

Supplement to the agenda for

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 19 July 2023

10.00 am

Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE

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7. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF THE FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISION ON REVIEW OF NEW HEREFORD LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE LOCATION Following the Political Group Consultation on 17 July 2023 and in response to a request from members, additional information for the costings of the Shirehall is provided in the attached document.	5 - 6

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: Questions from members of the public and the responses

19 July 2023

Question

From Nina Shields, Ledbury

- i. I would like to submit a question about the review of the location for Hereford Library.

What account has been taken of the impact on High Town if Maylords is returned to being retail premises?

- ii. With regard to the review of the location of Hereford Library, Ledbury Library Development Group would like to ask the following question.

Additional services were to be housed in Maylords, adjacent to the library. Where will they be located if the plan to locate the library in Shire Hall goes ahead?

- iii. With regard to the location of Hereford Library, Sustainable Ledbury welcomes the repurposing of existing buildings but has the following question.

We understand that Shire Hall is in a state of poor repair. What are the Council's plans to repair the building and make it energy efficient and how much will this cost?

Response to Question

By Cabinet Member Community Services and Assets

- i. The strategic review has considered both locations in detail against the set criteria. With the recommendation of the library moving to the Shirehall this will enable Maylord Orchards to continue to successfully operate commercial and retail units and to create new opportunities at the heart of the city centre. Since the purchase of Maylord Orchards the council has endeavoured to ensure that the centre is run effectively and it is noted that there is a strong interest and demand for the units with the centre becoming a vibrant community centre and a key player in regenerating the city centre. Footfall figures, although not expressly captured at Maylord Orchards, are obtained from Business Improvement District and indicate that from March-end June we are already seeing a circa 44,000 increase in visits; a 50% rise on the previous period last year. Our appointed agents inform us that we are performing very well against the national picture.
- ii. The Learning Resource Centre was to be located on the first floor of Maylord Orchards. The suggested location for this is now within the Undercroft area of Shirehall. The space is comparatively larger with further rooms available. This could increase the provision to potentially include areas such as a Maker Space and Sensory Room. The Shirehall is significantly larger and will not only meet the needs of the library but also provide flexible space to be used for wider events and activities such as refreshment facilities, civil ceremonies, weddings, registration of births, poetry readings, exhibitions, TED talks, business breakfasts, film screenings, health and wellbeing clinics etc. (subject to available future funding and any necessary consents).
- iii. The previous cabinet made a decision in November 2022 to delay a formal position on the future of the Shirehall, pending a Corporate Asset Review that is being undertaken. If the cabinet paper is approved on 20th July 2023 to agree the principle of the Library and Learning Centre relocating to Shirehall, then a detailed business plan will be developed.

Prior to the report in November 2022, many building surveys were undertaken to understand the failings of the building and to provide a cost estimate of likely repair. Carbon reduction formed a part of this and where possible, measures designed in. The cost estimate for a full refurbishment (significantly in excess of repairs only), as agreed by the previous cabinet, was noted in the November 2022 report as £7.5m. A recent report prepared to inform this review has identified that repair costs to be circa £3.6m.

With the new, proposed use of Shirehall by the Library and Learning Centre, the design will be revisited and re-costed. A full business plan will be developed for consideration by the cabinet in October, setting out the costs of the project.



SHIREHALL DESIGN STRATEGIC REVIEW JULY 23

Following the Political Group Consultation on 17 July for the Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre members requested additional information for the costings of the Shirehall.

The costings are below in the table but please note the following:

- Initial studies and reviews suggested a range of RAG rated options that were costed at a high level.
- In November 2022, the project was estimated at £7.5m based upon an agreed design and technical surveys.
- A **desktop exercise** was undertaken on the previously designed and costed works. The purpose was to understand the element of **essential works** to enable the building to be operational and safe.
- The exercise was completed subject to surveys, full specifications and details.
- It is not possible to confirm a final figure at this stage. A further review will be undertaken as part of the full business case to be completed in October. The figures included below are for information only and are not intended to inform the decision to select a new location for the Library and Learning Centre to be considered by Cabinet on 20 July 2023.

In summary the consultants were asked to estimate high level expected costs to reflect:

- a) defects such as risk of structural failure and water ingress which make the building unusable,
- b) works necessary to halt the ongoing deterioration of the building fabric,
- c) replacement of inadequate or end-of-life mechanical/electrical/plumbing services and
- d) any works which if not addressed may result in the council not meeting its statutory obligations as a building operator and employer in some way.

They were also asked for the cost plan to be updated to reflect inflation on a new timeline (construction commencing in spring 2024) and the omission of any works previously included as part of our landlord obligations to HM Courts.

The council's internal costs (£158,000 based on previous estimates) are then added. If consistent with the original strategy we would also look to include a 20% risk/contingency sum (higher than normal to reflect what we may find on peeling back the surface in a building of this age and condition, as well as the potentially limited freedoms we would have to minimise those extra costs due to conservation requirements). The cost plan already includes a 10% contingency sum of £281,649, and so we would need to add the same again to maintain it at 20%. On this basis the reduced scope is estimated as:

Design & Build as revised cost plan including 10% contingency allowance (£281,649)	£3,172,281
Internal project management & professional support services	£158,015
Additional contingency to increase total risk allowance to 20%	£281,649
Allowance for CCTV relocation within the building	£15,000
Allowance for refurbishment of listed metal canopy	£15,000
Total:	£3,641,945

Costs exclude any works required to Court Room 2

