

**West Bridgford Community Hub
Members Reference Group**

28th January 2008

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of the consultation with stakeholders and the community on the proposals for the West Bridgford community hub.
- 1.2 The consultation consisted of:
- a) A week-long display (26th November to 1st December) of the artist's impressions of the proposals at West Bridgford Library and Rushcliffe Civic Centre. The display at the library was staffed throughout the week, with staff at the civic centre able to answer questions from visitors. A "post-it" board was available in the library to capture immediate reactions.
 - b) A stall at the Farmers Market and Christmas light switch-on on 1st December.
 - c) Leaflets and questionnaires available at the displays and at other venues across West Bridgford. Two questionnaires were available – in addition to the general one a specific one was designed for children.
 - d) Briefings in the week preceding the displays for Rushcliffe BC members and stakeholders.
 - e) A website which included the artist's impressions and a facility to comment on the proposals.
 - f) Briefings for staff affected in the library and customer service centre, and other Rushcliffe Borough Council staff affected by the proposal to move the customer service centre.

2. Who responded to the written consultation?

- 2.1 Some 666 general public questionnaires were returned. The gender breakdown of respondents is 53% female and 45% male. 72% are residents of West Bridgford and 16% not. Two-thirds of the respondents (65%) are aged 18-64 with 30% over 65.
- 2.2 149 children's questionnaires were returned, with 57% from girls and 34% from boys. The age breakdown is

0-2	8.1%
2-5	26.2%
6-8	20.8%
9-14	35.6%

3. What services should the Community Hub offer?

3.1 The questionnaire contained a list of service which are planned for the hub and respondents were asked which ones they would like to see in it.

<i>Toilets</i>	91.7%
<i>Library services</i>	91.6%
<i>Information point</i>	72.7%
<i>Cafe</i>	65.2%
<i>IT facility</i>	61.0%
<i>Community meeting areas</i>	59.2%
<i>Face to face access to council services</i>	56.2%
<i>Registration services for births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships</i>	44.1%
<i>Youth services</i>	39.0%
<i>Shop mobility</i>	34.8%

3.2 Other facilities suggested included: cultural space or theatre for film, plays, music, lectures, or exhibitions; citizens advice bureau; faith space; young children’s indoor play area; space for older people; public telephone; Fairtrade shop; quiet study area; police contact surgeries; space for voluntary or community sector, e.g. RCVS; social club adults/children; bus pass applications - city transport easy rider passes; room for Notts family history society; function or activity space to hire; Community room to accommodate 80 - 100 people; doctors surgery; secure covered cycle storage

3.3 Children were asked what facilities or services would make them more likely to come to the library

<i>Toilets</i>	73.8%
<i>Drinks machine or cafe</i>	61.1%
<i>Comfy seating areas</i>	57.7%
<i>More toys and games</i>	35.6%
<i>More activities</i>	34.9%
<i>More books on display</i>	31.5%
<i>Chill out zone</i>	30.9%
<i>Make believe area</i>	26.2%
<i>Bright colours</i>	24.8%
<i>More comics and magazines</i>	22.8%
<i>Listening posts/music playing</i>	20.1%
<i>More computers</i>	18.8%
<i>A quiet place to study</i>	14.8%
<i>Someone to help with homework</i>	10.1%

4. Design

4.1 Respondents were asked their opinion on the proposals to create a community hub in West Bridgford on a scale of 1-5. The results show an overwhelming support for the proposals.

5 Strongly Support	47.7%
4.....	25.8%
3.....	14.6%
2.....	5.1%
1 Strongly Oppose.....	4.8%

4.2 Children were asked what they thought about the proposals for the community hub and library. There responses were

Great.....	73.8%
OK	19.5%
Don't like	4.7%

4.3 The public were asked to identify what is important to them about a new building in West Bridgford.

	<i>Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>
Ease of Access	88.7%	2.6%
Aesthetically suitable to the surrounding area	87.8%	5.1%
Environmentally Sustainable	83.3%	4.7%
Built using traditional materials	53.2%	24.5%
Modern Design	45.8%	31.1%

4.4 Nearly 20% of the respondents added a further comment. As would be expected these comments reflected the diversity of views. Some respondents expressed a preference for keeping the existing library building or elements of it. Others urged that a replacement building should be of high quality and performance and should blend in with the local area. There were suggestions for specific features to ensure that the new building is environmentally sustainable.

5. Access to services

5.1 Respondents were asked how they currently contact either Nottinghamshire County Council or Rushcliffe Borough Council regarding the services they provide.

By telephone	66.8%
In person face to face	36.6%
Online	21.8%
By letter	18.2%
By Email.....	15.8%

5.2 Adults were asked how often they visit West Bridgford Library.

Daily	5.3%
Once a week	32.4%
Several times a month	57.4%
Never	4.1%

5.3 They were also asked to rate on a scale 1-5 whether they would visit the community hub more often than they visit the existing library.

1(More likely to visit).....	23.4%
2.....	34.5%
3.....	31.5%

4.....	3.9%
5 (<i>less likely to visit</i>)	3.9%

5.4 Children were also asked how often they visit the library

<i>Two times a week</i>	7.4%
<i>Once a week</i>	27.5%
<i>Every three weeks</i>	43.0%
<i>Now and then</i>	22.1%

6. **Stakeholder Briefings**

6.1 The organisations represented at the stakeholder briefings were overwhelmingly in support of the proposals. Many expressed some disappointment that there was not sufficient space for them to be involved. Some identified activities which could take place in the hub providing there is sufficient space (eg for large university of the third age activities, performances and displays, police presence, voluntary or community sector presence).

6.2 Some specific concerns or reservations were raised about:

- a) the proposal to demolish the stable block
- b) possible encroachment onto the park
- c) location of pedestrian crossings
- d) adequacy and location of public toilets
- e) noise in library area
- f) size of café and balance with other users
- g) ensuring that youth facilities are open sufficiently

7. **Commentary**

7.1 The consultation received a substantial number of responses both to the questionnaires and individually to members of the team undertaking the consultation. There is a high level of support for the development of a community hub and the range of services that are proposed. Many respondents were keen for the proposals to go ahead quickly.

7.2 The reaction to building design is very much a personal matter. Overall, the respondent felt that the proposed design complements the Hall and adds to the local area. This is pleasing as the intention of the design was to be sympathetic to the listed building. Understandably, there is a strand of opinion that the existing library should be kept in part or whole. However, it was explained as part of the consultation that it was not possible to achieve the councils' ambitions for the multi-service hub and keep the existing building.

7.3 The consultation confirmed the view that the library service in West Bridgford is highly valued. Although a small minority of users are less likely to visit the community hub, a majority expect to use it more.

- 7.4 Several specific issues have been raised which will be considered as part of the detailed design. These include: location and adequacy of the toilets; environmental sustainability; detailed design of the library space; and relationship of the external areas with the park.
- 7.5 However, one significant issue has been identified through the consultation. It was understood that the stables were a late addition to the Hall and that it would be possible to get permission to demolish them as part of this project. However, indications have now been received from English Heritage that it would be more difficult than anticipated to gain listed building consent for their demolition. Consequently, revisions have been made to the proposals that will enable the stables to be retained and the hub to be developed. These will be presented elsewhere on the agenda.