

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Thursday, 8 June 2023, 10.00 am, County Hall Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Cllr Emma Stokes (Chairman), Cllr Emma Marshall (Vice Chairman), Cllr James Stanley, Cllr Laura Gretton, Cllr Peter Griffiths, Cllr Natalie McVey, Cllr Richard Udall and Cllr Craig Warhurst

Agenda Supplement

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Agenda produced and published by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Samantha Morris 01905 844963 or Deborah Dale 01905 846282, email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

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Date of Issue: Thursday 1 June 2023

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CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

8 JUNE 2023

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE REDDITCH LIBRARY

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities, the Strategic Director for People and the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on developments relating to progress since the Cabinet report on Redditch library relocation in October 2022 (Appendix 1) and to set out what information is still required before the Council (Cabinet decision) can make an informed decision on whether Redditch library should be relocated.

Background

2. Redditch Borough Council (RBC) have approached Worcestershire County Council (the Council) to request the Redditch library service is moved from its current location, into a new Community Hub at Redditch Town Hall, to free up the space for development of Redditch Town centre.
3. For the Council to be assured that the proposed move would not be detrimental to the library service or the county council's interests, it has stipulated, as outlined in the Cabinet paper from October 2022, that specific commercial arrangements, operational service conditions and collaboration opportunities are to be satisfied, the aim of which is to ensure that overall, the Council's costs will be no worse as a consequence.
4. The timescales on the project are ambitious as Towns Fund monies must be spent by March 2026. The library move, should approval be given, would take place in autumn 2024.
5. The October 2022 Cabinet report, set out the requirements that the Council would need to be fulfilled if the library service were to re-locate to alternative premises. These requirements are considered essential in protecting the Council's interests, both commercially and in terms of service offer/statutory responsibilities. The requirements are categorised into three areas of commercial arrangements, service conditions and collaboration opportunities.
6. These requirements were used in the preliminary discussions with RBC, which identified Redditch Town Hall as a potential alternative location to deliver the library service from. In summary, the proposed location within the Town Hall would be comparable with the space in the current library; be walking/pram pushing distance

from the existing library and suggested commercial arrangements would mean the Council was not financially worse off. With it being indicated that these requirements could be met, Cabinet agreed to commence a formal public consultation to seek opinion and views on the proposed relocation, before making a final decision.

7. RBC is already working on the redevelopment of the Town Hall and plan to go ahead with refurbishments and extension regardless of the Council's decision on whether the library will move there. RBC does this at its own risk. The Town Investment Plan states that government funding for the redevelopment of the library site is conditional on the library relocation. Tight timelines have meant that RBC have had to continue with planning activity ahead of the Council's final decision on whether to approve the relocation of the library, in order for the funding deadline of 31 March 2026 to be met. The Council has provided significant project management expertise, funded by the Council, to support the development of the project. Cabinet will consider the proposals and consultation entirely on its own merits in terms of the Council's statutory duties as a library provider.

Issues for the Panel to Consider

8. The Panel are asked to review the proposal to relocate Redditch library, which includes responses to public consultation along with progress updates against the requirements set out in the Cabinet paper of October 2022 as outlined below.

Public Consultation

9. A public consultation to understand residents' and library users' opinions, and the impact of a possible relocation of the library service in Redditch was carried out between 7 November 2022 and 24 February 2023.
10. The consultation consisted of background information to the proposals, a survey (available online and on paper), two public face-to-face meetings held at Redditch library on the 24 January 2023 and 9 February 2023 and a local history consultation meeting on 24 January 2023. The focus of the consultation was the proposed relocation of Redditch library; it did not cover the wider Redditch town centre development proposals. The consultation survey was available to complete in English, Polish and Urdu. The consultation was widely promoted in the local press and on social media channels. The full survey and resulting analysis report are attached as an appendix to this report (Appendix 2), with a summary of headline results below.
11. The initial timeline for publication of the analysis report was in line with Cabinet paper publication schedule for the meeting on 20 July 2023. Full anonymised responses to the survey will be published according to this original timeline and made available online from the 8 June 2023.
12. The independent analysis of the consultation was carried out by the Council's Business Intelligence Team and completed based on the data available, including feedback from all sources.

13. There were a total of 1467 responses to the survey. This represents 2.2% of the Redditch population aged over 19. There was good engagement and response to the survey for people aged 30 or over. There were fewer responses received for younger people aged under 30. 81% of survey respondents said they were library members.
14. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the new location for Redditch library being the Town Hall. 72.3% of respondents said that they disagreed to some extent.
15. Library members were more likely to disagree (77%) with the plans than non-library members (51%).
16. Respondents were asked to give the reasons they agreed or disagreed with the new location for the library. 1425 comments were received. Feedback fell into two broad categories:
- Factors relating to the proposed new location for the library
 - Factors relating to the wider town centre proposals
17. The three most common themes given by respondents in relation to the proposed new location for the library were:
- **The proposed location for the new library is not as good**
Comments about it being further from the town centre, bus stops, railway station and car parks were cited.
 - **Concern that there will be a reduction in the facilities offered by the new location**
Concerns that the move might lead to a degradation of library facilities and services and comments that the information provided at the consultation stage was not sufficient to reassure them that facilities will not be lost.

This theme included concerns about the relocation of some archive collections to Worcester and about meeting room provision
 - **Concern that the relocation will result in a reduction in the size of the new library**
Concerns that the new location would result in a reduction in the size of the library, having an impact on how respondents use the building to read, relax, work, or attend with children.
18. Other common themes around why respondents disagreed with the Town Hall as an appropriate location for the library included:
- Concern the new location would lead to a fall in library use
 - Concern the new building might be less accessible, e.g., steps, steep ramps etc.
 - Safety of the area around the Town Hall and on the approaches to it.
19. There were several common themes as to why respondents agreed that the Town Hall would be an appropriate location for the library:
- The new location is only a very short distance away

- It is an effective use of buildings
 - They are happy to have the library as part of a hub with services all in one place
 - The idea that a move to a new location could include new, modern facilities
 - The new location could be more accessible.
20. Respondents were asked whether anything would prevent them from using the library in the new location at the Town Hall. 1204 people responded to this question. The most common response to this question, by 36% of respondents, was that nothing would prevent them from using the library in the new location.
21. Reasons given that might prevent use of the library if it were in the Town Hall included:
- The environment or feeling of the new building
 - Would not use out of principle or boycott
 - Reduced facilities of the new building (if local archives were removed)
 - Availability of parking nearby
22. Two public meetings were held as part of the consultation giving residents the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns to a panel with officer and member representatives from RBC and the Council. Just over 100 people attended these meetings.
23. Many similar themes were dealt with in the public meetings as were expressed in the survey comments such as not wanting the library to move, how it would be a waste of money and the suitability of the Town Hall as a location for the library service.
24. In response to the key themes raised through the consultation, work has begun to address some of the concerns.
25. Discussions have taken place with RBC to identify ways of addressing accessibility concerns including making improvements to the Redditch Shop Mobility service and Dial a Ride service, mapping shortest and most accessible routes to the proposed new library location from different car parks, bus stops and other locations around the town centre, highlighting covered walkways and including a blue badge car parking space at the Town Hall.
26. To address safety concerns RBC have confirmed that new LED lighting is being added to existing lamps within the Town centre as a part of public realm enhancements, along with provision of new lighting along the High Street.
27. During the public consultation, a commitment was made by the Council to collaborate with local history groups and archive volunteers on the development of a plan for Redditch Library archive collections that would ensure archive material with the highest levels of local interest and demand was retained locally. This collaborative work commenced on 30 March 2023 and a draft plan is in progress. The Council is waiting for RBC to provide indicative layouts of archive shelving and other furniture in allocated library storage areas at the Town Hall, should the library relocate there, to enable a more detailed assessment of the amount of archive material that can be accommodated at the Town Hall if the relocation goes ahead.

Progress against the County Council's Stipulated Requirements

28. The Cabinet report of October 2022 set out several requirements to be used with RBC to protect the County Council's interests, both commercially and in terms of service offer / statutory responsibilities. Progress to date against these requirements and the assurance offered in how they can be met are outlined below.

Commercial Arrangements

29. The following explains how the "same cost" and best value for disposal requirements are met:

- a) The existing library (including accommodation leased to third parties) consists of approx. 1763sqm. The current area proposed to be leased to the Council within the Redditch Community Hub will provide 1773sqm, therefore providing an equivalent area. Based on these floor areas, an open market value of the accommodation to be leased to the Council has been assessed to be of similar open market value to the existing library. An agreement in principle on the areas is expected to be finalised by 2 June 2023. Slight changes will not impact overall valuation.
- b) The Council will be granted a 125-year lease of the accommodation for the library at the Hub and have proposed that this comes with the ability to sublet the whole or part and at the end of the lease the Council or its successors will have the rights to be granted another lease. In return the Council will grant RBC a 125-year lease of the Redditch library.
- c) The Council currently receive an income from letting space within the existing library plus a proportional contribution to the running costs. If the Council moves services to Redditch Town Hall, RBC will lease equivalent space to the Council to provide for the library and its current tenant. The Council would then lease equivalent accommodation to its tenant and therefore still receive similar rental income which is guaranteed until 2028 when the lease ends. Conversations are ongoing with the Council's tenant on their occupancy of the proposed new space, noting the Council's right within existing lease to relocate them.
- d) The Council have proposed a mechanism within the heads of terms for the lease of the accommodation within the Redditch Community Hub, which will protect the Council from increased net premises costs which would not otherwise be incurred. It is proposed that the total of service charge must not be more than budgeted for the existing library for equivalent services, and this figure will rise annually on an appropriate price index but will never be more than the actual proportional costs. The Council will have direct responsibility for electric charges as these will be separately metered to reflect actual use which we will have control of. The fact that the Town Hall building has new windows, solar panels and an air source heat pump installed is expected to support reducing running costs. Net budget position for Redditch library was included in the Cabinet report of October 2022, and further detailed budget information has been shared with RBC. An outline of updated service charges is expected from RBC by 2 June

2023 as well as written confirmation that it agrees that any charges within the lease will meet the requirement that the Council be no worse off.

- e) Subject to satisfactory agreement being reached on the implementation/ relocation costs as per the below, and providing an agreement can be reached in line with the principles above that the net costs to the Council are equivalent to current net costs at the existing library in respect of both the capital assets, ongoing running costs, and income generate, in aggregate, the requirement for the Council's overall costs/income position to be no worse will be met.
- f) The Council are waiting for RBC to confirm the proposed heads of terms and to provide an indication of what the actual likely proportional costs will be and the detail on the services to be covered under this cost. At the time of writing this has yet to be received from RBC.
- g) RBC provided a cost plan in August 2022 outlining the overall project funding to be provided for building works including fixtures and fittings. Since October 2022, further detailed planning has taken place to build the detailed scope of the requirements for internal and external plans, including a specific focus on Information Technology set up requirements. The provision that RBC will fund all costs associated with the relocation and the detail of specific works covered will be included in the contract to enter into a lease between RBC and the Council once the heads of terms have been agreed across all parties. The contract will make it conditional that these works are completed before the Council are bound to complete the agreement to take the lease of the accommodation at The Hub and to lease the Redditch library to RBC. The principle of a 'no worse' position for the Council financially and operationally has been agreed with RBC and the Council are waiting for a 'letter of comfort' to provide the assurance they are working towards the same principles as set out in the Cabinet report of October 2022. An updated cost plan incorporating all further developments such as IT set up costs, installation of CCTV provision, fit out of the areas is expected by 2 June 2023.
- h) The Council have been asked to provide a detailed furniture audit of the current library and an assessment of which specific items of furniture can transfer to the proposed new location, reducing fixtures and fittings costs. However, until the floor plans for service delivery areas are finalised, it is not possible to confirm which items of furniture can be transferred. It will be a requirement that RBC will cover the costs of any new furniture required directly because of the move, for example, where wall space is limited in the new design, existing wall mounted shelving cannot be re-used, and new freestanding items will need to be procured. Written confirmation from RBC on this principle is being sought. The Council have committed to funding any items of furniture which will require replacement or upgrade for service delivery reasons.
- i) Should the request to move library services be approved, further support requirements from the Council are yet to be costed including ongoing project management and other support services such as IT, property and library services. The Council's resources from a range of service areas have been allocated to RBC's project for the last 12 months at no cost to RBC. Ongoing

support cannot be confirmed until the Council have received an updated project plan outlining the requirements and timeline.

