

Appendix 5

Press release and call for public consultation from Newport City Council 15 January, 2013

Maindee and Stow Hill Libraries

Newport City Council is facing extremely challenging financial constraints and has to consider future provision of all its services. As part of the necessary budget savings, it is reluctantly being proposed to close two of the city's 12 libraries.

Maindee and Stow Hill libraries have been selected because of their close proximity to other sites, particularly the Central Library in the city centre which has the widest offer of library and information services in Newport. It will mean that all residents are still within two miles of a library, as set down in national guidelines.

Councillor Debbie Wilcox, cabinet member for leisure and culture, said: "This is an incredibly difficult decision but we have to face the reality that budgets are shrinking and savings have to be made.

"We are proud of our library service and we are fortunate that we have so many libraries in the city. However, we are considering these closures as a necessity so we can continue providing an excellent service to all our residents in other premises and through the greater use of technology.

"Libraries are changing with the times and we are seeing growing numbers of residents using our non-traditional services such as ebooks. We also offer the innovative BookExpress service where people can order books online, have them delivered to their home and return them to us by post free of charge.

"We have undertaken consultation with library users which identified key services valued by the public. We are prioritising the reduced funding available to us to continue to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service across the city.

"I know that both venues have a long history of delivering an excellent service to residents and people will be attached to their local library but the current economic climate has made it impossible for us to continue to deliver all of our services in the traditional way. I wish to stress however that I am keen to hear and listen to the views of residents on these proposals."

Every effort will be made to redeploy staff affected by the closures into vacant posts in other premises.

The closures will result in a saving of £58,000 in 2013/14.

Comments on the proposal can be made to www.newport.gov.uk/haveyoursay by Friday 25 January.
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