

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Report

**Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme –
South Area**

13th March 2014

Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Sarah Russell
Lead director: Liz Blyth

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose & Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) programme and the engagement and consultation that has been being carried out in the South area of the city.

The report sets out the final proposals for the South area of the city for the Scrutiny Commission's consideration, prior to a decision.

2. Recommendations

That the Scrutiny Commission note the progress made to date.

That the Scrutiny Commission provide any comment on the final proposals for the South area, prior to a decision by the City Mayor and Executive.

3. Background:

3.1 Background and activity to date

The TNS programme is scoped to identify different ways of organising how services are delivered within the neighbourhoods of the city of Leicester, with a view to reducing the costs of delivery by around 30% while maintaining the quality of our services.

The programme has identified an approach whereby the city is divided into 6 geographical areas and these are investigated sequentially to identify methods by which the service delivery model can be transformed through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

The scope of the programme covers four service areas:

- Community Services
- Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Neighbourhood based customer services

It is recognised that other services within the council deliver services in the neighbourhoods and although these are not in scope directly (i.e. Housing, Children's Services etc.), they have been involved in the development of this model where they form a part of the future delivery, for example, by sharing locations.

This report, and supporting appendix, describes a model for the first area investigated, which is the South area of the city (currently equivalent to the area covered by the Freeman, Aylestone, Eyres Monsell, Knighton wards prior to any changes through the Ward Boundary Commission Review).

The scope of the South area includes the following buildings:

- Southfields Library
- Southfields Drive Community Centre
- The Linwood Centre
- Eyres Monsell Community Centre
- Gilmorton Community Centre
- Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office
- Saffron Resource Centre
- Aylestone Library
- Aylestone Leisure Centre and Library
- Kingfisher Youth Centre
- Magpie Youth Centre
- Southfields Drive Sports Centre

3.2 Development of the model

In order to develop a model the following activities have taken place:

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process was carried out in September and October 2013 within the South area specifically (although residents from other areas could contribute via an online form) through meetings with stakeholders, public drop-in sessions and an online form for people to complete
- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a draft model, which was presented to the City Mayor and Executive in December 2013.
- Consultation on the draft model during January and February 2014 (see section 3.2.1)

- Refinement of the model into that proposed in this paper following results of consultation and further detailed design work surrounding the proposed projects

3.2.1 Engagement Activity

Details of the previous engagements between April and July and September and October 2013 have been previously reported. The main outcome of these previous exercises was:

- Retention of locality based services is a higher priority than the retention of specific buildings
- Strong support for the co-location of services, providing busy places from which multiple services can be accessed
- Support for the retention and improvement of Southfields Library, which was the only building specifically mentioned in this way

Following the previous report in December 2013, a consultation exercise has been carried out on the draft proposals that were presented to the City Mayor and Executive at that time. Views were sought on the suitability and practicality of those proposals.

A full report of the consultation carried out in January and February is attached to this document as Appendix A.

Based on the draft proposals that were presented in the consultation there was an expectation that the largest number of responses would focus on the Linwood Centre and the proposal to relocate the services provided to the Southfields Library.

A number of meetings and drop-in sessions have been held and an on-line consultation form was made available throughout the duration of the exercise.

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

- Stakeholder meeting, Aylestone Leisure Centre, 9th January 2014
- Public meeting, Aylestone Leisure Centre, 29th January 2014
- Drop – in Session, Linwood Centre, 4th February 2014
- Drop – in Session, Southfields Library, 4th February 2014
- Drop – in Session, Gilmorton Community Centre, 5th February 2014
- Drop – in Session, Eyres Monsell Community Centre, 5th February 2014

Alongside this a number of informal meetings have taken place with individual stakeholders and groups to discuss the proposals. A leaflet containing details of the proposals and a 'tear-off' response form was used to gather opinions on the proposals. These were widely distributed in the area, and a total of 2,000 leaflets were circulated.

The form was also available on-line to receive comments from 10th January to the 14th February 2014.