- j) Finalisation of heads of terms for lease agreement, noting all the above points, is expected by 2 June 2023. The Council will need time to review this and undertake due diligence on it so unlikely to be able to give a firm statement at the time of this report.

Operational and Service Conditions

30. The Council confirmed in March 2023 that the sqm calculations for the current library space were accurate, as used for comparison to space in the proposed new area. Updated square metre calculations for the Community Hub were received in May 2023. As floor plans are currently being updated to reflect feedback from the library service, at present, the final breakdown is not available. Table 1 outlines the latest totals – though it should be noted that these are subject to change when updated floor plans are available.

Table 1: Space Comparisons (sqm) existing and proposed Redditch Hub for Library and Library Tenant

Occupier	Existing Library	Redditch Hub	+/-
Library	1018	934	-84
Library tenant	466	494	+28
Shared	279	345	+66
Total	1763	1773	+10

NOTE: These figures are subject to change when next iterations of floorplans are available in May 2023

- 31. The Council are awaiting detailed floorplans from RBC that indicate how the space and shared space are allocated across the lower ground, ground and first floors of the Town Hall (expected by 2 June 2023). These updated plans are required to enable finalisation of commercial arrangements outlined above, and to assure the Council that allocated space within the Town Hall is equivalent to the service delivery area of the current library building. As with the other information that is anticipated for 2 June 2023, it is again noted that the council officers will require time to review this information and undertake due diligence therefore, it is unlikely that a firm statement will be able to be made at the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 June 2023.
- 32. The Council requires that alternative premises for the library are in a location that retains current footfall levels or where mitigation of a less central location is provided through an increase in the number of co-located service providers. The Community Hub at the Town Hall provides a single building for a range of agencies, including NHS and RBC services (confirmed) and other services (yet unconfirmed). However, it has been confirmed by RBC that NHS space and services will only be accessible by a separate entrance to the Town Hall. Separate entrances at the Town Hall for co-located partners may discourage use of library services and reduce library footfall. A review of methods for measuring footfall may be required to ensure data post-move can be directly compared if entrances are separated.

33. RBC have verbally committed to inclusion of a blue badge parking space in the Town Hall car park for library customers, in addition to short stay pick up and drop off spaces. This would enable customers with blue badges to park directly outside the library in its new location. The current Redditch library building does not have allocated blue badge parking spaces. The Council have requested written confirmation from RBC that accessible and short space spaces will be available for library users in the Town Hall car park. Further accessibility concerns raised through public consultation are noted in the consultation section above and are also addressed through the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment completed for the Cabinet report due for consideration in July 2023 (Appendix 3).
34. All plans reviewed by the Council to date show the library service arranged predominantly on the ground and first floors of the Town Hall, with archive and storage space on the lower ground floor. The proposed extension to the Town Hall to accommodate the Community Hub includes a new 2 storey glass entrance and rear glass 4 floor extension, with highly visible signage and increased glazing throughout (Appendix 4). Planning permission for these external works has been submitted to RBC and is currently live on the public planning portal for comment. The proposed plans provide assurance that the requirement for a high profile, visible, glazed entrance to provide an attractive 'shop window' from the street can be met, subject to planning application approval.
35. RBC have confirmed that the Libraries Unlocked service delivery model can be implemented when a decision is made on the timeline for Redditch. The cost of implementing Libraries Unlocked will be covered by the Council as a part of that programme budget. Confirmation on a timeline for implementation of Libraries Unlocked in Redditch is subject to the Cabinet Decision on Redditch library.
36. The Council requires that there will be no reduction in the library service offer because of the relocation. Initial library layout plans were prepared following discussions in 2022. The Council are awaiting the next iteration of layout plans from RBC to reflect library feedback provided in January 2023 (expected on 31 May 2023). These plans are required to provide assurance that there will be no reduction to the current library service offer or customer experience. RBC have verbally agreed that the library services will have priority access to three meeting rooms on the ground and first floor of the Town Hall to ensure all library service delivery requirements are met. This will need to be confirmed in writing and forms part of the Heads of Terms.

Collaboration Opportunities

37. RBC have provided verbal assurance that the Council's requirement for the design of the public realm space to incorporate clear design links and directional links to the proposed new library site to promote visibility of the library and mitigate risk of reduced footfall is being addressed. The Council are awaiting confirmation from RBC on this matter. It is noted that the proposed location is close to the proposed Innovation Centre development. The Council has requested additional signage, way marking and other features to be included in the public realm developments to encourage footfall to the new location.

Purpose of the Meeting

38. The Panel is asked to:

- consider and comment on the contents of the report
- agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Member; and
- determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 Cabinet paper October 2022 – Relocation of Redditch Library
 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 27th October, 2022,](#)
- Appendix 2 Redditch Consultation Analysis Report
 - Appendix 2A Redditch Library Consultation Survey
 - Appendix 2B Redditch Library Consultation Supplementary Questions
- Appendix 3 Equality and Public Health Full Impact Assessment (prepared for Cabinet Decision on 20 July 2023)
- Appendix 4 Latest exterior imaging of Redditch Community Hub – fly through video containing artists impressions of the vision and ambition for all Redditch Regeneration Projects: [Regeneration projects | Redditch Town Deal](#)

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 27th October, 2022,](#)

All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.

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Redditch Library Consultation Analysis Report

March 2023

Produced by Business Intelligence Team

Redditch Library Consultation

This report contains the analysis of results of the public consultation about moving the location of Redditch Library. The scope of this consultation did not cover wider Redditch town centre proposals.

1. Background

Worcestershire County Council currently provide library services in Redditch town centre at Redditch Library in Market Place. The library is well used with just over 6,000 active users borrowing books or using computers in the library in the 12 months to the end of January 2023, making it the second most used library in Worcestershire after The Hive. When taking into account the full range of services offered by the library, including events, groups, and use of meeting rooms, it is thought that there are just over 11,000 active library users across all library services in Redditch.

Redditch Borough Council have developed a series of proposals for the development of the town centre and Town Hall areas of Redditch. The town centre proposals comprise of two parts. Part one involves transforming Redditch Town Hall into a community hub. Redditch Library has been invited to be a part of this hub. If the library does move into the community hub at the Town Hall, the proposals then involve the redevelopment of the existing library site into a new shopping and leisure plaza.

Worcestershire County Council carried out a public consultation to understand local residents' and library users' opinions, and the impact of a possible relocation of the library service in Redditch. The consultation was open from 7th November 2022 to 24th February 2023.

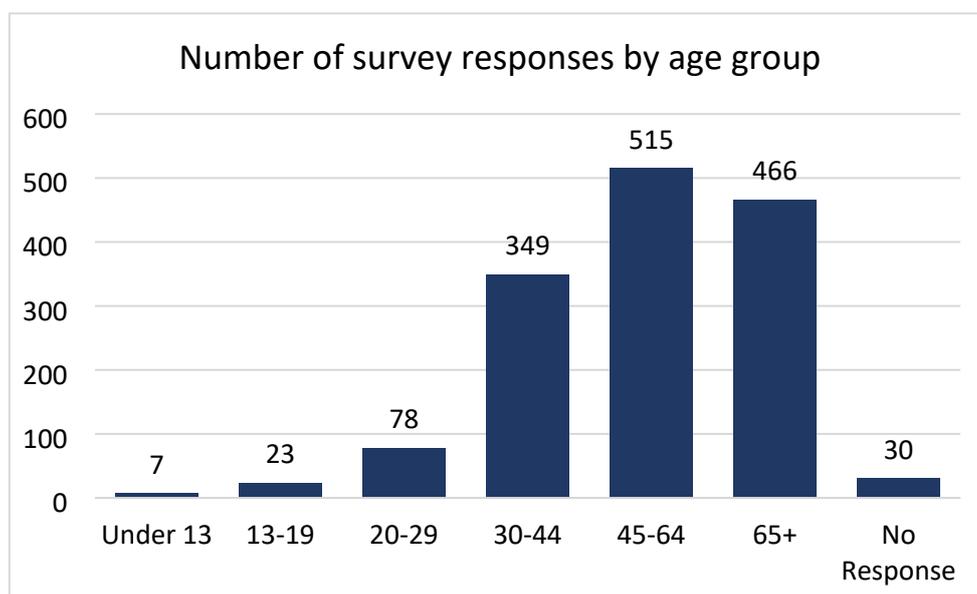
The consultation consisted of, provision of background information to the proposals, a survey (available online and on paper), and two public face-to-face meetings held at Redditch Library. The full survey is available in Appendix A. The survey was available to complete in English, Polish and Urdu.

The consultation has been widely covered in local press.

2. Survey Responses

There were a total of **1467 responses** to the survey. This represents 2.2% of the Redditch population aged over 19.

There was good engagement and response to the survey for people aged 30 or over. There were fewer responses received for younger people aged under 30.



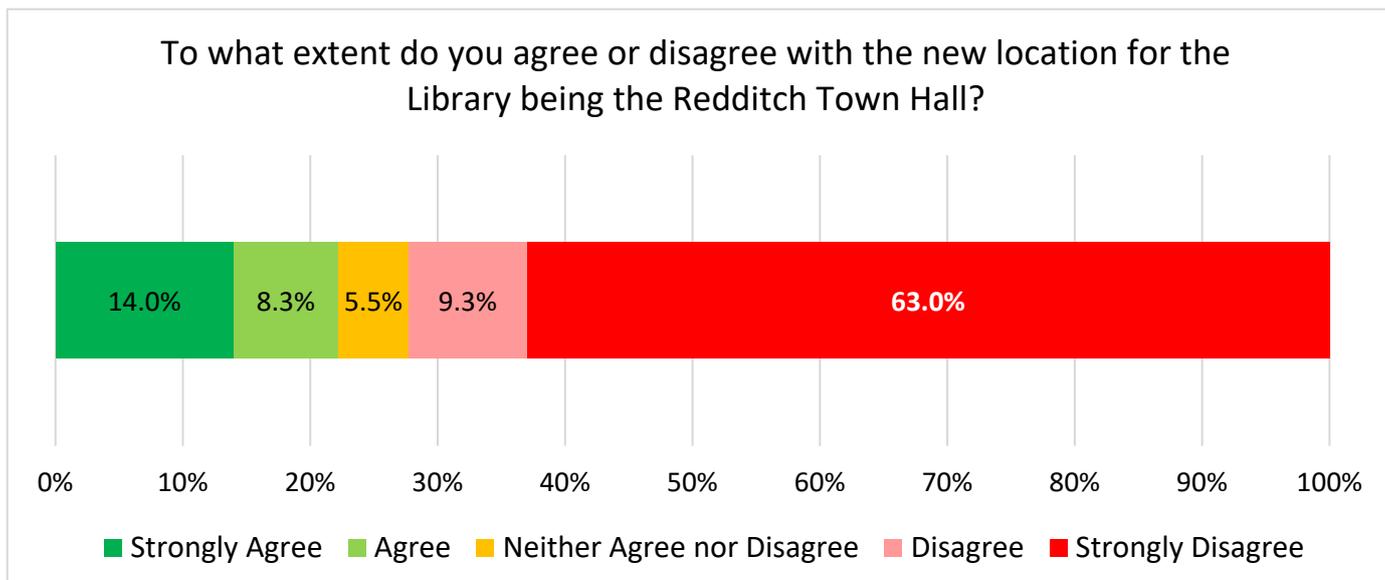
81% of survey respondents said they were library members.

The most common use of the library was to borrow books (73% of respondents), followed by 'to find out information', 'to read/relax', 'to research/work/study' and 'to use free public computers and internet'. This mix of services is also reflected in the priorities that respondents had for the library service.

More detail about uses of the library, priority library services and additional services respondents would like to see in the library can be found in Appendix B along with further breakdown of demographics.

3. Agreement with relocation to the Town Hall

Respondents are asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the new location for Redditch library being the Town Hall. 72.3% of respondents said that they disagree to some extent.

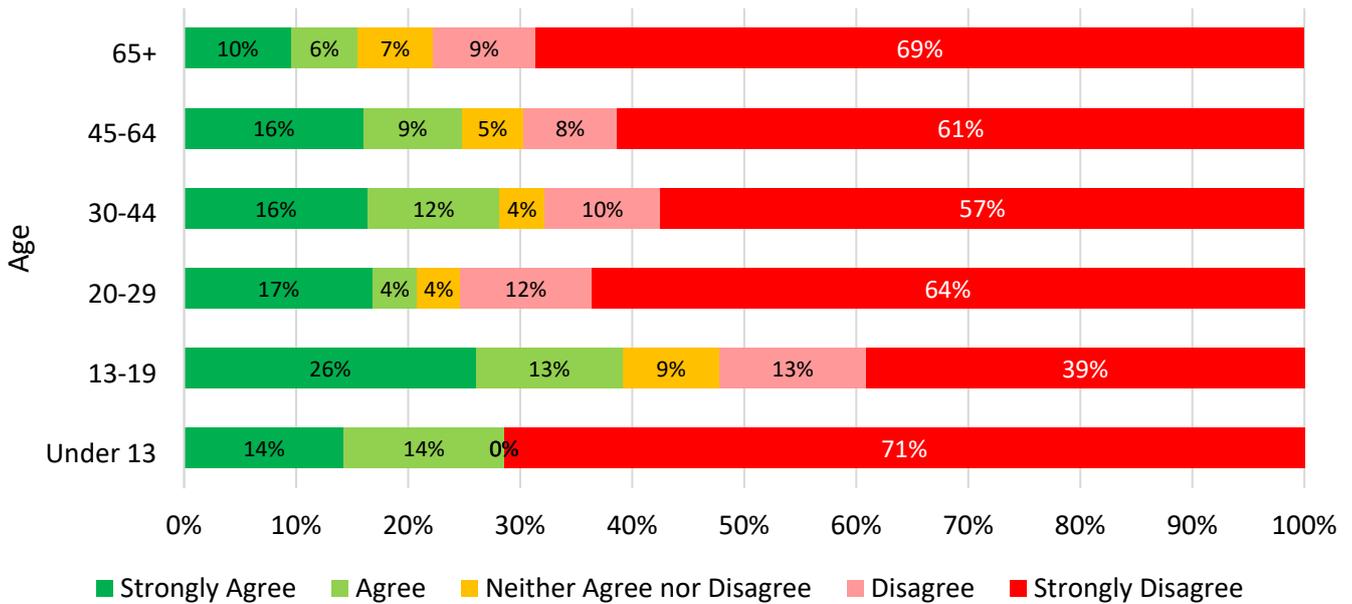


3.1 Agreement with Relocation by Age Group

There is little difference by age group about whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with the proposal to move the library to the town hall for anyone aged 20 or over.

Note: There are much smaller numbers of responses in the Under 13 and 13-19 age groups than in other age groups.

Agreement with Relocating Library by Age Group



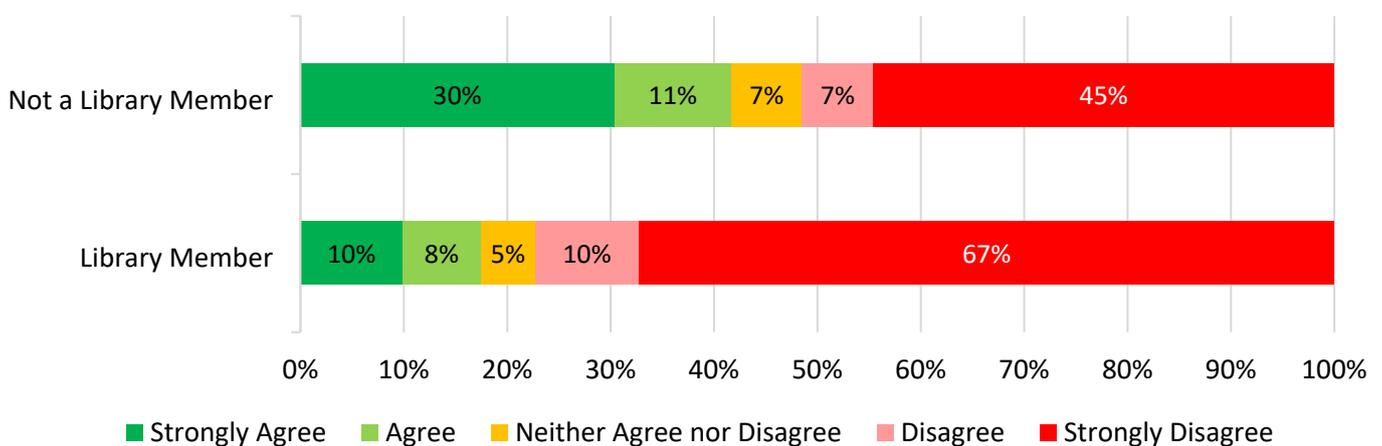
3.2 Library Members

Library members are slightly more likely to disagree (77%) with the plans than non-library members (51%).

Comments suggest that non-library members have responded to the consultation as local residents with an interest in the impact on the town centre proposed by the plans.

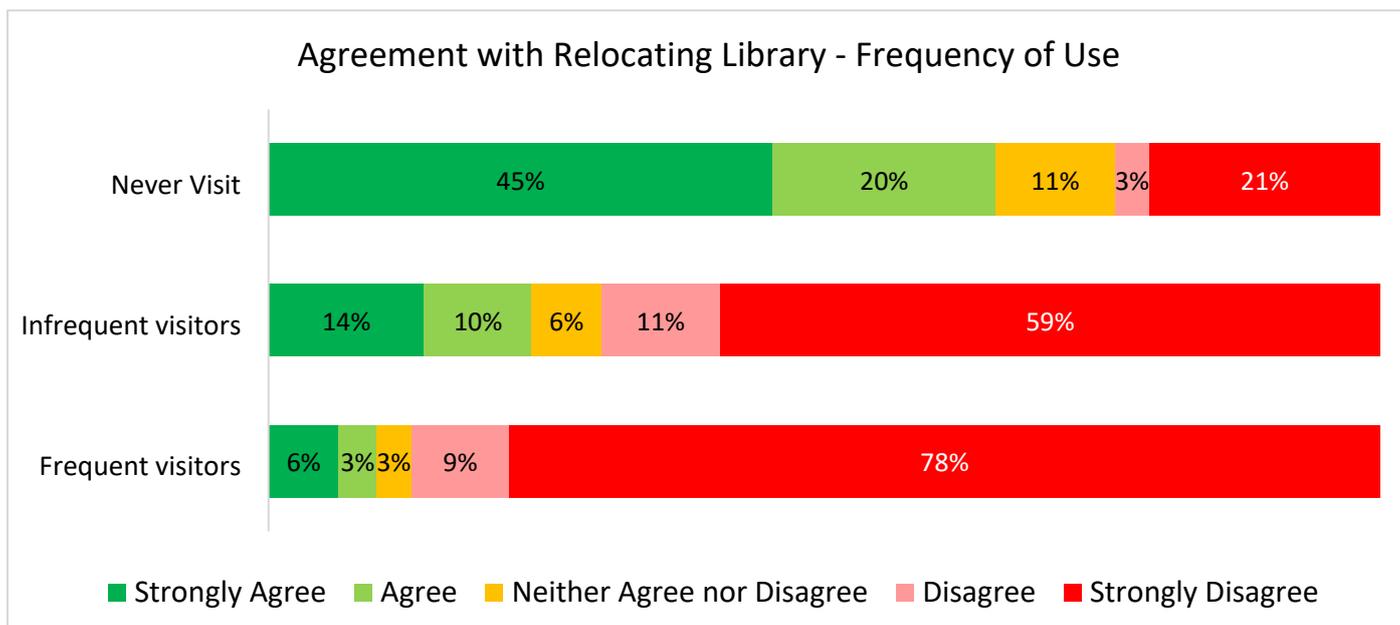
Note - Some comments mentioned the safe, welcoming space that the library provides without a requirement to spend money and how it is not only open to members – therefore some non-members may still be library users (just not borrowing books).

Agreement with relocating Library - Library Membership



3.3 Frequency of Use

Frequent users of the library were more likely to disagree with the library moving into the Town Hall building with 87% disagreeing with the move compared to just 24% of respondents who said they never visit the library.



4. Reasons why respondents agree or disagree with the new location for the library

Respondents were asked to give reasons as to why they agree or disagree with the new location for the library. 1425 comments were received. The full set of comments for this and all free text response questions can be viewed in Appendix C.

All comments were read and then grouped into themes. Each comment may have contained more than one theme.

Themes were focused in two areas:

- Factors related to the proposed new location for the library
- Factors related to the wider town centre proposals including the benefit and funding of this

While the second set of factors are not directly in the scope of this consultation, they are still closely linked with the decision to move the library.

4.1 Themes – New location for the library

The three most common themes given by respondents in relation to the proposed new location for the library were:

1. The proposed location for the new library is not as good

This includes comments about how it is further from the town centre, further from the bus and railway station, further from car parks and involves walking down and up a hill to get to.

“The Town Hall is quite a bit further away from public transport than the library is now and crucially it is downhill meaning that people with restricted mobility have to climb a hill to get back to their bus.”

“It is too far away from the bus station and car parks and would invoke a lot of extra walking which is difficult for the elderly and disabled especially in winter as there is no covered walkway.”

2. Concern that there will be a reduction in the facilities offered by the new location

Respondents were concerned that the move to a new location might lead to the degradation of facilities and services offered by the library. Some comments state that the information provided at the consultation stage is not sufficient to reassure them that facilities will not be lost.

