



Executive
13 February 2012

**Report from the Director of
Regeneration and Major Projects**

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolution
on the Willesden Green Redevelopment Project**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report responds to call in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 February 2012 of the Willesden Green Redevelopment Project which *RESOLVED:- that the Executive be recommended to reconsider proposals for the interim service delivery strategy and specifically consider the use of some closed existing libraries and the costings involved for the proposed strategy in order to provide a comprehensive interim library service for residents.*
- 1.2 This report builds upon the information that was provided to the Executive on 16 January 2012 Willesden Green Library Centre (WGLC) Redevelopment. Since that date, Brent Council's Library Transformation Project has successfully been upheld in the Supreme Court having previously been upheld in the High Court and the Court of Appeal.
- 1.3 This report shows that the on-going need for a library in Willesden Green is proven and supported by the courts; therefore the use of closed library buildings is not appropriate.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive reconfirms its agreement to the interim service strategy agreed on 16 January 2012.
- 2.2 The Executive rejects the proposal to use the closed buildings in Kensal Rise, Neasden and Cricklewood as part of the Council's library service and interim

service delivery strategy due to the conclusive need to provide a service from Willesden Green.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The interim service delivery strategy is thorough and comprehensive and was covered in detail in the original January 2012 Executive report in paragraphs 6.4-6.36 and is summarised again below. The plan will develop further in the seven months before the redevelopment. The costs of delivering the interim service strategy are set out in Appendix 1 and are fully covered by the current budget for Willesden Green Library Centre (WGLC).

3.2 The interim service delivery strategy also builds upon the Library Transformation Project (LTP), approved by the Executive in April 2011. The improvements are set out in detail in that report, but some of the key areas include:

- 7 day a week opening at all the Council's libraries
- Improved online services including virtual reading groups, improved reservation services and more reference materials
- An extensive home delivery and outreach service
- Exciting events and courses
- More public involvement in future stock development
- Additional support for children, young people, families and people with disabilities

3.3 In addition to this the new Civic Centre at Wembley will open by June 2013, providing access to a larger library, more study space and public IT facilities.

Interim library service

3.4 During the redevelopment core library functions will be provided from Grange Road (located next door to the current WGLC) and another location in the heart of Willesden Green (the negotiation will be finalised once the Development Agreement is signed).

3.5 Whilst the size of the book stock in the physical library building will be temporarily reduced during the redevelopment Officers are working to minimise the impact on active borrowers. During the redevelopment the reservation service for which there is currently a fee will be free and the speed of reservation service will be improved, giving access to the full collection of 6 million books. Customers will be able to obtain any stocked title within five working days and any unstocked title within two weeks (currently 7 days and three weeks). The current WGLC is 1,368m² and holds 60,000 books (on loan and on shelves). During the interim, 30,000 books will be on loan and on the shelves in roughly 270m² of library space across 2 buildings.

Events

3.6 The popular under 5s sessions, reading group sessions, school support services for excluded children, homework help and chatterbooks sessions for children will all be provided from premises in Willesden Green. Children and adults will continue to be able to access reading events, author talks,

exhibitions and some of the high profile promotions planned for 2012 from a range of different venues. New audiences will be sustained by sending them materials on forthcoming promotions and events.

Outreach

3.7 The service will continue to engage with families and current users and develop new audiences by outreach contact and partnership work with a wide range of partners. Opportunities to develop partnerships with Transport for London, businesses and retail outlets on Willesden High Road will be explored and will maximise the accessibility and use of the service.

Study space and computers

3.8 Study space is a key part of the interim service and during the 2012 exam period space will be provided from the current WGLC.

3.9 On an average day, staff observation shows that just under half of the study spaces and computers are in use at any one time (60 of the 130 study spaces and 20 of the 37 public internet pcs). During the exam period of April – June more of the spaces are used. The interim service delivery strategy has been designed to match this provision as closely as possible. We have organised a minimum of 50 spaces on a day to day basis:

- 10 PCS and 10 spaces at the temporary Grange Road library
- Further additional PCs and spaces in the alternative premises in Willesden Green
- 20 extra spaces at Kilburn library
- 5 extra spaces at Ealing Road
- 5 extra spaces at Town Hall

3.10 In addition, during exam time, we are negotiating for a further 80 spaces. At least 30 in the redevelopment of Roundwood Youth Centre (opening in the summer of 2012) and a further 50 spaces in a nearby premises. These will be supplemented by an additional 40 spaces at the new Civic Centre in Wembley. This will be closely monitored and if necessary we will continue to negotiate with local venues for further study spaces.

3.11 The draft staffing plan has been designed to deliver the LTP and the interim strategy. The plan will be closely monitored and staff diverted in response to customer need where possible.

