

## **SUTTON COLDFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

### **Sutton Coldfield Library Update**

A report on the above came to the Sutton Coldfield District Committee in July 2017

It set out the background as to how the city council had consulted on proposals to change the library service and through this had ultimately concluded a position on the future of Sutton Coldfield Library in the Cabinet report of February 2017.

The original proposals included the planned closure of Sutton Coldfield Library, but strong representation plus the emergence of a potential model for retaining library services at the Red Rose site enabled Cabinet to take the decision to see if a sustainable business model could be put together.

In order to progress this position a number of organisations have had to work constructively together to both create the time for a solution to be developed and also to identify and support that creative solution.

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council has taken a decision to fund the day to day operations of the library from April to August and to share the ongoing costs until the end of the year (subject to certain conditions being met)

The City Council has undertaken extensive repairs, identified an occupant for the second floor and agreed to share the ongoing costs until the end of the year.

#### **The focus of the sustainable business plan has included:**

1. Securing a home for the Local History and Archive collection within Sutton Coldfield
2. Repairs to the building to ensure it is watertight
3. Internal decorations/reparations
4. Negotiations with Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council to secure a financial solution
5. Letting of floor 2
6. Sharing of floor 1 so that it forms two thirds library and one third let for a complimentary usage by another party.

1. All Archive material was returned from storage and the Inventory was checked.

- Modifications were made and the material has been stored on site for the last few months.
- The rental of space to a third party will require further on site modifications but it remains the case that the Local History and archive collection will still be contained within the library and remaining accessible to library users and residents via requests to library staff.

2. The City Council has invested significantly in works to make the building water tight including:

- Following a detailed Inspection a number of repairs have been made to the roof
- Glass canopy removal and reinstatement
- Inspection and repairs to internal downpipes which caused the leaks in the Reference and Children's areas

### 3. Internal refurbishment and repairs

- Internal leaks have been repaired
- Stained ceiling tiles have been repaired/placed throughout the building.
- The heating is now fully working and connected to and controlled by Lancaster Circus, this will ensure the building is a comfortable temperature throughout.

### 4. Joint working on delivering a sustainable business plan

- The City Council and the Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council have undertaken significant dialogue regarding the financial requirements that would fall on both parties as part of a sustainable business plan going forward and there remains a commitment to making the sustainable plan work

### 5. We are in final discussions with a prospective tenant for the second and third floors

- It is a fundamental part of the sustainable business plan for the second floor to be let. It is the resources raised through letting this space that allow the City Council to invest the average costs of running a Tier 1 library into the Sustainable Business Plan for Sutton Library. A prospective tenant has been found and a draft lease has been exchanged and matters are now with solicitors. There is an expectation that this matter will be concluded by the end of the calendar year.

### 6. Sharing of floor 1

- The sustainable business plan is based upon reducing the library running costs incurred at floor 1 by having a partner utilise one third of the space and consequentially cover one third of the costs of utilities, business rates, rent, etc.
- Following considerable dialogue with a number of stakeholders and partners to identify a service offering that could occupy one third of the current library space, generate significant income (to cover an appropriate share of the running costs of the building) but also be complementary to the library offer. As a result of a formal Market Sounding exercise the city council has ended up in Single Contractor Negotiations with FOLIO/Little Green Frog over the provision of a play café. Considerable start-up funding was supported via Sutton Trinity Ward's Local Innovation Fund process on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and if this is supported by Cabinet Committee Local Leadership on 18<sup>th</sup> October this will enable FOLIO/Little Green Frog to conclude their submission to the city council to lease the space.

There has been considerable support, flexibility and determination from a range of people and organisations to reach the position we are currently in. There still remain matters to conclude but the partners are now much closer to being able to set out a sustainable business plan for Sutton Coldfield Library.

Chris Jordan  
Assistant Director  
Neighbourhoods & Communities

Sarah Chinnock  
Library Manager (Community Offer)