1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This briefing note summarises the content and context of a petition received by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2019. The petition, titled ‘The retention of a Library Service and Contact Centre at the Carnegie Library in Jedburgh’ received a total of 157 signatures.

2 PETITION

2.1 The 157 signatories to the petition wish to retain the Library Service and Contact Centre in the current building rather than relocating the services to the new Jedburgh Grammar Campus (JGC) for the following reasons:

   (a) Proposed location is unsuitable, being hard to access for many council residents.

   (b) Proposed space is too small to comply with Scottish Library and Information Council’s (SLIC) public library strategy.

   (c) The current heritage building was given to the town as a library for every resident.

   (d) Left vacant the building will become a liability.

2.2 The petition outlines a number of consequences to the plans to integrate the services in to the JGC as:

   (a) Detrimental to the health and social welfare of residents.

   (b) Economic health of the town will be impaired.

   (c) Scottish Borders Council will not be delivering an excellent public service.

   (d) Culture and creativity will be impaired.
3 CURRENT LIBRARY CONTACT CENTRE

3.1 Previously the Council’s Contact Centre, which is the Council’s face to face Customer Advice & Support Service, operated separately from the Library via a property in Exchange Street, Jedburgh. In April 2013 the Contact Centre was fully integrated with the Library and is currently operated by the Council’s Customer Advice & Support Service.

3.2 The Library Contact Centre is currently open on a part-time basis for a total of 25 hours per week as shown in Table 1 below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening times of Library Contact Centre, Jedburgh</th>
<th>Number of hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 10.00-13.00 &amp; 14.00-17.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 14.00-19.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Closed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10.00-13.00 &amp; 14.00-17.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 10.00-15.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 09.30-12.30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Closed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of hours per week</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

3.3 There were 389 members of the Library as at 31 March 2019 with 229 members under the age of 60 and 160 over 60.

3.4 During that year a total of 8,625 items, mainly books, were issued averaging 166 per week.

3.5 The library currently offers access to computers through the Peoples Network. During 2018/19 they were used for a total of 1,391 hours averaging 27 hours per week.

3.6 Last year the usage of the Contact Centre facility averaged 72 transactions a week.

4 THE JEDBURGH GRAMMAR CAMPUS

4.1 In 2016, Scottish Borders Council undertook a strategic review of the school estate. Each community was invited to identify needs for educational opportunities going forward, and despite Jedburgh being by far the smallest school population, the engagement in the consultations accounted for 75% of all responses received. The town highlighted a clear appetite for change in how not only education, but all services and facilities were being delivered.
4.2 As a result of this clear support for something different, a large scale exercise was undertaken to scope out what could be achieved and as a result, the objective was set “to deliver a community asset which would deliver tangible benefits for the health, wellbeing, learning and economic opportunities across the Jedburgh community.”

4.3 The vision for the campus was agreed as:

- A single learning space in the town where everyone in the community simultaneously learns, develops and keeps healthy.
- Where everyone in the community can attain, achieve, participate and be included.
- Where our most vulnerable children and citizens are supported and included to achieve, attain and participate.
- Where Education is for everyone at every stage of their life.
- Where care and learning are embedded.
- Where learning and employment are embedded.
- Where healthy living i.e. diet, lifestyle and activity are embedded.
- Where learning as a lifelong journey with access to resource and facility regardless of age or ability.
- A space where the talents, abilities and skills of everyone in the community are brought together for the benefit of all.
- A space which maximises use of all community and council resources.
- Where there is a one place approach to service delivery.
- With a one place approach to making the most of capacity in the community.
- A Secondary based learning space for children with additional support needs including children with autistic spectrum needs.

4.4 As well as the obvious benefits from this, the Council is committed to the Christie principals of best value and integration and sees education provision and its buildings as a valuable resource for the community before, during and after the school day. Through developing the objectives, the campus project sees the merger of all the educational, sports and community facilities. Funding investment was secured from Scottish Government on the basis of concurrent community use within the facility in early 2017 and the construction of the campus is well underway with opening scheduled for April 2020.

5 FIT FOR 2024 - PROPERTY RATIONALISATION

5.1 A programme of property rationalisation is being progressed as part of Fit for 2024 and the theme “Making Better Use of Council Properties”.
5.2 Over the last five years, SBC has, on average, spent £14m per year on the running costs of property including refurbishing and repairing the estate. However, the sheer size of the estate means that this investment is spread too thinly and makes it challenging to sustain properties that are fit for purpose in future.

5.3 The programme aims to ensure that the Council is bolder and braver in the decisions it takes about its properties and engages with communities and partners on how we can, together, meet changing customer needs and community demands in a sustainable and innovative way. It takes a localities and town-based approach to property rationalisation looking at:

- The investments the Council are making in both new and existing properties in each town and locality
- The opportunities that these investments offer for rationalising properties and having fewer but better fit for purpose buildings
- Identifying those properties that are core, non-core or surplus

5.4 Engagement with local communities around proposals in each town and locality is central to the programme approach. This engagement includes how, and where, services can be provided and what should be done with buildings which are no longer core to service delivery or are already surplus to requirements. A series of engagement events are currently being rolled-out across Borders communities as part of the programme and the first of these was in Jedburgh on the 26th June this year. The event, which built on earlier public engagement around the development of the campus, provided an opportunity to highlight the way in which the campus could be used for wider community uses including library and contact centre services in future.

5.5 Members of the public attending the event were asked for their views on the future use of the library building as well as the existing grammar school site and the town hall. Views are currently being fed into a feasibility study on the future use of these buildings and sites, to avoid them being left vacant, which is understandably a concern of the petitioners. At least two community groups have subsequently expressed an interest, under the Community Empowerment Act, in the Library Building. Nothing has progressed to a formal stage as yet.

5.6 Legal advice was taken on any potential restrictions on the sale of the Library Building ahead of the engagement event. While the property is a “Carnegie Library”, it can be sold without restriction. The property itself was not given to the Council by Carnegie but was, instead, purchased from a private individual. There were no restrictions on the title imposed by that disposition and the Council can sell it.

6 FUTURE VISION FOR SERVICES

6.1 The JGC will strengthen Jedburgh as a learning town where children and adults of all ages can grow and learn together. It will enable a completely different vision for learning and community, bolster Jedburgh’s ability to support and sustain community life by providing a new and appropriately
scaled single learning campus for all the generations within Jedburgh and the surrounding rural communities.

6.2 The learning campus will have space for parental and community activities from early morning into the evening where the whole community can enjoy learning and wellbeing activities. One of the biggest changes we have is to allow concurrent use of facilities. Traditionally buildings have accommodated schools from 9 to 4 and the wider agenda for the community has wrapped round these times. This campus will be able to be utilised by all groups at all times, and this was a condition of the funding awarded by Government.

6.3 Simply through being in the same facility will offer endless opportunities for informal contact across the generations. Learning being visible to all those accessing the building provides inspiration as well as promoting a positive view of the young people in schools.

6.4 For young people, older generations being in and around, sharing facilities and resources creates positive role models. Generations learn to understand and respect each other and to benefit from learning together.

6.5 The location of the public library resource within the campus means that from babies onwards families will have the opportunity to engage in literacy activities from intergenerational storytelling in purpose built ‘reading snugs’ to online reading programmes which support the basics of reading skills.

6.6 Providing the Contact Centre services from the campus will further encourage community to access all their needs in one place – but in a place where there are opportunities to meet and be sociable. Rather than just attending to business and leaving, all generations will hopefully be encouraged to stay and contribute to the life of the campus.

6.7 Increasingly customers expect to be able to access services 24/7 and the Council’s current Digital Customer Access (DCA) programme is focussed on how the Council can deliver more, and improve the customer experience, in a digital world. This is key to the delivery of the Council’s digital vision which is to become a digital organisation implementing digital options across the entirety of its functions to improve service delivery. This will be achieved by, for example, building processes around the customer experience, employing data-driven decision making, rolling out digital learning and digital self-service, simplifying and standardising processes, exploiting automation and utilising digital methods of engagement with employees and citizens.

6.8 Inherent in that vision is an acknowledgement that not all services or transactions can be delivered in a digital manner, nor will all citizens have the relevant skills or resources to engage digitally. Those citizens will still receive relevant support and this will be considered as part of the Fit for 2024 transformation programme.
6.9 The Scottish Libraries Information Council (SLIC) do not have any guidance on the design of libraries. The designated library space will form an integral part of the new campus building and extends beyond one fixed space e.g. into the designated community space within the main entrance. The new campus will provide Live Borders, working in partnership with the Council, with the opportunity to refresh the current stock, allow opening hours to be extended and to work with the community to start up new activities and services e.g. Code Club, Lego sessions and live music events. The new campus will ensure that library services in Jedburgh have a more visible presence in a location where the community can access other services. This approach will enhance the opportunities to engage in cultural and creative activity as opposed to impair them.

