

## **RELOCATION OF THE LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 As a result of its office accommodation strategy, the Council proposes to vacate the St Mary's Gate building around the end of 2012. This will require the relocation of the Local Studies Library.
- 1.2 A number of potential solutions have been identified and rejected in recent years, most recently relocating Local Studies to part of Blagreaves Lane Library.
- 1.3 Officers from the Council's Regeneration Department are currently developing proposals to bring the former Magistrates Court back into use and have incorporated the Local Studies Library in their plans. A report on the future of the former Magistrates Court is intended to be presented to cabinet in October 2012.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To note the latest option being progressed for the relocation of the Local Studies Library.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 With the redevelopment of the Council House nearing completion, the Council will soon be vacating St Mary's Gate. At this point finding a new home for the Local Studies Library will become urgent.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Background**

- 4.1 The Local Studies Library stores, maintains and provides public access to information relating to Derby and the surrounding area. It delivers a service for researchers seeking information about the city and local region and also offers a number of resources for family historians.

- 4.2 On average the library has just over 1,000 visitors per month. Although this is fewer than lending libraries, use made of Local Studies is more intensive. Users will often spend half a day, or even a whole day, in the library carrying out their research. The annual budget is £135,000.
- 4.3 The Public Libraries and Museums Act requires that the basic service is free at the point of access. Value added services are charged for – these include a research service, pre-visit resources checks, lectures and courses. However the income generated from these is modest.
- 4.4 The library is currently located in the St Mary's Gate building, occupying around 750 square metres of the ground floor and basement, mostly for materials storage. St Mary's Gate will be vacated by the Council around the end of 2012 as part of the corporate office accommodation strategy. The Council therefore needs to find alternative premises from which to deliver the Local Studies service.
- 4.5 Although the limitations of the current building mean that storage is rather inefficient, its replacement will need to be of a roughly similar size. This is to allow room for expansion because, unlike lending libraries, the Local Studies Library never discards stock and therefore continues to grow slowly over time.
- 4.6 During the last few years a number of options have been identified but ultimately rejected as impractical, unaffordable or unsuitable for effective service delivery. Most recently, in November 2011, a proposal to relocate to part of the Blagreaves Lane Library building was halted because of concerns that its suburban location was inappropriate for a service of equal relevance to all areas of the city. A full list of locations previously considered but rejected is shown at Appendix 2.

### **Proposal to relocate to the former Magistrates Court**

- 4.7 Council officers from the Regeneration Department are currently working up proposals to bring back into use the former Magistrates Court on Full Street. The concept is to adapt the building to add to the Council's portfolio of managed workspaces similar to Friar Gate Studios, where small and start-up enterprises can take a room or suite of rooms to launch or grow their businesses.
- 4.8 As part of their thinking the Regeneration Team were asked to explore the possibility of accommodating the Local Studies Library in the refurbished building. Their conclusion was that the publicly accessible part of the library could be located in one of the court rooms on the first floor. The former Magistrates Court is a Grade 2 Listed building, and locating Local Studies here would enable continued public access to one of its most attractive and architecturally significant areas.