Consultation Outcomes and Alterations to the Proposals

In total, at the closure of the consultation on the 14th February a total of 211 completed response forms have been received. The following points provide a summary of the outcomes of the consultation:

- One of the groups that currently uses the Linwood Centre, the Asian Tower Lunch Club, requested that they were relocated to the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (42 responses received concerning this). In examining this, it may not be possible for this relocation to take place due to scheduling conflicts, an alternative site would be Northfields Community Centre
- Some concerns raised around the safety of accessing Southfields Library through having to cross main roads. Accident information shows that there have been 6 incidents involving injury to pedestrians since 2000, the last of which was reported in 2007, which coincides with the implementation of improved pedestrian crossing facilities
- An online petition entitled "Do not close the Linwood Community Centre to the community that fought to open it in 1986", has been started by the Linwood Community Association. This is still to be submitted to the council.
- There are a number of responses (20) that request that services remain and are not stopped. This fits in line with the proposals to retain services albeit from different locations
- There are several responses (16) requesting that the Linwood Centre stay open which link with the alternative proposal from the Neighbourhood Management Board detailed later in this report
- There are several responses (11) supporting the extended use of Southfields Library in addition to the support received from previous periods of engagement
- There are several responses (9) specifically supporting the Saffron Resources Centre remaining in its current location

Saffron Resource Centre and Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office

Discussions have been held both on a formal and informal basis about the location of the Saffron Resource Centre and Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office. Both of the buildings are owned by the Council, within the Housing Revenue Account. This also formed a part of the consultation with a specific question included for people to respond to.

On discussion with the stakeholders, one option was to offer the use of the Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office ground floor to the Saffron Resource Centre, which was intended to reduce the overhead costs of the latter.

Further detailed investigation showed that the Saffron Resource Centre manages multiple sites from the grant monies received.

From the responses received to the consultation no clear preferred option has emerged with 52% of respondents to this question indicating a preference to move the Customer Services provision from the Neighbourhood Housing Office into the Saffron Resource Centre against the other way around (48% of respondents to this question).

Lessons Learned

The following provides a summary of the lessons learned from the engagement and consultation process:

- The drop-in sessions, although resource intensive are valuable as they allow more detailed conversations with stakeholders surrounding specific issues and allow responses to be provided to these specific concerns
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early and continuously has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns properly
- The process undertaken has met with very good co-operation between stakeholders and groups, as well as other services

Impact of Consultation on Model

Following the consultation the amendments noted below have been made to the proposed model for the South area:

- The responses requesting that the Old Aylestone Library retain a community function following transfer have been noted
- To relocate the printed music section from Southfields Library to provide more flexible space available for community and adult learning use
- Following detailed conversations with stakeholders, an amended proposal to retain current Saffron Resource Centre and Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Offices
- Ensure longer opening hours at the refurbished Southfields Library

3.3 Proposed model for the South area

This section describes a summary of the overall model for the South area.

3.3.1 Principles of the model

The following principles have been used to develop this model:

- Retention of locality based services is a higher priority than the retention of specific buildings
- A key principle of shared buildings providing multiple services
- A reduction of around 30% of current spend is to be achieved
- The services provided should remain and where possible be enhanced
- At this stage the model is based around the use of the buildings only. The programme intends to focus on a review of staffing at a suitable later stage
- Opportunities for alternative use should be investigated for buildings deemed surplus to requirements

3.3.2 Model summary

The overall model is to invest in an improved Southfields Library building and use this to provide multiple services. The model will also provide a self-service library facility within the Eyres Monsell ward, which enhances current provision of library services. This will allow the withdrawal from the current use of 3 buildings within the area.

The following list provides a building-by-building summary of the model:

- Refurbishment of Southfields Library to allow co-location of library, community services, adult skills and learning provision. Refurbishments include:-
 - Install kitchenette and warming cupboards
 - Replacement of existing boiler
 - Relocation of existing printed music area to free up more space for community / adult learning use
 - Interior and some exterior decorations to improve look and feel (i.e. plaster repairs, paint rails, new exterior doors)
 - Upgrade computer provision in community space to enable adult skills and learning computer courses to be held
 - Install access control (key fob) to allow out of hours access to groups
 - Improve exterior parking for people with disabilities
- Southfields Drive Community Centre
 - Relocate the services provided to the improved Southfields Library
 - Demolish the building
 - Release cleared land for Housing development/disposal
- Linwood Centre
 - Relocate the community services and adult education courses provided to the improved Southfields Library
 - Relocate Asian Tower Lunch Club
 - Vacated space will be refurbished for use as extension of Linwood

Workshops, which will be managed by Property Services.

- Saffron Resource Centre (operated by the Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Council):
 - No changes in the immediate term.
- Eyres Monsell Community Centre
 - Install self-service library facility, providing a new library service for the area, working in conjunction with the existing Book Borrowers Club.
- Gilmorton Community Centre
 - There is existing key fob access to the site and it is proposed to continue running this whilst monitoring usage, so that the police and other services can access the building as required. Should this trial not increase usage, the building will be released for alternative use as a rental unit.
- Old Aylestone Library
 - Dispose of the building. It will be made available through Community Asset Transfer. If not disposed of through this method, it will be disposed of through the open market.
- Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office
 - No changes proposed at this time.

3.3.3 Linwood Centre Alternative Proposal

An alternative proposal was submitted by the Saffron Neighbourhood Management Board. They proposed to use the monies needed for investment to improve the Southfields Library to instead improve the Linwood Centre in the following ways:

- Modifications to offer front of house services from Linwood Centre.
- Modify lift and disabled access
- Modifications to the first floor layout

These modifications would allow the following:

- Relocate Southfields Library to use the first floor of the Linwood Centre
- Relocate the Housing front of house function and Saffron Resource Centre into the first floor of the Linwood Centre
- Relocate the lunch club from Southfields Drive Community Centre
- The community café and food bank would remain

- Extra workshop units could also be made available on the first floor of the building

The following rationale was provided for the alternative proposal:

- There is not enough parking close to the Southfields Library
- If the proposals are carried out then the Linwood Community Association would end as it would have no purpose / focus
- Elderly and infirm people would not be able to access Southfields Library
- The food bank would cease. It was accepted that this could relocate to a different site but concerns were then raised about where volunteers would come from
- The Linwood Community Association includes organisers of the Fete and Christmas event and they were concerned that Southfields Library is not big enough to hold such events

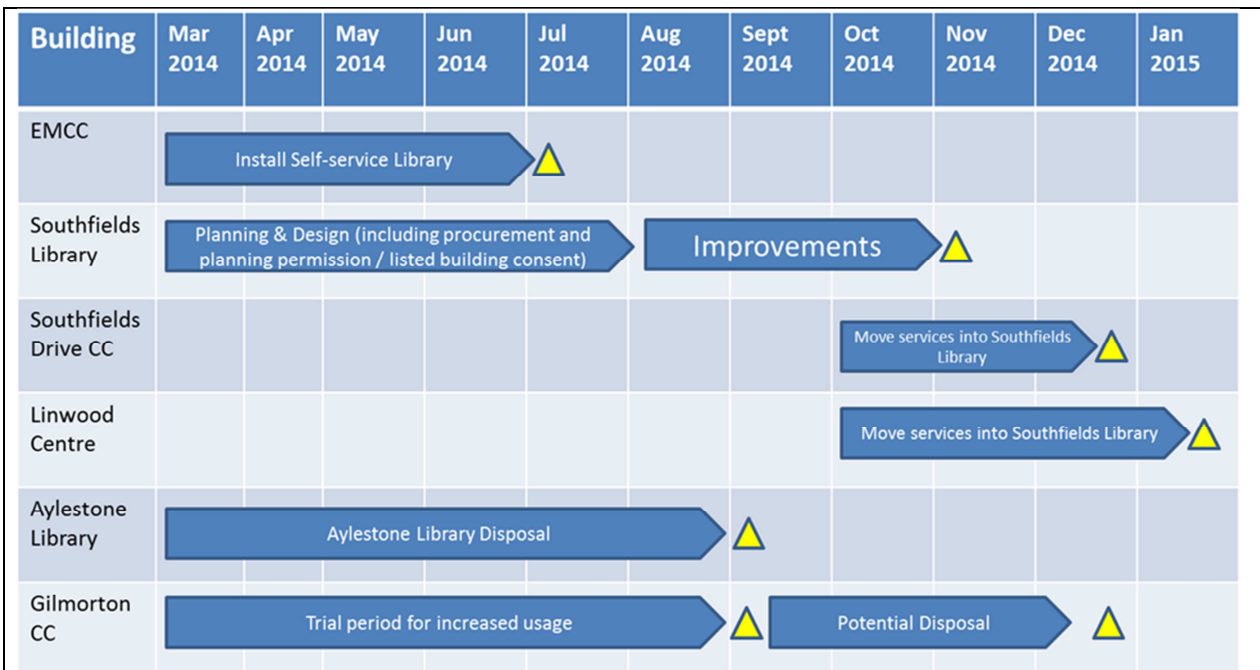
This alternative proposal is not recommended because:

- The costs of running the Linwood centre would remain high as most of the ground floor would still be in community use, which would not deliver the required financial savings.
- Saffron Resource Centre would not want to relocate to the Linwood Centre
- The library would not fit in the space on the first floor of the Linwood Centre. It would also mean that the library would not be visible and accessible
- This proposal would leave Southfields Library empty and, given the listed status of the building, would be very difficult to dispose of and make financial savings
- There has been large support from the engagement exercises from people in the community for an improved facility at Southfields Library.
- Loss of the opportunity for the extension of the Linwood workshop space, which would potentially create 30+ jobs in the area

3.3.4 Project Delivery

The model will be implemented by creating a number of projects based around specific buildings. There are dependencies between the building-based projects, particularly in that the improvements to Southfields Library are required to be completed before other services can be relocated and the other buildings released.

The following diagram shows a timeline of when these activities will be carried out:



The diagram shows that there is a large dependency on the Southfields Library work, as this allows the migration of services from the Southfields Drive Community Centre and Linwood Centre, which in turn allows the release of these buildings and the realisation of savings.

3.3.5 Building Uses

Southfields Drive Community Centre

This building currently shares a site with the Southfields Drive Sports Centre. Once the services that are currently provided from the building are relocated to the renovated Southfields Library the building will be demolished. The land cleared for use as housing/ disposal.

Linwood Centre

The Linwood Centre is currently partially used as workshops for small businesses, with the remainder of the building split between use as community space and a pre-school run by a voluntary organisation. The workshops and the pre-school facility will remain in place.

The community groups that use the building will be relocated to the refurbished Southfields Library and following this the space will be reconfigured and used as further units for small businesses. It is anticipated that the space will be partitioned into 14 new units, which have the potential for creating 30 – 40 jobs in the area. From a financial perspective, increasing the number of units and filling these would result in

the building having a net zero cost to the authority.

Old Aylestone Library

Over a year ago, community groups and individuals expressed an interest in assuming responsibility for the building. However, the original discussion included a proposal that the council retain responsibility for the costs of the building. This has not been taken up and it is now proposed to offer the building for disposal under the Community Asset Transfer policy.

Gilmorton Community Centre

The Gilmorton Community Centre is one of a set of retail units. The building currently has low usage and a low number of services being provided from it, and it is in need of repair and maintenance work.

This is a very small centre and the volunteer currently managing the building is not intending to continue in the longer term. There is existing key fob access to the site and it is proposed to monitor usage of the centre, with a potential view to releasing this building for alternative use if community use does not increase.

3.4 Costs and Benefits

3.4.1 Current Costs

The budgeted running costs (based on financial year 2012 / 13) for buildings only i.e. not including staffing costs in the South area are shown in the table below:

Building	Budgeted Running Cost
Eyres Monsell Community Centre	£20,500
Gilmorton Community Centre	£11,100
Southfields Drive Community Centre	£35,200
Saffron Resource Centre	£15,700*
Aylestone Library	£7,100
Southfields Library	£36,400
The Linwood Centre	£52,700
Sub-Total	£178,700
Kingfisher Youth Centre	£38,500
Magpie Youth Centre	£17,500
Southfields Drive Sports Centre	£10,300
Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office	£64,000**
Grand Total	£309,000

* Figure shown is the amount of grant provided dedicated to building running costs

only (i.e. no staffing or supplies / services costs included)

** Figure shown relates to contribution made from HRA funding

Note: the figures in the table above relate to the running costs of the building only and do not include staffing costs.

The budget figures for 2012 / 13 have been used for consistency, as these were previously presented, and were used to calculate savings available. They are also used as an aid to avoid double counting of efficiencies that have already been earmarked.

3.4.2 One-off costs

For the implementation of this model initial visual building surveys have been carried out to estimate the costs required to carry out the alterations required. The following table shows indicative capital costs to carry out the work required:

Building	Estimated Costs
Southfields Library	£142,000*
Southfields Drive Community Centre	£155,000
Associated fees for the above two projects	£45,000
Eyres Monsell Community Centre	£15,000
Client Contingency	£40,000
Overall Total	£397,000

* The figure shown does not include costs of changes to highway to improve disabled access as options are still under development for how this can be achieved

The estimated costs for the Southfields Library and Southfields Drive Community Centre are now being verified through detailed design work with a conservation architect. The costs stated specifically do not include for:

- Decanting costs and temporary accommodation
- Fittings, furnishings and equipment, including self-service kiosks
- Works to the roof lights of Southfields Library, except the plasterwork adjacent to the roof lights
- ICT and wireless points
- VAT

The costs include a total of £21k in contingencies for the Southfields Library and Southfields Drive Community Centre to cover asbestos surveys and potential removal. This, added to the client contingency amount of £40k provides a total amount of £61k

contingency to cover these or other unforeseen costs.

In terms of funding the capital elements of the works required, monies have previously been set aside from the corporate Service Transformation Fund and this will be called upon. Also, for the specific element of work surrounding the replacement of the boiler at Southfields Library, a request has been made for funding to be provided from the Energy Reduction Fund.

Alongside this there will be one-off revenue based costs to carry out moves of furniture and equipment, however, these are expected to be minor and will be paid for through existing service budgets.

3.4.3 Financial Benefits

At the point of releasing the buildings the following financial benefits will be available from reduced running costs and not including any staffing reductions (full year basis):

Building	Efficiencies
Southfields Drive Community Centre	£35,200
Gilmorton Community Centre	£11,100
Aylestone Library	£7,100
The Linwood Centre	£52,700
Grand Total	£106,100

Comparing the total savings shown in the table above (£106k) with the total premises costs of the area (£309k) shows that this is in line with the principle of the programme aiming to reduce costs by 30%.

A cost / benefit plan shows that the payback period for the investment is expected to be 3 – 4 years. However, it should be noted that this payback period does not take into account any savings from staffing costs, which will be used in addition to the savings on building costs described in this report.

There is also the potential to gain a capital receipt from the sale of the Old Aylestone Library building and/or the Southfields Drive Community Centre site. No targets have been set by the programme in terms of achieving capital receipts and so at this stage these have not been estimated.

The level of potential capital receipts is dependent on the option selected as this will determine which buildings will be up for disposal. These receipts could be used to offset some of the capital costs.

In terms of realising these savings, this can only happen once the building in question

has been transferred, demolished or sold, depending on the action. The following table shows when it is expected that efficiencies will start to become available

Building	Efficiency Commencement
Southfields Drive Community Centre	March 2015
Gilmorton Community Centre	March 2015
Aylestone Library	October 2014
The Linwood Centre	March 2015

The table above is based upon the completion of the projects as shown in section 2.3.2 above, any changes to these projects may have an effect on the availability of the savings and the date from which it can be realised.

3.4.4 Non-financial benefits

There are a number of non-financial benefits that apply to this model as follows:

