

## 6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE LIBRARY/SERVICE CENTRE IN THE SOUTH

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Corporate Plan Output: 8.2.24 Spreydon Library and 8.2.25 St Martins Library	

The Council, at its meeting of 23 November, adopted the Strategy and Resources Committee's recommendations:

1. *That the proposal for a combined library, service centre and learning centre be endorsed for public consultation*
2. *That the funding shortfalls for capital and operating costs be considered at the six monthly review and referred to the Annual Plan Working Party*

The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on the outcome of the public consultation and provide an update of the results.

### CONSULTATION PROCESS

On 24 November letters of invitation to three public meetings were sent to a wide variety of identified stakeholders and to the Library Siting Reference Group. This was followed by a letter box drop to 2,600 households and businesses covering the whole of Beckenham, from Thorrington northwards on either side of Colombo Street. Public notices advertising the forthcoming meetings were placed in the Press and Star of 29 November and 2 December 2000 and in the Observer of 3 December. Public meetings were held at three venues, Cashmere, Hoon Hay and Risingholme on the 5, 6 and 7 December respectively. Those attending were invited to submit comments by 22 December and to encourage any contacts with an interest in the subject to do the same. There were 26 submissions received as well as a further 25 letters of support. The general tenor was overwhelmingly enthusiastic and all but one were supportive of the concept. People were appreciative of the opportunity to comment. Copies of the submissions and full notes of the meetings will be tabled at the meeting of the Community Services Committee.

### Summary of the Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held at different venues in the expected catchment area for the proposed new service, where Sue Sutherland, Libraries Manager, presented the concept. The meetings were chaired by Oscar Alpers, Chairman of the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board and the public discussion and question sessions were facilitated by Simon Markham, Principal Adviser to the Community Services Committee.

The purpose of these meetings was to seek feedback from residents and to inform them of the planning process to date and the procedures which need to be followed to see this project become a reality

While the majority of residents who attended were positive and excited about the concept, issues and concerns raised tended to reflect their different communities and their proximity to the proposed new building.

- **Cashmere Club Meeting – 5 December 2000**  
Approximately 70 residents attended this meeting with the majority in favour of the concept and the site.
- **Hoon Hay Club Meeting – 6 December 2000**  
20 residents met in the Blue Room and, while most were supportive of the concept, concern was expressed about the distance to travel to the new facility and the difficulty of getting to the proposed site from this part of the city. The assurance that Spreydon Library would not be closed was appreciated as long as it was not seen as an opportunity to "run down" the service from this site.
- **Risingholme Community Centre Meeting – 7 December 2000**  
Twenty residents attended to hear the presentation. While the majority supported the concept there was an overall feeling of loss at the relocation of the Children's Library and because there would not now be a full Community Library in this locality. 2 people were not in favour of the proposal.

## Issues raised

### *The future of Spreydon Library*

Concern about Spreydon Library's future was expressed at all meetings but assurances were given that Spreydon was to remain open at its present site. The building would not be extended but it is possible that it would be refurbished.

### *St Martins Voluntary Library*

Fear was expressed at the Risingholme meeting that the relocation of the children's library might result in a downturn of patronage and eventual closure of the St Martins Library. It was seen as a social focal point, especially for the elderly who might have difficulty accessing the proposed Beckenham site. The meeting was assured that the Voluntary Library would remain open as long as the volunteers wished it to. The St Martins Children's Library would, under the proposal, shift to the new building at Beckenham. A discussion on the future of children's services in St Martins would be held in February with the St Martins volunteers. In the interim Sue Sutherland has asked for feedback on how children who do not have transport could access the new facility at Beckenham.

### *The Beckenham Volunteer Library*

Representatives from Christchurch City Libraries would meet with the Beckenham Library volunteers in February to discuss the voluntary library's future.

### *The Beckenham Service Centre*

Concern that the Advocacy Team and Council Services may not be so easily accessible was expressed. Nick Chapman gave assurances that accessibility of the Advocacy Team was a design consideration and that community governance is considered to be an important part of Local Government. In fact in the new, purpose-designed facility, the Advocacy Services should have a better public profile. Council's commitment to retaining local walk-in service facilities was restated.

### *The Proposed Learning Centre*

Almost everyone attending all meetings was in favour of this concept and excited by the idea and opportunities for all age groups. However some concern was expressed by a few about the cost effectiveness of providing such a service as they felt most schools in the area were well equipped with information technologies. Assurances were given that this facility would complement and extend schools-based provision for information technology and would benefit the whole community offering a wide variety of programmes and access to information. It would play an important part in helping to address the problem of the "digital divide" between those who have and do not have access to information technology. Discussions with local school principals showed that schools would support and use a facility like this. Management of the facility had yet to be discussed.

### *The New Site*

Concern was expressed about increased traffic in the area, access in and out of the site and adequate off street parking. All meetings were assured that no design work had been done yet and as the new facility would require Resource Consent. All normal forms of planning and consultation processes would be gone through.

### *Design*

Strong feelings were expressed, particularly at the Cashmere meeting, that the new facility should be sympathetic with the surrounding residential area and care should be taken to retain the grass and trees at the corner of Colombo Street and Hunter Terrace. A single storey building was preferred by most though some people thought that a double storeyed building could be designed to fit in with the present park-like surroundings. Future planning should include room for expansion of the collection and the design of the building should take future technological advances into account

### *Accessibility*

The difficulty of getting to Beckenham from Hoon Hay and similar areas was expressed by several residents. Preliminary discussions with CRC shows that if there is significant use of the Beckenham site they would consider deviating the Orbiter bus route to accommodate the new facility. People were again assured that the Spreydon Library and the St Martins Voluntary Library would remain open for people who could not easily get to Beckenham.

### *The proposed Café*

The majority of residents were in favour of a café but some people questioned the necessity of such a facility. It could be seen as a threat to nearby businesses. It was pointed out that the café at New Brighton was very popular and feedback had been favourable.

*Other issues*

- A need was seen for after hours facilities like cashflow machines where access could be gained by swiping a library card.
- There was a request for sufficient seating for browsing and plenty of good signage.
- A plea that there be a children's play area like the one at Spreydon designed in conjunction with the Parks Unit.
- The establishment of a Toy Library at St Martins was suggested.
- The children's area should be secure and in an area where their noise would not disturb other library customers.
- A request for considering opening the library after 9.00pm.

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That in light of the favourable response from the Community through the public consultation process, the proposal be confirmed as the preferred strategy of the Community Services Committee for providing library and service centre facilities in the south of the city.