- 4.9 Other parts of the central court area on the first floor would be converted into a learning room, staff work area and storage area. Further space to store library stock would be allocated in one wing of the first floor, and overspill storage would be available on part of the ground floor. This includes the old court cells. At least one of these would be retained in its current condition as an example of their original use, and we are developing outline plans to set up a small exhibition about crime and punishment in Derby in some of the other cells. Although access to these would be controlled, using them in this way would increase knowledge of this aspect of Derby's heritage and make good use of Local Studies' presence in the building.
- 4.10 The Regeneration Team believes that the Local Studies Library has the potential to become "an anchor tenant for the former Magistrates Court managed business centre and act as a catalyst to encourage related uses and provide a diverse business occupier use". It is also the case that by occupying the courtrooms the Local Studies Library would provide an opportunity to utilise parts of the building for which it would be difficult to find a commercial use due to the constraints resulting from the Grade 2 listing.
- 4.11 The report on the full scheme to regenerate the former Magistrates Court building, which is due to be considered by cabinet in October, will therefore include a recommendation on the relocation of the Local Studies Library.
- 4.12 From a library service perspective we believe this building would be a good location for Local Studies. The city centre location is exactly what users of the current building have been demanding and its proximity to the Council House, the civic heart of Derby, makes perfect sense. Total storage space is satisfactory, and locating the library in one of the most attractive parts of a Listed building is entirely appropriate.
- 4.13 The Magistrates Court building is next to the River Derwent so we have considered carefully the risk of flooding. All the public areas and most storage will be on the first floor, and therefore not vulnerable. The ground floor will be used for overflow storage of duplicate and easily replaced material only. Internal building works will help mitigate the flood risk. In addition we will update the existing Local Studies Library Disaster Control Plan to include robust storage policies to further mitigate any residual risk, backed up by protocols to ensure that we monitor Environment Agency flood warnings and take decisive action if flooding seems likely.
- 4.14 Like Friar Gate Studios, it is proposed that a redeveloped Magistrates Court would incorporate a café to serve both public and occupiers, and this would be welcomed by many users of the Local Studies Library as they tend to spend extended periods of time in the library.
- 4.15 Subject to cabinet agreement in October, the refurbishment of the former Magistrates Court is to be funded primarily through the Council's Regeneration Fund. Additional funding for the relocation of the Local Studies Library is proposed to come from the accommodation strategy capital budget: in July 2011 cabinet agreed to set aside £500k of that budget "to support further accommodation changes, such as implementing the relocation of the Local Studies Library."

- 4.16 The Local Studies Library is just one element of the whole Magistrates Court scheme. The costs of refurbishing the areas it will occupy would be incurred whether or not the library is relocated there. Only the removal and fit out costs – notably racking, and the installation of a mezzanine in one of the court rooms – are specifically attributable to the Local Studies project. The cabinet paper on the whole Magistrates Court scheme is being written in parallel with this report, and will include more detailed information on the scheme costs.
- 4.17 If the relocation goes ahead Local Studies' operating costs will be higher at the former Magistrates Court than at St Mary's Gate due to service charges and other factors. This increase has been provisionally identified as a revenue pressure of £47k in the budget setting process for 2013/14. This figure will be refined in the October cabinet paper.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 A list of the options that have previously been considered, but ultimately rejected as impractical, unaffordable or unsuitable for effective service delivery is given at Appendix 2. It includes a brief explanation of why each option was rejected, and costing information where available / appropriate.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b>	None
<b>Financial officer</b>	None
<b>Human Resources officer</b>	None
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Claire Davenport
<b>Other(s)</b>	Mark Leach (Development Officer – Regeneration Projects)

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Options previously rejected

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

1.1 None arising directly from this report

**Legal**

2.1 None arising directly from this report

**Personnel**

3.1 None arising directly from this report

**Equalities Impact**

4.1 None arising directly from this report

**Health and Safety**

5.1 None arising directly from this report

**Environmental Sustainability**

6.1 None arising directly from this report

**Asset Management**

7.1 None arising directly from this report

**Risk Management**

8.1 None arising directly from this report

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

9.1 None arising directly from this report

## Options previously rejected

No	Option	Rejected because	Notes
1	Discontinue the service entirely and dispose of all the stock through sale or donation to other organisations	Judged unacceptable.	The Local Studies Library holds the written records of the history of Derby and its people in trust for this generation and future generations. The collection includes over 60,000 items, with the oldest dating back several centuries.
2	Digitise the entire stock and dispose of all hardcopy material stock through sale or donation to other organisations.	Cost; practicality/legality; acceptability to researchers.	Some stock is currently digitised, and we continue to add to this as and when appropriate. However due to copyright restrictions much of the stock will not be available to digitise for many decades. Initial and tentative costings suggested that whole scale digitisation, even if it were legal, could cost several million pounds. Researchers generally believe that historic documents have intrinsic value, and need to be retained for future generations even when they have been digitised.
3	Relocate to the Central Library, using its basement for storage	Insufficient space in library; poor environmental conditions and flood risk in basement	Derby Central Library is already too small to carry out effectively the role of a modern central library. Giving up space to accommodate the Local Studies research room would place services under further pressure. The basement suffers from damp and would require costly remedial work to make it suitable for the storage of valuable historic records. The basement is close to the underground course of Markeaton Brook, and is therefore vulnerable to flooding.
4	Relocate to a newly built facility on the Pickford's House car park	Poor access to and limited space in car park; cost of new build; Listed building issues	Pickford's House is a Grade 1 Listed building. Building a new Local Studies Library in its grounds is certain to be contentious and complex.