- The result would be protection of services while achieving a 30% reduction in spending
- A reduction in energy use of approximately 30% and associated carbon dioxide savings that will contribute towards achieving the corporate environmental improvement objective to reduce the council's greenhouse gas emissions
- The increased availability of workshop spaces would generate job opportunities and development opportunities for local small businesses
- The model is in line with the majority views received from the engagement process i.e. increase co-location of services, invest in the Southfields Library, protect services delivered
- Convenient, co-located services, new services and some longer opening hours
- Releasing land for housing development
- Potential for additional services to be provided independently by community groups should they take on the Old Aylestone Library building
- Multi-service centres improve the opportunities for communicating a wider amount of information about community activity to a wider audience
- Using multi-service centres allows for longer opening hours, which supports more people to access them
- Allows a new model of operational management to be implemented, incorporating community groups and stakeholders into the planning and running of programmes of activity
- Multi-service centres will provide more opportunities for volunteers to get involved in a wider range of services
- Investment in multi-service sites to assist the longer-term viability of the services

in the area

- The addition of a self-service library in the area will increase library usage, contributing to all of the benefits that are associated to this type of service (literacy etc.)
- Usage of multi-service centres has proven to be higher than having individual services operating from single buildings from previous work carried out i.e. Aylestone Library, St Matthews Centre

3.5 Risks and Dependencies

The following list describes the risks and issues currently identified

- The overall model is dependent on the improvements to the Southfields Library and any delays in this work will have a knock on effect on the remainder of the programme. This is of particular note as the Southfields Library is a Grade II listed building, and has a risk of containing asbestos which will require safe removal prior to refurbishments being carried out.
- The projects included in the model are multi-faceted and will require the input, expertise and ownership from different areas of the council
- For all improvement works the identification and remedial actions required arising from the presence of asbestos may increase the costs and delay completion of any works
- The efficiencies are predicated on the ability to dispose of / demolish the assets that will no longer be used. The Southfields Library building is Grade II listed and therefore the proposed improvements to the building are subject to gaining Listed Building Consent. Preliminary discussions have taken place with conservation and planning officers and at this stage there is nothing to indicate that this approval will not be granted, however the risk of this not being gained is still recognised
- Capital costs are estimated at this stage based on the methodology described in section 3.4.2, these are currently being refined working through detailed design with architects

The following list describes the dependencies that have been identified to this point:

- Any changes to the Youth Service provision at the Kingfisher Youth Centre and Magpie Centre could have an effect on the proposed usage of these buildings and an impact on the usage of buildings in direct scope where close proximity exists
- Sports Services – the Southfields Drive Sports Centre will be transferred internally within the division from Community Services to the Council's Sports Services to seek to increase the take up of sport and physical activity opportunities in the Area
- The completion of the projects will rely significantly on other support services within the council, particularly property, planning, and, housing

4. Details of Scrutiny

This report is being considered by the Neighbourhoods Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission on 13th March 2014.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The capital costs for alteration and improvement of community buildings would be financed from the corporate Service Transformation Fund. Capital receipts may be received from any sale of land and buildings that are released from their current use. On-going revenue savings of circa 30% are sought, which would be achieved by proposals in this report for more efficient ways of working and better use of buildings, whilst protecting service quality. Should space be released at the Linwood Centre, it could be used to meet the demand for more small business workshops, the rental income from which would be expected to cover the on-going running costs.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081.

5.2 Legal implications

Legal advice on the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the law relating to consultation and decision making has been provided previously to Culture and Neighbourhood Services and further advice will be provided, as required, as specific issues arise.

Greg Surtees, Legal Services, ext. 37 1421.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been completed on the proposals made.

The proposed changes for alternative sites that maintain local service provision will have positive impacts for people across all protected characteristics as highlighted in

the report and EIA with the addition of new local services and upgrading of local facilities. Consultation has identified concern about access to alternative sites by elderly and disabled people - the only negative equality impact raised by residents. There are a number of options available for elderly and disabled people to use to access alternative sites - available public transport or specialised transport if needed, particularly if they have designated mobility needs and resources. Community groups could also explore whether they could assist in providing access to alternative sites for those with less specialised mobility needs.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

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

Environmental Impacts

The Council has a corporate carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction target of 50% of the 2008/09 level by 2025/26 and the consolidation of neighbourhood buildings and the co-location of services will contribute towards achieving this target. It is estimated that a 30% reduction in energy use and associated carbon dioxide emissions could be achieved through implementation of the proposed model. The Energy Reduction Fund bid for the replacement boiler at Southfields Library is welcomed.

Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team (x372251)

6. Background information and other papers:

None.

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Consultation Report – TNS South Area January / February 2104

8. Is this a private report (if so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes