

<b>Item No.</b> 13.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 21 June 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Re-provision of library including a resource centre for Camberwell	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Camberwell Community Council	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

This council is committed to the regeneration and renewal of Camberwell. One of the most visible signs of that regeneration will be the creation of a vibrant ‘town centre’ at Camberwell Green. We are working to bring forward plans which will deal with some of the transport and retail opportunities necessary to achieve that ‘town centre’ ambition, but believe that one of the roles which the council can play is the provision of a library which meets the aspirations of local residents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At the same time as we pursue our plans for regeneration the council has continued to implement its’ accommodation strategy; bringing together employees and services spread across many different offices in the borough into two principal offices. The first of these at 160 Tooley Street opened in 2009, and the second at Queen’s Road, Peckham, will open in 2012/13. This strategy has meant that the council’s presence in Camberwell has been reduced.

By pursuing the proposal in this report we can meet the twin objectives of providing a new library for Camberwell and a facility where residents can access other council services, demonstrating a clear and visible presence and commitment for Southwark Council in the heart of Camberwell.

A full consultation has taken place on this proposal and there appears to be strong support amongst both local residents and current library users. There is also a sound business case for this project as there are significant revenue cost savings linked to relocating from the current unsatisfactory library premises.

I recommend the proposals set out in the report below.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Cabinet:

1. Approves the re-provision of premises for the Camberwell library, which will include a new resource centre and be located on the site in front of the Magistrates' Court.
2. Notes the allocation of a capital budget for this project as part of the Modernise 2 programme.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. In November 2010, the Cabinet agreed a revised Office Accommodation Strategy focusing on providing a fit for purpose environment for staff and visitors; an improved standard of access and quality of accommodation for council services; a reduction in the council's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; a reduction in the high costs of maintaining a widely spread and ageing office estate; and the generation of capital receipts through office disposals for reinvestment in council priorities.
4. The strategy recognised that the council in the future would have a limited physical presence in the Camberwell area, especially as the Harris Street Area Housing office site, which currently provides front desk services for the Camberwell Area, is due for demolition as part of the Elmington Estate regeneration scheme.
5. The strategy also noted that the Pavilion building which currently houses the Bermondsey One Stop Shop would be surplus from late 2011 and instructs officers to develop proposals for the relocation of this building currently to Camberwell through a full investigation of potential sites, including D'Eynsford Road, integration with wider plans for regeneration in Camberwell, following a complete needs analysis and consultation.
6. An officers' working group has been established and has considered the requirements for the delivery of services in Camberwell. The most pressing requirement for the re-provision of accommodation was identified as for the library and officers have investigated the option of relocating the library from its current premises. Additional future requirements are expected to be access to council customer service channels and an element of customer service provision for housing customers. There were also opportunities for providing space for other public sector partners to meet the public. The co-location of the library with other services has therefore been considered.
7. The feasibility of using part of the space for a cafe or arts including exhibitions and sale of art work is also being progressed through discussions with local providers including the Camberwell College of Arts
8. The current library (shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 1) operates from three rented shop units on Camberwell Church Street. The accommodation is spread over four floors in three buildings, the upper parts of which are under utilised. The children's' library operates from the basement which has no natural light or disabled access and is prone to damp. The offices and staff facilities are at first and second floor level, accessed through a separate door from the street. This makes the management of the library difficult and there are safety issues with cash being taken upstairs at the end of the day.
9. As noted in the Office Accommodation Strategy, the council has the opportunity to reuse a building that currently houses the One Stop Shop in Bermondsey and which is now surplus to requirements. This building is a single storey structure that could provide suitable accommodation for a new library and shared resource centre. ( photograph shown at Appendix 2)
10. The council own the freehold interest in the square in front of the Magistrates' Court ( shown edged blue on the plan at Appendix 1 and in the photograph at

Appendix 2) This is large open space with a fenced area of trees and shrubs known as Camberwell Orchard.

