



**Report for:
ACTION**

Item Number:

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Libraries for the 21 st century - a strategy for libraries in Ealing
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Portfolio(s)	Customer Engagement
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	15 th March 2005
Implementation Date if Not Called In	
Affected Wards	All
Area Committees	N/A
Keywords/Index	Libraries; investment strategy

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval for a strategy for investment in all the borough's libraries to ensure that they can respond to the needs of local residents, deliver the government's agenda for libraries, and contribute to the effectiveness of the Response Council.

1. Recommended Actions

- That Cabinet agree to the strategy for libraries set out in this report
- That Cabinet agree the investment programme for all libraries set out in this report
- That Cabinet instruct officers to prepare a detailed programme to refurbish and modernise libraries in line with the strategy
- That Cabinet redesignate the capital budgets totalling £1.19m identified in paragraph 6.3 for this investment programme

2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

3. Key Points

3.1 Legal

There are no legal implications at this stage

3.2 Financial

The Executive Director for Resources has contributed to the financial information in section 6 and Appendix 2.

3.3 Staffing

Section 6.4 identifies efficiencies in the use of staff arising from changes to the layout of buildings, co-location with other services, and the application of technology such as self issue terminals. There are no specific recommendations on the numbers or allocation of staff at this time.

4. Background

4.1 The government has identified a modern mission for libraries in its strategic document *Framework for the Future*. This presents three key activities:

- **The promotion of reading and informal learning.** This builds on the traditional core skills of encouraging the enjoyment of reading by the development of audiences through reading groups and literary events. It encompasses support for learning, focussing particularly on basic skills, ICT and job skills and information provision
- **Access to digital skills and services including e-government.** This develops the extensive number of public computer terminals provided through the People's Network to provide access to ICT for people who might otherwise be marginalized, and a supportive environment for those coming new to the technology. These terminals are an ideal framework for the migration of customers to electronic forms of communication envisaged as a benefit of the Response programme
- **Measures to tackle social exclusion, build community links and develop citizenship.** Libraries are easily accessible public spaces in the heart of communities and provide a free access to both printed and written information in an unthreatening environment.

4.2 These activities link together the libraries traditional role with newer roles that complement the objectives of the council and support the Response Council. In particular the library service contributes to corporate priorities in a number of ways:

- **Delivering the Response Council.** Response points in libraries provide a consistent access to council services and staff will support customers in the adoption of the new channels, particularly using the internet
- **Developing community cohesion.** Libraries can build on an established information role and act as a focal point within communities.
- **Supporting economic development.** Libraries provide information on courses including basic skills and ESOL training and ICT courses in the four learning centres situated in library buildings.
- **Helping to revitalise town centres.** Libraries are identified as a key component in town centres strategies
- **Tackling social exclusion** by targeting excluded and marginalized groups and in particular by supporting digital skills and access to ICT.

4.3 Library buildings are a visible presence in the high street of major town centres and within communities and a sign of the council's commitment to its residents. Libraries remain one of the most used services provided by the Council and are

highly regarded by the people who use them. However, there has been a downward trend in library use, certainly for the traditional role of lending books, and this trend has been seen across public libraries nationally. The trend has, however, been reversed by increased visits for use of public ICT terminals over the last few years.

Across the country there are a number of new library buildings and refurbishment programmes and there is strong evidence that new and refurbishment buildings create higher levels of public awareness and generate significantly higher levels of use. Some examples of these are given in Appendix 1.

- 4.4 Residents' views on libraries have been taken into account in formulating the strategy. User surveys have shown for some years that many existing users are dissatisfied with the appearance of our buildings and the facilities in them. Results from the most recent customer survey (Nov 2003) are shown in appendix 4. As well as improving libraries for existing users, an aim of the strategy will be to remove barriers that discourage some residents from using libraries at all.

Consultation with residents on the precise plan for each library will take place as the strategy is developed.

5. A strategy for investing in libraries in Ealing

At the heart of a strategy for libraries is the need to provide libraries that both our customers and the Council can be proud of. Ealing Council has twelve public libraries; of these 3 are 100 years old, 4 are 70 years old, and only 5 have been built in the 40 year existence of the present borough. The newest buildings are already 20 years old. Most libraries are ill-equipped because of design and layout to meet the needs of the modern mission for libraries.

