

AGENDA ITEM NO 9

REPORT NO 313/24

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 OCTOBER 2024

PROPOSED CHANGES AT ARBROATH LIBRARY AND RE-LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

REPORT BY JACKIE BUCHANAN, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE & CHANGE

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report provides details of the responses to the public consultation in respect of design proposals for Arbroath Library to improve the delivery of face-to-face library and ACCESS services, and the re-location of Council Archives currently housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar. It also asks Committee, having had regard to the responses to the public consultation, to approve the upgrade works to Arbroath Library as detailed in this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report principally aligns to the key priorities of 'Caring for our Place' and 'Angus Council is Efficient and Effective'. In particular to:

- reduce our energy use through a reduction in our property estate coupled with good management to reduce wasting energy;
- support Angus Alive and Tayside Contracts to transform their businesses to ensure a sustainable service offering;
- continue to support face to face appointments wherever possible, with greater focus on those with specific needs; and
- continue to develop and deliver our change programme.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee: -
- (i) notes and has regard to the responses received following the public consultation in respect of proposed changes at Arbroath Library and re-location of the Council Archives currently housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar (as detailed in Appendix 1); and
 - (ii) approves the proposals for the upgrade works to Arbroath Library to both improve the delivery of face-to-face Library/ ACCESS services, and to improve the storage and public access arrangements for the Council's Archives, as detailed in this report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report provides information on the responses received following the public consultation in relation to proposed changes at Arbroath Library outlined in [Report 172/24 which was considered by Committee on 4 June 2024.](#) The design proposal relates to the integration of Arbroath Library/ ACCESS services; moving the Archives currently housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar, to Arbroath Library; and the resulting implications for the Community Learning Shop, holding of wedding ceremonies, and the Art Galleries. The Library/ ACCESS merger had already been agreed at by Council on 3 November 2022 (Report 364/22 refers) and therefore did not form part of the consultation exercise.

- 4.2 The consultation also sought feedback on the proposed decants to accommodate the delivery of the Library/ACCESS service for the period of the improvement works being carried out on the Arbroath Library building.
- 4.3 Members will recall that it was decided not to bring a proposal at this time relating to the entire relocation of all Council Archives & Collections currently stored across a number of locations, including at The Yard, Forfar and The 'Bull-ring' at the Mart, Forfar, due to the ongoing market testing currently underway regarding Angus House (Report 150/24 refers). This proposal relates only to the Archives currently housed at the Hunter Library, Restenneth, Forfar.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 An informal public consultation process was undertaken per [Report 172/24](#). (Please see: - <https://engage.angus.gov.uk/angus-alive-investment-proposal-arbroath-library>). The consultation period ran for a period of 6 weeks, from Tuesday, 18 June 2024 to Tuesday, 30 July 2024.
- 5.2 Consultees were provided with opportunities to express their views using the Engage Angus Portal or via comments forms which were available in Arbroath Library, The Hunter Library, Arbroath Sports Centre, and the Saltire Centre.
- 5.3 The Consultation sought the public's views on the design proposals to: -
- improve the delivery of face-to-face library and ACCESS services at Arbroath Library
 - improve the storage and public access to the council's archives.

A summary of the proposed changes and more detailed documents were provided at: - [Proposed Changes at Arbroath Library and Re-Location of Archives | Engage Angus](#)

Details of the Consultation responses, along with due considerations, are provided in Appendix 1 to this report. A total of 26 responses were received. 10 of the responses provided positive feedback for the proposals, 11 gave negative feedback (although not all relating to the actual design proposals), with 5 responses being neutral in their view.

- 5.4 Only 2 of the responses related to alternative/additional ideas or suggestions for proposed design layouts. The other responses related to general feedback, questions as to the costs, staffing, opening hours, suggesting alternative sites, and views on how local collections should be held.

Subjects Raised /Theme	Comments
General Positive Feedback	9
Local History Archives	5
Alternative Site Suggestions	3
Financial Concerns	2
Suggested Alterations	2
Opening Hours	2
General Neutral Feedback	1
Weddings	1
Staffing	1
Total	26

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 It is proposed that, having had regard to the consultation responses, Committee agrees to proceed with the works at Arbroath Library as outlined below.
- 6.2 The following design proposals have been developed with the aims of enabling Angus Alive to achieve operational efficiencies and improved accessibility by the discontinued use of the Hunter Library building at Restenneth, Forfar, and for greater use to be made of the first-floor gallery spaces in Arbroath Library to accommodate the Archives: -

6.3 Improvements to Arbroath Library/ ACCESS Facilities: Design Proposals

- 6.3.1 Design proposals have been developed for improvements to Arbroath Library/ ACCESS facilities, including upgrading of the existing reception, adding a private meeting room, refurbishing the existing IT training suite, and moving the Learning Shop downstairs into the

main library area where the local history section is currently located. The local history section is to be moved to the 1st floor as part of the Archive proposals.

6.4 Relocating Archives to the Arbroath Library building: Design Proposals

- 6.4.1 It is proposed that the Archive materials currently located at the Hunter Library will be relocated to the first floor of the library building, utilising parts of the current Art Gallery spaces. Subject to Committee approval today, the move is proposed to take place in January 2025 to align with the expiry of the current lease for the Hunter Library. At this time, it is proposed that works will be in progress to improve the ground floor Library/ ACCESS facilities, and this may limit access to the first floor area. However, interim measures would be put in place for the service to continue with as little disruption as possible to service users.

Community Learning Shop Implications

- 6.4.2 Following design reviews and input from the Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth Directorate, it is proposed that the existing Community Learning Shop would be relocated to the ground floor of Arbroath Library on completion of the works and would continue to support citizens who currently use the facilities. Options in relation to improving current opening arrangements for this service are also being explored by Angus Alive.