11. Other options for the re-provision of the library in premises that are outside of the council's ownership have also been considered. There are a number of current planning applications for schemes in Camberwell that include an element of commercial space. These include 272-274 / 294-304 Camberwell Road and 315-317 Camberwell New Road (the old snooker hall). (Shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 3) Although these schemes have a commercial element and might be able to accommodate the library they are further from the main shopping area of Camberwell on the other side of Camberwell Road.. The timescales for these developments are unclear and could be many years in the future. In addition it is likely that the council would have to pay a commercial rent for the space.
12. Initial feasibility work has been carried out on the proposal for a building on the Magistrates' Court site and option of relocating the Bermondsey One Stop Shop building to Camberwell, This is considered practical as this building is still in good condition and is of an appropriate size and design to be accommodated in the proposed location outside of the Magistrates Court.
13. A full public consultation on the proposals has now been completed. This included a paper and on-line questionnaire, stalls at local events, sessions with library groups and other local stakeholders and a presentation at Community Council. The consultation started on 14 March and finished on 21 April. Over 400 questionnaires were returned and there was broad support for the proposal to re-provide the library on the Magistrates Court site. A more detailed analysis is set out in paragraphs 30-37 of this report.
14. The capital budget to fund this project was allocated in the Revised Office Accommodation strategy report to the Cabinet meeting held on 23 November 2010.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **The council's approach to regeneration in Camberwell**

15. The council is committed to supporting the regeneration of Camberwell. Aspirations include improved council services, new and refurbished public realm, better housing and providing support for local businesses to improve the town centre as a shopping and leisure destination.
16. The potential for regeneration in Camberwell was reported to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2009. The sub-committee also accepted the view that the location of the library is less than ideal and that, when an opportunity arises, serious consideration should be given to its relocation. The recommendation was that 'The library is a key facility and should be linked with the town centre. It should be a factor for inclusion in any future developments in the area'.
17. In consultation with members, officers have developed a new approach to the coordination of council activity and initiatives in Camberwell. The development team led by Economic Development brings together all officers who are leading on projects in the town centre and wider Community Council area to ensure joined-up working in consultation, project development, implementation and delivery. The development team reports back regularly to Members and through Community Council.

18. The first phase of the regeneration has included the refurbishment of part of the Leisure Centre which was completed earlier this year and was formally opened in March.
19. TfL have approved and funded a feasibility study on improvements to the road layout and public realm in Camberwell. The feasibility study and option development is the first stage in the process towards securing capital funding from TfL. The scheme aims to reduce pedestrian congestion, improve crossing opportunities, reduce street clutter, and review bus operation in the town centre including bus stops. Consultation will start on this later in 2011.
20. In the meantime, £100,000 has been secured to deliver small-scale transport and public realm improvements to the town centre area, including removal of unnecessary signage, bins or railings, and provision of cycle parking or ramps.
21. Officers within the Community Safety team, licensing unit, have been exploring options for improving the evening and night-time economy within Camberwell town centre, including taking steps towards 'Purple Flag' accreditation.
22. Cabinet approved a comprehensive regeneration strategy for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Elmington Estate on 22 March 2011. Phase 1 comprising 136 new Council homes has been completed and two large vacant sites have been sold, subject to contract, to Notting Hill Housing Trust on the basis that the sites are redeveloped for mixed tenure schemes. The disposal of a further four sites was agreed as part of the strategy and five blocks will be refurbished in the Council's new Housing Investment Programme
23. Consultation is also planned on the development of an Area Action Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Camberwell that will set the framework for the future development of this area.
24. There is a long held local aspiration for new community facility in Camberwell. The re-provision of the library together with a resource centre in Camberwell as a second phase, links with these proposals and the wider regeneration of the town centre.
25. The Magistrates' Court Square is part an important pedestrian route to the centre of Camberwell from housing estates to the north and east of the town centre and improvements to the public realm would encourage more people to walk through and use Camberwell Green. The project would link with improvements to the public realm that are planned through the TfL funded scheme.
26. The proposal also offers opportunities for the development of arts projects that could include exhibitions and possible sale of work.
27. The development of the site outside the Magistrates Court would also work well with new monthly markets on Camberwell Green and encourage more people to use this space.
28. This proposal would enable the council to create a significant presence in Camberwell which could offer a range of services to local residents.

