

<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Decision Type:</b> Non-Key
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<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 07 November 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Radcliffe regeneration, interim service arrangements	
<b>Report of</b>	Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth	

## 1 Summary

- 1.1 The Radcliffe Regeneration Framework is a plan to invest in new facilities in the Town. This includes the construction of a new school, the opening of a new Leisure Centre and Library as part of the new Radcliffe Hub and the redevelopment of the current Radcliffe Library into an Enterprise Centre. Overall, this represents a welcome improvement to service provision and is a significant investment to the Town.
- 1.2 This report is an update on the interim service arrangements required in Radcliffe to enable the implementation of these schemes.
- 1.3 Vacant possession of the Spring Lane site is required by March 1<sup>st</sup> so that work can begin on the construction of the new school. The affected services are the Leisure Centre and the Pupil Referral Unit. (PRU). The Leisure Centre will need to close on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to meet this requirement and the PRU will need to vacate their site during February half term 2024. Any delay in vacating the Spring Lane site will attract a financial penalty for the Council of £2.4m.
- 1.4 A grant from UKSPF will enable the redevelopment of Radcliffe Library into an Enterprise Centre by April 2025. There will be some disruption to Library Services whilst the construction work is undertaken in 2024 and during the decant from the current building to the Hub between April 2025 and Autumn 2025. A further report will be brought forward once more details about construction and decant are known following the December 2023 Regeneration Board.
- 1.5 A full programme plan for Radcliffe will be produced before Christmas setting out all the interdependencies, affected staff will be briefed beforehand and a full communications plan will be developed to keep service users, residents, Members, and staff informed of progress.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

That Members agree the following:

- 2.1 Agree that the Leisure Centre in Radcliffe will close on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to enable the handover of the site for the construction of the new school on the Spring Lane site.
- 2.2 To note the temporary arrangements which will be put in place prior to the opening of the new leisure facility in Radcliffe in late 2025.
- 2.3 To note that the PRU will vacate the Spring Lane site in February half term 2024 and options to proceed with alternative arrangements are underway and will be approved subject to further work on costs and programme planning. A further report will be brought forward once this work is completed.
- 2.4 To note recent progress with the development of the Enterprise Centre and a proposal to bring forward a further report setting out details of decant and library services.

### **3 Reasons for recommendation(s)**

- 3.1 Any delay in vacating the Spring Lane site will attract a financial penalty for the Council of £2.4m.
- 3.2 Various options have been explored to re-provide a full-time sports hall and gym in Radcliffe and the service has worked closely with local Members and the community and voluntary sector to identify suitable locations. This has not been possible as the community venues are required for other activities throughout the week such as church services and it would not be possible to move the gym equipment to accommodate.
- 3.3 It is not possible or affordable to re-provide a temporary swimming pool in Radcliffe.
- 3.4 The new Community Wellness Activity Plan is an appropriate next step following the development of the 2023 Wellness Strategy and is an excellent demonstration of the ambitions of the Let's do it Strategy, working together to deliver for the local community.
- 3.4 The PRU will need to vacate the site during February half term 2024 to hand over the site for the construction of the school. The option to relocate to Spurr House has proved too expensive and not achievable within the timescales so further options are under discussion.
- 3.5 The financials have been agreed to turn the current Radcliffe Library into an Enterprise Centre by April 2025 and the work is underway to tender for a construction partner and operator. When the construction programme is agreed a further report will be brought forward after December 2023 Regeneration Board to set out the operational impact on the current Library.

## **4 Alternative options considered and rejected.**

- 4.1 An options appraisal was carried out looking at assorted options to re-provide the sports hall and gym in community venues and by renting or buying a portable building, but this proved to be unaffordable in the current climate, there was a lack of available alternative sites and a shortage of portable buildings nationally due to RAAC issues elsewhere in the UK.
- 4.2 An alternative long-term option for the PRU relocation was considered at Spurr House although costs have risen significantly against the Cabinet approved budget. This option has been discounted as a short-term solution as the construction programme does not align with offering vacant possession of Spring Lane to the DfE.
- 4.3 An options appraisal was carried out looking at potential alternative locations for the library once the construction work on the Enterprise Centre commences. It has not been possible to identify a vacant building in Radcliffe that is large enough or at an affordable price to relocate the whole library to. Options around providing a portable building on the car park were investigated but there is a lack of availability of these buildings nationwide due to the current RAAC crisis in schools across the Country and the costs were unaffordable. The architect and developer will work up a series of options for the December 2023 Regeneration Board for the continuation of Library Services in conjunction with the Library Service during this period.