No	Option	Rejected because	Notes
5	Relocate to the Council House.	Lack of space	
6	Relocate to the County Council's Records Office building in Matlock, with one variation including the retention of some electronically accessible elements of the service at the Central Library.	Judged unacceptable that Derby residents / Council Tax payers should have to travel 20 miles out of Derby to find out about the history of their home city.	This was a time limited opportunity and is no longer available. The County Council was about to build an extension to the Derbyshire Records Office, and to relocate its main local studies library to the same site. We enquired whether we could contribute to the capital cost of the project so that the size of the extension could be increased to also accommodate the Derby Local Studies Library. The extension of the Records Office is now under construction and is too small to accommodate the Derby's Local Studies Library.
7	Relocate to one floor of the Silk Mill Museum.	The Museums Transformation Programme has ambitions to redevelop the whole of the Silk Mill into a major visitor attraction for Derby. Allocating one whole floor to the Local Studies Library would limit the scale of the opportunity.	A feasibility study was carried out in 2010 into refurbishing the second floor of the Silk Mill to accommodate a relocated Local Studies Library. Property Design Services' budget estimate suggested a capital cost for the works in excess of £1m.
8	Relocate to the Derby Museums store on Bold Lane.	Cost	A feasibility study was carried out in 2010 into refurbishing the Bold Lane Museum store and converting it into a new home for Local Studies. Property Design Services' budget estimate suggested a capital cost for the works in excess of £2.6m, part of which was to be spent on acquiring an industrial storage unit for the museum artefacts that would have been displaced when the Local Studies Library moved

No	Option	Rejected because	Notes
			in.
9	Deliver the service from a central location – possibly part of the Central Library – but store all hardcopy material at a remote location, with a regular collection and delivery service between the two	Unacceptable impact on service delivery / the user experience; insufficient space in Central Library / cost of alternative centrally-located accommodation	Users are on a voyage of discovery. They rarely come to the library knowing every document they wish to consult. They perhaps have a starting point, but then follow a trail – one document leads to another, which in turn leads to a third, and so on. A regular part of the job Local Studies staff is to fetch a succession of documents from the stores when users identify a need for them. If, every time a user identifies the need for a document, he has to wait 24 hours for it to be delivered from remote storage, his experience will be poor. He is unlikely to be satisfied with the service the Council provides. It is also worth noting that there are substantial costs involved in acquiring and maintaining a remote location, staffing it every day to find items that are wanted and re-shelve items that are returned, and providing a transport link between the two. It has already been noted above (3) that there is insufficient space at the Central Library to accommodate the front-facing element of the Local Studies Library without damaging other services delivered from it; therefore this option would also incur the cost of acquiring additional centrally located accommodation for Local's public research room.
10	Relocate to 30 Market Place	Too small	
11	Blagreaves Lane Library	Suburban location judged inappropriate for a service equally relevant to residents from every corner of the city.	User consultation indicated high levels of opposition to this proposal. In particular it was felt to disadvantage non-car users, who in most cases would have to take two buses to use the service, rather than the one that would be needed to access a centrally located service. Capital cost was



No	Option	Rejected because	Notes
			estimated in the region of £360k.
12	Former Mango Tang restaurant	Cost	The report due to be presented to cabinet in October on the whole Magistrates Court scheme includes an options appraisal for the Local Studies Library. It shows the Mango Tang option to be significantly more expensive than the Magistrates Court.