

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet member for Culture Leisure and Sport
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	23 March 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Relocation of Paulsgrove Library
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of Cultural Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Paulsgrove and Cosham
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1** To update the Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport on the background information related to Paulsgrove Library, and the rational for relocating to the proposed site at 147 Allaway Avenue.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** That a survey and financial exploration is undertaken to determine the feasibility of re-locating Paulsgrove Library from its current location in the Paulsgrove Community Centre to 147 Allaway Avenue, in the Paulsgrove shopping precinct.
- 2.2** That the rational for relocating Paulsgrove Library to the Allaway Avenue site is agreed based on the information provided in this report, and that a further report will be circulated to confirm the proposed next steps and seek authority from Members.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** Paulsgrove Library is a relatively small library situated within the Paulsgrove Community Centre in Marsden Road and serving the large residential Paulsgrove community. The library currently holds a stock of 14,239 items and has an annual footfall of 35,196 and issues 27,555 items per year. This represents 3.2% of the overall issue and 4.5% of the overall footfall. These figures indicate that the library is not thriving in its current location in spite of a sustained campaign of initiatives to increase engagement.
- 3.2** In 2006 a comprehensive Library Service review was undertaken which included consultation with staff, library users and external focus groups.

For the city, the report identified that the pattern of repeat use necessary to borrow and return items on a regular basis was facilitated by locating libraries in places where a wide spectrum of community members regularly gather. Shopping areas were identified as the most accessible. Although schools, community centres and health centres were community hubs for some community members they were not regularly accessed by all. Shopping centres catered for the widest range of community members. The report concluded that many libraries were not well located in terms of providing good community access and in some instances the community focus had moved since the library had been established. This was the case with Elmgrove Library which has now been re-located as Southsea Library and Customer Service Centre to the centre of the Palmerton Road retail precinct.

**3.3** In terms of Paulsgrove Library the report concluded:

“While it is clear that a library facility is necessary in the Paulsgrove area, there are considerable difficulties with the present location. ....Physical access is restricted due to the severely sloping approach road, which only provides access to the library and community centre. The library cannot benefit from ‘passing trade’. The severe geographical slope of Paulsgrove is a factor for movement in the community generally. For the elderly, disabled and parents with small children, the amount they can borrow is restricted by the prospect of the steep walk home.”

**3.4** The report goes on to recommend:

“Re-locate the library to either a site within the Allaway Avenue shopping area or the area surrounding the Tesco's Supermarket.”

**3.5** In 2006 the total issues for Paulsgrove Library were 30,508 (3.18% of the city total) and the footfall was 34,625 (3.06%.of the city total. In the years since the Library Development Plan recommended relocation the performance of Paulsgrove Library has changed very little. With issue and visitor figures between 3 and 4% of the city total. Feedback from library users has identified a perception that the area of Marsden Road is unsafe at night and repeated the concerns over the steep slope which causes difficulties for wheel chairs, buggies and the elderly. The outreach team have frequently met surprise that the library exists from targeted groups who have not accessed Marsden Road or been aware that there was a library.

**3.6** An opportunity has now arisen to re-locate to 147 Allaway Avenue which is a smaller property but in the heart of the shopping area which is mix of local shops, fast food, service outlets and the Healthy Living Centre. This is the area close to Paulsgrove Primary school where families gather at the beginning and end of the school day. Regular observation indicates that the area is in constant use by the members of the immediate residential community. The property is currently used as a warden's office and owned by PCC. Exploratory discussions with the Housing Department reveal that they would be prepared to bear the principle cost of the necessary re-fit.

The internal recharge would then remain low to reflect the useful social and learning functions delivered by the library offer.

This initiative is subject to the outcome of the survey report and resultant costings, which will enable Housing and Libraries to consider the financial arrangements which will inform the feasibility of the project.

### **3.7 Aims of the re-location:**

- To increase use of the library services in Paulsgrove in terms of a 10% increase in visitor numbers and library issues.
- Increase new library members joining at Paulsgrove Library by 12%.
- Raise awareness of the existence of the library and the services it can deliver.
- Extend library services to all ages, abilities and cultures living in the Paulsgrove area.
- Prioritise services which meet expressed local demand.
- Increase engagement with volunteers.

### **3.8 Proposed actions:**

- Consult with residents, both library members and non-members regarding the priorities and preferences for service delivery from the Allaway Avenue location.
- Establish a Friends Group to embed the library in the community.
- Consult local groups regarding stock selection.

## **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1** To locate the library in an area frequently accessed by a high proportion of Paulsgrove residents in order to meet the aims expressed at 3.7.

## **5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1** A preliminary EIA has been submitted.

## **6. Head of legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments**

- 6.1** The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides that the local authority has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The recommendations set out above would seem to meet these obligations and are further supported by the powers to promote social well being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 6.2** Issues relating to the change of use of the site at Allaway Avenue, potential future use of the current site, and the application of the Councils Contract Procedure Rules under Part 3A of the constitution to any works etc, will all need to be considered and addressed in a future report to members.

**6.3** Under Part 2, Section 3, of the City Council's constitution the Portfolio holder for Culture, Leisure & Sport has the authority to approve the recommendation contained within this report.

**7. Head of Finance's comments**

A full financial appraisal will need to be carried out and funding secured before a decision can be taken to relocate the library.

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**Signed by:**  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Head of Culture**

**Appendices:                                 None**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Library Development Report 2006	Central library

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet member for Culture Leisure and Sport on 23 March 2012.

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**Signed by:**  
**Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport**