



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

7 December 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Opportunities for the Potential Relocation of Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries - Public Consultation Results

(Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership, Culture, Tourism and Climate Change)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 Clay Cross North/South, Staveley and Staveley North and Whittington.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

3. Purpose

3.1 To inform Cabinet of the results of public consultation on the opportunities presented by the Town Deal programmes in Staveley and Clay Cross which support the Council's wider ambitions to deliver high quality, value for money services and aid delivery of Council Plan priorities regarding Library Services.

3.2 To seek approval of Cabinet's 'in principle support' for Chesterfield Borough Council's plans to relocate Staveley library service into a new building (Building 21) within the heart of Staveley town centre.

- 3.3 To set out the potential implications of specific town deal proposals for Derbyshire County Council services and assets (Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report refer) in supporting the wider regeneration ambitions for Clay Cross and Staveley.
- 3.4 To approve that work, in partnership with Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, progresses at pace to finalise detailed designs and both capital and revenue costings as part of the next steps of project development, ensuring that the full cost of relocation and occupation of new buildings is understood and to agree that relocation will not be supported unless such costs are either the same or lower than existing costs of the library service at these locations.
- 3.5 To advise that further reports will be presented to Cabinet for final consideration once the full cost of proposals are understood.

4. Information and Analysis

Background to the Consultation Exercise

- 4.1 In 2020-2021, Government announced that a total of £3.6 billion was to be made available to regenerate over 100 towns across England through a Town Deal Programme. Clay Cross and Staveley were two of three such areas in Derbyshire (Long Eaton being the other one).
- 4.2 Town Investment Plans (TIPs) were required to be set out for each area; proposals in Clay Cross have focused on increasing the skills and productivity of the local workforce, improving access to a range of higher/ better quality jobs and training opportunities and improving the environmental quality of the town centre, ensuring it is a thriving place to live and work. Proposals in Staveley have focused on similar issues and also include a strong focus on opportunities for sustainable travel and transport (for example, mobility hubs and re-opening Barrow Hill rail station).
- 4.3 Whilst proposed relocation of the library into the existing Adult Education facility was included in the original masterplan for Clay Cross (Cabinet Member report Clay Cross Town Deal Outline Business Case, dated 21 December 2022 – Decision Reference D635 refers), the opportunity to relocate Staveley Library into a new town centre building has only recently emerged and proposals are at an early stage of development and require a specific approval in principle.

- 4.4 Library services are currently provided in both Clay Cross and Staveley with the buildings typically being in 'edge of town' locations. Both libraries are classified as 'Tier 3' in the County Council's current Library Strategy. Performance levels for 2022/23 were good, noting the recovery from the pandemic:
- Visitor numbers: Clay Cross 12,725; Staveley 27,569
 - Book issues: Clay Cross 11,898; Staveley 26,826
- 4.5 Having regard to the above context, a joined-up approach to consultation with the public was considered essential to explore the full range of views and opportunities presented by both these proposals. At its meeting on 15 June 2023, Cabinet gave approval to undertake a consultation exercise on proposals to relocate both Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries as part of a programme of work within the respective Town Deals (Minute No. 86/23 refers).

Budget and Strategic Context

- 4.6 In helping to address the current financial challenges, all service areas within Derbyshire County Council are being asked to review areas of expenditure and seek new ways of reducing costs and securing efficiencies. The Library Service currently has a net operating budget of £4.9m constituted (net of some operating costs having been transferred to Corporate Property) mostly of building running costs and staffing.
- 4.7 Members will be aware that a new Library Strategy is being developed as part of the wider drive to secure efficiencies and savings; given recent successes around the co-location of Killamarsh Library with a local leisure centre, the new Strategy is likely to include recommendations to maximise similar opportunities to access grant funding and relocate to modern premises where possible, not least to help reduce running costs.
- 4.8 The proposals to relocate Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries are set within this context. Forensic work is being undertaken by DCC to understand the current, full running costs (controllable and non-controllable spend) of each library; the detailed relocation and running costs of any new buildings is not yet known and work is being undertaken with officers at both Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) and North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) to ascertain these costs, prior to any final Cabinet approval for relocation being sought. Appendix 1 of this report provides an overview of the issues regarding finance and property assets.

The Consultation Exercise

- 4.9 Consultation commenced on 30 June 2023 and ran until 22 September 2023. Information was publicised through the Council's Website, social media and at Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries. Consultation questionnaires were available online and in physical formats with Library staff supporting direct discussions with members of the public if queried.
- 4.10 The approach to consultation was three-fold: whilst the key area of engagement was around the proposed relocation of the service to alternative premises, the opportunity was also taken to ask about library usage and membership and community participation. These wider responses will be used to help refine the new Library Strategy going forward. Overall, and despite the attempts made to promote the consultation exercise and encourage engagement, the response levels were low – with a total of 88 representations received across both library proposals. The approach to consultation is set out below:

Part 1. Outline of proposals to relocate the library.

Questions were:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to relocate the library as part of the Towns Deal Masterplan?
- Would relocation of the library into the Town Centre cause any additional difficulties?
 - Parking
 - Accessibility
 - None
 - Other
- If 'Other', please specify

Part 2: How to use buildings more effectively, make the best use of space and identify opportunities to link up with key partners.

Questions were

- Are you a library member?
- Which of the following services do you currently visit the library for?
 - Borrow/return books
 - Use the computers
 - Meet with friends
 - Study or to work
 - To read
 - Research (e.g. family history)
 - Leisure

- Look for work/job applications
- Attend Children's events
- Attend Adults events
- Other

Are there any of the following events and activities that you would like to be able to access at the library?

- Exhibiting artwork
- Craft activities
- Music and singing
- Film and photography
- Creative writing
- Author talks
- Local history talks
- Social clubs/support groups
- Healthy lifestyle activities
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Part 3: Opportunities to increase membership, participation and engagement in the library services.

Questions were:

- Would you be interested in volunteering at the library in either running a particular event or activity to engage residents in your local community?
- Are you interested in forming or are you already part of a community group that would be interested in accessing funding to run or contribute to running events and activities in the library?
- Would you like to see any providers or partner services e.g. Health partners represented in your library?

4.11 The remainder of Section 4 of this report presents a summary of the responses received from the public consultation exercise. Detailed analysis is provided in Appendix 2 - Clay Cross Analysis and Appendix 3 - Staveley Library Analysis. A copy of the Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) that was undertaken to assess the implications of the proposals on Protected Groups is provided at Appendix 4.

Summary of Consultation Responses - Clay Cross Library

4.12 A total of 18 responses were received as part of the consultation exercise, equating to approximately 0.1% of the local population. Of those, 16 were library members which is 1.1% of registered library users in Clay Cross. Whilst the proposals to relocate Clay Cross Library

as part of the Town Deal elicited positive comments, some respondents raised concerns, with 44% of people disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal. NB – it is important to note that where % figures are provided, they represent a very small number of actual respondents, with 18 being the baseline (denominator).

Relocation

- Of those that disagreed with the proposal, 39% of respondents expressed a concern about parking, one stating it was an *'awkward place for car access and out of the way'*. In contrast, one respondent raised that there *'was plenty of parking across the road and in the park area'* although acknowledged that it did need updating.
 - Accessibility was also raised as a concern by 35% of respondents, 50% of whom had a disability.
 - For others that disagreed in general with the relocation, it was commented that the library was better as a *'separate building not part of something else'* and another had concerns about the existing library being *'left to rot'* or *'being knocked down'*.
 - A respondent felt the library was *'well situated'* and moving it *'would not enhance their library experience'*. Another respondent felt that the library would be too far away in the proposed location, although another suggested *'being closer to town would be more convenient'*.
 - Very few of the respondents to the survey said there were no issues with only 10% of people selecting the option

Using Buildings More Effectively

- Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents use the library to borrow or return books with 31% of people confirming this. Of the other uses, reading and leisure, using computers and to look for work/job applications were selected.
- Some respondents offered commentary on other uses including *'browsing, local information'* and an interest in *'exhibitions of art'*.
- Another respondent stated that *'a library wasn't a social centre'* and the service should focus on *'anything to do with literacy but not to try to be all things'*. When asked if they would like providers or partner services represented in the library, nearly 40% of respondents agreed with this idea including:
 - Play, reading, rhyming and singing sessions where midwives attended and breast-feeding groups.
 - Job Centre Social Services Health
 - Involvement of health providers/partners to assist support groups benefiting people who feel they are overlooked or do not get chance to talk with others in same situation.

- IT workshops and problem solving

Increasing Membership, Participation and Engagement in the Library Services

- When asked what other possible events and activities the library space could be used for, respondents selected from a number of options. From the results, all available options on activities/events received some selection by respondents, with local history talks being slightly more popular ahead of Author Talks, though Exhibiting Artwork and Craft Activities also received a number of responses.
 - One respondent thought there should be more children's activities and engagement with local schools' and another suggested a book club and '*more children's clubs to involve different age groups in book related activity*'.
 - Another thought, a 'Poetry Open Mic session' would work.
 - In contrast, one respondent suggested that the library should '*not be used for music and crafts*' and new books would be welcome.
- Only one person replied to say they would be interested in volunteering at the library and three responded that they would like to be part of a community group to run events at the library.
- When asked if anything else could improve the library experience, some commented that improved/extended opening hours on an evening and Saturday would be beneficial.
- Few suggested that there should be a wider choice of books and noted that the '*choice of new fiction was limited*'. Another commented that the library experience was '*helped by the knowledge of staff*'.

Summary of Consultation Responses: Staveley Library

- 4.13 A total of 70 responses were received to consultation on the proposed relocation of Staveley library, equating to approximately 0.5% of the local population. Of those, 59 were library members, which is 4.3% of registered library users in Staveley. For all respondents to the consultation, 67% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to relocate the library. This compares to 24% who agreed or strongly agreed.

Relocation

- When asked about the library relocation, nearly half of respondents (43%) expressed a concern about parking, though this reduces to only 29% for those that agree or strongly agree with the proposal. Accessibility appeared as less of an issue, with 22% of all respondents and 29% of those who disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal expressing it as a concern.

- For those that agree or strongly agree with the proposal, nearly two thirds (65%) said there were no issues. However, this reduces to only 16% for those that disagree/strongly disagree.
- Cross referencing the demographics shows that people with a disability were more concerned with accessibility, with 50% expressing a concern, whereas those with no disability were more concerned with parking (43%).
- Older age groups also seem more likely to disagree with the proposals - with over 65% of each age group either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- For others that disagreed in general with the proposed relocation, it was commented that the library was '*in a quiet location ideally suited*' and '*one of the best in the country in terms of atmosphere*'.
- One respondent questioned options to explore other sites for redevelopment and another stated there was a '*need to make sure that the current library remained open until the town deal building was built*'.
- For those that agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, nearly two thirds (65%) said there were no issues. However, this reduces to only 16% for those that disagree/strongly disagree.

Using Buildings More Effectively

- Given users could provide multiple answers to this question, a total of 154 representations were received from the 70 respondents. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most respondents confirmed they use the library to borrow or return books (38%). Of the other options provided, research was the next popular with leisure, to read and to use the computers also getting a reasonable number of responses.
- Others commented they used the printer/photocopier, enjoyed browsing and accessing the Citizens Advice Service.
- When asked if they would like providers or partner services represented in the library, just over 27% of respondents agreed with this idea.
- Many suggestions were around health and wellbeing, such as Health and Mental Visitors, triage services, blood pressure service, local health and wellbeing groups.
- Other ideas included Job Centre and Citizens Advice.

Increasing Membership, Participation and Engagement in the Library Services

- When asked what other possible events and activities the library space could be used for, respondents selected from multiple options. Craft activities and local history talks were slightly most popular. Other ideas included 'a community café area' and 'groups for children

- aged 5-11 years old to encourage a love of reading in younger children’.
- Only a small number of respondents said they would be interested in volunteering at the library or be part of a community group to run events at the library.
 - When asked if anything else could improve the library experience, some commented that the proposed location would be ‘*closer to Town*’ and may offer ‘*better engagement with local primary schools*’.
 - Negative comments mainly focussed on the attachment to the existing building and location.

Conclusion

- 4.14 The level of response to the consultation exercise was very low, despite attempts to engage the local community, including non-users. It is acknowledged that the level of positive engagement that the Town Deal public consultation received, which included discussion about the library, may have resulted in the low response rate. No statistical significance can therefore be applied to the results so qualitative interpretation is an important element of presenting a conclusion and suggested next steps.
- 4.15 Notably, the consultation exercise was launched in advance of the Council’s serious budget challenges being known and there is a clear need to ensure ‘next steps’ are considered within this context.
- 4.16 Relocation – views appear to focus on related issues such as the re-use of the existing building, availability of parking and accessibility rather than the principle of relocation itself. The Council has successfully relocated other libraries recently and so the principle is an established element of the strategic approach to library management; an example is Killamarsh Library which is now co-located with a leisure centre and enjoying significantly increased footfall.
- 4.17 New buildings – and even modifications to existing buildings – are required to meet modern construction standards and be compliant with disability legislation in terms of accessibility and so concerns regarding access would be addressed through this process. The availability of convenient car parking remains an emotive issue and it’s clear that consultation responses vary in this regard. Whilst Staveley library has access to parking within the curtilage of the building, the proposed location in the heart of the town centre would not only increase the visibility of the service but provides improved access via public transport (an important element of the Council’s sustainable travel programme) and Morrison’s car park provides free facilities in close proximity. At Clay Cross, new and improved car parking in the vicinity of the adult

education building is a key part of the masterplan. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at Appendix 4 provides information on the relevant issues and their mitigation.

- 4.18 Some helpful comments were received regarding the use of the buildings and the services offered, along with opportunities for increasing patronage. These will be taken forward and included in the new Library Strategy, and specifically, any service re-design at Clay Cross and Staveley should the proposed relocations go ahead.
- 4.19 It is noted that community capacity and volunteering does not seem to be available to any great extent, however a more visible service in the right location may in fact, encourage current non-users to become more involved in their library facility.

Implications for Derbyshire County Council (DCC)

- 4.20 Appendix 1 sets out the various considerations that need to be applied to proposals such as the potential relocation of library provision to a different building. In summary however, the key considerations that need to be balanced are:
- Finance: The two Town Deals provide an opportunity for DCC to access grant funding that would be used to support improvements to the physical buildings/ new buildings - and potentially improve the range of library services on offer. Modern buildings typically are more energy efficient and there is a further opportunity, through relocation, to reduce some of the controllable elements of spend (utility bills etc); a move to alternative premises could present the Council with revenue savings over the longer term. However, the shape and scale of these potential savings aren't yet fully understood as more detailed building design is required by the respective borough councils before actual running costs can be confirmed. In addition, the 'fit out' costs and removal costs – and their source of funding - also needs to be understood before any final commitment can be given to relocation. Typically, revenue costs aren't included in Town Deal grants so it is important the Council reserves its position.
 - Supporting regeneration ambitions: DCC is keen to play a strong and facilitative role in supporting the regeneration ambitions of district councils and this is reflected in our Market Towns Regeneration Pipeline. Key benefits of the masterplans for both Staveley and Clay Cross include improved public realm, improved access to sustainable travel and transport and the revitalisation of old town centres to increase footfall and facilitate wider socio-economic benefits. Library facilities based on the heart of these areas would benefit from increased visibility and complementary footfall.

- Other issues: such as ability to rationalise existing physical Council assets, subject to leases, disposals etc being satisfactorily addressed. Clawback liabilities connected with the acceptance and use of Town Fund monies - and whether there are any potential implications for the County Council should any aspect of the proposals affecting DCC property or projects not proceed fully or only have limited time in implementation.

Concluding Comments

- 4.21 None of the above issues are insurmountable and the detailed design and costing process that needs to take place as part of the next stage of project development will seek to clarify and resolve them. Having regard to the consultation responses and in balancing other considerations, approval is sought through this report to support the 'in principle' relocation Staveley Library (noting that Clay Cross library relocation received in principle approval in December 2022) and the progressing of detailed work to confirm the full costs of relocation, prior to a final decision being made by the Council.
- 4.22 Comments relating to using buildings more effectively and increasing membership, participation and engagement in the library services will be noted during any relocation should the proposals go ahead.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Public consultation on the proposed relocation of both libraries took place between 30 June and 22 September 2023. To ensure the consultation was accessible to all, a combination of paper and online questionnaires was used.
- 5.2 Response levels were low - 18 responses were received for Clay Cross and 70 responses for Staveley – and section 4 of this report provides a summary. Appendices 2 and 3 provide a more detailed analysis of the results.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Option 1: Do nothing - This option would result in the two libraries remaining in their existing buildings. The opportunities to secure improvements to the physical buildings – and potentially to service delivery – would not be achieved. Also, the opportunity to secure reductions in running costs would also be lost. North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) and Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) would not be able to fully implement their Town Investment Plan and would not maximise the opportunities presented by the Town Deal

funding. As such, the residents of Clay Cross and Staveley would not be best served.

- 6.2 Option 2: The refurbishment of the existing Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries - This option is not considered viable for the foreseeable future due to Council's current budgetary challenges and the level of investment that would be required to address the backlog of maintenance on the buildings, particularly at Staveley Library. In addition, both libraries perform very poorly in terms of energy consumption so significant investment would be required to reduce the carbon footprint of each building. Clay Cross library is prone to vandalism and, although anti-vandalism measures have been put in place, due to its location in a public park, the building is still considered vulnerable. Relocation and co-location with other services of mutual opportunities for increased footfall and enhanced service to customer. The refurbishment of existing buildings does not offer this opportunity and therefore is not considered appropriate.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Cabinet Member – Clean Growth and Regeneration report, Clay Cross Town Deal Outline Business Case 21 December 2022 D635 (CGR)
- 8.2 Cabinet report, Proposals to Consult on the Potential Relocation of Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries 15 June 2023, Minute No. 86/23 refers)

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.
- 9.2 Appendix 2- Clay Cross Library Consultation Analysis.
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – Staveley Library Consultation Analysis.
- 9.4 Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment.
- 9.5 Exempt Appendix 5

10 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes and accepts the results of public consultation on the opportunities presented by the Town Deal programmes in Staveley and Clay Cross which support the Council's wider ambitions to deliver high quality, value for money services and aid delivery of Council Plan priorities regarding Library Services.
- b) Approves 'in principle support' for the proposal to relocate Staveley library service into a new building (Building 21) within the heart of Staveley town centre.
- c) Notes and accepts the potential implications of specific town deal proposals for Derbyshire County Council services and assets (section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report refer) in supporting the wider regeneration ambitions for Clay Cross and Staveley.
- d) Approves that work, in partnership with Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, progresses at pace to finalise detailed designs and both capital and revenue costings as part of the next steps of project development, ensuring that the full cost of relocation and occupation of new buildings is understood and approves that relocation will not be supported unless such costs are either the same or lower than existing costs of the library service at these locations.
- e) Agrees to further reports being presented for final consideration once the full cost of proposals is understood.

11 Reasons for Recommendations

- 11.1 Relocation of Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries would maximise the opportunities presented by the Town Deal Funding. As such, the residents of Clay Cross and Staveley would be best served.

12 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The Council is currently working to address significant budgetary challenges. Accessing opportunities to help improve the standard of library buildings and achieve efficiencies in running costs is a welcomed approach to service delivery. The two town deals at Staveley and Clay Cross represent such an opportunity.
- 1.2 Detailed work is being undertaken working closely with Corporate Property, to understand the full, current running costs of both libraries and these are set out in Exempt Appendix 5. In helping ensure the Council addresses its budget challenges, it is imperative that the running costs of the new buildings are equal to, or lower than, the current running costs. This needs to include the costs of the new fixtures and fittings and the relocation of the service to the new buildings. Agreement to move will not take place until this has been confirmed.
- 1.3 Relocation presents potential further financial advantage in that the new buildings mean the Council would no longer need to find the funding to refurbish the current buildings and the planned maintenance programme would be positively impacted for some years. Exact figures for this are not known at the time of writing this report.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council undertook a period of consultation with the public and key stakeholders between 30 June and 22 September 2023. The manner of consultation was shaped by the Council's corporate consultation practice to ensure that input from service users and non-users is secured as far as possible and that all groups were provided with the best opportunities for input.
- 2.2 A further report regarding the assets will be required once the asset plans and recommendations are finalised.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Clay Cross library is open for 30 hours per week Monday-Saturday and employs 5 staff on a part time basis (1.62 FTE). Clay Cross library is open for 30 per week Monday – Saturday and employs 4 staff on a part time basis (1.62FTE). There are no proposed changes to the staffing structures as

part of this proposal but clearly, if the proposals go ahead, then the physical staff base of the library will change. In terms of distance from existing buildings, this is minimal and being located closer to the heart of town centres will aid sustainable travel options for staff.

- 3.2 Consultation with staff and trade unions where required on the implications of any proposals will be conducted in line with Council procedures.

Information Technology

- 4.1 If Clay Cross and Staveley Libraries relocate, the Council's Information Technology will be required at each site.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Analysis has been carried out by the Library Service, the results of which are provided at Appendix 4. In summary, the main findings indicate that the proposals to relocate Clay Cross and Staveley Library could impact on people of all ages and a limited number of people with disabilities. Key issues that need to be addressed during relocation are:

- Libraries situated in different locations
- Accessibility for disabled users
- Parking
- Quiet areas

- 5.2 These can be offset by providing adequate parking, ensuring enough space for disabled access and quiet areas is included in plans, and using mobile shelving to create space when needed and seating areas being available.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The potential relocation of both libraries is in line with the principles of creating a green and prosperous economy in Derbyshire, and our more specific Regeneration Pipeline which includes market town renewal programmes.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

Property and Asset Management

- 7.1 Further information is provided in exempt Appendix 5.