## Report on the consultation

29. The consultation questionnaire asked people for their views on how they would like to use the library, what was important in developing the open space around the library and for any comments on the proposal.
30. There was a good response to the consultation and 437 people completed either the on-line or paper questionnaire
31. Sessions were held with 7 library groups including the book group, toddler groups and sessions for older people. Library users were able to ask officers about the proposals.
32. There were stands at the opening of the Leisure Centre and the Farmers Market where local residents were able to see the proposals and ask any questions before completing the questionnaire. A session was also held with young people from St Michael's and All Angels School and Southwark Refugee Community Forum supported residents in completing the form.
33. Questionnaires were sent to all the local TRAs, Camberwell College of Arts, local Doctors surgeries and the Southwark Pensioners.
34. A more detailed analysis is shown in Appendix 4 but the key points were
  - Respondents completed the majority of the questions about how they use the library and what additional services they would use.
  - Just under half of the people commented on particular things they would like to see included – more plants, a cafe, exhibition space, children's play, table tennis and better toilets were all mentioned.
  - A similar number – 197 people - also made additional comments on the proposal for the re-provision of the library outside the Magistrates Court
  - Of these 67% supported this idea, commenting that it was a good idea.
  - A further 16% were broadly supportive but asked that the Council made sure that as many of the trees as possible were protected.
  - 17% of those who commented or 9% of the overall respondents – 33 people - had concerns about the proposals, either because they think that the library should stay where it is and/or have concerns about the use of the Magistrates Court Square for a new building and the reuse of the Bermondsey One Stop Shop.
  - Their reasons included concerns about losing the green space; about the life span of the One Stop Shop building and its suitability for this site; how the design of the landscaping would be developed to deal with issues such as safety and general concerns about whether the proposal is good value for money
35. A presentation was made to Community Council on 20 April and the general comments were supportive with a small number of people raising concerns.
36. Overall the consultation shows there is strong local support for the proposal. However a number of valid points were identified that will need to be addressed as part of the design development.

## **The business case for moving the library**

37. To provide a full service to residents the library would be on one level with full disabled access – this cannot be achieved in the current premises. If the library remains in its current building there are limited options for the development of the service or link to other council service provision.
38. There are revenue cost savings resulting from relocating from the current library premises. The current library premises are leased from 3 different commercial landlords at a total current rent of £83,500 p.a.
39. All three leases expire over the next 4 years and the option of either surrender or assignment is being investigated. Two of the units have substantial upper parts that would convert to residential use. The units are well located in the centre of Camberwell so it may be possible to attract a good quality tenant to take this space as there is a low vacancy rate in the central area.
40. There would obviously be no rental payable on the new building and the business rates should be lower as they would be based on a community/office use rather than retail use.
41. The premises would also be more efficient both in terms of energy consumption and staffing. Staff will be deployed more efficiently to assist the public in their use of the library and to support their easy access to council information.
42. It is also hoped that the library could then generate some income via hire of the meeting spaces and it may be economic to provide a café which may promote higher take up of service by the local community.. A cafe was strongly supported by people who responded to the consultation.
43. The library would be more welcoming and accessible to the community and easier to use as it will be at ground floor level and open plan. There would also be the opportunity to include a provision for disabled parking. At John Harvard Library, visits have increased by 26% since the refurbishment in 2009.
44. Addressing the identified need in Camberwell to provide a customer access point and to re-provide the library forms a key part of the Modernise 2 strategy and both can be achieved using this structure.
45. The re-provision of the library in more flexible premises could provide access to council customer service channels. It could also provide an opportunity to provide flexible work space and meeting rooms that could be used by council officers and Members to work and meet with local residents in the south of the borough. Discussions are under way with public sector partners, housing and customer services on the options, but the space can be designed to be flexible enough to deal with a range of users.
46. The option of converting the existing library has been considered but is not considered cost effective or practical. A significant investment would be required to provide a lift between ground floor and basement and this would also lose a large amount of floor space in an already cramped facility. The upper floors would still not be accessible and the council would need to remove the lift out at the end of the leases.

### **Proposed procurement route**

47. Design development will be procured through external consultants and this work has been tendered and an appointment will be made following approval of a Gateway 2.
48. The first action under this appointment shall be to carry out further feasibility, carrying out site investigations and confirming the project brief and also comparing the costs and benefits of delivering a new structure with those of the relocation of the One Stop Shop Building. The most cost effective option would then be progressed within the agreed budget.
49. Other required professional services will be procured through the invitation of tenders from the council's approved list or existing framework arrangements.
50. If this report is approved it is proposed that a planning application will be submitted in August 2011 following further public consultation on the proposals.
51. It is proposed at this stage that the construction work will be procured under a two stage design and build form of contract.

### **Timescales**

52. If Members decide to proceed with this project, a planning application would be submitted in September 2011. The construction work would be tendered and if consent was obtained works would start in at the end of the year. The new library would open autumn 2012.

### **Policy implications**

53. This proposal is linked to the key council priorities set out in Southwark 2016: Sustainable Community Strategy through all three of the objectives
  - *Improving individual life chances*: the objective is for Southwark's people to achieve their educational potential and enjoy cultural and leisure opportunities. A new library with improved facilities for all ages will encourage the increased use of the library in Camberwell - there is a specific commitment to generally improve the use of libraries in the borough in the Plan
  - *Making the borough a better place for people*: the objective is to make Southwark a place that has a sustainable use of resources and a safe, clean and liveable public realm. This proposal will create a more energy efficient building than the current library and improve an area of public realm so that it can be used and enjoyed by local people.
  - *Delivering quality public services*: the objective is to provide services that are accessible and integrated, customer focused, efficient and modern. The proposal for a new library and resource centre where Council services could be delivered in an integrated and modern way, making the best possible use of technology, supports this objective.

54. This proposal is also linked to the priorities of the Council both to regenerate Camberwell and also to make regeneration work for the community.

### **Community impact statement**

55. This project will improve access to library facilities for people of all ages but especially for families and children. In the current library the children's area is in the basement and parents and carers have to leave their buggies in the main library before carrying the children downstairs. The building will be all on one floor and will provide full access for all users including wheelchair users.
56. The construction of this facility will involve the removal of some trees and the reconfiguration of the Camberwell Orchard – an area of trees and shrubs behind a small fence in the Magistrates Court Square. Plants and trees would be replaced in a new planting scheme which could, if there was local support, include an ecology garden. There would be further consultation on this as part of the planning process.

### **Resourcing implications**

57. The project management will be carried out by staff in the current property team and the project manager would lead a team of officers to deliver the project.
58. The project manager would report into the Modernise 2 Programme and update the Libraries Board on progress against planned milestones and budget throughout the delivery of the project.

### **Legal and financial implications**

59. The freehold interest in the site outside the Magistrates Court site is held freehold by the council and there are no covenants restricting the use of the site or its development
60. An allowance has been made in the Modernise 2 programme for the re-provision of the library including a resource centre in Camberwell.
61. The procurement of the design work and construction work will be approved through the usual Gateway reporting process.

### **Identified risks and how they will be managed**

62. There are a number of risks associated with this project in line with all construction work. If the project is approved a detailed risk log will be maintained throughout and managed through the usual departmental procedures
63. Inadequate brief means that design does not meet users' needs and the public realm proposals do not deal with issues such as safety and the relationship to neighbouring road and The Green – Medium Risk. Mitigation: ensure full local consultation and that the brief is signed off by Library Services and Public Realm departments and they are fully involved in the development of the design
64. Design development proceeds without regards to budgetary constraints. Medium Risk. Mitigation: Quantity Surveyor employed at outset to check costs at each stage of design development.

65. Delays to programme -Medium Risk. Mitigation: designers and contractors will be expected to supply evidence of successful completion of similar projects and there will be on-time penalties for delayed delivery.

### **Consultation**

66. There has been a full public consultation on this proposal as described above.
67. Further consultation will be held with local stakeholders as part of the planning process.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Strategic Director of Communities Law & Governance**

68. The report recommends approval of a proposal to site a combined library and other resource facility on part of the courtyard/square in front of the Magistrates Court at Camberwell Green off D'Eynsford Road London SE5. This land is already owned by the London Borough of Southwark and is held freehold.
69. The council would not need to acquire any land in order to build here but may be necessary to appropriate the land from one department to another. A power to appropriate land is given to the council by section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 in a situation where the council would be authorised to acquire the land by agreement and where the land concerned is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held. It should be noted that any such appropriation would be subject to the rights of the public or any third parties over the land in existence at the date of the appropriation. If the land concerned is an open space then a pre-notice procedure would need to be followed
70. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives council the power to do anything which they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well being of their area. The power can be exercised to or for the benefit of the whole or any part of the council's area. If the Cabinet is satisfied that this proposal would promote or improve the economic or social or environmental well being of the area in which the proposed new library and resource centre is to be situated they may approve the recommendation
71. If approval is given, it will be, as noted in the Report, necessary for a procurement strategy to be implemented and approval from the relevant authority within the council obtained

#### **Finance Director**

72. This report recommends the approval of a project for the re-provision of premises for the Camberwell library, which will include a new resource centre and be located on the site in front of the Magistrate's Court, and notes the allocation of a capital budget for this project as part of the Modernise 2 programme
73. The Modernise 2 strategy badged as the revised office accommodation strategy, was approved by cabinet on 23 November 2010. The strategy included an indicative budget allocation for the pavilion relocation.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet Papers 23 November 2010	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Jane Seymour x54907
Consultation report and data	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Jane Seymour

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1 (open)	Plan showing location of existing library and proposed site outside Magistrate Court
Appendix 2 (open)	Photographs of Bermondsey One Stop Shop and the Magistrates Court Square
Appendix 3 (open)	Development sites in Camberwell
Appendix 4 (open)	Detailed report on consultation

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Eleanor Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive	
<b>Report Authors</b>	Jane Seymour, Senior Project Manager	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	Yes
Cabinet	Yes	Yes
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