



Assessment & Recommendations Report for Libraries and Community Centres

From: Lee Warner
Lead director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Lee Warner / Michael Clarke
- Author contact details: lee.warner@leicester.gov.uk

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report and its appendices is to provide an update on the findings of the recent public consultation (April 2025 – June 2025) and provide commission members with an update on the future recommended delivery model for Libraries and Community Centres.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Assessment & Recommendations Report (Appendix 1) provides a detailed look at the proposals which were consulted on and the changes to the proposals following consultation and revision of the EIA. It also provides a detailed breakdown of the recommendations for the future delivery model of our Libraries and Community Centres.
- 2.2 The Findings Report (Appendix 2) provides a detail of what we found out during the consultation from the survey responses and wide range of consultation meetings.
- 2.3 The Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) provides an updated Equality Impact Assessment for the future recommended delivery model for Libraries and Community Centres.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the reports and provide comment.

4. Report/Supporting information

- 4.1 Appendix 1 - Assessment & Recommendations Report
Appendix 2 - Findings Report
Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The Neighbourhood and Environmental Services division has a revenue savings target of £7.2m to achieve by 2027/28. The proposals which were consulted upon would have delivered up to £2.1m towards this target. The revised proposals would deliver a full year saving of £1.57m in 2027/28 (with part-year savings of £0.57m in 2026/27). The financial impact of the changes to the proposals is therefore a reduction in savings of £0.53m; this will make the delivery of the full savings target more challenging.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance
14th November 2025

5.2 Legal implications

The recommendations set out in the Assessment & Recommendations Report (Appendix 1) have potential staffing implications.

In respect of any Community Asset Transfer there is the potential for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”) to apply. If TUPE applies, then employees assigned to the relevant provision will transfer to the new provider with their existing terms and conditions protected. It may also be necessary for the new provider to offer the transferring employees continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. It is therefore recommended that ongoing advice is sought from legal services and HR to determine whether TUPE would apply to any proposed transfer.

The recommendations which involve either reduced staffed opening hours at retained sites, the closure of sites or the relocation of sites, represent a reorganisation of the current structure. The Council’s organisational review policy would need to be followed should a decision be made to proceed with these recommendations. There is the potential for this to include redundancies and if this is the case the Council’s redundancy policy should be followed to minimise the risk of employment related claims against the Council.

In all of these circumstances management would need to ensure that due process is followed, and meaningful consultation is undertaken with affected staff.

Julia Slipper, Principal Lawyer (Education & Employment).
18 November 2025

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will require additional goods and services to be purchased which will need to be undertaken in line with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and procurement legislation. Any modifications to existing contracts due to changes in scope of library management services should be managed in accordance with contractual provisions and, where relevant, internal approvals sought

as necessary. Legal Service should be engaged to provide guidance and support throughout this process.

Mannah Begum, Principal Lawyer (Commercial Legal).
18 November 2025

When property is to be disposed of, the Council has a legal obligation to dispose of land at the best consideration reasonably obtainable in accordance with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Open marketing is acknowledged to achieve best consideration. A disposal includes either a freehold sale or lease for a term of more than 7 years. However, the Council also has the power to dispose of land and property at less than best consideration in accordance with the 2003 General Disposal Consent. In order to utilise the Consent, the Council must be satisfied that the proposed disposal will contribute to the social, economic or environmental well-being of the area in which the property is situated. The limit of the undervalue in respect of each individual site must not exceed £2m. If any proposed undervalue will exceed £2m then Secretary of State consent would be required for any disposal to proceed.

Following the Localism Act 2011, the Council adopted its Community Asset Transfer Policy to provide community groups the opportunity to have a greater control in their community governance. The procedure for CAT transfers is contained within the Policy.

Therefore when considering options for disposal, the Council should have regard to its adopted Framework for Property Disposals and the Community Asset Transfer Policy. Legal Services will continue to advise should subsequent disposals be realised.

Zoe Iliffe, Principal Lawyer (Property Highways & Planning)
19 November 2025

Throughout the programme the Neighbourhood and Environmental Services Division have sought, and taken, advice regarding robust governance of the transformation journey by appointing a legal advisor to the Programme Board. This has spanned the design, engagement, consultation and decision-making phases. The aim of this advice has been to enable a fair and transparent decision to be made which minimises the risk of a successful public law (J.R.) challenge

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister
18 November 2025

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

If a property is transferred out of the Operational Estate under CAT, the carbon emissions arising from its heating and other energy use will no longer be included in reporting of the council's own carbon footprint. However, it will continue to be part of the city's footprint.

For properties that are retained within the council's portfolio, reduced operating hours may have a positive impact on overall energy use, ultimately reducing the associated emissions.

Transfer of a property has an opportunity cost to it in carbon terms, in the sense that it removes the ability for the council to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and decarbonisation improvements to the building while it remains transferred. However, it does create a possibility for the community group and the community it serves to explore opportunities to make those investments themselves and secure the benefits for the duration of the lease. This is more likely to have a viable business case if the group has a long lease on the building and should therefore be considered, where applicable. The conditions of lease and availability of support after the transfer may have a positive impact on the community groups' ability to invest in energy efficiency and decarbonisation improvements.

Providing there are no significant building closures, the impact on service users' methods of travel should be minimal and therefore have a negligible effect on associated carbon emissions.

There is a risk of an increase in energy use where self-access services are provided, however the installation and use of automatic lighting and automated powering down of equipment should mitigate the risk down to a minor impact.

On balance, there is likely to be a reduction in the council's own emissions associated with reducing the number of buildings within the operational estate, however the city as a whole may see little change in its annual emissions with a minor risk of these increasing over time if opportunities to carry out energy efficiency, renewable energy and decarbonisation improvements are not realised for buildings that have been transferred out of the operational estate.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246
14th November 2025

5.4 Equality Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in making decisions and carrying out their activities they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Leicester's multi-service centres, community centres, and libraries play an important role in local neighbourhoods. They promote health and wellbeing, bring communities together and provide places for people to meet.

An updated Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the future recommended delivery model for Libraries and Community Centres is attached at Appendix 3. This assessment incorporates the detailed findings of the public consultation (Appendix 2) and has informed the final recommendations in Appendix 1.

The recommended delivery model has been revised following the consultation and EIA findings to include specific mitigating actions. The EIA is an iterative process and should be revisited as part of the decision-making process.

The implementation of the recommendations will be monitored for equality impacts as part of the formal review process.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148 14/11/2025

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)