An investment programme is needed to refurbish these libraries to ensure that they can provide:

- Excellent customer access to council services
 - Welcoming environments that can act as focal points in their communities
 - Attractive buildings which convey a positive image of council and encourage customers to use them
- 5.1 Refurbished and modernised libraries can more easily deliver the national and local agenda for libraries. By attracting more people to libraries the council will improve its rating in terms of key performance indicators and the Public Library Standards which have a direct impact on CPA.
- 5.2 The capital investment programme for libraries has six objectives.
- Reallocate space within libraries for Response points – most libraries cannot easily accommodate Response points without changes to their layout. These need to be clearly identifiable and branded on the exterior and interior of buildings
 - Libraries have suffered from under-investment over several decades and the building stock is in a generally poor state of repair. Before these buildings can be transformed to take on a new role we must address the maintenance backlog.
 - Libraries have basic wheelchair access, but there is much more to be done to meet disability standards. Entrance doors, width of gangways, height of shelves,

induction loops, colour contrasts for people with limited vision, and signage all require attention

- The changing role for libraries puts greater emphasis on such things as adult learning, basic skills, reader groups and events for adults and children – active rather than passive use of our buildings. Library interiors need greater flexibility – moveable shelving for example – to accommodate these needs within often quite small buildings.
- The Public Library Standards (PLS) require library authorities to have 6 PCs for public use for every 10,000 population. To meet this requirement Ealing needs to get from the present 105 terminals to 185, and to create the space within buildings to house them
- Similarly the PLS require library authorities to purchase 216 books and other stock items per thousand population. To meet this standard Ealing would need to increase its spending on stock by £130,000 per annum.

6 . Investment strategy

6.1 Capital investment is required for buildings, ICT and library stock. A total of £6.62 million has been identified, made up from

- A total of £4.47m for **buildings** incorporating 3 elements:
 - £1.6m to remedy the **maintenance** backlog that has been identified in Asset Surveys
 - £670k to undertake the works identified in **DDA surveys** required to make library buildings compliant and minimise the chances of a challenge
 - £2.2m to undertake the **interior remodelling** required to create flexible and attractive interiors which can deliver the modern agenda for libraries and Response points
- £1.060m for **ICT** will allow for the replacement of a large quantity of obsolete equipment and to give customers and staff up-to-date equipment and to increase the number of public terminals required by the Public Library Standards
- £390k to bring the spending on **library stock** up to level indicated in the public library standards (216 additions per annum per 1000)
- £673k for **project management** and costs and contingencies

6.2 The programme includes identified work at all 12 libraries in the borough with the exception of Jubilee Gardens. This is already the subject of a proposed new, shared facility with the Primary Care Trust which has already been reported to Cabinet. That proposal is expected to be self-funding within the Southall Area Strategy.

The future of Acton, Southall and Greenford libraries will be integrated in the relevant town centre strategies. As these are key library buildings and there are currently no firm proposals or dates for rebuilding them, the costs of refurbishing the existing buildings have been included in the investment programme. However, if the town centre strategies go ahead with the libraries included in the schemes the funding programme can be directed towards ensuring high quality library provision or if possible the requirement can be reduced.

6.3 A sum of £1.19m has been identified as available in 2005/6 to start this programme, comprising monies already allocated in the capital programme for libraries (£100k), in the Response programme to allow for the creation of Response points in libraries (£884k), and for DDA improvements (£135k). An indicative spending plan for 2005/6 is shown in Appendix 3.

£5.5m will be required to continue this programme in 2006/7 and 2007/8. A breakdown of the overall costings for the programme is included in Appendix 2 and is the subject of ongoing work.

6.4 The capital investment strategy is designed to produce a return on investment which has financial and non-financial elements.

In terms of **buildings** the investment will provide:

- Ability to deliver the Response Council by creating Response Points within libraries
- Reduced overheads from lower maintenance and energy efficiency by addressing the maintenance backlog and modernising systems
- Reduced threat of challenge under DDA
- More efficient use of staff by co-location and improved layouts reducing the number of staffed service points and self service
- Improved customer satisfaction and increased take-up of service impacting on statutory PIs for visitor numbers and reducing the cost per visit

In terms of **ICT** the investment will provide:

- Reduced maintenance costs on new equipment producing a saving on revenue maintenance budgets
- Improvements in the operational efficiency of staff with up-to-date technology will improve business efficiency
- Additional public PCs in libraries allow the authority to meet the target in the public library standards
- A technology refresh would enable us to respond to customer demands for e.g. photo quality printing and burning CDs/DVDs. Such facilities will help retain existing customers and encourage new ones and will generate additional income.
- Self-issue terminals in larger libraries would reduce staffing needs, and with revised layouts, contribute to the potential for staff savings
- Investment in hardware and software to enable text messaging and email as the main means of communication with our customers will save on postage and stationery

In terms of **library stock** the investment will provide:

- The ability to meet the Public Library Standards for additions to stock and for stock replenishment rate for which we have been criticised
- Improved customer satisfaction rate relating to the ability to find the books they want. This is a KPI feeding into the CPA rating.
- The opportunity to increase expenditure on income generating audio visual material (DVDs etc) without damaging expenditure on other areas. This will generate more income from hire charges.

In terms of the **Response programme** the investment will provide:

- An improved network of town centre libraries and community libraries, along with the library in Ealing Hospital, providing enhanced customer access to Council services

- Self access through dedicated terminals linked to the Council website where users can be supported by library staff
- Use of a free phone to contact Response direct
- The ability to send documents and correspondence to the Registry through the internal mail system
- Consistent face-to-face information and advice by library staff who have access to the universal systems used by staff in Response Direct
- The flexibility to learn from our first experiences of operating the Response Council and make adjustments to our original assumptions – e.g. Northolt Library has sufficient space to operate a face-to-face service and is at the greatest distance from Perceval House

6.5 The financial return on investment is made up of a number of elements

- Reduced revenue maintenance costs because the maintenance backlog has been addressed
- Improved energy efficiency resulting in lower running costs
- Some staffing reductions resulting from the co-location of buildings, improved layouts, and an element of customer self-service
- Opportunities for commercial activities such as sales concessions
- Increased income from fines and charges that follow increased footfall
- Increased income from current and new sales items including a wider range of DVDs

An indicative breakdown of the financial return is shown in Appendix 2

6.6 The most important benefit of refurbished libraries will be an increased level of library visits and an overall improvement in library usage. This will improve Ealing's rating against this KPI and reduce the unit cost per visit, currently £4.05. Estimates that draw on the experience of other authorities that have gone through a similar refurbishment programme suggest that the cost per visit could reduce to £2.22.

7. Concluding comments.

7.1 There is some risk in this strategy. The strategy is designed to produce libraries that meet the needs of residents and are welcoming and well-designed buildings that encourage regular use. Ultimately the vindication of the strategy is significantly increased levels of use (thus meeting or getting close to the Public Library Standard for library visits) and a high level of customer satisfaction. This will have the desired impact of reducing the cost per visit. The large investment required to fund the programme is needed to make a significant difference to the look and feel of buildings and the services delivered through them; in this way we can generate the excitement and enthusiasm that encourages new and lapsed users to investigate what is available.

7.2 However, not carrying out the programme would pose other risks to the council. There would be a continued decline in the use of the service, with a consequent increase in the cost per visit and the cost per loan. Significant investment is needed to reverse the downward trend in library usage and reinforce those areas of the service that are currently performing well such as the use of public terminals and the hire of DVDs.

7.3 Further, libraries have an important role in projecting the new image of the Council and the way it operates, which is at the heart of the Response

programme. Some of the impact of the major refurbishment of Perceval House and the new customer contact area will be undercut if council buildings elsewhere in the borough appear shabby and unwelcoming. Libraries as a major Council presence in the community need to be seen to be a vital part of the new Response Council

5. Background Information
(public documents referred to in writing the report)

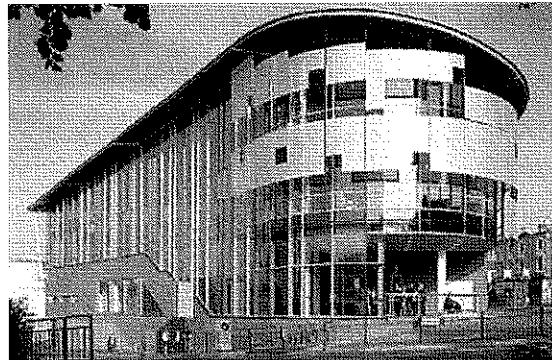
Public Library Users Survey 2003

Appendix 1: examples of new library buildings and refurbishments



There is strong evidence that new and refurbished libraries can generate significantly higher levels of use. Iconic new libraries like the Norwich, Millenium Library, Bournemouth and the Tower Hamlets Ideas stores and Stratford in London have created enormous media interest and have seen visitor numbers increase by as much as 300%. The interior of Bow Ideas Store is illustrated here.

New buildings like Peckham and Bournemouth have won prizes for their eye-catching architecture and have created a climate where the importance of good civic design and the contribution that high quality architecture makes to people's lives is recognised. Bournemouth is illustrated right



On a smaller scale than these flagship buildings Hendon Library in Barnet has just reopened after refurbishment at a cost of £1.4m., bringing a listed 1930s building up-to-date.



In Ealing the refurbishment of Pitshanger Library in the winter 2003/4 has produced a library which fits within a busy shopping street and is highly visible and accessible.

Appendix 2

Library Refurbishment capital programme including all libraries except Jubilee Gardens

£000

Total Capital requirement	6,618
Less Approved capital	984
Less DDA budget	135
Net capital requirement	5,499

Indicative savings that contribute to the Return on Investment

Reduced running costs	20
Staff savings from redesign of interiors	80
Increased income from fines	30
Commercial opportunities	25
Sales of goods and hires	16
Total	171

Revenue cost of capital programme

Interest at 5% p.a. on £6618k	331
Minimum Revenue provision at 4% p.a.	265
Less savings above	(171)
Net estimate of revenue costs	425

Appendix 3

Indicative spending programme (Programme to be confirmed as part of a 3 year plan)

Year One

	Northolt £000	Northfields £000	Greenford £000	Central £000	All Libraries £000	Total £000
DDA works	10	65	46	30		152
Maintenance backlog		40	77	190		307
Response points	10	10	10	10		40
Internal reorganisation	20	117	30			167
Stock expenditure					130	130
ICT Refresh					175	176
ICT developments						
Sub total	40	232	163	230	305	972
15% project management and contingency	6	34	25	34	45	145
Total	46	267	188	264	351	1,118

Library	Proposed scope of works
Northolt	Create the Response point, improve the entrance and replace the existing counter to meet DDA requirements
Greenford	Address the maintenance backlog and reorganise the entrance and counter areas to make the building more easily accessible
Northfields	Complete scheme at to remedy building defects, to rebuild the entrance and extend the porch as well as to reorganise the interior, including the creation of a Response point.
Central Library	First phase of work to the starting in the second half of 2005/6 with the bulk of the work and additional funding in 2006/7
All libraries	Year one of ICT refresh to public terminals originally funded through the People's Network programme and the oldest staff equipment

Project phasing

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Northolt		Southall	Hanwell
Greenford		Acton	
	Central		
		West Ealing	Pitshanger
	Northfields		
	Jubilee Gardens		Library Support Centre
		Perivale	Wood End

Appendix 4

Rating of library buildings by users

- 25% of respondents thought that the external appearance of libraries was no better than adequate. For some libraries it was nearer 50%
- 23% of respondents thought that the interior condition of libraries was no better than adequate. For some libraries it was more than 30%
- The rating of ease of access entering and within buildings was better but there were some notable exceptions
- 30% of respondents thought the layout of libraries was no better than adequate and this was consistent across all libraries
- 43% of respondents thought the provision of seating and tables was no better than adequate
- 32% of respondents thought the provision of computers was no better than adequate

Source: *Public Library User Survey, November 2003*