

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET**

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27 JUNE 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>LEIGH WHITEHOUSE, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR RESOURCES</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WEYBRIDGE HUB REDEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA:</b>	<b>GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT/ TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES</b>

<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>
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This report seeks Cabinet approval for capital funding to refurbish and extend Weybridge Library, a Surrey County Council (the Council) owned asset, to create a multi-use service hub delivering a wider range of services and facilities, accessible to all Weybridge residents.

The recommended proposal will upgrade the existing building's facilities, extending the ground floor library space and provide refurbished space for the Council and other third-party partners to deliver additional essential services. The exterior will be upgraded to improve the look of the building and the refurbishment will also reduce energy use and carbon emissions, contributing to the Council's net zero ambitions.

Delivery of this project supports the Council's Community Vision for 2030 to ensure No One Left Behind and the Hubs programme, which looks to deliver services in a joined-up way allowing residents and users to access multiple services in one location.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves capital funding to redevelop Weybridge Library, extending the ground floor and refurbishing the existing building, to create a new multi-service hub. The capital funding required to redevelop the site is commercially sensitive at this time and is set out in the Part 2 report.
2. Approves procurement of appropriate supply chain partners to deliver the design, build and fit out of the new building in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders and Public Contracts Regulation 2015, alongside other related legislation in force at the time.
3. Notes that regarding the procurement of supply chain partners, the Executive Director for Resources and the Director of Land and Property are authorised to award such contracts up to +5% of the budgetary tolerance level.

## Reason for Recommendations:

Approving the recommendations set out in this report will result in the following outcomes:

- Services delivered from the building will be improved, accommodating a wider range of services and facilities for Weybridge residents provided by the Council, public sector and third-party partners.
- Deliver a new, modern library and cultural provision which meets current and future needs of users and staff.
- Flexible and integrated public services, co-located in one building, accessible to all members of the community.
- Optimise and make best use of an existing Council asset.
- Create potential commercial opportunities and increase Council income from letting/hiring vacant space to third-party groups and partners.
- Improve the building's environmental performance, reducing energy use and carbon emissions.

## Executive Summary:

### Background

1. Weybridge Library is a Council freehold asset which is now in need of investment. The building's infrastructure needs to be updated and upgraded to extend the building's useful life and improve facilities for current and future building users. This project looks to avoid future high maintenance costs and better manage current levels of carbon emissions to align the building with the Council's net zero ambitions more closely.
2. The condition of the building has also resulted in the building being under-utilised, the only occupiers are the library service and a third-party tenant, Brooklands Radio, with some occasional use by community and commercial groups. Improving the spaces and facilities will better serve the building's current occupiers and users and attract more third-parties to lease or hire vacant space.
3. This report proposes redeveloping the current library building to create Weybridge Hub, a multi-use, thriving, community facility. The Weybridge Hub scheme aligns to the objectives of "[Weybetter Weybridge](#)", the wider public sector programme, where the Council is partnering with Elmbridge Borough Council and NHS Surrey Heartlands to redevelop and improve community and healthcare facilities in Weybridge.
4. The recommended proposal, to refurbish the existing building and extend the library space on the ground floor, addresses and meets Service needs and aligns with the Council's Hubs programme. It will enhance the look of the building and improve the space available for lease/hire by third parties so providing potential income generation to the Council. Other options considered are outlined in Annex 1.
5. The external façade will be enhanced, including replacing the windows, doors and curtain walling. The roof which is at the end of its useful life will be replaced and wall and roof insulation will be upgraded. Refurbishing the building also allows opportunity to significantly reduce energy use and carbon emissions.

- Residents will still be able to access a library provision in Weybridge during the refurbishing works period. The Council is working with partners to provide a viable solution.

### Hubs programme

- The scheme is aligned to the Council’s vision for the delivery of service hubs and incorporates key principles of the Hubs Programme, such as “designed around community or service user need,” “interoperability between multiple services and safe and inclusive and supportive” spaces.
- There is no ‘one size fits all’ as to what constitutes a service hub and which services are provided from one. Each hub within the programme will deliver accommodation and services based on the needs of its locality and the community it serves. They will be flexible multi accessible spaces suitable for a range of front-facing services. However, they will all be developed within the scope of the 12 agreed hubs programme principles:

## The principles of a Service Hub



- The proposal for Weybridge provides an opportunity to utilise an existing Council freehold asset and deliver a fit for purpose building which can be utilised for Council, public sector, and third-party use. The proposed new hub will provide accommodation for a variety of services and partners, including but not limited to, libraries, youth services, commercial and community space and community rooms available for hire.
- The new and improved library space will deliver on all aspects of the library services strategy by providing spaces that deliver cultural, social, economic, and learning outcomes and improve resident wellbeing. The proposal also includes a provision for Targeted Youth Services, with improved outcomes for young people including fewer Police interventions for young people.

11. Delivery of this scheme, within the hubs programme, will enable the Council to host partner organisations and promote wider access to public services. Residents will be able to access multiple services from a single location. These co-location approaches are an efficient and effective use of resources, enabling delivery of a range of services reflective of local need. Hubs can bring people together and help residents form new relationships and support networks, by enabling and hosting community-led activity, improving health and wellbeing through activity programmes and partnership working. As such they will deliver on the principles of the Community Vision for 2030 creating more vibrant and integrated communities.

## **Youth Services**

12. Targeted Youth services have identified Weybridge as a key area of need due to increased “County Lines” activity in the town; children and young people are particularly at risk of becoming involved in County Lines. To increase the support provided to young people at risk, to intervene with the aim of preventing young people encountering the criminal justice system, a dedicated youth space is required.
13. The same space can also be used for supporting young people who have been arrested, to minimise the time they are held in custody suites and maximise effectiveness of support post-arrest. Such support needs to be away from other youth provisions to provide young people with a safe space for 1-2-1 or small group sessions. The space is designed so that it can be used and accessed 24/7, 365 days of the year.
14. Other Youth Service teams will have access to the space for targeted youth support, and family support work with young people.

## **Library Service**

15. The Library & Cultural Services Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to retaining 52 libraries, within their existing localities. The ambition is to deliver modern and progressive libraries that are bright, welcoming, flexible spaces creating vibrant hubs for each local community.
16. Weybridge Library has been identified by the service as one of the top 20 priorities for investment and modernisation due to its current state of maintenance, poor look and feel and the underutilisation of the wider building.
17. In line with the wider Libraries Transformation programme, detailed in the Cabinet report “Modernising our Library Estate – Libraries Transformation Programme Phase 1” (June 2023), the Weybridge Library service offer will provide excellent book collections and resources for learning, a social space for cultural activities and events, business support and a gateway to Council and community services. As part of our libraries modernisation programme, Weybridge Library, will deliver improved digital platforms, effective IT and Wi-Fi infrastructure, extended opening hours using Open Access technology, and refreshments. The flexible design of the space will also ensure a vibrant and exciting activity programme, delivered in partnership with our residents. All of which will ensure that no one is left behind.
18. Three engagement and feedback events (May 2022, Jan 2023 and May 2023) have already been undertaken with residents in Weybridge alongside a CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Adult Library User Survey undertaken in

March 2022. The result of the survey whilst showing high satisfaction with the overall service, showed low satisfaction with the look and feel. Users ranked Weybridge Library 45th out of 52 for attractiveness of the library inside and 38th for attractiveness outside, with 52 being the least attractive. Resident comments received through the engagement events and survey have been used to influence the initial layout designs. Further engagement and co-design sessions are planned with residents later this year before producing a final design.

**Consultation:**

19. Consultation with residents, community groups, third-party partners and stakeholders is underway to involve local groups with the project and its proposals. Open and accessible consultation will continue throughout the project’s development. The key objectives of the engagement plan are to:

- Raise awareness of the proposal and give community, business and political stakeholders opportunity to comment and potentially influence the proposal.
- Involve stakeholders in identifying issues which are material to the proposal.
- Create opportunities for feedback on the proposal and be clear on areas open to influence.

20. The following have been consulted and had input into the proposed design and delivery model:

- Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
- Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property and Waste
- Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
- Senior staff within the Customer and Communities Children, and Families, Lifelong Learning, and directorates, Surrey County Council
- Land and Property, Legal and Finance teams, Surrey County Council
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- NHS partners

**Risk Management and Implications:**

21. The risks identified at this stage are outlined below.

	<b>Risk description</b>	<b>Mitigation action/strategy</b>
a.	Planning permission refused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design team to consider and investigate likely issues e.g. transport, access, drainage, as part of pre-application discussions.</li> <li>• Designs to consider proximity of neighbouring building to design a scheme which complements its surroundings.</li> <li>• Engage with the local community at an early stage to take into account feedback and any concerns regarding the proposal.</li> </ul>
b.	Increase in development costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project team working closely with the Cost Consultants to monitor and manage construction costs.</li> <li>• Risk allowance of 15% has been allowed for in the design and construction cost estimates.</li> </ul>

	Risk description	Mitigation action/strategy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing development cost appraisals to monitor and manage construction costs, professional fees, surveys and investigations, fixed furniture and equipment, temporary/decant facilities, Council resource capitalisation costs, and 5% Council contingency for unforeseen issues.</li> <li>Consideration will be given to building contract procurement methods which allow for early involvement of the building contractor and/or specialist suppliers. This includes pre-construction, where project costs, programme and design quality will be reviewed to closely manage overall programme costs.</li> </ul>
c.	Access to site during construction period given the wider Weybetter Weybridge Development programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early engagement with contractors, as well as a transport and highways consultant, to develop access strategy and plan.</li> <li>Continued engagement with stakeholders on the Weybetter Weybridge Development programme.</li> </ul>
d.	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A communications plan is in place to engage and consult residents, local groups and stakeholders on the project's proposals.</li> </ul>

#### Financial and Value for Money Implications:

22. The proposal to extend and refurbish Weybridge Library to create a multi-use service hub will deliver a modern, fit for purpose building. The current service offering will be upgraded, providing a range of additional services for improved user experience, accessible to all Weybridge residents.
23. A range of options was considered to deliver a multi-service hub in Weybridge with the space and modern facilities required by the library service and other public sector services to be accommodated in the building. The options included: alternative leasehold or freehold acquisitions to relocate the library, and a complete re-build of the library building on the existing site. These options were discounted due to limited availability of sites in the town which could accommodate and meet the needs of the library service and the cost and carbon footprint to demolish and rebuild the existing building.
24. Options to deliver service requirements and make best use of the existing building included expanding the library to the first floor; this was discounted as even though it delivers on spatial requirements, due to structural limitations the library would become disjointed, impairing the user experience. The recommended proposal, to extend the ground floor meets Library Service spatial requirements, and the refurbishment will deliver modern and upgraded facilities for the library and other building users. See Annex 1 for further details.
25. The building's infrastructure will be improved which will save on future high running costs and contribute to the Council's net zero ambitions. Upgrading the building's exterior will improve the look of the building and enhance the local area. The interior spaces will be refurbished which will make space available for hire/lease by third-party partners more attractive, generating potential income to the Council.

26. The project forms one of several capital investments required to deliver statutory requirements.
27. The capital funding required to deliver the project is allocated within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This information is commercially sensitive at this time and is set out in the Part 2 report.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary:**

28. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
29. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.
30. The recommendation to transfer funding from capital pipeline to budget is provided for in the current MTFS. The residual borrowing costs are factored into the MTFS. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations of this report.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:**

31. The Council as freehold owner of the Weybridge Library site is empowered by legislation to pursue the proposals set out in this paper to deliver a wider range of services and facilities which are accessible to residents.
32. Under Section 2(1) of the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 a local authority has extensive development powers and may, for the benefit or improvement of its area, erect, extend, alter or re-erect any building and construct or carry out works on land.
33. Cabinet is under fiduciary duties to residents in utilising public monies and in considering this business case Cabinet Members will want to satisfy themselves that it represents an appropriate use of the Council's resources.
34. There are no significant legal implications at this stage related to procurement. Further detailed legal input will be provided as project develops.

#### **Equalities and Diversity:**

35. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not considered to be required for this proposal for the following reasons:
  - The redevelopment will comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations ensuring the building and its facilities are accessible to all.



- Council Services (e.g. Libraries and Children, Families and Lifelong Learning) are positively impacted with improved facilities to support improved access to, and delivery of services from the building for the communities they serve.
- Any changes to Service staffing will be dependent on Service strategies and requirements rather than the proposal outlined in this report.

<b>Other Implications:</b>
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36. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Corporate Parenting/ Looked After Children	No direct implications.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	The development will be designed and built with safeguarding and security for vulnerable children and adults. This is particularly relevant for the Youth Services space which will be accessed 24-hrs. Enhanced security measures such as specified entry point, access controls and CCTV will be used to ensure safe entry, egress management, and minimise interactions with other users of the building.
Environmental sustainability	The development will be designed and built to a high sustainability standard in relation to the council's commitments on net zero emissions, waste minimisation, supporting biodiversity and 'urban greening,' resilience to future heat stress and flood risk and sustainable transport/ accessibility.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Consistent with the Council's net zero target, the building will be designed with the ambition to be operationally net-zero carbon and be future-proofed to be adapted and resilient to the impacts of climate change. The key features of an operationally net-zero building include high thermal efficiency, a low carbon heating system and maximising the generation and use of on-site renewable energy. Materials and construction emissions will be reduced where feasible. The next design stages will address the Green Agenda within the budget allowance for the project and will design solutions to address the Green Agenda, e.g., Sustainability, and the Application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs); opportunities for rainwater harvesting; irrigation solutions; biodiversity net gain, landscape boundary treatments etc.
Public Health	No direct implications.



## What Happens Next:

37. Should Cabinet approve this proposal, high-level timescales are as set out below:

Key milestones	Timescale
Submit Planning Application	Jun 2023
Planning decision	Dec 2023
Award contract(s)	Aug – Dec 2023
Commence construction	Jan 2024
Complete construction	Dec 2024

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### Consulted:

- Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
- Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property and Waste
- Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
- Children, Families, Lifelong Learning, and Customer and Communities directorates, Surrey County Council
- Land and Property, Legal and Finance teams, Surrey County Council
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- NHS partners

### Annexes:

Annex 1: Options considered

Part 2 report

### Sources/background papers:

[Community vision for Surrey in 2030](#)

[Weybetter Weybridge](#)

Cabinet Report, Nov 2021: [Libraries Transformation Update and the Next Phase, Modernising Our Library Estate](#)

[Library & Cultural Services Strategy](#)

[The Carnegie model](#)

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