

## Central Library ideas

1. Costs to move library to Dolphin Centre & associated works: approx. £1.7 million.
2. Current cost of running library services (including Cockerton & van?) approx. **£460,000** (220K staff; £60K supplies, £120k building maintenance, £60k ?)

By moving, it would save DBC around £335K p.a. Would cost £800k to remain ??

Advantage in moving: to save on staffing costs. Security/building maintenance less, as under one roof.

### Idea for Crown St. Library:

1. Move lending library and children's library into the Dolphin Centre. Cost less in fitting out. More space for books and expanded children's library/soft play, etc.
2. Leave gallery, ref. library, IT suite and local studies where they are now. These are all located in the old building, so no challenge re. Covenant. Archives remain in basement. Need to remain located with ref. books & Local studies.
3. This will create two large empty rooms suitable for other community uses, which could be divided with temporary room dividers as needed.
4. Community projects could include the Bridge Arts Project (Neasham Road site closing down). More appropriate and likely to be better visited re. their open days and exhibitions, if located in town centre.

Other groups, such as knitting, textiles, etc., re-located from Lingfield Point. Writing groups, painting courses, music, IT evening classes, etc., could all take place at Central Library.

To be open later during weekdays to accommodate evening courses. Small café for users.

To bring in revenue to cover maintenance and running costs of the building, to reduce need for DBC funding (except, perhaps, for qualified library staff).

DBC could allow community groups (as above) to develop and grow over, say, a three year period (or until 2020) to assess viability and to allow time for these extra sources of funding to build up. If not viable, to consider selling off the extension only.

**Community Library Service** – (attached) Lewisham and in other Greater London areas – excellent review of how these work.

**NB.** Would it be legal to charge a small annual subscription to use library services in both places? Suggest £5 pa (to start with). This would generate a substantial revenue for running costs. If Central Government is reducing its funding to local councils, then this should be allowed (applied to government for changes) so that councils can become more devolved.

If Central Library put up for sale, is it true that the price is likely to only be £300K? This is derisory. It should be sold for around the same amount it would cost to move the contents to the Dolphin Centre. Would there be any restrictions on the building's future use?

## **Community library service**

Community library services are an exciting development that sees council library services housed in centres that are run by community organisations providing a mix of activities for local people.

### **How will this save money?**

As part of the Council's £88million savings programme, Lewisham Council decided to close five libraries, to pursue the option of transferring those library buildings to the community and to reorganise the remaining service.

By transferring buildings to the community and reorganising the service, the Council has saved money on upkeep and maintenance and on salary costs.

This approach created an opportunity for community groups and organisations to acquire the former library buildings for alternative uses at minimal or no rent, as long as they committed to maintaining the building and keeping them open to the community. Crucially, the community library model also means that the Council can still provide council library services from the building, even after it has been transferred.

### **What is happening in Crofton Park, Grove Park and Sydenham?**

Crofton Park, Grove Park and Sydenham library buildings are now run by a social enterprise called Eco Communities. Eco Communities also run a computer recycling business from the buildings, which funds the upkeep of the building and the community activities delivered from it. The buildings also house some Lewisham Council library services, including book stock and reading development activities for all ages. Self-issue terminals give access to information about other council services and to a stock of five million books across the London Libraries Consortium.

What is happening in Blackheath?

Age Exchange has expanded its Reminiscence Centre to improve its established services and house a community library service. This was achieved in stages.

From 6 June 2011, 1,000 books plus daily newspapers and periodicals were made available in the existing Reminiscence Centre.

On 1 August, the book stock was increased to 6,000 and the library moved to the ground floor of the Bakehouse behind the Reminiscence Centre where it was complemented by a café and reading lounge with daily newspapers and weekly and monthly journals.

Work to upgrade the Reminiscence Centre was completed in late summer 2012 when it reopened to provide, side-by-side, enhanced reminiscence services and a full children's, teenagers' and adults' library with a reminiscence lounge, coffee shop, training centre and patio.

### **What is happening in New Cross?**

New Cross Learning (formerly known as the New Cross People's Library) is a community-run space offering a library service and a bookshop as well as a wide range of learning activities, supported by registered charity Bold Vision.

When did these community libraries open?

The library buildings in Crofton Park, Grove Park and Sydenham – run by Eco Communities – opened on 31 May 2011. The community library service at Age Exchange opened on 6 June 2011. New Cross reopened in August 2011.

**Who staffs the former library buildings?**

The Crofton Park, Grove Park and Sydenham buildings are managed by a combination of Eco Communities staff and volunteers. The community library service at Blackheath is housed in the Reminiscence Centre, which is run by Age Exchange staff and volunteers.

Lewisham library staff are providing a peripatetic service from the five buildings, as well as supporting and training the volunteers in their efforts to promote books and reading. Lewisham library staff visit the buildings regularly to organise reader development activities for residents of all ages including story time sessions, reading groups and regular initiatives such as World Book Day, the summer reading challenge, Black History Month and more.

When will the self-issue terminals be installed?

Self-issue has now been installed in all community library services. This equipment gives users access to 5 million items across the London Library Consortium.

What else is in the former library buildings?

Eco Communities are accommodating many of the activities that previously took place in the libraries. They also run their computer recycling operation from the libraries, and are looking for new and innovative ways to use the buildings to fund their upkeep, particularly through computer training. Age Exchange has expanded its Reminiscence Centre to house community library services, a training centre and an upgraded café.