

Communities Committee

Report title:	Attleborough Library
Date of meeting:	6 March 2019
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe - Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
<p>Strategic impact</p> <p>Caring for our County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good growth: Building communities we can be proud of• Starting a new relationship with Norfolk families: Helping people to live independent, productive lives where they are healthy, happy and with good access to opportunities• Helping our population remain independent, resilient and well: Focusing on helping vulnerable adults to live independently <p>As part of the Norfolk Futures work on Local Service Strategy, we are looking at ways to better meet the needs of people within their locality. By offering easy access to universal services we are supporting the principle of joining up services and offering our help early to prevent and delay the need for formal services.</p>	

Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the planned move of Attleborough Library from its current location in Connaught Road, into a multifunction hub within the Attleborough Community and Enterprise Centre.

The movement of the service, whilst not geographically very far, represents a new way of joined up working where multiple service offers are available in one place to support the needs of the local community. As well as a purpose designed library space, the centre will house Adult Education facilities, a community café and multifunction rooms that are suitable for use by a wide range of services such as community health services, services for adults with learning disabilities, partner organisations and volunteer groups. Early years education and childcare provision will also remain on site.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- **Endorse the movement of Attleborough Library into the multi-service hub, as part of the Local Service Strategy agreed through Norfolk Futures**

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council is committed to reshaping services to make them fit for the future. We are working to join up services in our communities, offering help early and in the right places. This will be better for people and communities, and better for the public sector, by making the best use of resources. We are doing this by developing a local service strategy, by joining up work, initially across departments, to reduce duplication in services and promote information sharing.

The ambition is to eventually be able to organise and deliver services with colleagues across the voluntary sector, districts and other public services, such as

the police or health services, at a local level, to make delivery seamless at the point of need. Services will be organised and delivered around the needs of the local population and the Council will have a much better understanding of the strengths and challenges facing each local community and be able to mobilise resources accordingly.

To support this ambition, the trial of multi-function hub was agreed by the Norfolk Futures Steering Group and is guided by the following principles:

- **Service continuum** redesigning services along a continuum from prevention through to specialist help and protection, to develop targeted offers in key localities.
- **Targeting services.** Developing and utilising local intelligence to inform decision making, mapping existing and targeting future services.
- **Buildings review** understanding our current footprint and opportunities for consolidating and repurposing.
- **Multi-function hubs** Develop a multi-service offer to realise opportunities offered by more integrated services and the One Public Estate programme.

Norfolk County Council wishes to pilot the delivery of its local service strategy in Attleborough, through the creation of a multi-function hub. The library will be a key element of the Attleborough multi-function hub.

Developing multi-function hubs will enable us to realise opportunities offered by more integrated services and to create fit for purpose service delivery spaces. This will reduce duplication and allow better sharing of resources to effectively target services where they are most needed.

1.2 Attleborough Library is currently situated in Connaught Road Attleborough. It is currently open for 69 hours each week, for 42 of these hours staff are present, and for 27 hours the library is in the Open Library Model:

- Monday: 8am-7pm (staffed 10am-7pm)
- Tuesday: 8am-7pm (Open Libraries access only)
- Wednesday: 8am-7pm (staffed 10am-7pm)
- Thursday: 8am-7pm (staffed 10am-7pm)
- Friday: 8am-7pm (staffed 10am-7pm)
- Saturday: 8am-4pm (staffed 10am-4pm)
- Sunday: 10am-4pm (Open Libraries access only)

In 2017/18 the library welcomed over 42,000 visitors. They borrowed 67,237 items. The library currently occupies 176 square metres of publicly accessible space.

Attleborough Library supports the following:

- Stronger, more resilient communities
- Increases reading and literacy
- Improves digital access and digital literacy
- Improves health and wellbeing
- Provides information, support and signposting for our most vulnerable residents
- Supports economic growth by encouraging people back to work and encouraging greater prosperity

- Helps everyone achieve their full potential through learning and access to information
- Provides cultural and creative enrichment
- Provides a safe space and supports community cohesion

It is proposed that Attleborough library moves to the Attleborough Community and Enterprise Centre, which is situated on Church Road Attleborough. This is part of a development of a multi-function hub, outlined in the County Council's Local Service Strategy. The library in its new location will offer 215 square metres of publicly accessible space. The existing location and new location can be seen on the map in Appendix 1.

- 1.3 The two locations are in close proximity to each other, and as such a formal community consultation about the move was not required. The new library premises will be on the ground floor of the Community and Enterprise Centre and will be approximately the same size, but with access to improved facilities such as disabled toilets and a café, plus space for the library to develop its services that reduce social isolation, promote literacy and support health and well-being. Visitors to the centre will be able to access a range of other services in the same building.

Members of the community are being asked to contribute to the look and feel of the new library via an engagement display in the existing library. The library will continue to deliver a wide range of services and staff jobs will be unaffected by the move.

- 1.4. Norfolk County Council has adopted a new vision for the County Council. This vision [Caring for our County](#) focuses the Council on providing the best services it can for its residents. The vision is supported by a new strategy – [Norfolk Futures](#) – which sets out a transformation programme for Council services to make them fit for purpose, robust, affordable and sustainable, both now and in the future with emphasis on.

- Promoting independence for vulnerable adults: giving people the skills and confidence to live independently and safely, in their own homes, for as long as possible.
- Safe Children and Resilient Families.
- Local service strategy: proactively targeting our services in the places where they are most.

- 1.5. The Services which will form part of the Attleborough multifunction centre include
- Libraries
 - Early education and childcare
 - Early Childhood and Families Service
 - Day opportunities
 - Information and advice services
 - Adult and community learning
 - Community based drug and alcohol support services
 - Registrar Services
 - Public Health prevention programmes

2. Evidence

- 2.1. Currently the Connaught Road site is a single use library. The new Enterprise Centre site will offer local people access to a range of Council and other public services to demonstrate the positive impact of the Local Service Strategy

This is set alongside the need to reduce Council revenue expenditure while at the same time ensuring that service meet the needs of communities as far as possible. The facilities management revenue savings that will arise out of the library move to new premises will be approximately £10.5k

The move to efficient and resilient premises will reduce future demands on the maintenance budget for all services located within the new Enterprise Centre offer.

Vacating the current library site on Connaught Road will enable the site to be sold. No formal valuation of the site has been done, but the estimated capital receipt is £200k.

Bringing multiple services to one site offers benefits to residents in Attleborough. It will enable the library to expand on its current service offer and will enable the library to be delivered from improved facilities.

- 2.2 Creating a joined-up community resource has the potential to attract new visitors and the opportunity to work alongside other public service providers. The case for libraries being part of multi-function hubs was set out by the Arts Council in 2017. This identified the rationale for co-locating services in community hubs include:
- Efficiency in the use of assets and reducing costs through bringing services together in one place
 - Supporting a more local and devolved approach to service delivery linked to the localism and community rights agenda which prioritises decision-making powers moving from central government to individuals and communities
 - Promoting community involvement and enabling communities to take action in their local area through providing physical spaces and the connections to start up new activities and services
 - Providing services in a more accessible and seamless manner for residents, including making it easier to signpost to other sources of support

The project also aims to improve facilities in the Community and Enterprise Centre through upgrading works, including the provision of a Changing Places toilet, a community café and access to a garden area. The opening hours of the library will be unaffected by the change

Both premises offer customer parking, although the Community and Enterprise Centre is closer to a free carpark and bus routes.

- 2.3 Library staff have been engaging with library customers in Attleborough telling them about the move and answering questions. A range of “frequently asked questions” has been developed to support staff in answering the public’s questions. These can be found at Appendix 2.

Plans of the new library space are on display in the existing library on Connaught Road. Library staff are engaging with local stakeholder such as schools and heritage organisations. In addition, as part of these sessions, children are participating in the selection of new stock for the library.

Library volunteers and community groups which currently deliver activities in the

library have been asked to contribute their views into the process.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. The main financial implication for the offer are linked to the demand and early help agenda's. Offering our help and advice early helps people and families to maintain the health and independence, and therefore the major driver for this work is in reducing and delaying the need for formal services.

Section 2 sets out some of the key financial metrics. The Corporate Property Team, who are funding the work, envisage the capital costs to improve the Enterprise Centre will be in the region of £150k and quotes are currently being obtained. The capital receipt of the Connaught Road site, should it be declared surplus to requirements, will be around £200k.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. The development of a multi-function hub is a key innovation which will deliver visible benefits for the library itself, other partners and services in the building and local residents. It will take a period of time to see if any key metrics associated with the local service strategy move, and these can be influenced by a range of different factors.

A further innovation is the provision of a "changing places" toilet. To use a toilet in safety and comfort, many people with disabilities need to be able to access accessible facilities, which have more space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist. This will be provided at the new centre and will increase the number of facilities available across Norfolk. Access will be available 24 hours a day through the radar key system.

4.2. Risks

The key risks that need to be considered are:

- The multi-function hub may not deliver the expected outcomes
- The capital receipt from the sale of the old library site is not forthcoming
- Refurbishment costs of the new premises are higher than expected
- The centre will "outgrow" the needs of the local population in terms of capacity

Whilst the majority of the risks identified can be measured and managed in the short term, the final risk around capacity of the offer may need further mitigation.

Attleborough is a growing town, with plans to expand significantly in the future, with 4,000 new homes expected by 2036.

The Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan identifies the importance of developing a multi function community hub in the town centre but in a different location.

Queen's Square and the 'back-land' behind it form an important town centre site and enhancement opportunity site, enabling the historic centre of Attleborough to grow its range of attractions as the town grows and to serve the hinterland villages. This proposed regeneration site is where the ANPSG or its successor organization would seek to create a 'Community Hub', which could include a relocated and expanded Library, Archives and Town Council Offices and Tourist Information Centre, and new 25 public toilets.

The library element of the new centre would be funded by section 106. The

planning contribution expected from the 4,000 new homes is £976,000 and a potential site for the development. There is no timescale for the development of this facility, and therefore it makes sense to progress with the current multi-function hub opportunity at the Enterprise Centre.

We propose that a review of the library's requirements takes place in 5 years to assess whether its accommodation in the Community and Enterprise Centre is still fit for purpose.

4.3 **Equality impact assessment**

Accessibility is a priority for Norfolk County Council. Norfolk has a higher than average number of disabled and older residents compared to other areas of the UK, and a growing number of disabled young people.

The proposal set out in this report has been assessed and the conclusion is that this proposal has the potential to significantly improve accessibility and independence for disabled and older people in Attleborough. This is not just because relocating different services together helps to reduce costly, tiring or painful journey times for disabled service users (as they only need to attend one venue rather than several different venues to access different services) – but also because the proposal makes provision for a changing places toilet.

Many disabled people, or people who care for disabled children or adults, are greatly restricted in their ability to access local services because of a national shortage of changing places toilets, which contain the right equipment to support people with complex disabilities to use toilet facilities. The provision of the changing places toilet in Attleborough, mentioned in para 4.1, will significantly increase the accessibility of the area.

Proposals to relocate services to different buildings, or to share buildings between services, need to take into account the internal and external accessibility of the building and its ICT systems/associated infrastructure, and access to public transport and adequate disabled parking. No issues have been identified in relation to this proposal, and the proposed new location is closer to a free carpark and bus routes.

Because there may be greater constraints on space (due to having a number of services in one location), it will be important to ensure that there is sufficient space for disabled service users and staff to easily access all areas (for instance, when using large motorised wheelchairs) facilities, fixtures and fittings. It will be important to ensure that consideration is given to managing noise – to enable the best possible acoustics for people who are hearing impaired, and noise levels - eg to support people who may be more sensitive to noise, such as people on the autism spectrum. Other considerations should also be taken into account, e.g. making the space as autism-friendly as possible - low arousal and allowing for free movement, to avoid crowding or queueing. Members of the community are being asked to contribute to the look and feel of the new library via an engagement display in the existing library, which will help in identifying how best to address some of these needs.

Through the Local Services Strategy, the County Council is developing its design guidance on accessibility, to ensure that it takes every opportunity to maximise

accessibility for disabled service users and staff. This proposal will draw on the principles identified through existing guidance and seek to identify new opportunities for promoting inclusion (such as making provision for a changing places toilet) that can be integrated into subsequent proposals, as the strategy is taken forward.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Enterprise Centre was identified as a suitable site for a multifunction centre as the site provided an early opportunity to develop and open a multifunction centre as well as increased utilisation of estate and the opportunity to consolidate our estate footprint and to realise capital through disposal.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- **Endorse the movement of Attleborough Library into the multi-function hub, as part of the Local Service Strategy agreed through Norfolk Futures**

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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