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## **Background**

### **5 New school**

- 5.1 Bury Council, working with Star Academy and the Department for Education, (DfE), continue to progress plans that will see the establishment of the Star Leadership Academy, Radcliffe's new secondary school. Star Academy Radcliffe have appointed a principal Designate for the school who will attend the Bury Secondary Headteacher meetings. The school is on track to open in temporary accommodation for September 2024 and then into its permanent home by September 2025.

- 5.2 The new school will be built on the site of the former Coney Green High School at Spring Lane. The council has recently approved admission arrangements for its secondary schools for the 2024/25 academic year, including the arrangements that will apply for the new school.
- 5.3 Construction is expected to start on site in late 2023. The school will open to its first group of year 7 pupils in September 2024. The construction of the new school in Radcliffe on the Spring Lane site requires the relocation and reprovision of both the Leisure Centre and the PRU. The Department for Education (DfE) have confirmed that they require vacant possession of the Spring Lane site to make way for the demolition of the existing buildings starting in Spring 2024, that will make way for the construction of the new Radcliffe Academy. There is a financial penalty of £2.4m if vacant possession is not offered up on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## 6 **Leisure Centre**

- 6.1 Improved Leisure facilities have been planned to open at the new Radcliffe Hub in late 2025. This will provide a state-of-the-art gym, studio space and a rooftop fitness space as well as swimming facilities, a changing village, library, café, community meeting space and a clip 'n' climb centre. A new secondary school will open in 2024 and the current Library will be repurposed into an Enterprise Centre. This represents a huge investment and improvement in services for the town.
- 6.2 A two-month period is required to decommission the existing leisure centre buildings including closing down all services, removal and storage of equipment, fixtures, and fittings to be retained as well as relocating where possible, existing customers and user groups. A separate decommissioning plan is being prepared to oversee the decommissioning tasks.
- 6.3 An options appraisal was developed to see whether the gym, sports hall, fitness, and wellness provision could be retained in Radcliffe until the new Hub opens in late 2025. It was assumed that a temporary swimming pool could not be provided due to costs. The swimming pool at Radcliffe Leisure Centre closed on 25<sup>th</sup> August due to on-going maintenance and repair issues which were becoming too costly to maintain in the short term. Alternative arrangements to relocate swimming provision to Ramsbottom and Castle Leisure Centres have been made available and Radcliffe Swimming Club have agreed to relocate to Castle Leisure Centre in the interim period. Community Learn to Swim and school swimming lessons are also being re-provided.
- 6.4 In order to vacate the site for the school by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024, it is recommended that the remaining gym, studios, and sports hall at the Leisure Centre close on

10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to give enough time to vacate the building and hand it over. It has not been possible to identify an alternative site in Radcliffe for the sports hall and gym and additional provision at Castle Leisure Centre will be provided including an additional female only space which will reduce the costs of storage of gym equipment.

- 6.5 Bury Council has developed a Wellness Strategy in partnership with Sport England. This is a groundbreaking innovative approach to getting inactive people moving more and participating in preventative health programmes which reflects the Sport England Future of Public Leisure Report 2023. Delivery is through four new neighbourhood Wellness Teams which will go live on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The teams will work with the community, faith, and voluntary sector as well as other partners particularly in the NHS to deliver a full and enriched programme of activities in community settings.

One of the neighbourhood Teams will be based in Radcliffe which will enable wellness and fitness services to remain in Radcliffe. This will be a full programme of activity spread across seven days at convenient community locations. Venue hire will be at no additional cost to the Council and will be funded by the participation fees for each session. We would like to thank various organisations in Radcliffe that have tried to accommodate us including Radcliffe Football Club and several Churches. We will work with these organisations to deliver the Community Wellness Activity Plan.

