations. The detailed plans should be finalised by April 2012.</p> <p><u>b)</u> This proposal has been very seriously considered and paragraph 6.29 and 6.30 provides a clear explanation of the issues that have been considered. The paragraphs in the Executive report are set out below:</p> <p><i>'It has already been decided by the Council that a library facility at Willesden Green should continue to be provided. The basis for that decision is set out in the report to the Executive of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011, namely that libraries located on the high street or in central hub locations are more frequently used. Indeed Willesden Green Library has the highest library usage in the borough. It is therefore considered vital that the temporary relocation of this service should, so far as possible, be in the same location. This will enable the high level of service users to continue to use the facility. The Grange Road location meets those needs in terms of location, albeit that it is smaller than the current site. Grange Road remains centrally placed in Willesden Green</i></p>

*with the same travel access as the current venue. The continued location in Willesden also reduces any negative impact on service users in the interim period pending completion of the redevelopment. The locations for extra study places are based on availability of space in other Council libraries nearby where the relevant facilities are already available, and at other suitable and easily accessible locations from the present facility. The cost of providing these additional places is kept to a minimum by using Council run buildings which have capacity, and does not entail any additional staffing.*

*There has been a suggestion by a very small number of members of the public supporting the continued use of the Kensal Rise and Cricklewood sites, that the Council should use those sites for use as an alternate library and or study space. Members are advised that officers have considered a range of other options before recommending the interim arrangements set out in this report. These sites would not be suitable. Firstly the need for use of an alternative building does not arise until July 2012 by which time it is highly likely, if the Council continues to be successful in the legal challenge against the libraries decision, that the sites will be actively administered by All Souls College and not the Council - as owner, trustee or otherwise. Secondly, even were the sites to be available, the on cost of managing the buildings for this purpose is relatively high in terms of maintenance, heating etc. thirdly due to the well-established need to retain a library in the Willesden Green area, the location would have to be in addition to that at Grange Road and additional staff would need to be recruited, and lastly the locations do not meet the needs of the borough's residents.'*

The cost of providing the interim service for 18 months is currently estimated at £2,000,890 and this is fully covered by the current budget for the WGLC leaving no available finance for any other projects. This estimate will be updated as the final plans are confirmed.

A number of requests have been submitted to reopen a number of closed buildings during the 18 month redevelopment. The estimated costs for an 18 months reopening, seven days a week are:

Kensal Rise	£353,560
Cricklewood	£351,860
Neasden	£518,998

There is no available budget to fund this unplanned reopening.

- c) The key accessibility and affordability of travel issues that arose from the comprehensive equalities impact assessment are:

Risk	Mitigation
Access to book stock	There will be an improved reservation service and good home delivery and outreach services. This will provide a good level of access to stock during the redevelopment.

<p>Availability of PCs and study space</p>	<p>For study space, during exam times there will be 130 spaces available. the alternatives are within a reasonable travel distance and affordability will not necessarily be a major issue as bus travel is free from under 5's, 5 -15 year olds and 16-19 year olds in full time education and or work based learning.</p>
<p>Current users of WGLC Customer Contact will need to travel further for face to face services</p>	<p>The temporary location in Harlesden Job Centre Plus is quickly and easily accessible by public transport.</p> <p>In addition, all Customer Contact Services are available by phone, internet and post.</p> <p>The residents of Harlesden will also benefit during the redevelopment by having easier face to face access to the Customer Contact Service</p>
<p>There isn't space for the full museum and archive during the redevelopment</p>	<p>The archive will be accessible in Grange Road which is as accessible as the current location. The outreach work will take the service to the residents rather than them travelling to the service.</p> <p>In addition to this innovative outreach service, online services will be improved, enabling residents to access more information from their own homes.</p>
<p>Each of these issues has been mitigated to a significant degree. Whilst introducing further bus services to aid access to the alternative study space could be carried out under the wellbeing powers, there is no evidence that the scale of the issue warrants further significant expenditure. The financial constraints on the Council and the short term nature of the interim strategy do not permit even further mitigation.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Lack of clarity in the papers provided to members at the Executive meeting about the design and functions of the proposed new building including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) No information (even in broad terms) about how the available floorspace will be split between the different uses and the projected income from the proposed commercial uses.</b></li> <li><b>b) No information about the architectural and design approach to the development or the planning considerations and risks (other the risk of local objections set out on page 54) that the design has to</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>take into account.</b></p> <p><b>c) Lack of clear explanation about how the zero net capital cost will be achieved.</b></p> <p><b>d) Inadequate consideration of the risk of construction costs being greater than anticipated and the extent to which the additional costs might fall on the council if they are not the responsibility of the contractor; and inadequate assurance about financial control of the project subsequent to detailed design development and prior to practical completion.</b></p>
	<p>a) The Client Design Brief incorporates a schedule of accommodation for the new cultural centre accompanied by details of the Council's technical requirements and information on the qualities, character and strategic principles of the space required.</p> <p>The projected income from the Café, the only commercial space within the building, is still to be confirmed as this will vary depending on the nature of the commercial operator the Council aspires to procure.</p> <p>b) The design proposals submitted by Galliford Try Plc as part of their tender submission were evaluated against the following criteria "<i>Clarity of masterplan design approach, in accordance with the Planning Statement for the Willesden Green Library Centre Site.</i>" Each of the tenderers attended two pre application meetings with the planners during the tender process. Planning considerations therefore informed the design development process and the associated risks were evaluated through the tender process. It is not envisaged the design proposals pose a significant planning risk.</p> <p>The architectural approach and associated design concept will now be developed in accordance with the feedback received from the WGLC staff, users and residents.</p> <p>c) At present the value of the residential land at the rear of the site is estimated to be worth £10.449m. This sum has been calculated assuming the removal of the existing buildings to enable the development of 94 residential units for outright sale.</p> <p>Once planning approval has been granted the total financial envelope available to develop the cultural centre will be confirmed. When developing the detailed specification for the Council Works, both Galliford Try and the Council will have regard for the total cost envelope available, which at the time of writing is estimated to be £10.449m.</p> <p>The development agreement has been structured in such a way which</p>

	<p>allows the Council to determine the agreement if the cost of the new Cultural Centre (Council Works Detailed Costs) exceeds the value of the residential development (Council Works Threshold Cost).</p> <p>d) The Council will be required to approve the Council Works Detailed Costs prior to the unconditional date. Once these costs have been approved by the Council, Galliford Try Plc will be required to deliver the Council Works Detailed Specification within the agreed financial envelope, thus risk associated with cost increase will be transferred to the developer after the unconditional date.</p> <p>As set out above in section 3C, prior to the unconditional date the Council can determine the agreement if the cost of the new Cultural Centre (Council Works Detailed Costs) exceeds the value of the residential development (Council Works Threshold Cost).</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Defects in the decision making process including:</b></p> <p>a) <b>lack of information provided to members about the revenue consequences of the recommended decision (section 7 asserts that all future revenue costs will be contained with existing budget allocations for the management of the WGLC but there are no figures to support this. Additionally there is no mention of the revenue implications of the non-cultural centre functions such as office space and contact centre).</b></p>
	<p>a) The cost of all future revenue costs associated with the management of the new cultural centre inclusive of the non cultural functions will be contained within the existing revenue budget allocations or less for the management of the WGLC.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>lack of access to Background Papers despite requests in good time</b></p>
	<p>Regrettably, officers were unable to assemble the large amount of additional information requested prior to the Executive. The Executive Report and associated appendices did however contain all the necessary information required to enable the Executive to make a decision on the recommendations set out in the Report.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Consultation strategy (recommendation 2.7)</b></p> <p>a) <b>The agreed consultation strategy does not include any objectives nor does it specify what scope there is for the current design to be altered in response to the consultation. It is therefore unclear to what extent this is a genuine consultation strategy and to what extent it is simply a public engagement strategy designed to</b></p>

	<p><b>provide reassurance and promote the project to stakeholders.</b></p> <p><b>b) There is no mention in the report, recommendation or consultation strategy of reporting back the outcome of the consultation to members (Executive or Scrutiny) to enable consideration of the views expressed.</b></p>
	<p>a) The Executive Report states within Paragraph 6.40 that “ working closely in partnership with the Council, Galliford Try Plc will refine, agree and deliver the indicative consultation strategy”. Details of the consultation objectives, scope and methodology will be agreed with Officers prior to implementation.</p> <p>b) The feedback received from the consultation will inform the detailed design development of the cultural centre. The Willesden Green Project Board, established to oversee the delivery of the project, will be responsible for evaluating and scrutinising the consultation feedback ensuring it meaningfully informs the design development process. This accords with standard proposal. As previously set out Officers have been authorised to approve the detailed design of all of the Council’s Major Projects including the Civic Centre.</p>
	<p>Objectives be set for the consultation strategy; the process for considering and responding to consultation feedback be clarified and publicised to stakeholders in due course; a resident / stakeholder liaison group be created as part of the consultation strategy.</p>
	<p>Consider the revenue implications of the decision to assure value for money and the other issues raised above.</p>

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