	Library service
Current FTE	Manager 1 Officers 2 Customer Service Assistants (CSAs) 11.2
Interim Service staff FTE	Manager 1 Officers 2 (Outreach, locations, pop-up events) CSAs 2 (Outreach) CSAs 5 (Grange Road) CSAs 4.2 (Alternative premises)

Why should the interim library service continue to be delivered from Willesden?

- 3.12 The Library Transformation Project (LTP) approved by the Executive in April 2011 clearly set out the plans for the library service including the plans for 6 library buildings. These principles have been extensively tested and upheld by the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. It is critical that library services continue to be provided from Willesden Green. Paragraphs 6.29 and 6.30 in the January 2012 Executive report clearly set out the reasoning. It is also worth emphasising that there are 10,000 active borrowers using Willesden Green Library Centre compared to 3000 for Kensal Rise and Willesden Green combined. On top of this the level of social deprivation, life limiting illness and educational attainment are greater issues in Willesden Green – further reinforcing that the service must remain located in the area.
- 3.13 It has been proposed that the interim service should be provided from one of the closed buildings in Kensal Rise, Cricklewood, or Neasden. The costs of doing this are set out in detail in Appendix 2 and summarised below. These costs are not justified by the small impact not mitigated by the interim strategy. Based on the LTP commitment of seven day opening, the costs are: Kensal Rise £353,560; Cricklewood £351,860; Neasden £518,988.
- 3.14 There is also proposal that a proportion of these costs could be mitigated by using volunteers. If we are looking to provide a full and reliable seven day a week library service then the wisdom of relying on volunteers needs to be examined in line with our LTP. Volunteers to complement the work of professional staff can be beneficial but replacement of staff with volunteers is not part of the LTP. Managing, recruiting and training volunteers is a cost that is not warranted by the impact of the short term closure.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs of the Interim Service Strategy are set out in Appendix 1 and the costs of reopening the closed buildings are set out in Appendix 2.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The LTP has withstood legal challenge in respect of the way that the decision was made on the 11th April 2011 including the siting of the libraries within Brent based on the statistical information.
- 5.2 Under section 7 of the Public Museums and Libraries Act 1964, the Council has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof. The Administrative Court and the Court of Appeal found that the Council was not in breach of that legal duty when the Executive approved in April 2011 the Libraries Transformation Project and the closure of the six libraries at Barham Park, Cricklewood, Kensal Rise, Neasden, Preston and Tokyngton.
- 5.3 There is currently a proposal from the Friends of Kensal Rise Library to run a library at the site at the former Kensal Rise library. This proposal is receiving

the Council's attention and consideration. This is separate from the Council's interim service delivery strategy as the site at the former Kensal Rise library is not at Willesden Green.

5.4 Members are referred to the content of the Legal Implications set out in the report in respect of this matter that was submitted to the Executive at its previous meeting on 16 January 2012.

5.5 Under Standing Order 20 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the Call-In Overview and Scrutiny Committee can recommend to the Executive that it should reconsider a decision after either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or at least five non-executive members of the Council request for a decision to be "called-in". Following such a recommendation, the Executive shall meet and take into account the recommendations made to it. After such consideration, the Executive may then proceed to implement or change the decision as it sees fit.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The report to the Executive on 16 January 2012 included a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment in section 9 and Appendix 15. In summary this identified a small number of potential impacts for analysis and possible mitigation in relation to users of WGLC during the redevelopment:

- Accessibility and affordability of travel. Here, the key issues are that there will be less stock held in Grange Road and the additional premises, a reduction in the number of PCs and study space with further to travel for some. Mitigation is in part provided by the LTP plans such as improved reservation service, outreach and home delivery. Also, the alternatives are within a reasonable travel distance and affordability will not necessarily be a major issue as bus travel is free from under 5s, 5 -15 year olds and 16-19 year olds in full time education and or work based learning.
- Impact on educational standards. Here, the potential impact is a slight reduction in the number of study spaces available. This risk is mitigated by the availability of spaces in other venues and libraries and matching current provision during exam preparation times.
- Impact on social cohesion. The issue is that there will be a temporary reduction in the availability of shared neutral space.

6.2 Officers have carefully considered if any adverse impacts remain after the mitigating measures have been taken into account. The potential adverse impact only affects a small group of current customers and relates to the temporary reduction in shared neutral space, and the slight reduction in car parking. Whilst these are not completely mitigated by other steps they are justified by the benefits of the Library Transformation Project and the redevelopment of WGLC. No other adverse impact was identified for any of the user groups in relation to the long term plan. Indeed the aim of the proposal is to improve the facilities for all service users. There is no evidence to suggest any indirect discrimination arising as a result of the interim or long term proposals

- 6.3 The financial constraints on the Council and the short term nature of the interim strategy do not permit even further mitigation, for example by reopening closed buildings in Cricklewood, Kensal Rise or Neasden.