- 6.6 It is proposed that a communication plan will be put in place as soon as possible.
- All leisure members will be notified by email and the planned closure will be highlighted via the website and Bury Leisure phone lines and social media channels.
  - Draft copy is ready for the regeneration newsletter which will be published the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> Nov.
  - A meeting has taken place with Leisure Centre staff with support from HR and the TU and there will be a further meeting with Radcliffe Library staff on 31<sup>st</sup> October.
  - The next meeting of the Radcliffe Regeneration Forum is on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

## **7. The Pupil Referral Unit**

- 7.1 The current PRU is also located on the Spring Lane site. This site will have to close during February half term 2024 and the operation moved to another site to allow vacant possession to be offered up to the DfE. A project to relocate the PRU function to Spurr House in Unsworth has been ongoing although has been affected by increasing costs and programme delays.

- 7.2 To facilitate the relocation of the Pupil Referral Unit, plans had been developed and dialogue advanced for the procurement of a preferred contractor to convert the Council owned Spurr House site. Walker Sime Consultancy were appointed to do a project review and their report was received in October 2023. The main findings were that the project was not deliverable within the required timescale or affordable against the budget. Following advanced dialogue and discussion, it has become clear the necessary construction work at Spurr House cannot be completed in the timescales required.
- 7.3 The Land and Property Team have explored several alternative sites across the Council owned portfolio. Further options are being reviewed for the development of an interim facility with the senior leadership team of Oak Learning Partnership, the identified sponsor for the Spring Lane PRU. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet with a proposal for this site.

## **8. The Enterprise Centre**

- 8.1 The scheme aims to convert Radcliffe Library, located within Radcliffe Town Centre and adjacent to the Levelling Up regeneration activity (part of the Radcliffe Regeneration Framework) to a flexible, multi-functional Enterprise Centre. The space will provide a range of private offices and bookable hot desks to facilitate up to 100 occupiers. The end goal is to create a vibrant, flexible space that will enhance footfall in Radcliffe Town Centre further igniting additional investment into a location on the cusp of reinvention. This will nudge further investment and confidence in the town, providing additional business rates revenue to the Council and a reason to visit and invest in Radcliffe for businesses and house builders. Nine out of ten Bury businesses employ less than nine people and whilst there is some private provision in Bury, this is in high demand. The Council-owned Bury Business Centre is also almost fully occupied, further demonstrating demand to support additional small-scale workspace. A pivotal part of Radcliffe's levelling up ambitions are to increase footfall in the town centre where businesses have access to required services.
- 8.2 Community access to the facility will be a key element of the project and bookable meeting space will be available to rent by both business and community users, subject to funding outputs requirements (businesses supported) being met in the first instance.
- 8.3 A grant from UKSPF and investment from Bury Council will enable the redevelopment of Radcliffe Library into the Enterprise Centre by April 2025. There will be some disruption to Library Services whilst the construction work is undertaken and during the decant from the current building to the Hub. A further report will be brought forward following the December 2023 Regeneration Board with options to ensure the continuation of the Library Service during this time.

- 8.4 The construction programme is planned to begin in September 2024 for a 24.5-week programme of work. Site mobilisation and any required library decant should commence in August 2024. Two options are being considered and costed for the library during this period. Working with the construction contractor, once we have more detail on the construction methodology, we will consider whether we can retain partial opening hours/days for the library by dividing the ground floor into two halves via an acoustic wall. Secondly, we will seek to use any available space in the existing Market Hall for parts of the library, including options potentially to move the children's library there in the interim.
- 8.5 These are high level proposals now and will require a more detailed construction programme and discussions with the Library Service and the impact of the work on the service before any decisions can be taken. There will be discussions with stakeholders including:
- Internal design phase including engagement with library staff and Members.
  - Internal sign off at the December 2023 Regeneration Board
  - Public consultation which will be promoted across all communication channels including the Radcliffe Regeneration newsletter.
- 8.6 There may be disruption to the library once the Enterprise Centre opens in April 2025 until the new Radcliffe Hub opens in Autumn 2025 although this period coincides with the period the library would have been packing up and decanting from the current building to the Hub.

