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The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s endorsement of a proposal for the Libraries Unit to extend its operations into the vacant first floor space in the New Brighton pier terminus building. The additional space will be used to provide a café for library patrons and to extend the seating and browsing area for the overwhelming number of patrons visiting the New Brighton Library.

BUSINESS SINCE OPENING

Since the New Brighton Library opened on 24 July 1999 it has been an outstanding success and experienced unprecedented use. In the five and a half weeks since opening just over 100,000 people have visited the library, it has issued 51,000 items and registered 859 new members. By comparison, Shirley Library (currently the busiest in the network) registered 151 new members, issued 48,234 items and had 26,660 visits for the month of August.

If this volume of business continues the projected visits for the year will exceed one million (Central Library 1.1 million, Art Gallery 250,000, Canterbury Museum 500,000) and the issues will exceed half a million (grown from 220,000). This is a large volume of business for a library of 950 square meters.

CUSTOMER COMMENT

These quantity measures are corroborated by the customer feedback, which has, on the whole been very favourable.

“Firstly I must congratulate the Council on a fabulous resource, it fantastic, not only for the people of New Brighton but the Community as a whole.”

This type of comment is echoed frequently. However, there have also been complaints particularly about parking, congestion in the building and difficulty of access for the disabled as a result. The lack of a quieter space for reading and browsing has also been commented on. The following comment is typical:

“Too congested, need more space to read a book with a child without people pushing into you.”

In an attempt to cope with the congestion, the staff have dismantled several shelving areas but this can only be sustained in the short term whilst the stock is at low numbers.

In addition to these issues, there have also been numerous requests for coffee facilities in the library so that customers can enjoy reading and using the listening posts with some refreshment. This was the original intention in the brief prepared by the Library but for commercial reasons the café was kept separate from the library proper. Both commercial spaces are as yet untenanted and the Property Unit is seeking proposals.

OUR PROPOSAL

The Library proposes that it take over the occupancy of the top floor for a period of two years and provide a café facility with space for reading and enjoying the view. Popular materials such as magazines and newspapers would be transferred to this area, thus freeing up some of the space in the main area to ease the congestion.

This proposal brings together three competing needs:

- The requirement for additional browsing and reading space for library customers
- The desire of customers for a coffee facility within the library so they can both read and have refreshments at the same time
- A reliable and sound tenant for part of the space which is currently vacant

COSTS

Costs for achieving this project have been split into one off costs of fitout and on going operational costs.

The vacant area is in an unfinished state and will require wall finishes, ceilings, plumbing and drainage, fire protection, cabling and electrical and lights. In order to lease this space, the Council is probably going to have to fund some of these costs to attract a tenant. The cost of finishing the work outlined above is estimated to be \$53,000. Floor coverings, blinds, signage and seating will cost \$21,000. These are one time costs and will benefit future tenants of the space and make the space easier to tenant in the future.

Additional operating costs for the area include cleaning (\$5000), electricity (\$3000), contingency (\$2000) and rent. Property Unit has indicated a rental figure to the library, which includes rates and insurance, of \$60,000. This is predicated on a \$200 per square meter plus \$75 per square meter to cover rates, insurance, and landlord maintenance. I would propose that a 50% rebate be applied for the first full year of taking on the new space. If this were agreed to the additional operating costs would be \$40,000 in year one and \$70,000 in year two.

The café facility would be sub contracted and would contribute revenue to offset the operating costs of \$10,000-\$20,000 per annum. A similar situation has just occurred at the Pioneer Recreation Centre where they are about to contract a company to provide a café facility in their foyer. The expected contribution to Pioneer Recreation Centre from this operation is \$10,000.

In year one, the net increase in unbudgeted operating costs would range between \$20-30,000 and in year two \$50-60,000.

Funding for the fitout can be achieved within the existing Library and Property budgets.

CONCLUSION

We are seeking the Committee's endorsement of the Library's proposal to lease the upstairs space for a period of two years as outlined above. This proposal will be incorporated as one of the options for use of the space, for the Property and Projects Committee to consider at its September meeting. If the Library proposal was to be endorsed and recommended by the Community Services Committee this would be reported to the Property and Projects committee as part of the proposal.

Recommendation: That the Committee support the Library approaching the Projects and Property Committee to lease the vacant first floor space in the New Brighton Pier Terminus building for the purposes of providing a café and reader space, subject to confirmation of a source of funding for increased operating costs.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** Not seen by Chairman.