6.10 The new campus will enable a more joined up service with partners and other agencies and the ability to forge new partnerships and delivery models to better meet present and future needs of the community. The co-location of libraries with other services is not a new approach and there is an increased emphasis on the changing role and the way communities use libraries e.g. digital access, learning and employment support. Co-location will open up opportunities for the service to engage with a much wider audience and attract new users to the library service who may not have visited the library in its previous location in the town centre.

6.11 Increasingly customers are using the digital services offered by Live Borders Library services. These are provided free for all library members, in a location with a wi-fi connection e.g. home/school/gym/library, and provide a range of online resources which customers can access 24 hours a day to download e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines. Support is available through the service for customers who require support to access the internet and this is something that will be a key focus for the new campus. The investment in ‘Inspire Learning’ allowing the rollout of iPads to pupils will offer families new opportunities to access digital services.

6.12 Live Borders Library Services deliver a housebound library service to borrowers who are more or less confined to their home, for the very old and vulnerable or for persons with a disability who cannot reach their local library. This service enhances the provision for vulnerable groups.

6.13 “What Matters Hubs” are sessions held in many Borders Towns under the Health and Social Care agenda. Bringing together staff from Social Work, Health, Carer’s association, Charities and various support networks, these hubs offer the opportunity for the older population to access advice, support and services. Locating such a provision within the campus will not only extend this opportunity to the elderly population, but to the entire community.

6.14 It is recognised that for some residents the new location may be less convenient or pose some challenges. Officers from the project delivery team are in dialogue with colleagues in passenger transport to review transport routes and seek opportunities to enhance provision within the town to include public transport accessing the campus as part of the
established routes and services and it is hoped, that with sufficient demand, this provision could expand.

6.15 The JGC provides an opportunity for the Council, Live Borders and other key partners to improve outcomes for the residents of the town. This means taking a new approach to service design and delivery and being adaptable to change as the Campus opens and develops. Key to this will be ongoing discussions with all stakeholders on how services can be accessible for all.

7 SUMMARY

7.1 The response to the petition is outlined above. The response to each of the key concerns, detailed in the petition are summarised in table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns raised</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed location is unsuitable, being hard to access for many council residents</td>
<td>It is recognised that for some residents the new location may be less convenient or pose some challenges. The project delivery team are specifically looking at access which includes a review of transport routes seeking opportunities to enhance provision within the town.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It was also highlighted at the property engagement event on 26 June 2019 that for some residents of the town the location will be easier to access.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The site selected for the new community campus was chosen following a rigorous options appraisal process which included significant community engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The expansion of the opening hours of these services and the further promotion of digital services, will also improve accessibility. This includes the new opportunities via ‘Inspire Learning’ for families to access digital services through iPads.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussions will continue with all stakeholders on how the services can be accessible for all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The proposed space is too small to comply with Scottish Library and Information Council’s (SLIC) public library strategy.

The Scottish Libraries Information Council (SLIC) do not have any guidance on the design of libraries.

The Library and Contact Centre services will be provided from areas across the campus and are not restricted to only the fixed space shown on the plans. There are large, flexible areas within the campus that the community can use in addition to the school and nursery spaces and Live Borders and the Council are taking the opportunity to consider how services can be delivered differently.

The new campus will provide Live Borders, working in partnership with the Council, with the opportunity to refresh the current stock, allow opening hours to be extended and to work with the community to start up new activities and services.

The current heritage building was given to the town as a library for every resident.

It is acknowledged that the building is important to the town. Although a “Carnegie Library”, the property was not given to the Council by Carnegie but was purchased by the Council from a private individual. There were no restrictions on title imposed by that disposition. The property can be sold without restriction.

Left vacant the building will become a liability.

The Council, through engagement with the community, through interested bodies and via a feasibility study, is seeking to find a sustainable future for the building which maintains or enhances the built environment in the town.

Interest in the building has already been expressed informally and discussions will continue on its potential future use.

Table 2

Approved by:
Jenni Craig
Service Director Customer & Communities

Author(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation and Contact Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenni Craig</td>
<td>Service Director Customer &amp; Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley Munro</td>
<td>Lead Education Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background Papers:
Previous Minute Reference:
Jedburgh Intergenerational Learning Campus – 21 December 2017
Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenni Craig can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Jenni Craig, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells – Tel. No. 01835 824000 Ext. 5013; Email- jcraig@scotborders.gov.uk