

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 22 June 2023

Question 1

Cllr Liz Harvey, Ledbury North

To: cabinet member, Community services and assets

The decision report states that: “other Town Investment Plan projects that were originally due to be clustered with the library in Maylord Orchards (Rural Media Digital Culture Hub, Powerhouse and Encore) to create a cultural hub are now locating elsewhere” and cites this as grounds for the review.

However, the full Strategic Business Case for the Stronger Towns Library and Learning Resource Centre published on the Council's website and approved by Cabinet in June 2022 makes it clear that changes in the other stronger towns project plans and in the council's own plans for Maylords have already been fully taken into account.

Why is the Cabinet Member not recognising these facts, and why are the guiding principles for undertaking the review not being made public at the point the case is being made for the need for the review itself?

Response

The cabinet paper cites this as one of a number of reasons for the review, alongside the continued high demand for retail space in the shopping centre. The draft City Centre Masterplan has also identified a range of needs for strategically significant sites, and there are now other options for redevelopment compared to when the project to relocate the library to Maylord Orchard was first identified. The detailed business case referenced is specific to the Maylord Orchard focussed project rather than considering other options in the city at the time. The strategic intent of the Town Investment Plan approved by government was to create a cultural hub in the city. The review is an opportunity to consider if this can still be achieved.

Should cabinet support the decision to undertake the review, the scope of the review will be finalised as soon as possible and circulated. The council will also seek the views of key partners as part of the review process.