



Proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom.

Consultation from 23rd August to 15th October 2021

www.stockport.gov.uk/haveyoursay

Introduction

- Stockport Council has been awarded £14.5 million Future High Streets Funding by the government to spend on Stockroom, a new Learning and Discovery space in Merseyway.
- Thanks to the people who took part in the first phase of engagement earlier this year on what could be included in Stockroom. Following the positive response to the idea of creating new, 21st Century library facilities in the town, we are now consulting with people about moving the Town Centre library services from Central Library into Stockroom.



In the UK, every Council has to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service” by law. Each Council has to decide how best to provide this service in terms of its physical location; access; and types of services on offer.

These services include but are not limited to;

- Book loans;
- Computer and Wi-Fi access;
- Heritage and archive material access;
- Activities and events;
- Advice and support services;

Some of these services operate from Central Library building on the A6 close to Stockport Town Centre.



Central Library was opened in 1913 and has operated as the Town Centre library since then. The layout of the building was suitable for how people used libraries through much of the 20th Century. However, the way the building is laid out and the investment needed make it a challenge to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service, fit for the 21st Century, from the building.

- The Heritage and Archive library is also only on a provisional accreditation and place of deposit status due to the poor state of the storage on the site.



Current trends in library usage

- Nationally library visitor numbers have been declining over the past decade.
- Stockport Central library has seen visitor numbers fall by almost half (42%) from April 2012 to March 2020 and it now attracts just over 100,000 visitor a year.
- In addition, loans have fallen 35% among 10 to 14-year-olds between April 2017 and March 2020, while loans have fallen 61% among 15 to 19-year-olds between April 2017 and March 2020.
- But the Council believe Stockroom will be able to attract more people to use the fantastic services our libraries provide.
- Where other local authorities have re-imagined their library services for the 21st Century there has been a substantial uptake in the use of those services.



Chester Storyhouse

- ❑ 800,000 visits to the library, café and community spaces in first year of opening
- ❑ Children's book loans increased by 50%



Ideas Store – Tower Hamlets

- ❑ Increased library visits from 550,000 to 2 million
- ❑ Enrolment in Adult Learning doubled to 8000 per year

- We are asking people to complete a short questionnaire to understand people's views on the proposed move of library services from the Central Library building, into Stockroom.
- Whatever the result of this formal consultation process there is no intent from the council to demolish or abandon the Central Library building – it is a Grade II listed building and is a much loved and important part of our town's heritage which we want to preserve. As such, Stockport Council has agreed some clear pledges for the future of the Central Library Building.
 - The building will not be abandoned or demolished
 - The Council will seek future uses that would be sensitive to the historic nature of the building and would retain public access to the building
 - The Council will not sell the freehold or allow the building to be developed for residential use that would mean the public losing access to this heritage asset



The Future High Streets Fund

- Launched by the government in 2018 to renew and reshape the high street in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability. “
- Stockport’s proposal was to create ‘Stockroom’, a new Learning and Discovery space in the heart of the town’s high street, Merseyway.
- Stockport was awarded £14.5m in December 2020
 - One of only 15 out of 72 Local Authorities to receive the full funding request
- The rules governing how this money can be spent mean investing the money into refurbishing Central Library is not possible. The money must be spent on supporting the High Street and repurposing vacant retail space.
- It is important to note that this is a government award which has been given to Stockport Council and this investment will not mean less investment in any of our community library buildings across the borough.



- Stockroom will be a centrally located and convenient new arrival point for the town centre, which will breathe new life into empty retail spaces on Adlington Walk in the heart of Merseyway and bring thousands of new visitors to the town centre, better supporting shops and businesses.
- Stockroom will be larger than a football pitch offering five times the floor space of Stockport's current Central Library
- The building could accommodate more than 20,000 books and provide new spaces for Stockport's historic archive and 21st Century touchscreen learning.
- Stockroom's size and location, in the heart of the high street means it will be able to provide more space, more services, more things to do and longer opening hours.
- Stockroom will be an inclusive space for everyone to use regardless of age or mobility and will provide with brand new 'best in class' toilets with enhanced facilities for people with a disability
- Stockroom will have direct access to over 800 car parking spaces including designated disabled and family spaces.



- Stockroom will be a place to learn, play and relax, providing a new café and meeting point as well as high-quality children's library and research and study spaces for people of all ages to inspire lifelong learning.
- Stockroom will provide better access to digital services and technology and adult learning opportunities to help people to achieve their full potential, allowing them to learn new skills and secure better jobs and good business growth
- It will also be a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together and celebrate our heritage.



Stockroom will use a range of technologies to bring every visit to life.



Indicative CGIs of what Stockroom could look like.

Questionnaire

- The questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete and by taking part you not only have a chance to make your voice heard but you could also win a High Street shopping voucher.
- The questionnaire is available online at www.stockport.gov.uk/haveyoursay and paper copies are available from public libraries across the borough.



Thanks and any questions?

