



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CULTURE AND PROSPERITY COMMISSION 5 December 2005

Report of the Director of Development and Cultural Services

The Future of Libraries

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To comment on the vision for Derby's public libraries
- 1.2 To endorse the continuing search for alternative to PFI as a funding mechanism to achieve the vision.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The re-engineering of Derby's library network answers a longstanding need recognised over 30 years ago when plans for a new Central Library first emerged. Since then, important new drivers have reinforced the message coming from Derby's citizens and visitors:
 - Derby's Victorian Central Library cannot perform to the level required by modern Public Library Standards
 - existing libraries at Mickleover and Chaddesden have been demonstrated to be unfit for purpose
 - our ambition, first expounded in 1998, to position a library in every District Centre, remains unfulfilled
 - area working and the neighbourhood strategy are emphasising the role of public libraries as providers of public contact points, information and inspiration
- 2.2 Our recent experience shows that PFI will not deliver this vision, but the need for it grows ever stronger.
- 2.3 Experimentation with the neighbourhood based at Sinfin Library and the fresh approach to library design at Alvaston Library and Learning Centre point the way towards a redefinition of the meaning and the impact of public libraries. Our PFI bid was designed to provide the right investment in buildings to create an infrastructure capable of delivering the national Public Library Service Standards and Framework for the Future, the Government's ten year vision for English public libraries. Beyond that, Derby's public libraries will create and support innovative communication channels between citizens and a huge range of public providers.
- 2.4 **The Vision**

By renewing and expanding the city's library network, the Council will support individuals and communities, and fulfil key Council policies by:

- encouraging reading, literacy, learning and the pursuit of knowledge
- giving access to public information, and providing a network of contact points for personal enquiries about the City Council services
- creating a network of contact points where providers of personal information, advice and guidance can receive and respond directly to enquiries from members of the public
- offering a network of locations from which members of the public can enjoy free access to e-government services
- supporting cultural diversity, and providing resources for and about Derby's culturally diverse population
- celebrating Derby's shared culture and heritage
- providing a network of welcoming and neutral public spaces in which everyone can take pride

2.5 **The Network Renewed**

Our ambitions for Derby's libraries include:

- the construction of a new Central Library of approximately 3,000 square metres
- the relocation of the Local Studies Library to the premises vacated by the Central Library, creating the opportunity to join up aspects of library and museum services relating to heritage based activities and the creative industries
- the refurbishment and extension of Pear Tree Library, to transform it into a full Library and Learning Centre based on the model at Alvaston
- the relocation of Spondon and Chaddesden Libraries to new, expanded premises. These would become full Library and Learning Centres
- the construction of entirely new Community Libraries at Allenton, Chellaston, Littleover, Mackworth and Oakwood

2.6 **Derby Central Library**

A new Central Library for Derby will transform our performance against Public Library Standards and provide a beacon of best practice in integrated services. Print and technology-based information services will be expanded, reader development work across the City will have a powerful base and the Library will show the way forward in fully flexible independent learning facilities for adults.

2.7 **Libraries as Community Information Hubs**

- 2.7.1 Public libraries do not exist in isolation. They do not simply provide information from their own resources, but increasingly give access to networks of other providers. Under this proposal each library will act as a contact point where citizens can obtain information about the full range of Council services, as well as information and advice from other statutory and voluntary sector providers.

- 2.7.2 To provide this objective every new or refurbished neighbourhood library will act as a joint services centre. Each will make space available for Council staff and representatives from partner organisations to meet with, and deal with enquiries from, members of the public. The accommodation provided will include a separate advice suite and private interview room, based on the model developed for the Neighbourhood Base at Sinfin Library.
- 2.7.3 Front-line staff will deal, either directly or by referral, with any enquiry about Council and other public services, using the new corporate CRM system, the internet and other sources. Time will be created for this important activity by adopting self-service technology and more flexible working practices; this will release staff from more mundane tasks.
- 2.7.4 Customers not wishing to speak with a member of staff will access Council information, and make contact with the Council, through the provision of ICT kiosks at every library. This would build on the experience being developed in the Sinfin area.
- 2.8 Re-Engineering**
- 2.8.1 This is not simply a series of building projects. New Library buildings will be innovative in their design and presentation, but equally importantly, the activity inside them is being completely re-engineered for the 21st century.
- 2.8.2 Derby's successes at Sinfin, Alvaston and the children's Reading Rocket show our track record.
- 2.8.3 Users who are experienced and skilled will be able to help themselves to the riches of our printed heritage and electronic assets; people who are less confident will be guided and supported in their journey towards enlightenment or personal fulfilment.

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Background papers:	"Derby Connect" PFI bid 2005 available from David Potton, Head of Library
List of appendices:	Services Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Costs

The project as proposed in our PFI submission was £28 million. It consisted of an array of capital projects undertaken all at once. Outside the constraints of PFI the renewal programme will need to be spread over many years as funds become available.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council is obliged by law to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service. These terms are not defined in the legislation, but all library authorities are obliged to measure themselves against national Public Library Standards.

Personnel

3. The development of the public library network in Derby will entail changes to jobs and working practices. These changes will be introduced within the Council's best practice in the field of industrial relations.

Equalities impact

- 4 Public Libraries provide the greatest value to communities where greatest deprivation is felt. They provide free access to information and to works of the imagination.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The proposal comes under the Council's Objective of providing
- a stimulating and high quality learning environment**
 - healthy, safe and independent communities**
 - a lively and energetic cultural life**
 - a prosperous, vibrant and successful economy**
 - a shared commitment to regenerating our communities**

5.2 The proposal furthers the priority/priorities

working towards raising educational achievement

working towards improving customer service, in the city centre and locally

working towards minimising increases in Council Tax and increasing value for money from our services

integrating and improving children's services

better procurement to deliver VFM

working in partnership to achieve socially cohesive communities

improving the Council's built assets for service delivery