

WIRRAL COUNCIL

TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT HEALTH AND WELL BEING

04 APRIL 2014

SUBJECT:	REFURBISHMENT OF BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL LIBRARY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF BUSINESS PROCESSES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE MEADEN
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report requests that Birkenhead Central Library is allowed a short period of closure to allow ground floor refurbishment reducing the number of staffed counters to one main counter and change the operational ground floor layout to bring the Young Person's library into the main room and move the public IT facility into the separate room. This cannot be completed while remaining open without compromising health and safety for public and staff a short period of closure is requested for a maximum of three weeks in late May 2014 starting after the bank holiday Tuesday 27th May 2014..

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 To allow Birkenhead Central Library to have ground floor refurbishment work undertaken along with an operational layout change. This will allow the remodelling of counters to have one main counter, plus swapping the Young Person's library from its separately staffed room into the main Library room and the public IT area moving into the separate room. This allows our staff to better manage the use of all areas of the library and reduce the number of staffed counters allowing better direct access for users.

2.2. The counter replacement is not a full rebuild but one which removes the need for separate counters and allows a later decision to be made as to the future building layout. The major item of cost is the required lobby door replacement which has to accord with the building design as well as much needed electrical works.

2.3. The electrical upgrade is required to fully meet current standards and allows us to introduce the automated book return kiosks, known as RFID, which are already in place in a number of sites.

2.4 Some concerns have been raised with regard to moving to open plan for children and young persons. The move has been carefully and sensitively planned to accommodate all various groups who access the service. We already successfully operate an open plan Library lay out at other busy

Libraries and there will be more staff resource in the open plan system to oversee children and all customers within the YP area and beyond. This enhances safety for our staff as it eliminates 'lone working' and helps reduce antisocial behaviour activity which has not tended to be in a larger overseen main room.

- 2.5. Our senior library professionals also believe children will not be adversely affected as a result of this change. Firstly the children's area will cover a larger area in the main room and the designated area will be focused on children. Being in the main area of a site has not adversely affected adult users at other sites and our staff will look to minimise this potential as much as possible. As part of our assessment of this move we have taken account of child safety issues and believe the presence of staff at all times and in numbers will address the safety issue. This has not been a significant risk at any site where we already have mixed profiles in one room.
- 2.6. Work on site is to begin in late May 2014 and while some work can be carried out while open with some facilities necessarily restricted. Library OSS staff will look to minimise disruption and inconvenience as much as possible to users. The work will involve full closure to the public for which formal permission is sought for a minimum of two weeks, maximum three weeks. As yet precise dates cannot be given but will be advertised locally and to ward members once agreed. This is likely to be from the late May Bank Holiday Tuesday 27th May into June 2014.
- 2.7. No closure time is ideal and we are doing a number of things to mitigate any negative impacts on the local community. As the whole building access is not available for this period a small pop up library will be offered at Conway One Stop Shop in central Birkenhead for the period of closure. This will have a varied selection of the latest titles and a free reservation service if books are required and need to be obtained from another library site. They will be able to be picked up from the pop up library. Library activities and events will also still be available at neighbouring libraries.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Potential closure delays

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Library site remaining partially open was considered not feasible.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The plan for the site will be publically available at the Library to ensure users are aware of the work. We have already responded to concerns over the change to the children's library move into the open area as detailed above.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 A modernised facility will facilitate increased partnership working and discussions with a voluntary sector group increasing its presence are already underway.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 Financial - The funding for this work, £35,000, is from the library one stop shop maintenance budget and is within budget.
- 7.2. IT – There are changes in IT on site and the electrical upgrade is required to fully meet current standards
- 7.3. Staffing – the open layout allows us to better staff the facility
- 7.4. Assets – these changes are all proposed and undertaken via asset management colleagues.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is attached.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 Birkenhead Central Library site be closed for a period of up to three weeks from Tuesday 27 May 2014 in order that essential maintenance work be undertaken.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 To allow Birkenhead Central Library to have the necessary building work undertaken and allowing a short period of closure.

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APPENDIX None

REFERENCE MATERIAL None.

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Dates