## **9 Links with the Corporate Priorities:**

- 9.1 The new draft Community Wellness Activity Plan is a comprehensive programme of activities, support, and access to services across the entire week in Radcliffe. The principle is to use the LET's Strategy to bring together in one place, what is happening across Radcliffe and across all areas of wellbeing.
- 9.2 Using the LET's principles the Activity Plan, led by the Radcliffe Wellness Team will show how the community, Council and NHS partners are working **together** to get moving more, what sessions need support and what sessions need to be provided. The Radcliffe Wellness Team will bring that specialist knowledge, such as getting blood pressure checks, smoking cessation advice, grant finding/applying and act as local co-ordinator with partners across the NHS and social prescribing.
- 9.3 The hire of community venues to deliver the Plan's activities will bring a spotlight to community venues and income generated from venue hire. This will support the voluntary, community and faith organisations to directly benefit

from the programme, build on their **strengths** and further anchor them into the life of the Town.

- 9.4 The development of the Enterprise Centre will focus on the **Enterprise and strengths** principles and provide managed workspace and business support within a local neighbourhood. This will provide opportunities for community wealth building through new business start-ups, increased local spend and the adoption of new skills.
- 9.5 The relocation of the PRU will enable the construction of the secondary school. This will in turn provide employment opportunities for local people and bring enhanced secondary school facilities to Radcliffe.

## **10 Equality Impact and Considerations:**

- 10.1 A draft EA is available for the Leisure interim arrangements. Whilst there will be some disruption to the provision of Leisure Services during this interim period, Radcliffe Swimming Club, community learn to swim and school swimming can be re-provided at other pools and discussions have taken place with stakeholders to deliver this. Additional female only gym provision will also be made available at Castle Leisure Centre using some of the gym equipment currently at Radcliffe. This will enhance provision in response to protected characteristics around gender and race. The development of the Community Wellness Activity Plan will provide new and enhanced Wellness activities in Radcliffe which will reach more people and support residents to be more active and healthier.
- 10.2 EAs for the relocation of the PRU and the development of the Enterprise Centre will follow as part of the reports that will be brought forward later.

## **11 Environmental Impact and Considerations:**

- 11.1 Bury Council has a pledge to be Zero Carbon by 2038. This means that the current estate needs to be rationalised and modernised. This Enterprise Centre scheme presents the opportunity to introduce a flexible and innovative workspace into the heart of a highly sustainable town-centre, reducing the need to commute to a place of work. The library building itself is of a certain age and the opportunity for refurbishment and redevelopment will enable the estate to reduce its carbon footprint over time.
- 11.2 The closure of the current Leisure Centre provision will reduce the amount of energy expended on site and the reprovision of fitness and wellness activities in Radcliffe within walking distance of residents' homes will increase the amount of active travel in the Town with no need to travel to Ramsbottom or Castle Leisure Centres.
- 11.3 The environment impact of the new school has been set out in previous



reports to Cabinet.

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## 12 Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a risk of a DfE fine if the Spring Lane site is not vacated by 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	Plans are in place to vacate the Leisure Centre on time and work is underway to progress the interim site of the PRU. Strong programme management will be required and close attention to progress monitored at the Regeneration Board.
There is a risk that a solution cannot be found for the interim continuation of Library Services during the construction period for the Enterprise Centre	Mitigations can be put in place once the construction methodology is known, and options will be brought to the December Regeneration Board.

## 13 Legal Implications:

Failure to vacate the site will result in a financial penalty for the Council, Members are asked to agree to the closure date of 10<sup>th</sup> December to facilitate vacant possession of the site. Earlier agreements with the DfE which have been reported to Cabinet penalties will be incurred if we cannot meet the terms of this agreement. Cabinet will receive further reports in relation to the proposed Enterprise Centre and library pre provision.

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## 14 Financial Implications:

There is a financial penalty of £2.4m if the site for the new school is not vacated by the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 therefore it is essential that this work is progressed. Previous reports have been brought to Cabinet with indicative budgets for the refurbishment of Spurr House to accommodate the relocation of the PRU. This budget is still within the Education capital programme until the final solution and costs are confirmed.

The costs of the works required for the Enterprise centre are funded through a UK shared prosperity fund grant and the Council Capital programme, any additional costs required to decant the library during the works will be worked up and brought forward to the Regeneration Board in December 2023. This will require the identification of additional funding.

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## 15 Appendices:

None

## 16 Background papers:

None

**17 Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
PRU	Pupil referral Unit
DfE	Department for Education
UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund
EA	Equality Assessment
RAAC	Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete