

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside
<b>Date:</b>	19 January 2015
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed move of Emsworth library
<b>Reference:</b>	6365
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. It is proposed to move Emsworth library from its current location in a leasehold building in Emsworth to a nearby community building, owned by Hampshire County Council and run by Emsworth Community Association.
- 1.2. This report sets out the reasons behind this proposal, the results of the consultation and Equality Impact Assessment. It recommends that Emsworth library does move into the Emsworth Community Association building before the lease on the current library building ends in 2018.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. Emsworth library is currently situated in a leasehold building (measuring approx. 104sqm/1,115sqft) in the centre of Emsworth (see map in Appendix 1). The library is open 35 hours a week with 150,431 visits<sup>1</sup> in 2013/14 and 63,277 issues. It is Hampshire's 25th busiest library (out of 48)<sup>2</sup> but it is also one of Hampshire's most expensive libraries to run in terms of cost per square metre. This is primarily due to the cost of rent, insurance, business rates and other premises costs, which the Library and Information Service (LIS) is required to pay, totalling approximately £35,000 per annum. A number of these costs, particularly rent and insurance, would not be payable if the library was located in a County Council freehold-owned property. In addition, the library attracts retail business rates, due to the retail nature of

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<sup>1</sup> There are known issues with the electronic counter in the library which is over counting, probably by about 20%

<sup>2</sup> Combining visits and issues figures

the property prior to occupation by the library, which is more expensive than rates payable for other libraries situated in non-retail properties.

- 2.2. The lease for the library building expires in 2018 so it makes good business sense to look for a new and cheaper home for the library.
- 2.3. Emsworth Community Association (ECA) was set up in 1975 and occupies a County Council owned building less than 400m away from the library. Currently the ECA building hosts over 80 regular activities each week, including art, crafts, adult learning and dance classes. ECA also provides a wide range of activities and social events for local residents.
- 2.4. In early 2014, ECA applied for a major Capital Buildings grant from Hampshire County Council to make some significant improvements to the County Council's building. On 6 March 2014, the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside awarded a grant of £100,000 to ECA<sup>3</sup> towards the cost of the proposed building works.
- 2.5. Before the grant was awarded, the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside and the Assistant Director for Community visited ECA to discuss the plans for the building and to look round the facility. It was during this visit that the idea of possibly moving the library into the ECA building was first mooted. Further discussion followed about the possible move of the library after the £100,000 grant had been awarded to ECA, with both parties agreeing that it seemed a good idea, but needed to be explored further.

### **3. Public Consultation Exercise**

- 3.1. On 14 July 2014 LIS started a three month public consultation exercise on the proposal to move Emsworth library from its current location to the ECA building. 3,000 copies of a consultation leaflet were printed and distributed via the library and ECA. Press releases and social media were used to alert the public to the consultation. The leaflet and web pages set out the reasons for the proposed move and included a detailed plan of the proposed library layout in the ECA building.
- 3.2. The Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside visited the library on 30 October 2014 where he met the staff, talked to some local residents who were against the proposed move and was interviewed by the local press. Cllr Chapman also visited the home of a local resident who presented him with a petition entitled "The Undersigned Residents Strongly Oppose Hampshire County Council's Proposal to Close Emsworth Library

and Transfer to Space in Emsworth Community Centre”, with 1,046 signatures on it.

#### **4. Public Consultation Analysis**

4.1. At the end of the three month consultation period, 449 responses had been received; of these –

- 142 (31.6%) were in favour of the proposed move of the library or neutral
- 307 (68.4%) were against the proposed move of the library

4.2. By far the main objection was the proposed layout of the library in the ECA building (121 objections, 39% of all objections). Other concerns in descending order were:

- the less central location (and convenience of combining a library visit with another activity)
- the perceived danger of crossing the roads to the Community Centre
- parking
- that moving the library might contribute to the decline of the village centre

4.3. Taking on board that the main objection to the proposed library move related to the location of the library within the ECA building, further discussions were held with ECA to see if a more suitable location for the library could be found. After some time, a new location was provisionally agreed, ensuring the library was in one location in the old Victorian school part of the ECA building. With high ceilings and large windows, this part of the ECA building is bright and welcoming. The library would also have its own separate access for book deliveries and a small staff office. See Appendix 2 for more detail.