Background Papers

Executive Report Library Transformation Project April 2011

Executive Report Willesden Green Library Centre Redevelopment, January 2012

Appendix 1 Cost of Interim Service Delivery strategy

Appendix 2 Costs of reopening closed buildings

Contact Officers

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APPENDIX 1 Cost of Interim Service Delivery strategy

Assumptions: Based on the current budget setting estimates for the 2012/13 budget. Closure of WGLC in September 2012. Budgets based on a 6 month 'business as usual' service from WGLC and then 18 months of the interim service. Many of the costs are estimates and cannot be finalised until negotiations complete after the Developer Agreement is signed. The calculations include all costs for the library, museum and archives, including set up of the new premises. Renting local venues as extra study spaces during exam times will not be necessary in 2012/13 as the existing library will still be open.

	One off costs	Half year at WGLC	6 months interim service	18 months interim service	Total cost of 18 month interim service	
Estimated costs for fit-out of temporary premises x2	90,000				90,000	IT costs plus Grange Road: installation of automatic doors, redecoration, shelving, minor electrics. Includes an allocation of up to £20,000 for improvements at another location.
Removals and storage for Library, museum and one stop shop	261,000				261,000	
<i>Sub -total one off costs</i>	<i>351,000</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>351,000</i>	
Staffing costs		<i>349,993</i>	<i>349,993</i>	<i>1,505,340</i>	<i>1,505,340</i>	
Premises costs		<i>273,430</i>	<i>77,100</i>	<i>188,150</i>	<i>227,000</i>	2 premises in WG and study space for 2013/14
Event costs						
Outreach and events			36,100	54,150	54,150	Hire of venues, performers, exhibitions, online improvements, publicity, transport.
1948 Exhibition			13,400	0	13,400	
<i>Sub-total event costs</i>			<i>49,500</i>	<i>54,150</i>	<i>67,550</i>	
<i>Estimated Income</i>		<i>-50,000</i>			<i>-50,000</i>	
Total	351,000	573,423	476,593	1,747,640	2,100,890	Existing annual revenue budget is 1,332,403

Appendix 2 Costs of reopening closed buildings

The costs of reopening the recently closed buildings are set out below. These costs are all in addition to those of providing the interim service in the Willesden Green area. These costs assume that by the time of the redevelopment the costs of Cricklewood and Kensal Rise are no longer borne by Brent Council.

Cricklewood	Total cost	One off costs	12 month cost	Interim 18 month cost
One off costs	2,750	2,750		
Staffing costs for six frontline staff sc4 (with on costs)	223,623		149,082	223,623
Proportional management costs of temp manager for three libraries (with on costs)	23,896		15,931	23,896
Sub-total staffing costs	247,519		165,013	247,519
Premises costs (maintenance, security, cleaning, utilities, business rates)	36,000		24,000	36,000
Supplies, IT and support	36,341		23,868	36,341
Stock	29,250		19,500	29,250
Sub-total other costs	101,591		67,368	101,591
Total	351,860	2,750	232,381	349,110

Kensal Rise	Total cost	One off costs	12 month cost	Interim 18 month cost
Sub -total one off costs	1,000	1,000		
Six frontline staff sc4 (with on costs)	223,623		149,082	223,623
Proportional management costs of temp manager for three libraries (with on costs)	23,896		15,931	23,896
Sub-total staffing costs	247,519		165,013	247,519
Premises costs: maintenance, security, cleaning, utilities, business rates	38,250		25,500	38,250
Supplies, IT and support	37,541		24,668	37,541
Stock	29,250		19,500	29,250
Sub-total other costs	105,041		69,668	105,041
Total	353,560	1,000	234,681	352,560

Neasden (ground floor only)				
The costs for Neasden include the assumption that the rent is an additional cost to the council as the intention is to find a tenant who will cover these costs by the time of the redevelopment.	Total Cost	One off costs	12 month cost	Interim 18 month cost
One off costs - IT and copiers	2,500	2,500		
Sub -total one off costs	2,500	2,500		
Six frontline staff sc4 (with on costs)	223,623		149,082	223,623
Proportional management costs of temp manager for three libraries (with on costs)	23,896		15,931	23,896
Sub-total staffing costs	247,519		165,013	247,519
Premises costs: maintenance, security, cleaning, utilities, business rates	79,350		52,900	79,350
Rent	84,000		56,000	84,000
Supplies, IT and support	56,869		37,913	56,869
Stock	48,750		32,500	48,750
Sub-total premises & other costs	268,969	0	179,313	268,969
Total	518,988	2,500	344,326	516,488