This theme included concerns about the relocation of some of the archives to Worcester so they will no longer be available in Redditch, but also about some other facilities in the new library such as the provision of meeting rooms.

“Have not yet seen any specific plans regarding the library. Concerned it may lead to a reduction in what is available in the library.”

“I believe the consolidation of three library meeting rooms and two council meetings rooms into three shared meeting rooms represents a degradation to the library service.”

“I object to any removal of Redditch's archives from the town; these are our archives and should be accessible to all residents. Redditch is where they belong.”

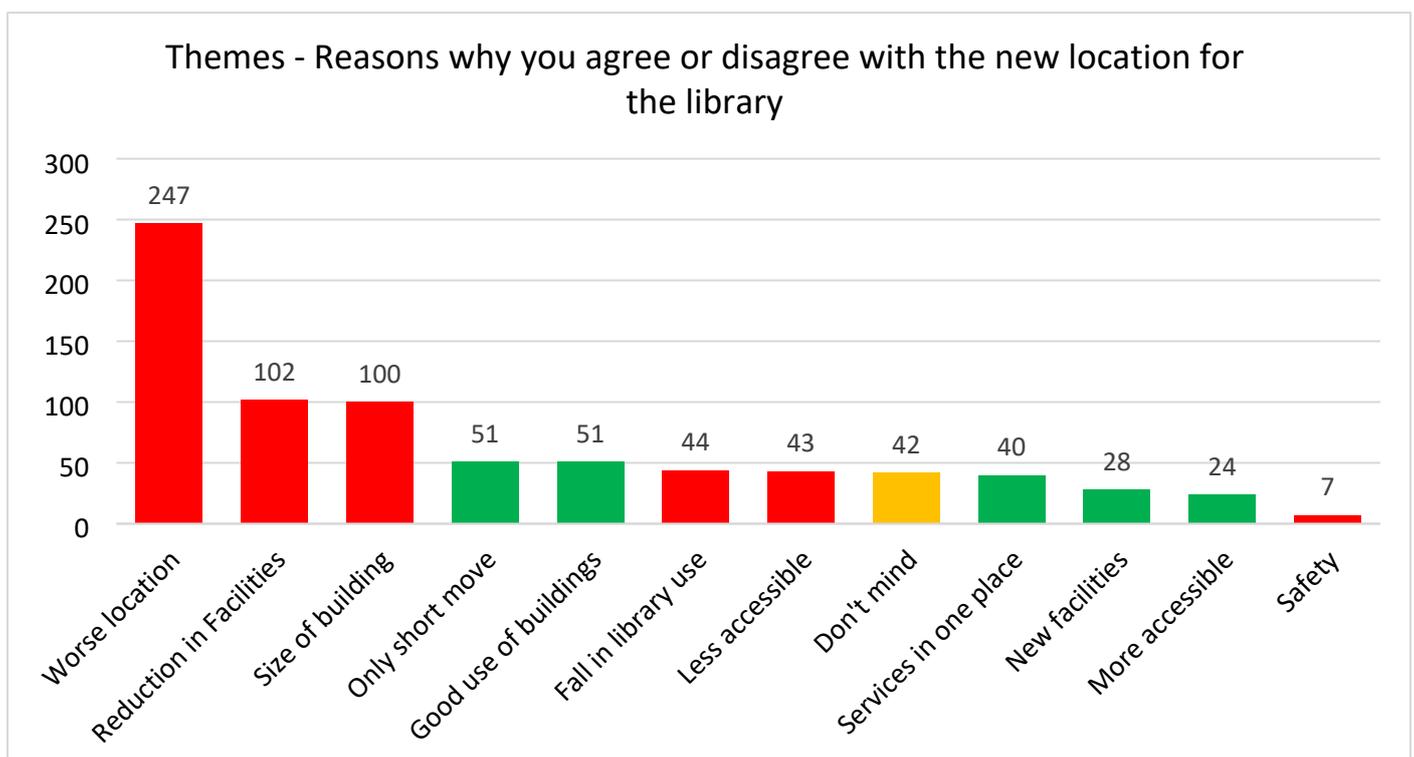
3. Concern that the relocation will result in a reduction in the size of the new library

This theme included a range of comments from respondents that the new library within the Town Hall would result in the reduction in the size of the library, having an impact on how they use the building to read, relax, work, or attend with children.

“The proposal move for the library is to move into the town hall is downsizing and downgrading the library. The proposal shows that the space is not anywhere near what we currently have as a library, especially for a town with a bustling college.”

“I'm not sure the Town Hall will have the right amount of space for books, desks, computers etc.”

“It sounds like it's going to be shrunk and stuck in a basement as an afterthought a library should be every town jewel.”



Other common themes around why respondents disagree with the Town Hall as an appropriate location for the library included:

- Concern the new location would lead to a fall in library use
- Concern the new building might be less accessible, e.g. steps, steep ramps etc.
- Safety of the area around the Town Hall and on the approaches to it.

“The library in its current position has great footfall. If it is moved to the Town Hall, footfall will drop dramatically because it will be away from the Town Centre.”

“I for one would not like to walk past the pubs or away from the safe areas. When it’s dark and late is a higher risk.”

There were also several common themes as to why respondents agree that the Town Hall would be an appropriate location for the library, such as:

- The new location is only a very short distance away
- It is a good use of buildings
- They are happy to have the library as part of a hub with services all in one place
- The idea that a move to a new location could include new, modern facilities
- The new location could be more accessible

“It’s only few yards away from the current location, therefore I have got no objections.”

“I think that it is a really good idea to pull all of the services together into one building which can be accessed by all.”

“It makes sense to co-locate and share services across public sector. A lot of the activity that people go to the Town Hall to undertake may increase library footfall, usage and raise awareness of what other services are on offer there.”

“I love the idea of a community hub, all services under one roof.”

“I don’t like that in the current library I have to use a lift to get the pushchair to the children’s books. Moving the library gives the opportunity for this to change.”

“I also think that the library has been drained of resources and new books for a long time so if this is the boost it needs to refresh the available resources for all the community then I am all for it.”

4.2 Themes – Wider town centre proposals

This set of comments were given as reasons why respondents agree/disagree with the Town Hall as the new location for library but deal with the wider town centre proposals and the costs and benefits of moving the library at all.

The four most common themes given by respondents were:

1. The current library building and location is ‘fine as it is’.

This theme includes comments of how well used and liked the current library is and how suitable the location is near to the town centre and the Kingfisher Centre.

“We have a perfectly good library which functions well in its current position.”

“I believe the library is ok where it is at present, the building is modern, accessible to all, closer to the town centre, and it is really unnecessary.”

“I feel that a library is better suited to its own premises, and the Redditch Library is a perfect building for such a library. It would be a shame to get rid of the building when it is so suitable for its current function.”

2. The proposals are a waste of money

Comments in this theme talk about moving the library, and in some cases the wider plans, as a waste of 'taxpayer's money'. This was often linked with comments about the current library being already located in 'perfectly good building'. There are also comments about how the current library has relatively recently been renovated.

"There are more pressing needs for our Council to consider before spending such huge amounts of money on this move."

"Why waste money demolishing the library building, when that money would be better spent improving the town centre, the Parade opposite the church being just one area that might benefit."

"The library has just had an enormous amount of money spent on refurbishment. Why would you just dismiss that? Is money that easy to come by? It is a purpose built stand alone library. Perfect! as it is. There is no need to waste more money on a service already perfect."

3. The town centre needs development

There were a range of comments made about the town centre needing improvement and development. These were often made by people who agreed that the library should move to the Town Hall, although not exclusively.

"The town is desperately in need of revitalisation and in particular the area of the current library and the current town hall."

"Redditch Town Centre is desperate need for regeneration and investment. The current Library building does not allow for the vision of the Town Deal to be achieved and therefore the library needs to be relocated to the Town Hall."

"I support the wider regeneration of the town centre and understand the relocation of the library can help to facilitate this."

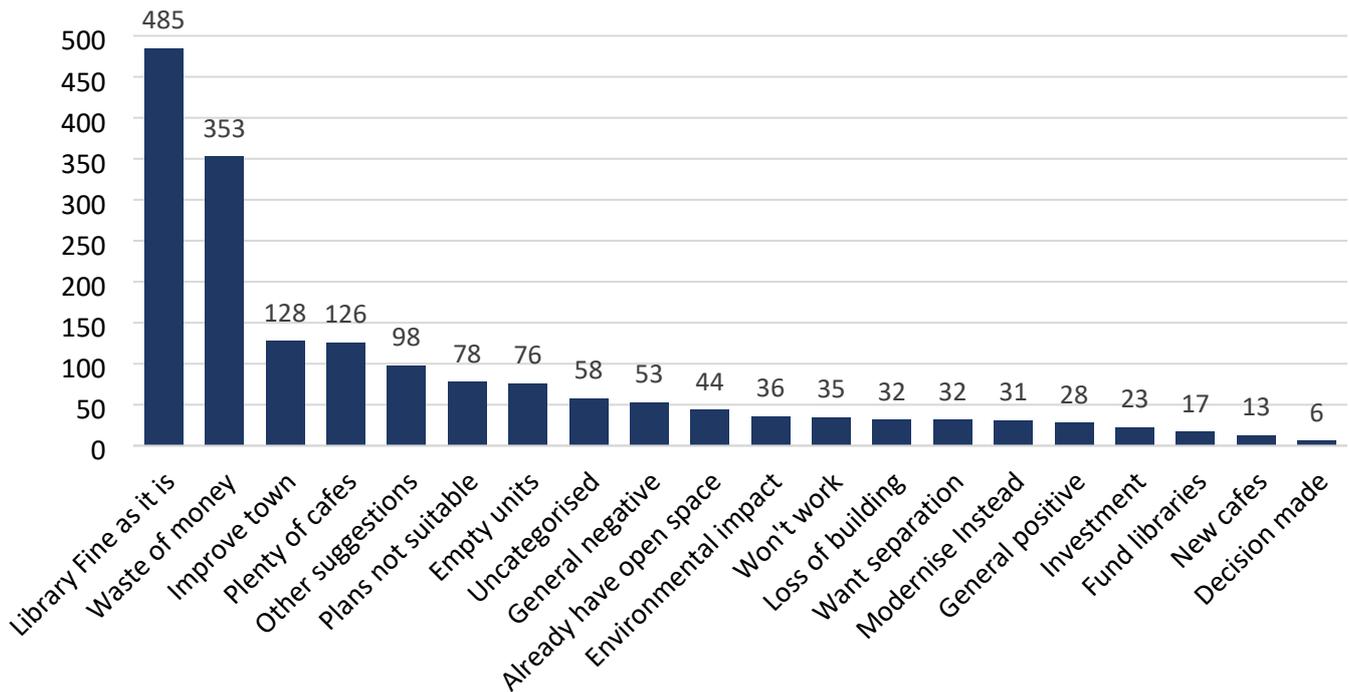
4. Redditch already has plenty of cafes and coffee shops

A range of comments were made on the town centre development proposals and views and benefits of the proposed changes. One area in particular was not popular, and this was around the vision of new café facilities around the redeveloped plaza area. Respondents thought that Redditch town centre already had enough cafes for its needs.

"We have plenty of Coffee shops and eateries in Redditch already as whenever a shop closes down, it becomes a cafe. We do not need an outdoor eating area as has been proposed as we do not have a same weather conditions as on the continent."

"There are already dozens of cafes and the like in the town centre and Kingfisher centre. Citizens will not drink more coffee or eat more buns just because there are more places to do that."

Themes - Reasons why you agree or disagree with the new location for the library



Comments also touched regularly on these themes:

- Other suggestions for the use of the money or the development of the town centre – commonly involving the market.
- That the town centre development plans are not suitable for the area, weather, demographic of Redditch etc.
- There is plenty of available commercial space in the town centre already without creating more
- The current open space in the centre is sufficient or could be enhanced to be sufficient
- The environmental impact of demolishing the library and the development plans
- Loss of a building with distinctive brutalist architecture

“It is far from following the green agenda to demolish buildings and release CO2 into the atmosphere when it is not absolutely necessary!!”

“Your environmental impact assessment fails to consider the enormous environmental cost of demolishing a healthy and suitable building. The majority of greenhouse gases that are produced from buildings come not from occupation, but from manufacture of building materials and construction. The concept of improving environmental sustainability by moving to a more efficient building while demolishing the old one is a folly. Furthermore you have not included the environmental impact of remodelling the town hall. I believe that demolishing and rebuilding the library contravenes the council's environmental pledge.”

“The library is a classic example of Brutalist architecture in the West Midlands and needs to be kept up and preserved as much as possible, so that the unique character of the region is retained.”

“The proposal intends to replace the Library with an empty space, there is plenty of space in the town centre, we do not need more.”

5. Things that might prevent use of the library in the new location

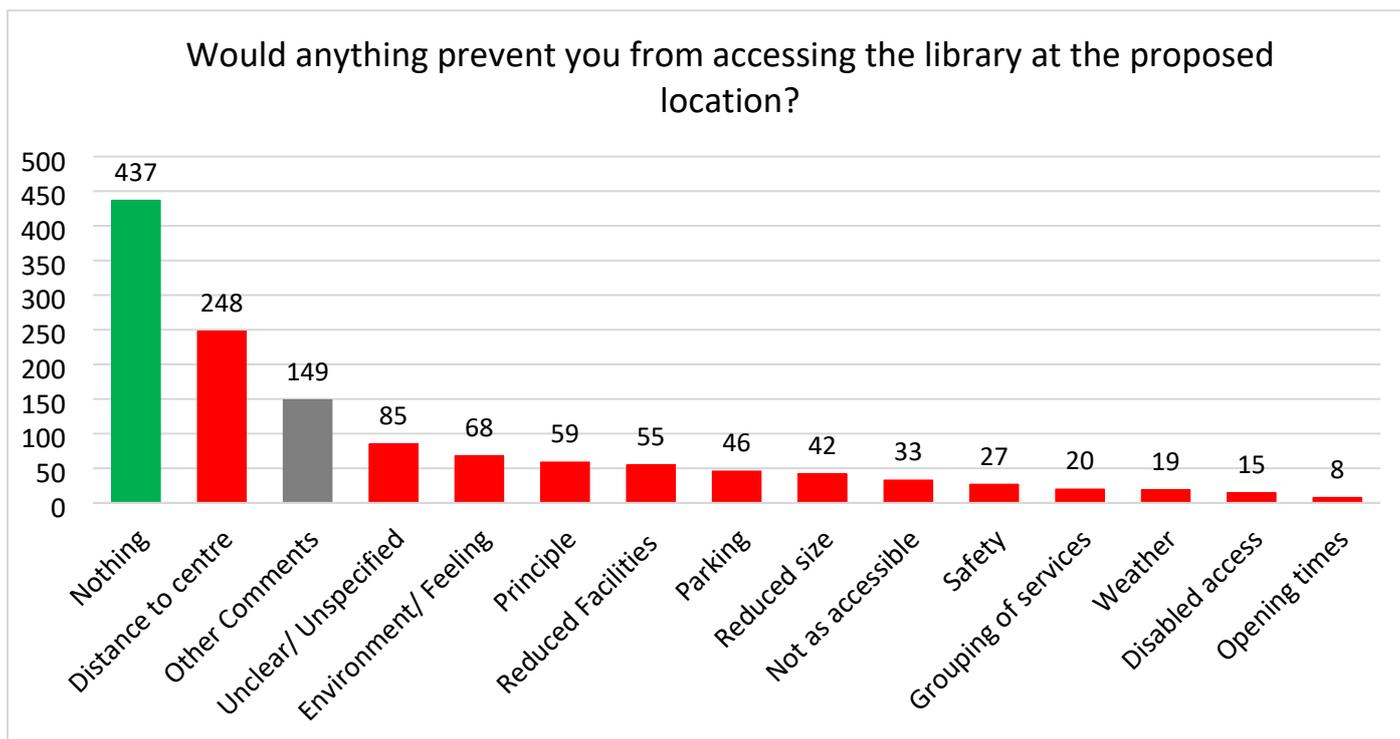
Respondents were asked whether anything would prevent them from using the library in the new location at the Town Hall. 1204 people responded to this question. The most common response to this question, by 36% of respondents, was that nothing would prevent them from using the library in the new location.

“No as it is virtually next door.”

“No. Not at all. I think it can only be a positive thing for Redditch. We are not losing anything only gaining.”

“I would be happy to continue to use the library in its new location”

“Probably not, subject to decent access arrangements e.g. opening times.”



The most common reason identified which would prevent use of the library in the new location was its distance from the town centre.

“Yes. The new location is further away to walk to and is isolated from the town shopping centre.”

“Too far to walk for a lot of people. Not easy just to pop in while in town doing other things if you move it further away.”

“It is too far for me to walk as I use a mobility aid.”

Other reasons given that might prevent use of the library if it were located in the Town Hall included:

- The environment or feeling of the new building
- Wouldn't use out of principle/boycott
- Reduced facilities of the new building (in particular if the local archives were not here then could not use them)
- Availability of parking nearby

“This is not about me, but I can see many that would not feel comfortable attending, not all have a good relationship with Redditch Town Hall, the library is a safe place a welcoming place you cannot replicate it in the town hall.”

“Wouldn’t use it on principle. Will find alternative ways to get what I need.”

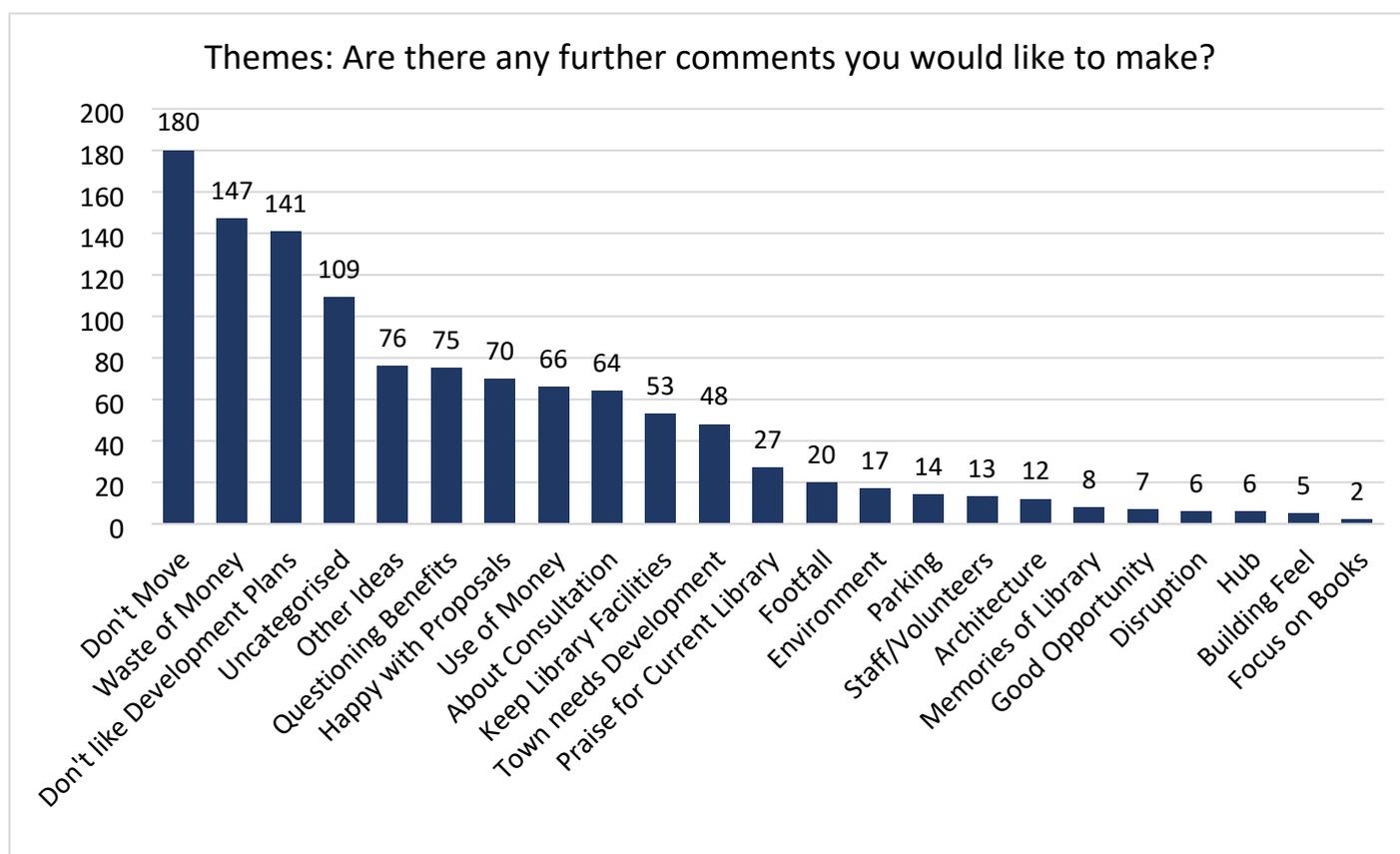
“Yes, it will be too far away from where I park the car as a Blue Badge holder and there is never enough disabled parking at the town hall.”

“The new library appears to be less well equipped than the existing one. I'm not sure if I will bother.”

“I am autistic and I struggle with change and processing information. I have been coming to the library since 1984 and I know it. I would struggle with using a totally different space.”

6. Have your say

Respondents to the survey were also offered a final opportunity to make any further comments about the proposals to relocate the library to the Town Hall. 840 comments were received.



The most common responses picked up on themes already discussed such as a desire for the library to remain in its current location and that they consider the relocation to be a waste of money. However, this section was also used to comment on the town centre development plans, including providing other ideas for the town centre or for how the money might be spent.

“To move the library from the site it is on already is a big waste of Redditch tax payers money, as the site it is on at present suits all people who want to use the library and close to centre so we want get to wet and cold in bad weather.”

“The library is vibrant and popular in its present spot, it already brings hundreds of people a day out of the Kingfisher and onto the high street. Will a fountain do the same? It was the first place I visited as a new resident for info, and being central and obvious helped this. It is used all the time by

vulnerable people who was struggle to walk the further distance, which is much further from the bus station and central car parks. I am very much against this proposal.”

“The current position of the library could actually enhance that area. By using the money to add to the unused areas around the library you could actually increase footfall to the library and encourage people to use the outside areas with food and drink outlets along the front where the unused British heart foundation shop is.”

“Moving the library to the town hall site will give the chance for a cafe pavilion area. As mentioned in the plans. I would be less interested in large retail chains using that space. I would like to see small local ethical businesses trading in that area. Maybe with some cooperative community based ventures. Such as a community lead bakery perhaps with the opportunity of on-site learning/ baking skills courses. Also the chance to extend the market area and perhaps have a monthly farmers market.”

Some people used this section to express how happy they were with the proposals.

“I appreciate the work that is being done to improve Redditch and feel that we should not be held back by staying with what is familiar, just because that is more comfortable. While it will cost a considerable amount to make the changes, it will open up other possibilities to improve Redditch.”

“People want to see the town get its well deserved upgrade. It is absolutely vital that the towns bid money is used to enhance the town and the relocation of the library will bring much needed regeneration to a town that at the moment is pretty much on its knees Please - you must allow this project to be undertaken for the sake of safeguarding our town for generations to come.”

A number of respondents praised the current library and reinforced the value and importance of keeping library services in Redditch

“Whatever happens with the location, please keep the library and all the activities that currently happen there. It is a fantastic community facility!”

Finally, some people used this section to comment on the consultation itself.

“I think that this consultation is very important and the issue at hand has garnered a lot of public attention, so it would be great if our opinions and thoughts were actually heard and taken in consideration. This feels like a done deal but I hope I’m wrong and that this consultation isn’t just a thing you have to do but don’t have to listen to.”

7. Feedback from Face-to-Face Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held as part of the consultation giving residents the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns to a panel with officer and member representatives from Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council. Just over 100 people attended these meetings.

Many similar themes were dealt with in the public meetings as have been expressed in the survey comments such as not wanting the library to move, how it would be a waste of money and the suitability of the Town Hall as a location for the library service.

“If you move the service down to the Town Hall, there are a lot of people with kids, older people with mobility issues – when it is pouring with rain. Are you going to build a covered walkway for people? Can you change the access from the front to the side, make sure you can access from a flat surface with no steps?”

“I am concerned about the money it will cost to demolish the current building plus the money to improve the Town Hall. Why can’t that money be saved by improving the existing building, create a

plaza either side of the library. I don't understand the money that is being wasted to demolish this and improve that."

"It seems too obvious that this is all about money. This library could be a focus of the plaza, with café services on the ground floor, opening on to the square outside. We could open up the place more. With millions to spend on it, it could be made lovely. This shouldn't just be another commercial exercise."

The meetings also provided members of the public to seek further detail and clarification on aspects of the consultation and wider plans.

"For clarification – you say you want no diminution of the library service. It looks like the square footage of the new space is more than the current, but no space has been given for computers, business space, study space. Looks to me like we are moving to a smaller space and losing out because of it – the paper shows zeros for things when they are not zeros!"

"There are a lot of events on at the same time, is there enough space in the new library for that to happen so they are not interfering with each other?"

"The benefit of doing this needs to add value to what there is because it is going to cost a lot of money. What value will this money spent be adding to the services?"

"If money is not spent by 2026 has to go back to central government, can this be delivered in time?"

"Concerned that the move from point A to point B. RBC have said that services are going to be bigger and better, but I am worried that the process of the move will allow the opportunity to remove those services... .. The more things that move, the more chances there are to cut a corner here. Look what happened in COVID, corners were cut and we lost out on a lot of things."

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Redditch Library Consultation

This survey is available in English, Polish or Urdu.

If you would like to request this survey in a different language please email redditchlibraryconsultation@worcestershire.gov.uk

The Redditch Library Consultation is an opportunity for us to share the proposed library relocation plans with Worcestershire / Redditch residents and community organisations so that both groups can provide their views and make suggestions.

By completing this voluntary survey you agree to your responses being collated, processed and analysed by Worcestershire County Council. All information provided will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and used only to inform our proposals for library change.

Please read the background and details of the proposal on the consultation webpage www.worcestershire.gov.uk/redditchlibraryconsultation prior to answering this survey.

The closing date for responses to this consultation survey is 24th February 2023.

Are you a library member?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

What do you visit Redditch library for?

Tick all that apply

- To borrow books
- To borrow music CDs, DVDs or audio books
- To use free public computers and internet
- To use free Wi-Fi
- To use online reference resources, e.g. Ancestry
- To find out information
- To research/ work/ study
- To meet people
- To read/ relax
- To attend a library social connecting group (Old Redditch Reminiscencers, Knit & Natter, Jigsaw Swap)
- To attend a community social connecting group (Reddi to Talk, Carers Careline Community Group)
- To attend a reading group/ writers group/ book club
- To attend a film club/ film makers club
- To attend an adult learning course
- To attend a job club/ job fair
- To attend author events/ special events
- To volunteer
-

- To receive digital support from library staff/ Digital Champions
- To use BIPC (Business and IP Centre) Worcestershire business resources/ services (business drop-ins, 1:1 support, business databases, business networking)
- To use Library Service at Home
- To attend NHS clinics/ drop-ins
- To attend early years story/ rhyme times (Baby Bounce and Rhyme, Story, Joy & Rhyme, Story Stomp, Storytime)
- To bring children to library events & activities (Chatterbooks, Lego Club, Crafty Kids, Code Club, Science Club, Duel, Dungeons & Dragons)
- School visit/ Nursery visit
- Other (please specify below)

It is proposed that Redditch Library will be relocated to allow for the Redditch Town Plan to be realised. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the new location for the Library being the Redditch Town Hall?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please explain the reasons why you agree or disagree with the new location for the library.

Would anything prevent you from using the library at the suggested new location? Please explain.

**Are there any additional community services you would like to see in Redditch library?
Please describe below.**

Would you be interested in volunteering at Redditch Library?

Answering this question will not commit you to volunteering at Redditch library in the future.

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

If you would like more information on volunteering opportunities, it can be found here:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20017/libraries_and_learning/11118/volunteering_and_work_experience_in_a_library/1

Or you can visit the library to speak to a member of library staff or call 01905 822722.

Have Your Say. Are there any further comments you would like to make

About you

Please complete these questions to help us understand the different views of different sections of the community. All information provided will be kept confidential.

What best describes your gender?

- Female
 Male
 Prefer not to say
 Prefer to self-describe

What is your age?

- Under 13
 13-19
 20-29
 30-34
 45-64
 65+

Do you have any long-standing health condition or disability? (Long-standing means anything that has troubled you over a period of at least 12 months or that is likely to affect you for at least 12 months.)

- Yes
 No

Does this health condition or disability limit your day to day activities in any way?

- Yes, limited a lot
 Yes, limited a little
 No

What is your home postcode?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Now please click submit.

Appendix B – Supplementary Survey Questions

Responses to questions asked as part of the consultation about the impact of moving Redditch Library from its current location to Redditch Town Hall.

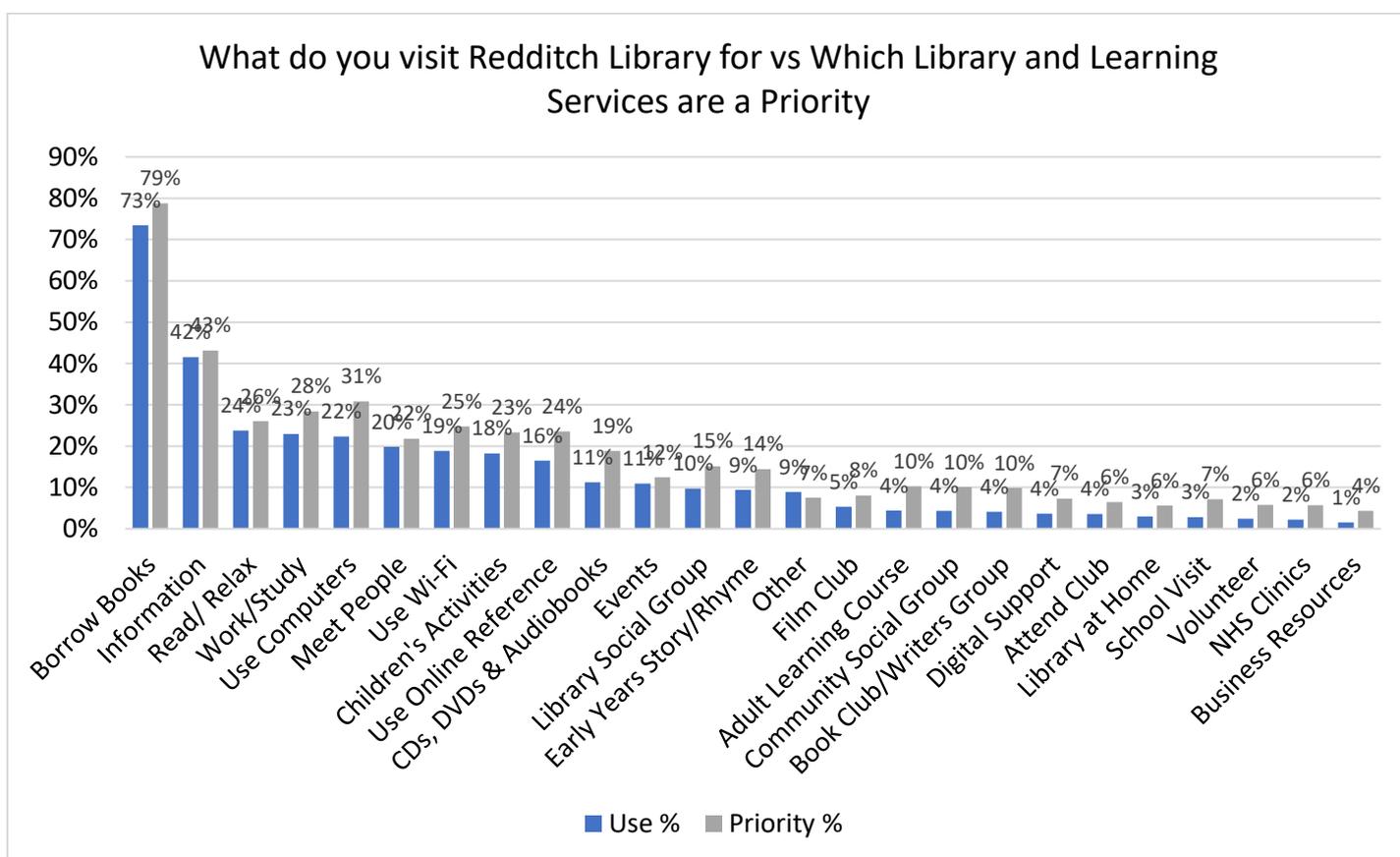
Use of the Library and Priority Services

Respondents were asked to tick all the reasons from a list as to why they use Redditch Library. They were then given the same list of library uses and services and asked which ones were a priority for them.

By far the most common use of the library for 73% of respondents was to borrow books. This was also the top priority service offered by the library chosen by 79% of respondents.

The top 5 most common services for both use of the library and priority for respondents was completed by:

- To find out information
- To read/relax
- To research/work/study
- To use free public computers and internet.



Additional services

As part of the consultation survey respondents were asked “Are there any additional community services you would like to see in Redditch library?”.

550 responses were received for this question.

The most common additional service that respondents would like to see were various types of clubs or meetings at the library, for example book clubs, social clubs and children’s groups.

“It would be lovely to see a wider range of clubs. I know there are already clubs in place, but I think adding a wider variety for a different range of abilities, age and peoples interests would attract much more people.”

Additional services also popular with respondents were an information and advice centre such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, a café and space or clubs for youths.

“It would be lovely to have a community coffee shop, perhaps run by volunteers with proceeds going into the library.”

“Citizens advice office - someone to talk to face to face instead of an email.”

“Youth Services. The town desperately needs to focus on engaging with and providing opportunities for young people. There is not enough for them to do and the town is becoming an intimidating place to be at times.”

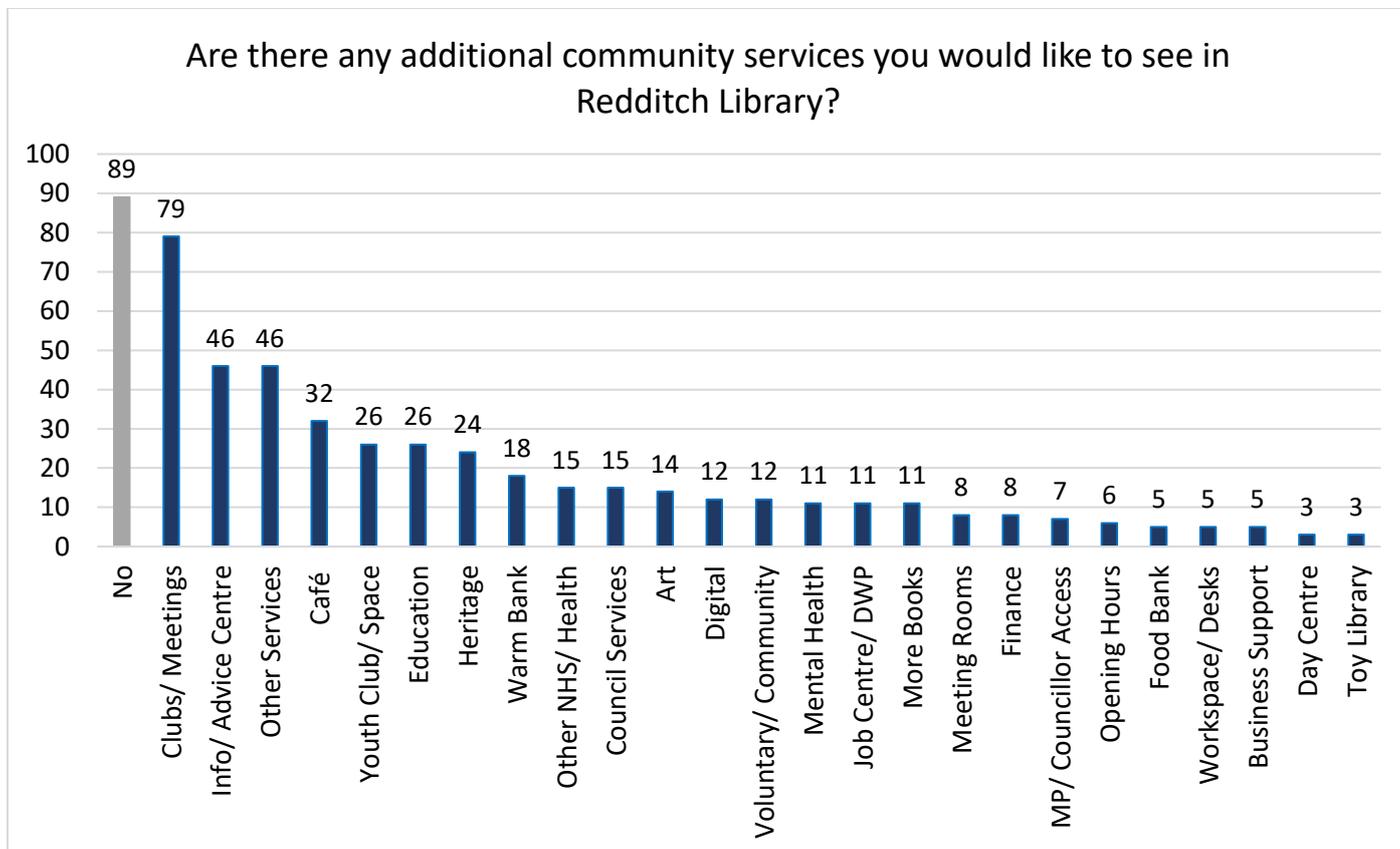
Education for adults and young people and history or heritage provision were also popular with respondents.

“Perhaps a Redditch Museum as part of the town hall hub.”

“I would like to see the current Library building retained but working in partnership with Redditch Museum to build a comprehensive heritage centre housing our archives and artifacts for future generations to use.”

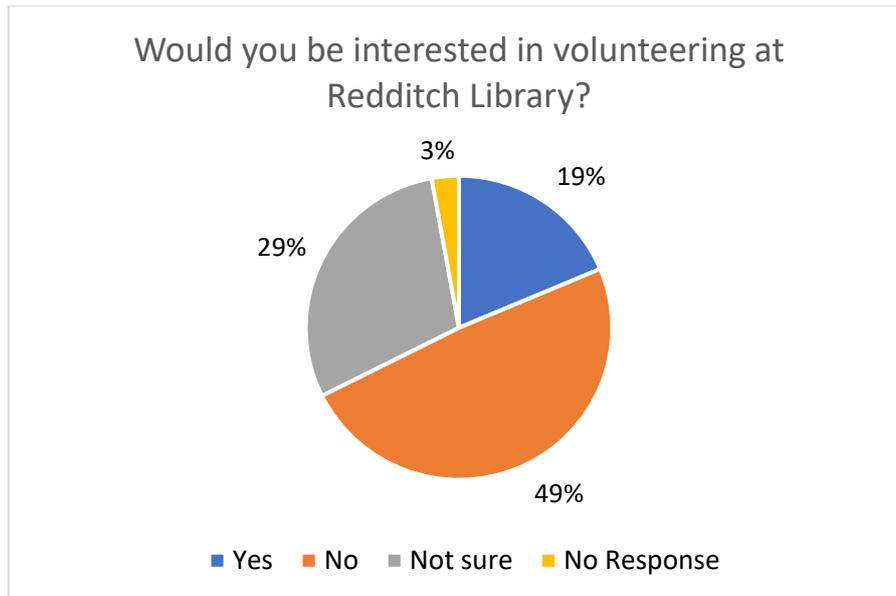
“Update everything push for a centre of knowledge have classes there for improving the towns educational ability with HOW college.”

“Technical Lectures/ evening classes would be great. The College has cut back drastically.”



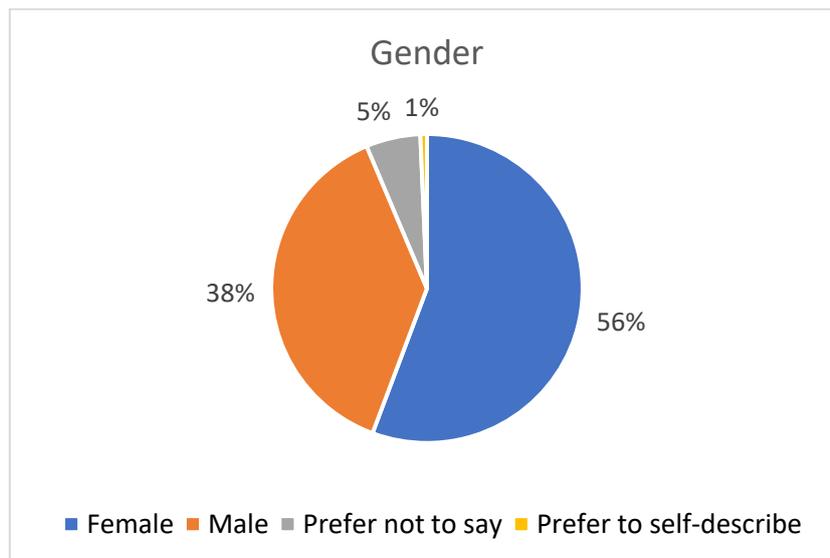
Volunteering

19% of respondents said that they would be interested in volunteering at Redditch library.



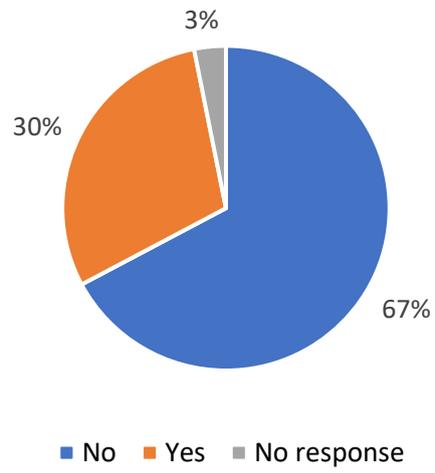
Demographics

There were slightly more female respondents than male respondents.



30% of respondents said that they have a long-standing health condition or disability. Responses are slightly over represented with people who have a long-standing health condition or disability. 30% of respondents compared to 25% of the Redditch population as measured by the Census 2021.

Long-standing health condition or disability



Equality and Public Health Full Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment Id: #480

Date printed: 10/05/2023

Date assessment submitted: 10/05/2023

Requester: Emily Morrall

1.0 Screening Information

Project Name

Relocation of Redditch Library - Cabinet Decision on Move

Name of Project Sponsor

Hannah Perrott

Name of Project Manager

Emily Morrall

Name of Project Lead

Rob Elmes

Please give a brief description of the project

In June 2021 Redditch secured a historic investment of £15.6 million Town Deal which will help fund ambitious new projects for the town.

Plans involve the re-development of the current Redditch Library site which includes the demolition of the existing library building and the delivery of a new public square and associated commercial development. Worcestershire County Council is actively supporting the regeneration of Redditch within its Town Plan and wants to work collaboratively with the Borough Council on the re-location of the existing Library into other suitable premises. In October 2022, WCC Cabinet approved the high level plans and set of requirements for the proposed newly located Library and authorised the commencement of public consultation. The project purely involves relocation of the existing library services from their current location into a shared Community Hub space in Redditch Town Hall, a distance of 100m from the current library building. A new JIA is now being completed post-Public Consultation to inform the Cabinet Decision on the move.

Data Protection screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Equality and Public Health screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Environmental Sustainability screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

1.1 Background and Purpose

Background and Purpose of Project?

To support your answer to this question, you can upload a copy of the project's Business Case or similar document.

Cabinet report to be uploaded when finalised. Redditch Borough Council have been successful in their bid for funding as part of the Towns Fund to redevelop Redditch Town Centre. One of the projects proposed to be funded by the Towns Fund is the redevelopment of Redditch Library, to create a new Town Plaza and commercial space. In order to progress this, Redditch have approached Worcestershire County Council with a proposal to relocate library services from the current building in Redditch Town Centre into a new Community

Hub at Redditch Town Hall. The town development including building works and demolition are being led by Redditch Borough Council and as such will be subject to separate governance and impact assessments. This impact assessment focuses on the impact of relocation of library services only, though it is also important to consider the possible impact of the areas of the project which will be the responsibility of RBC, even though these impacts may be outside of WCC control, they should still be noted.

Upload Business Case or Support documents

No files uploaded

Project Outputs

Briefly summarise the activities needed to achieve the project outcomes.

The project involves the transfer of Library and DWP services from their current location in the dedicated Redditch Library building to a new space to be created within Redditch Town Hall. Worcestershire County Council are asked to approve the relocation of services, from a service delivery and financial perspective, and support the physical move from building to building. Building works and demolition of the current library building will be led by Redditch Borough Council, along with further improvements to the Public Realm as a part of the Town Investment Plan.

Project Outcomes

Briefly summarise what the project will achieve.

The key outcomes of the wider Town Development are captured in the RBC Town Investment Plan. The core deliverable of the WCC output (move of library service) is to support this wider investment plan. There are no specific outcomes for WCC in this project, however, the Cabinet report supporting the decision will outline a set of core requirements that must be met in order for WCC to support the move, such as ensuring there is no impact on service delivery and that commercial and financial conditions are met.

Is the project a new function/service or does it relate to an existing Council function/service?
Existing

Was consultation carried out on this project?

Yes

1.2 Responsibility

Directorate/Organisation

People

Service Area

Communities

1.3 Specifics

Project Reference (if known)

Not Recorded

Intended Project Close Date *

September 2024

1.4 Project Part of a Strategic Programme

Is this project part of a strategic programme?

No

2. Organisations Involved

Please identify the organisation(s) involved: Worcestershire County Council

Other: Redditch Borough Council

Details of contributors to this assessment:

Name	Natalie Ahmed
Job title	Senior Change Manager
Email address	NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk

3. Who will be affected by the development and implementation

Please identify group(s) involved: Service User

Visitors Staff Communities

3.1 Information and evidence reviewed

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? *

Age and ACORN definition of Library users (demographic information) have been reviewed alongside survey responses. Census data, school census data and National Insurance Number Registrations data was reviewed to assess the potential requirement for translation of the survey into other language

3.2 Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken

Who and how have you engaged, or why do you believe engagement is not required? *

*

Worcestershire County Council carried out a public consultation to understand local residents' and library users' opinions, and the impact of a possible relocation of the library service in Redditch. The consultation was open from 7th November 2022 to 24th February 2023.

The consultation consisted of, provision of background information to the proposals, a survey (available online and on paper including Library Services at Home customers), and two public face-to-face meetings held at Redditch Library. Additional comments received via email and Library feedback cards were also included in the consultation analysis report.

The survey was available to complete in English, Polish and Urdu, large print and Braille. Census data, school census data and National Insurance Number Registrations data was reviewed to assess the potential requirement for translation of the survey into other languages. The data indicated the most commonly spoken languages, other than English, were Urdu and Polish. The survey was translated into those languages, and a process was established to ensure translation into other languages could be completed upon request.

3.3 Summary of relevant findings

Please summarise your relevant findings. *

The full analysis report of survey findings will be published with the Cabinet report, and all comments provided within the survey will be made publicly available subject to being redacted to remove information which could lead to the identity of individuals.

Headline findings include:

There were a total of 1467 responses to the survey. This represents 2.2% of the Redditch population aged over 19.

There was good engagement and response to the survey for people aged 30 or over. There were fewer responses received for younger people aged under 30.

Respondents are asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the new location for Redditch library being the Town Hall. 72.3% of respondents said that they disagree to some extent.

There is little difference by age group about whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with the proposal to move the library to the town hall for anyone aged 20 or over. (Note: There are much smaller numbers of responses in the Under 13 and 13-19 age groups than in other age groups.)

The three most common themes given by respondents in relation to the proposed new location for the library were:

1. The proposed location for the new library is not as good

This includes comments about how it is further from the town centre, further from the bus and railway station, further from car parks and involves walking down and up a hill to get to.

“The Town Hall is quite a bit further away from public transport than the library is now and crucially it is downhill meaning that people with restricted mobility have to climb a hill to get back to their bus.”

“It is too far away from the bus station and car parks and would invoke a lot of extra walking which is difficult for the elderly and disabled especially in winter as there is no covered walkway.”

2. Concern that there will be a reduction in the facilities offered by the new location

Respondents were concerned that the move to a new location might lead to the degradation of facilities and services offered by the library. Some comments state that the information provided at the consultation stage is not sufficient to reassure them that facilities will not be lost.

This theme included concerns about the relocation of some of the archives to Worcester so they will no longer be available in Redditch, but also about some other facilities in the new library such as the provision of meeting rooms.

“Have not yet seen any specific plans regarding the library. Concerned it may lead to a reduction in what is available in the library.”

“I believe the consolidation of three library meeting rooms and two council meetings rooms into three shared meeting rooms represents a degradation to the library service.”

3. Concern that the relocation will result in a reduction in the size of the new library
This theme included a range of comments from respondents that the new library within the Town Hall would result in the reduction in the size of the library, having an impact on how they use the building to read, relax, work, or attend with children.

“The proposal move for the library is to move into the town hall is downsizing and downgrading the library. The proposal shows that the space is not anywhere near what we currently have as a library, especially for a town with a bustling college.”

“I'm not sure the Town Hall will have the right amount of space for books, desks, computers etc.”

There were also several common themes as to why respondents agree that the Town Hall would be an appropriate location for the library, such as:

- The new location is only a very short distance away
- It is a good use of buildings
- They are happy to have the library as part of a hub with services all in one place
- The idea that a move to a new location could include new, modern facilities
- The new location could be more accessible

“It's only few yards away from the current location, therefore I have got no objections.”

“It makes sense to co-locate and share services across public sector. A lot of the activity that people go to the Town Hall to undertake may increase library footfall, usage and raise awareness of what other services are on offer there.”

“I don't like that in the current library I have to use a lift to get the pushchair to the children's books. Moving the library gives the opportunity for this to change.”

4. Protected characteristics – Equality

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development & implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. Please select one or more impact box(es) below for each equality group and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative for the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on e.g. staff, public, patients, carers etc. who are part of these equality groups.

Age

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. Feedback from survey indicates public concern regarding the possible move as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location. The impact for older people and children of this additional distance has been noted in terms of ease of access to services. The proposed new location would offer services spread largely over a single floor (with some 1 floor above) which compared to the current building with 4 main floors plus smaller mezzanine floors, could have a positive impact from an accessibility perspective, making it easier for service users to move around the building and access services.

Additionally for younger age groups, there are currently several groups which run from the Redditch Library for younger children, such as "bounce and rhyme" sessions. Groups for parents and babies are popular within the library and therefore suitable space to hold groups attended by up to 30 parents with pushchairs is essential. The proposed new location would offer a Children's Library area in a large open space on the ground floor to ensure ease of evacuation if required - this is a positive impact as the current Children's area is accessed on the first mezzanine floor requiring use of a lift or going up 4 steps.

Disability

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. Feedback from survey indicates public concern regarding the possible move as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location. The impact for disabled people who are wheelchair or mobility aid users, or who cannot comfortably move this additional distance has been noted in terms of ease of access to services. The proposed new location would offer services spread largely over a single floor (with some 1 floor above) which compared to the current building with 4 main floors plus smaller mezzanine floors, could have a positive impact from an accessibility perspective, making it easier for service users to move around the building and access services.

Gender reassignment

Potential neutral impact selected

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members who are going through or have completed gender reassignment, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Marriage and civil partnerships

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any specific groups with members who are married or in civil partnerships which use meeting rooms at the library, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Pregnancy and maternity

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. There are several groups which run from the Redditch Library at present which can be accessed by those on maternity, such as "bounce and rhyme" sessions. Groups for parents and babies are popular within the library and therefore suitable space to hold groups attended by up to 30 parents with pushchairs is essential. The location move could impact on these groups as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location which could have a negative impact on accessibility for those with pushchairs. The proposed new location would offer a Children's Library area in a large open space, accessed on one level (no stairs) and on the ground floor to ensure ease of evacuation if required - this is a positive impact as the current Children's area is accessed on the first mezzanine floor requiring use of a lift or going up 4 steps.

Race including travelling communities

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. If there are additionally people in this group who have English as a second language, there may be additional neutral impact as the same facilities will be available

Religion and belief

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. For example, the library currently runs Easter and Christmas specific activities. There may also be further opportunity to engage more effectively across communities and invite other groups for events based on religious beliefs

Sex

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Sexual orientation

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

5. Characteristics - Public health

Other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members from vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub which may benefit vulnerable groups by enabling them to access more services from one building.

Health inequalities

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members experiencing health inequalities, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on health inequalities through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Social and economic

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for social support groups and the Job Centre Plus is located within the library building. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, and it is anticipated that the Job Centre Plus will continue to be co-located with the library service, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral.

Physical health

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The current library space, for example, is used as a meeting place for health walks (open to all) and for developmental health checks. The impact for these groups, and any others which provide activities to improve physical health, will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on physical health through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Mental health and wellbeing

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for many community groups including those promoting mental health and wellbeing, for example groups for people facing loneliness and isolation. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on mental health and wellbeing through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Access to services

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for many community groups including those promoting health care and other services, for example Developmental Health Checks. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on access to services through enabling people to access more services from one building.

6. Actions to mitigate potential negative impacts

Risk identified	Risk of negative impact for those with reduced mobility from the move of service, accessibility at the new location included walking up / down a slope, further from transport hubs and some car parks
Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	Proposed mitigations include: - promotion of available shop mobility equipment which can be accessed in the Kingfisher centre and used to support the journey from Kingfisher Centre car parks to the library - promotion of shorter walking routes from car parks such as the car park by the Palace Theatre and closer exits from

	Kingfisher centre which shortens the journey from the car park to the Town Hall. Work to ensure these routes are accessible and maintained - provision of blue badge parking capacity in the Town Hall car park, immediately adjacent to the proposed new location - working with RBC on their planned Public Realm improvements to enhance the route from the current library location down to the Town Hall, to provide a clear trail with access to seating along the route
Who will lead this action	Redditch Borough Council working in close partnership with Worcestershire County Council
Timeframe	By September 2024 (proposed move of service date)
Risk identified	There is a risk that, as a town centre location in a built up area, green space will not be available near to the new library location for use by those with assistance dogs. (note this risk would be similar for both the current and proposed new location)
Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	WCC officers to work with RBC on the wider public realm improvements within Redditch Town Centre to identify opportunities to access green space for those with assistance dogs. Ensure there is provision within a reasonable distance. It is noted that there is a green space (grassed area) outside the back of the Town Hall, near to the underpass under the ring road which minimises this risk.
Who will lead this action	Rbc (working Closely With Wcc)
Timeframe	By September 2024

How will you monitor these actions?

Not recorded

7. When will you review this equality and public health estimate (EPHIA)?

The EPHIA will be reviewed at key milestone gateways in the wider implementation plan (led by RBC). Example milestones include sign off of detailed plans, signing of lease agreement, go / no go decision for final move of services (exact dates TBC).

8. Declaration

The following statement has been read and agreed:

All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation

Our Organisation will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others

All staff are expected to deliver and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics

I confirm to the best of my knowledge that the information I have provided is true, complete and accurate

I confirm that I will make sure that Equality and Public Health have been and continue to be considered throughout the project life cycle and that, if circumstances change in the project, a further Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment Screening will be carried out.

9. Application Details

Last Updated Date Time
10/05/2023 10:19:26

Screening Submitted Date Time
14/03/2023 11:37:46

Last Reopened Date Time
10/05/2023 09:28:37

Full Impact Submitted Date Time
10/05/2023 10:19:26

Approved/Rejected Date Time
No Date Recorded

Current User Dashboard Request Status
Submitted

10. People with access to the original screening

Emily Morrall (EMorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk)
Natalie Ahmed (NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk)

11. People with access to this equality and public health assessment

Emily Morrall (EMorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk)
Natalie Ahmed (NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk)

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