

Library Investment and Improvement (Library Refurbishments)

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Report title: Library Investment and Improvement (Library Refurbishments)	
Report to: Cllr Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	
Report author: Suzanna Shaw, Director of Customer Services	
Date: 18 February 2020	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 As outlined in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of the Essex Future Library Services Cabinet report and Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024 (FLS Strategy) (FP ref 461/06/19), the Council proposed an investment of £1.9m to modernise the library service by “refurbishing them to deliver a consistent high-quality look and feel across the network and by continuing to develop staff skills to improve the service provided to library service users”. This report sets out the recommendations that will best deliver modernisation through refurbishment.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the principles (see section 3.6) which set out the rationale for identifying libraries to be refurbished under this project.
- 2.2 To approve the recommended procurement option (Option 1 in section 4 below).
- 2.3 Agree that the decision on which libraries are to be refurbished will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate and Customer, using the principles set out in section 3.6 below.
- 2.4 Agree to delegate to the Director of Customer Services the decision to award contracts for the refurbishment of libraries using the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Framework. A separate contract will be awarded for the refurbishment of each of the identified libraries.

3. Summary

- 3.1 The Future Libraries Strategy (approved by Cabinet on 23 July 2019) highlights the declining use of libraries over the last 10 years and the need to deliver a more modern library service in new and more efficient ways to create an active and sustainable service. It committed to investing in the library service to create

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new, vibrant, modern spaces in council-run libraries to deliver a consistent high-quality look and feel across the network. It is recognised that such improvements could help the library service to increase usage.

- 3.2 As part of the strategy, Cabinet approved the drawdown of £3m from the Transformation Reserve for investment and improvements in libraries. The drawdown was allocated to three key areas of the Strategy. £1.9m was allocated to deliver the refurbishment activity (see Financial implications section 6.1) and the remainder to support the development and set up of community-run libraries and technology improvements, such as a new Library Management System.
- 3.3 The refurbishment project will create opportunities for the library service to attract a wider and more diverse audience – and the project will look at offering space and facilities for people with additional needs, community groups, families, students and older people. Features such as sensory areas, comfortable and practical space for people and groups to meet and relax, study zones and family areas will also be incorporated in the designs where possible.
- 3.4 The ambitions of the refurbishment project are to create modern library spaces fit for now and the future that align to the wider strategy, meet local need and library services aspirations such as Community Hubs. This includes a library service with improved customer experience; opportunities for co-location of services/increased partnership working; and opportunities to generate income as other Local Authorities have seen through their own library refurbishment activity (see other LA themes section 3.7 and for more information see Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The project aims (scope) to deliver libraries that are accessible and inclusive. This will incorporate the following, initially, in the refurbished libraries: consistent branding, clear signage, flexible furniture to maximise space as needed, suitable shelving, new meetings rooms or pods, suitable areas for co-locating library and other public services. It is intended that this project sets a consistent look and feel that could be rolled out to other libraries in future (see diagram 1 section 3.9).

The Principles

- 3.6 The principles below set out the rationale the project will use to identify a list of libraries for modernisation through refurbishment, ensuring that refurbishments are carried out in an informed and consistent way. The approach to refurbishments across these libraries will be aligned to deliverables shown in diagram 1 (see section 3.9 below).

Principle	Will Consider
Local Circumstances/Social Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where other local investments such as housing developments are happening or planned.• Accessibility to other local community facilities and services

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current services and activities being delivered that are already encouraging people to visit the library
Strong co-location opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where community groups or partners have already indicated an interest in sharing the library space. <i>Co-location is an ambition of the FLS Strategy and there is now an opportunity to encourage co-location by including meeting rooms or appropriate flexible spaces into the requirement to enable future income generation.</i>
Strong partnership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is an opportunity to work with partners to run activities/sessions that complement the library and benefit the community. <i>The Library Service vision is to encourage a community hub environment by creating flexible spaces, etc to attract opportunities for co-location/partnership working; and increase footfall, accessibility and use of the library building.</i>
In need of refurbishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries that need uplifting and updating in order to create improved, modern, and flexible spaces through new signage, new shelving, branding, furnishings, etc.
A library that is Freehold or has a leasehold of 10 years or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the benefits of the investment is realised during the lifetime of the asset.

Please note:

- Any opportunity to maximise the refurbishments will be sought. For example, where extra funding is identified from partners or through internal opportunities.
- Should the refurbishment of additional libraries be required in the future, (outside of existing project budget) further approval will be sought via the normal decision and budgetary processes.

