

Worthing Community Hub Frequently Asked Questions: Second Edition

We are now half-way through the engagement period to find out what residents and stakeholders think of proposals to bring together a Children & Family centre, young people's Find It Out centre and the Registration service, under one roof with the library, using the library building in Richmond Road.

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions so far, together with responses for what may be possible if we proceed to the feasibility stage.

Will there be fewer books to borrow?

We have no plans to reduce the collections of books for borrowing. We believe there is significant scope for changing the internal layout in the library and if we receive positive feedback during the engagement period we would work with library specialists to plan a modernised book stock layout, including space for browsing and reading, as well as library shelving.

Will you still provide quiet study space in the library?

Yes. We already know that quiet study space is a much valued part of the service libraries provide, particularly for those studying and those conducting local history or other research. If we receive positive feedback in the engagement period then the next stage will involve working with architects and library layout specialists to design modern spaces for core library services, including study space.

Will there be a cafe?

We know our partners in Worthing Museum already have plans to create a new café in their garden, as part of a wider project to refurbish their building, subject to successful funding applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other bodies. We would like to find ways to make it as easy as possible for visitors to the library building to also visit the museum next door, make use of the new café and access the expanded museum collections. We will of course look at all the comments at the end of the consultation and consider the idea of a Library café before we make our final proposal.

Why have you decided the Sure Start Children and Family centre is to be moved?

Other libraries in West Sussex already share their space with Children & Family centre teams, for example in East Grinstead, Midhurst and Findon Valley, and these all operate successfully. Families in these communities have the benefit of accessing all of the services from their Children & Family centre team, plus the added benefits of library services available in the same location.

The library building in Worthing has great scope for accommodating more services, in addition to the full range of library services already offered, if we refurbish the interior spaces. In scoping out options we have looked for County Council services which are already located close by to the library in Richmond Road and this is why the Footprints Children & Family centre, currently on Crescent Road, was selected, along with the Registration Service currently in Portland House, Richmond Road and the young people's Find It Out centre, in Marine Place.

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How will you ensure privacy in the library, for example space for mothers breastfeeding?

If the library is to accommodate a wider range of services it will be vital that the building is refurbished significantly to make appropriate spaces for each of the new services. Other libraries in West Sussex already share space with Children & Family centres and/or the Registration service, so we have knowledge and experience of the kinds of spaces required, for example for clinical appointments, group play sessions and confidential space for one-to-one appointments.

We believe there is significant scope for changing the internal layout of the three-storey library in Richmond Road. If we receive positive feedback from residents during the engagement period the next stage will be to engage architects to give us their expert opinion on options for refurbishment.

Is there possibility of an outdoor space at the library?

We know the garden at the Children & Family centre is important to families, so we would explore options for creating outdoor space at the library site. This will require architects' expertise, so cannot be answered fully until we move to the next stage, subject to positive feedback in the public engagement period.

How will you create environments suitable for both children playing and people registering a death?

Our largest libraries in West Sussex are already accustomed to creating different spaces for different activities, for example they provide quiet study space on one floor and space for group activities for people of all ages on another. This 'zoning' will be even more important if the library is to host a wider range of services, each with their own customer groups with their own specific needs.

We have other libraries where the Registration Service is already accommodated in the library, for example East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Storrington, so we have experience in carefully managing the environment to be appropriate for people who may be bereaved registering a death.

What parking will be provided, for staff or customers?

There are parking restrictions across the town centre in Worthing, including the roads surrounding all of the services which are part of these proposals. Currently there is no parking available for any of the staff working in the library.

We know that parking is very important for some of the staff working in the other services that have been suggested for moving to the library, for instance health staff who work in the Children & Family centre but also need to travel as part of their role.

If we receive positive feedback during the engagement we would seek to work with the relevant partners in the County Council and Adur & Worthing councils to explore what options there are for identifying parking for priority staff.

Customer parking will remain the same on the roads surrounding the library. The library building has bus stops immediately outside, providing good links to other parts of Worthing and communities along the coast. The library is also around 10 minutes' walk from the main railway station.