4.4. It has also been agreed that flexible shelving will be installed in the library so that the books can be wheeled to one side or into another room if the ECA want to use the space for another booking when the library is not being staffed. As with any library refurbishment, LIS would use the opportunity to buy a wide range of new books and resources for the library if it moved into the ECA building.

#### **5. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

5.1. An EIA was undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed move of Emsworth library and a link to the assessment is included in Integral Appendix B. Compared to the population of Emsworth ward aged over 60

(37%), more older people are active customers of the library (44% of customers). Fewer adults (18 – 59) use the library (only 32% of library users are aged 18 to 59), compared to 46% of the population aged 18 to 59 in Emsworth ward. The proportion of children aged 0 – 17 using the library (23.4%) is higher than the proportion of 0 to 17 year olds in Emsworth ward (17%).

- 5.2. The majority of library customers are female (64%). This is higher than the % of females in Emsworth ward, which is 52%.

## 6. Financial Information

- 6.1. Emsworth library costs £75,940 a year to run (2013-14 costs), which takes into account income and includes –

	£
Staffing	43,710
Utilities	1,610
Rent	24,700
Insurance	1,000
Business rates	9,300 (retail rate)

- 6.2. If the library was to move into the ECA building, it would pay, pro rata, its share of the utility and cleaning costs of the ECA building. It would need to pay business rates but these would be significantly lower than the business rates it currently pays as a retail premises. The actual amount LIS would pay ECA has still to be agreed with ECA, but, overall, it is estimated that the proposed move would save about £30,000 a year.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. There is no doubt that the proposal to move Emsworth library into the ECA building generated a considerable number of negative comments and publicity. Many of the comments related to the initial location of the library within the ECA building which was spread across two locations. Subsequent discussions with ECA have addressed many of the points raised by moving the proposed library into a different, single location which will give the library a bright and airy space, a significant improvement on its current location.
- 7.2. It is recognised that the current library location in Emsworth is considered to be very good and this was reflected in the petition and analysis of the consultation. However, the proposed move to the ECA building would mean the library would be nearer the shops, car parking and new residential development in north Emsworth. It would also be adjacent to Emsworth Museum and a new doctor's surgery which is being developed next door, making the area more of a community hub.
- 7.3. Looking to the future, LIS has to make a future 14% budget reduction by April 2017 and probably the same again by 2020. In order to make these

budget reductions, and still provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for local people”,<sup>4</sup> LIS needs to reduce its expenditure where it can and one way of doing this is to move out of leasehold premises. Moving libraries out of stand-alone buildings into larger community buildings where costs can be shared is another way of making budget savings without impacting the quality of the service.

- 7.4. If the library were to move into the ECA building, it is not possible to say when this would be at the moment because of the need to resolve some issues around the IT connection to the County Council systems. However, the move would need to be by the time the lease expires in 2018 and is likely to be considerably earlier than this. If this were to be the case, then the Council would need to consider the options for dealing with the current lease until it expires in 2018, all of which would be at the discretion of the landlord. These options could include: identifying another Council use for the property; assigning the lease to a third party; or negotiating an early surrender of the lease.

## **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1. That the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside agrees that Emsworth library moves from its current location in Emsworth to the Emsworth Community Association building in Emsworth before the lease on the current library building expires in 2018.
- 8.2. That officers identify potential alternative uses for the existing leased library building.

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<sup>4</sup> Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

- 1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

#### **Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- 1.2. The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- 1.3. Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- 1.4. Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

#### **1.5. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

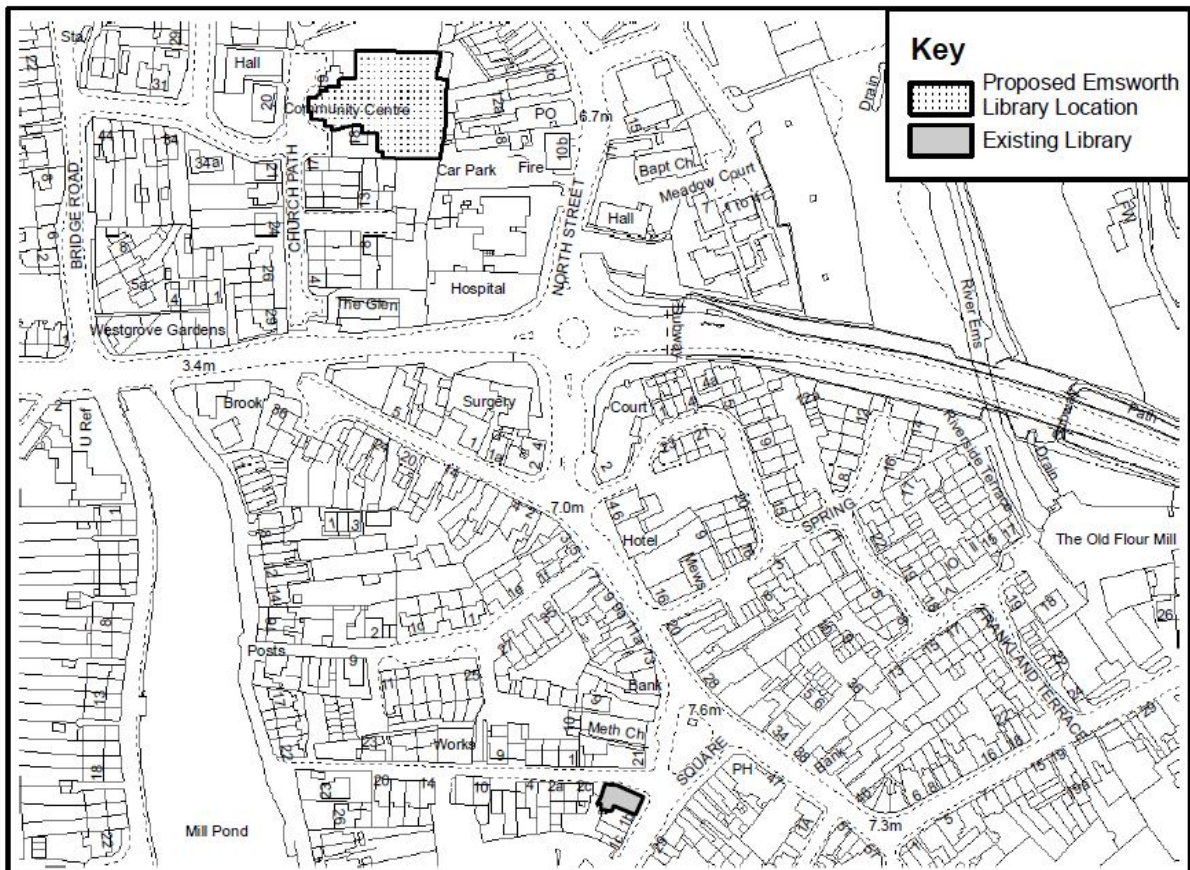
The full assessment can be viewed at <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/AnewlocationforEmsworthlibrary-EIA-2014-08-12.pdf>.



### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

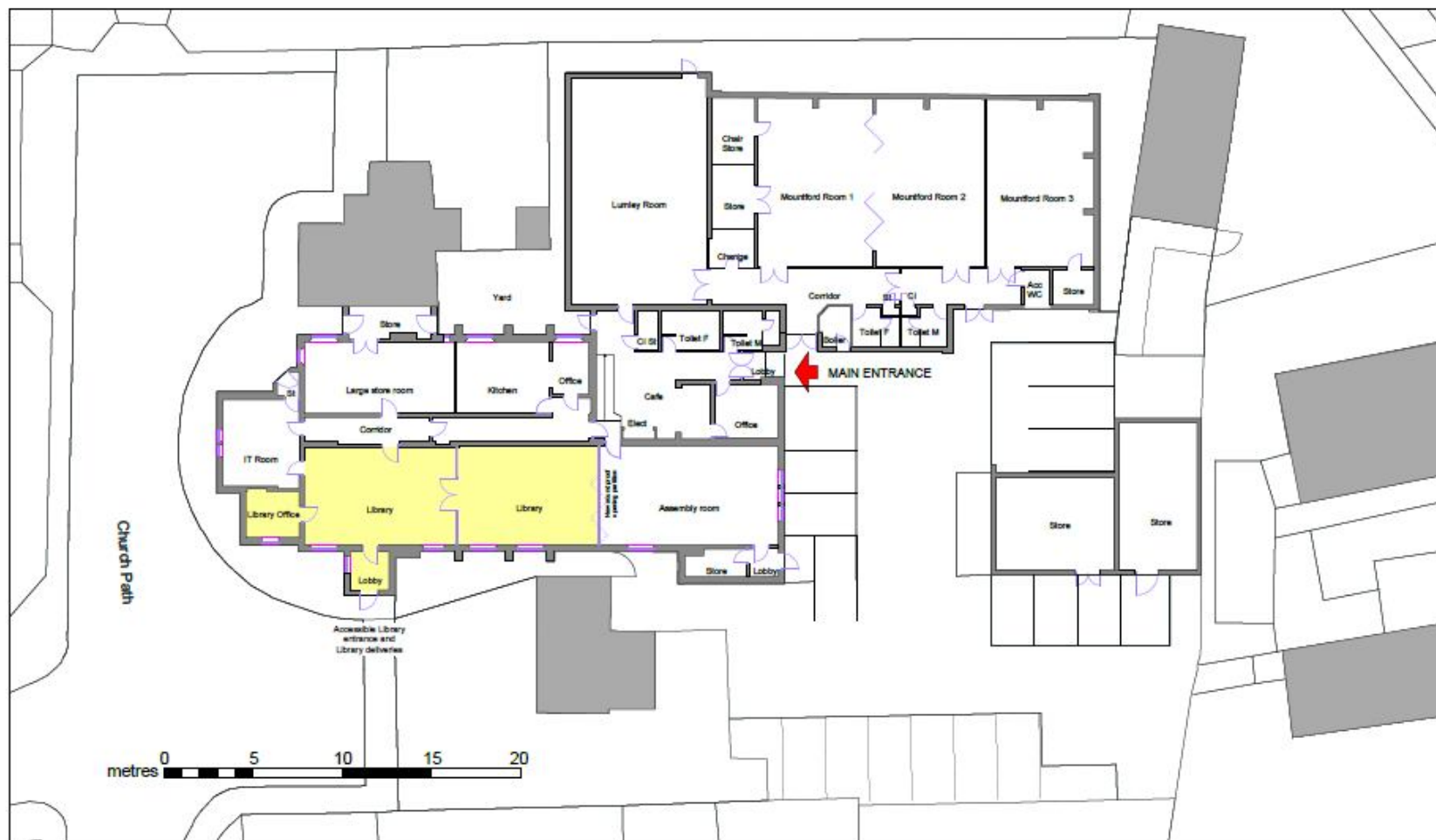
2.1. N/A

### **3. Climate Change:**

- (a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? N/A
- (b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? N/A



<h2>PROPOSED EMSWORTH LIBRARY RELOCATION</h2>	PLAN NO. A / 13 / 840	REV. <b>A</b>	<b>NOT TO SCALE</b>
	FILE REF. 13L/19	© Crown Copyright and database rights 2014. All rights reserved. HCC 100019180.	
 Hampshire County Council	DATE December 2014	<b>Property Services</b>	



**FEASIBILITY**



HCC Property Services,  
Three Ministers House,  
70 High Street, Winchester SO23 8UL,  
Tel: (01962) 847801

NOTES	
1 This drawing is © copyright Hampshire County Council 2011. No unauthorised reproduction permitted. All rights reserved.	3 This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (100019182, 0011)
2 No dimensions are to be taken from this drawing	

REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
F1	Issued to Library Service		
F2	Operable partition wall drafted between Library & Assembly	10/12/14	EW

PROJECT				SHEET CONTENTS	
Emsworth Community Centre Emsworth, PO10 7DP Library Feasibility				Revised Location of Library Areas within the Building	
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHKD	DRAWING NO.	REVISION
1:100@A1 1:200@A3	18/11/2014	EW		P10690-18	F2
				FILE REF: HCC Library Feasibility	