Other Local Authority Themes and the Essex Libraries Consultation:

3.7 Essex is not alone in investing in its libraries to ensure their future sustainability. Many library authorities across the country are improving their libraries and there are some common themes:

- Creating modern, light, vibrant facilities that are genuinely inviting to the whole community (such as Eye Library in Suffolk, which recently moved from an old pre-fab location to a purpose built facility in a previously dilapidated building)
- Introducing a fresh, contemporary colour scheme, reflecting current needs and allowing for future changes (such as Edwinstone Library, Nottinghamshire, which has doubled the number of new users and increased visits by 20% since a completely new design and furniture was installed)
- Reaching and attracting new audiences and users (such as Rugby Library where a new Makerspace has been included in their redesign)

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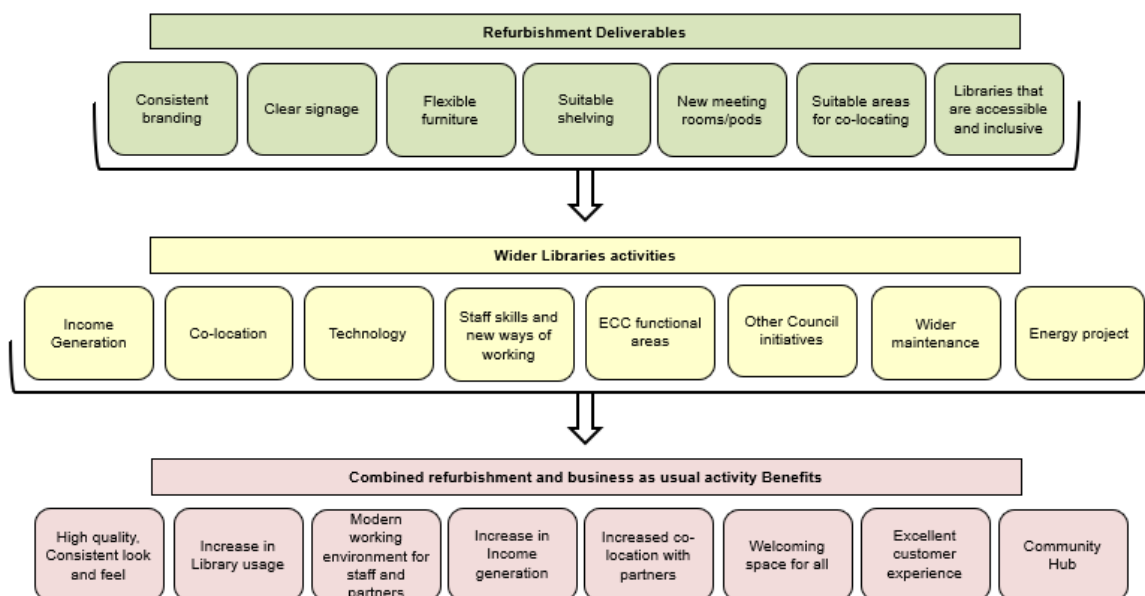
- Working with partners to maximise use of the space and generate income (such as Hove Library in Brighton and Hove, which has invited in partners and charities to raise revenue)
- Helping users develop new skills (such as Fleet Library in Hampshire which has invested in technology to teach coding)
- Redesigning the space to make traditional library fixtures such as self-service machines and shelving more flexible and less intrusive (such as Milton Keynes Library which has completely revamped its entrance and foyer)
- Taking into account those with additional needs, such as autism, dementia or learning difficulties (such as Dartford Library in Kent where a purpose-built space has been created to teach life skills to adults with learning difficulties).
- Using flexible spaces, to accommodate:
 - Coffee mornings to address loneliness such as Birmingham Council.
 - Provide after school facilities for children such as homework clubs in Islington or a Kitchen Social club, at Sutton Library which provides study support and activities plus a meal for children who are entitled to free school meals.
 - Working with adult social care and children's services to provide sessions for families and older people such as the baby-weighting clinics and Older Day Care sessions run by Hampshire Libraries.

3.8 Many of these themes also reflect what Essex residents want to see in their libraries. In two recent pieces of customer engagement carried out by Essex Libraries (public research in 2018 and in the consultation on the draft Future Library Services Strategy in 2018/19), some of the comment's respondents made in respect of their libraries were:

- To be better designed and delivered to meet their needs.
- To be for multi-purpose use, e.g. offering a mixture of quiet study areas and community use spaces
- To have spaces for young people to study, reading, games and chilling out.
- To have more digital provision
- To be accessible to disabled users, wheelchair users and those with special needs
- To be more attractive to children
- To have sensory areas
- To have a play area/ shop space to enable income generation.

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3.9 **Diagram 1:** The below diagram, depicts how the Library Refurbishment project aligns with the aims of the strategy, the ambitions of the library service and some of the benefits expected.