Wedding Ceremony Implications

- 6.4.3 Wedding ceremonies are currently held in the Corsar Art Gallery. Whilst initial proposals meant this would no longer be possible, after review, if the proposed movement of the Learning Shop is agreed, the Corsar Gallery would be retained and could continue to be utilised on an ongoing basis for wedding ceremonies.

Art Gallery Implications

- 6.4.4 Using the current Art Gallery spaces in the manner set out in the design proposals, would continue to allow the display of artwork on the perimeter walls of the two gallery spaces. If agreed, this would mean that the two Brueghel paintings could continue to be displayed.

6.5 Temporary Decant Arrangements

- 6.5.1 The proposed improvements and changes to the Library building would require the decanting of the current Library/ ACCESS services while the works are undertaken. It is proposed to utilise the Community and General-Purpose spaces at Saltire Sports Centre. These are located close to the main entrance and reception areas.
- 6.5.2 The proposed improvements in relation to the first-floor areas proposed to be used for the Archives could be accommodated without the need for a decant, albeit there could be some disruption during the building works, which could include no access to the passenger lift which is located in the library space. If approved, citizens and staff using those first-floor spaces would be kept fully informed of any changes required to accommodate the works and any interim measures to ensure staff and citizen needs and safety.
- 6.5.3 It is proposed that the Community Learning Shop would decant from the first floor to an alternative location for the duration of the works before relocating to the ground-floor on the completion of works. Citizens will be advised of the temporary location once a suitable space has been identified.
- 6.6 Subject to Committee approval today, **the broad timeline is as follows:**
- Design/ Procurement/ Contract Award: November to December 2024
 - Decant/ Works Period: January 2025 to June 2025 (6 months)
 - Move Archives from Hunter Library to first floor areas in Arbroath Library: during January 2025 (1 month)
 - New Arrangements in Place: from July 2025

7. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following summarises the key property changes involved in these proposals:
- Terminate the lease of the Hunter Library, Restenneth Priory by Forfar.

- Invest in Arbroath Library, as described in Report 172/24.
- Temporary use of Community and General Purposes spaces at Saltire Sports Centre, Arbroath for Library/ ACCESS decant during the works period.

7.2 Confirmation of the Council's intentions regarding the Hunter Library lease will require to be declared to the landlords at the appropriate time in advance of the expiry date. The current lease is a Full Repairing and Insuring Lease (an "FRI" Lease) which contains a clause requiring the building to be returned in the same conditions as it was originally leased out. This means that the Council will be responsible for any repairs required. This will require a dilapidations survey to be agreed with the Graham Hunter Foundation Inc.

7.3 At the Special Meeting of Angus Council on 29 February 2024, one-off revenue funding of £45,000 was approved to cover the necessary works identified in a dilapidation survey. Following site inspections conducted by Property Assets officers, it is anticipated that this allocation will be sufficient to cover both the costs of the survey and the required repair works.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The permanent integration of Arbroath Library/ ACCESS Services into the existing Arbroath Library building was detailed in the initial proposal agreed by Council at its meeting on 3 November 2022 (Report 364/22 refers). As detailed in that Report, property-related revenue savings from agreeing to the Library/ ACCESS integration in the Arbroath Library building amounted to £57k overall (£30k Angus Council and £27k Angus Alive), albeit these savings are already accounted for.

8.2 Report [172/24](#) highlighted that the cost of the project proposals amounted to £0.290m, which can be funded from part of the allowance of £1.928m in the General Fund Capital Programme for the Angus Alive Transformation Project – Library/ Facilities Investment (Angus wide). This would require to be re-profiled in line with the estimated timing of the spend.

8.3 Estimated Costs

8.3.1 The overall total estimated costs of the proposals are as follows:

Description	Estimated Cost £
Arbroath Library Improvements; ground floor and first floor	265k
Removals, IT and decant	25k
Total Estimated Costs (Excluding VAT)	290k

These will be accounted for under the budget referenced in 8.2 above and include any auxiliary service decants and resultant short term lease arrangements resulting from this.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 The proposals will involve changes to: current facilities and building users at Arbroath Library, the re-location of Archive services from Restenneth, by Forfar to Arbroath; and also the current Library/ ACCESS facilities. Although the proposals are aimed at providing improvements and benefits overall, there is also a potential risk there may be an adverse impact by the changes for some. Accordingly, the public consultation was undertaken on the proposals so that a final decision can be taken having due regard to the feedback received and in order for any possible mitigations to be put in place to reduce any adverse impacts.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Should Committee agree to the proposals for the upgrade works to Arbroath Library as detailed in this report, the Council's overall property portfolio would reduce and this would likely assist to reduce CO2 emissions. There may also be a benefit in reducing CO2 emissions with the Archives being more accessible in Arbroath Library through public transport.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 2.

12. CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12.1 A Childrens Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been carried out within the EIA.

13. CONSULTATION

13.1 The Chief Executive and all Council Directors, along with the interim Chief Executives of Angus Alive have been consulted in the preparation of this report and its Appendices.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report 150/24 – Agile Working and Estates Review
- [Report 62/24](#), [Annex 1](#), [Annex 2](#), [Annex 3](#) - ANGUSalve Charges Review and Budget Settlement 2024/25 (Council, 29 February 2024)
- [Report 364/22](#), [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#), [Appendix 3](#), [Appendix 4](#), [Appendix 5](#), [Appendix 6](#) and [Appendix 7](#) – ANGUSalve: Transformation Programme Update (Council, 3 November 2022)
- Report 172/24 – ANGUSalve Investment Proposal: Arbroath Library Building (P&R, 4 June 2024)

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Consultation Responses with comments

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment