

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	LEISURE, SPORT & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Report of:	Senior Constituency Manager for Sutton Coldfield
Date :	14 September 2011
SUBJECT:	SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN CENTRE LIBRARY
Wards affected:	Sutton Four Oaks, New Hall, Trinity and Vesey

Purpose of Report

To report on the progress made to reopen the library in the red Rose Shopping Complex.

Recommendation

That Leisure, Sport and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer Details

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1. **Background**

Sutton Coldfield Library is part of the Red Rose shopping complex and is owned by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Pension Fund. Birmingham City Council holds the residue of a 99 year lease which does not expire until 2073. The annual rent is currently £33,000. A meeting has been held with the landlord and the landlord's agent Johnson Fellows and they have confirmed that they have no plans to date to redevelop any of the shopping complex.

The neighbourhood office was moved to the library in Autumn 2009 although this did not involve the disturbance of any asbestos material. The first floor lending, music and children's library was closed in April 2010 pending a modernisation and refurbishment programme and the service temporary relocated to the second floor. During the stripping out of the ceiling grid the contractor identified areas of asbestos insulation board that had been damaged when computer cabling had been installed some years previously. A decision to close the library with immediate effect was taken by the Constituency Director.

A temporary neighbourhood office was set up at Sutton Coldfield Constituency Office and the other community libraries within the Sutton Constituency have extended their opening hours; in June 2011 the neighbourhood office and the local history collection was relocated to 76 Holland Street, a council owned, former residential building. These services will transfer back to the library once the refurbishment has been completed. This has enabled the Constituency to offer a walk in service within the neighbourhood office, and access to local history material and archives by appointment.

The initial budget estimate to reoccupy the library is approximately £1.8m inclusive of departmental fees. This work includes the removal of asbestos on the first and second floors and the third floor flat together with an environmental clean, replacement of the ventilation system and plant, new floor coverings, ceiling grids, electrical installations (including light fittings) and minor decorations associated with the above. Funding has as yet to be identified. A design brief has been issued and Officers are currently working up the detail in preparation for a full report to Cabinet later this year.

The Sutton Coldfield Constituency Committee has received an update at each of its meetings since the library was forced to close. Elected Members and members of the public have expressed clearly their desire to see the Library reopened as it is seen as a significant contributor to the lives of the people of the whole Constituency and the Town Centre.

A period of consultation with Elected Members and service users will be undertaken once the detailed design and costs are completed.

All options for the long term delivery of library and neighbourhood office services in Sutton Coldfield will be considered and reported accordingly. Subject to Cabinet approval, it is anticipated that refurbishment will commence in January 2012, with the building reopening to the public in December 2012.