Measures of success:

3.10 Whilst the refurbishment project aims to deliver or support the delivery of the benefits as shown above, an increase in footfall and library members in refurbished libraries will be used to measure its impact. This data is available now and will be reviewed again once the refurbishments in libraries are complete.

Procurement:

3.11 To achieve the benefits depicted in diagram 1 section 3.9 and best value for money, it will be necessary to carry out procurement exercises for the design and refurbishment of each of the identified libraries.

3.12 A recent example of a successful refurbishment carried out by ECC is the Children's Library in Chelmsford, which was procured under a framework agreement by Warwickshire CC.

3.13 There were a number of options considered (see Options section 4 below). It should be noted that these options are based on individual libraries being identified on a phased basis over a period of time rather than all being identified at the same time.

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4. Options

4.1 Option 1: Call-off contract under Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework (**Recommended Option**)

This option is considered the most suitable way to allow ECC to refurbish each library as and when it is identified and selected for refurbishment.

For the first identified library, a further competition exercise will be carried out between the five suppliers on the framework and a contract awarded to the successful bidder.

For subsequently identified libraries, a direct award will be made under the framework to the supplier that was successful for the first library, so as to ensure a consistent look and feel between all identified libraries.

There are five suppliers under this framework:

- Demco Interiors
- Design Concept
- FG Libraries Products
- Emergent Crown
- Showcase Interiors.

The framework period is for 2 years from 08/05/2018 to 07/05/2020, with an option to extend for two further periods of 12 months (2+1+1). YPO are intending to take up the initial 12-month extension option.

Advantages:

- ECC can award contracts on a library by library basis, allowing us to take evolving plans and new information into consideration when choosing the next library to refurbish
- Less internal resource than OJEU competitive tender exercise
- Compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015)
- Suppliers already assessed for financial stability, track record, experience and technical & professional ability.

Disadvantages:

- The successful supplier for the first library may be unwilling to bid or deemed to be uncompetitive for subsequent libraries, in which case ECC might have to run a further competition between the framework suppliers which could impact on the consistent look and feel of the libraries if different suppliers are used.
- Suppliers pay YPO a rebate of approximately 1% of value of contracts awarded to them under the framework. This rebate is built into the price paid by the customer.

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Alternative frameworks were considered (Warwickshire Refit Framework and the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework), however both of these frameworks expire in 2020 with no extension options, therefore there would be insufficient time to carry out direct awards for all of the identified libraries prior to their expiry.

It should be noted that for all Framework options. Mitie would be responsible for any contracted services provision such as flooring and painting, the cost of which would be contained within the £1.9m allocated budget.

4.2 Option 2: ECC to establish its own framework agreement with a single supplier

ECC would run a competitive tender exercise to establish a framework with a single supplier, under which direct awards would be made to the supplier for each library as and when the library is identified. The value of the framework would be above the threshold of £189,330 therefore PCR 2015 would apply. Either the Restricted (two-stage) procedure or the Open (single stage procedure) could be used.

Advantages:

- Consistent look and feel between libraries would be ensured as there would be only one supplier
- Contracts would be awarded on a library by library basis, allowing ECC to take evolving plans and new information into consideration when choosing the next library to refurbish
- Compliant with PCR 2015
- ECC contract terms and conditions apply
- Requirement would be advertised, maximising the potential number of bids received

Disadvantages:

- Large amount of internal resource required
- Takes approximately 6 months to establish the framework

4.3 Option 3: ECC to run its own competitive tender exercise for each library

Under this option ECC would run a separate procurement exercise for each library. It is likely that the value of each contract would be above the threshold of £189,330 therefore PCR 2015 would apply. Either the Restricted (two-stage) procedure or the Open (single stage procedure) could be used.

Advantages:

- Compliant with PCR 2015
- ECC contract terms and conditions apply
- Requirement would be advertised, maximising the potential number of bids received

Disadvantages:

- Large amount of internal resource required
- Takes approximately 6 months for each procurement exercise

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Note: Mitie would be responsible for any contracted services provision such as flooring and painting, the cost of which would be contained within the £1.9m allocated budget.

4.4 Option 4: MITIE to carry out Libraries “refresh” under the total facilities management contract it holds with ECC

A refresh would allow for Mitie to ‘refresh’ a higher number of libraries by reducing the works undertaken expected within the other options. A refresh would include works such as; re-painting of walls, the installation of new flooring and any other contracted services such as mechanical and electrical and any structural works. This would provide a minimal consistent look and therefore the wider investment and improvement activities will have less chance of realising the benefits depicted in diagram 1 (see section 3.9).

Advantages:

- The allocated budget could be spent across more libraries by reducing the remit of works undertaken within the existing contractual framework.

Disadvantages:

- This option would not be compliant with the FLS Strategy which committed to refurbishing our larger council-run libraries to deliver a consistent high-quality look and feel across the network.
- Mitie are not library design specialists
- Timescales may vary due to contracted resources and dependency on sub-contractors/third parties, a lesson learned from the Library Meeting Hub Chelmsford.

4.5 Option 5: Do Nothing

Advantages:

- Nil cost to ECC

Disadvantages:

- Not compliant with the FLS Strategy which committed to refurbishing our larger council-run libraries to deliver a consistent high-quality look and feel across the network. This could impact on the wider pieces of work this project is aligning to for example, partners become less eager to co-locate, or flexible areas of space are not maximised, both impacting income generation opportunities. It would also mean that the public and customers will not see some tangible investment into the library buildings and can't take advantage of the upgrades.
- Would not be responding to the response to the consultation where Essex residents expressed their views for libraries (see Other LA themes section 3.7).

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5. Next steps

Date	Task
Jan-Feb 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify first library to refurbish using the principles Identification of specific library requirements commences Develop location specific requirements for tender packs Site survey commences
Feb-Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue Invitation To Tender (ITT) to framework suppliers Tender submissions (including site surveys by bidders where applicable)
Apr-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender evaluation
May-Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-tender Internal governance (to seek approval to award contract and to publish the decision)
Jun-Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify successful/unsuccessful bidder Voluntary Standstill period Contract award
Jul-Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract signature Contract Start Library Refurbishments commences
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Communications for staff and public

6. Issues for consideration

Issue/Risk	Mitigations
<p>Risk: Refurbishments, could impact staff and customers - Libraries may have to close or relocate for some tasks</p>	<p>Where possible the contractors, working with the library and the Project Manager (PM) can identify disruptive works ahead of time and plan for out of hours works or possibly focusing on one floor at a time where appropriate or cordon areas. A temporary service or relocation may need to be considered depending on the extent of the works.</p>
<p>Risk: Unknown external timelines, could impact identifying when the framework and Mitie can start work.</p>	<p>PM to start conversations with the framework contacts to gain average timescales of previous refurbishments in their portfolio and keep Mitie engaged.</p>
<p>Risk: Buildings cannot be adapted within agreed budget, particularly where the outside of the building may need work such as painting, this could impact the quality or overall look of the refurb.</p>	<p>PM to work with the framework to identify costs and agree quality.</p>

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<p>Risk: If library refurbishment to the same extent was expanded to the remaining library estate (over 70 buildings) the cost would be significant.</p>	<p>Senior officers to take another decision will be taken via the normal decision and budgetary processes.</p>
<p>Risk: The recommended approach to refurbish libraries will involve multiple procurement exercises or direct awarding. Therefore, delivery of refurbishments and its benefits will not be seen as quickly as if the libraries to be refurbished were chosen from the outset.</p>	<p>PM to work with procurement to ensure future planning and assumptions are considered to shorten timescales where possible.</p> <p>PM and library service to ensure communications are up to date and shared internally and externally around refurbishments and benefits.</p>
<p>Risk: The YPO framework is not extended beyond May 2020, or it is not extended beyond May 2021, leaving insufficient time to complete all direct awards.</p>	<p>ECC would have to procure via one of the alternative options (see section 4).</p>

6.1 Financial implications

The Future Libraries Strategy cabinet paper approved in July 2019 authorised the withdrawal of up to £3m from the Transformation Reserve to support the implementation of the new Strategy, with £1.9m for library refurbishments.

Based on the soft market testing of suppliers that was undertaken it is anticipated that the £1.9m would enable five larger libraries that fit the principles listed above to be refurbished. The exact number will however be dependent on the size of library, the scale of the refurbishment needed to improve the library facilities and the specification that is chosen. Other factors, such as the co-location and partnership opportunities at specific library locations will also have an impact.

In the event that the costs look likely to exceed the available funding it is expected that specifications will be reviewed to bring costs back into budget.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 Refurbishment of libraries may need planning permission, building regulation approval and the works need to be competitively procured under the ECC procurement rules.

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7. Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8. List of appendices

Appendix 1: Research and Essex Consultation themes
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

9. List of Background papers

Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024 Cabinet Report

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	18/02/2020

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Margaret Lee, Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services	23/01/2020

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Nicole Wood, Executive Director for Finance and Technology Services (S151 Officer)	
Stephanie Mitchener for Nicole Wood	03/02/2020
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Paul Turner	29/01/2020