Ipsos MORI

Calderdale Council

Your Calderdale, Your Future

As the largest town in Calderdale, what happens in Halifax affects everyone who lives or works in the borough. We are very proud of Halifax town centre, and we want to know your views on how to make it even better. Calderdale Council has to decide on the best option for the future of the town centre and the Central Library and Archive, which is currently at the Northgate site near Woolshops and the bus station. The Council wants to hear your views on what the best option is.

Calderdale Council is committed to making the most of opportunities to build a future for Calderdale. This sometimes means making difficult decisions, such as how we make space for retailers so that they bring visitors and jobs to the area. We want to know what you think – please complete the Response Form, either by post or online. We will consider carefully your comments before making any decisions later in the year. Please note we will not consider previous consultations so please respond by the dates shown below.

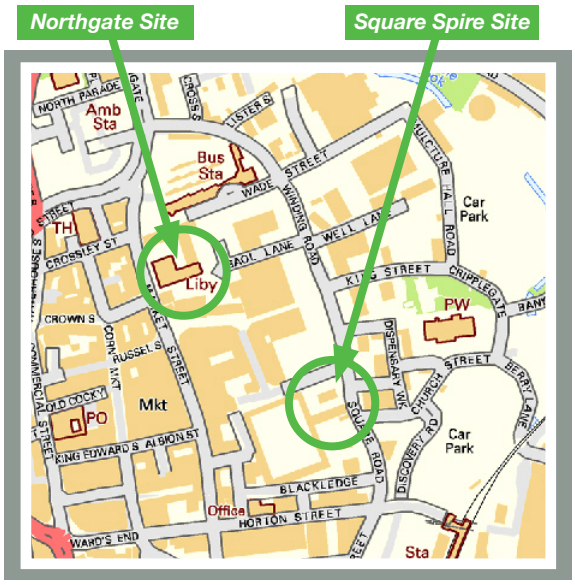
Councillor Tim Swift (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Janet Battye (Deputy Leader of the Council)

This document gives background information and outlines what the Council sees as the feasible options and lets you know how to have your say.

The Halifax town centre and Central Library and Archive consultation

Calderdale Council wants Halifax town centre to grow and to secure a better future for everyone in Calderdale. This means deciding how to develop and improve the town centre to make it a better place for residents to shop, work, and relax and for companies to do business. This would attract more people to Calderdale, as well as more businesses to provide jobs. **The future of the town centre and what happens to the Central Library and Archive are linked** – they cannot be taken as separate issues because what happens to the Central Library and Archive will affect what the Council can do in the town centre. Decisions about how best to change and improve Halifax town centre must be made carefully and it is important that as many people as possible across Calderdale have their say.



(c) Crown copyright. All rights reserved (Calderdale MBC) (100023069) (2012)

Calderdale Council has appointed Ipsos MORI, an independent agency, to ask for people's views on its plans for Halifax town centre and Central Library and Archive.

There have been several consultations on the Central Library and Archive previously and the latest was stopped earlier this year because it was felt to be flawed. Ipsos MORI, an independent agency, has been appointed to collect and analyse the results to ensure everything is done fairly and impartially.

The consultation has two parts: **a representative survey** of adult residents (sent by post to a random sample of addresses please respond by 3rd August) and **an open consultation** whereby people can go online or pick up a Response Form at Northgate House, Central Library and Archive or the Town Hall (please respond by 30th September). The results from the survey and consultation will help the Council to understand how people feel about the town centre and the Central Library and Archive and will be used in making the decision about what to do.

Why Halifax town centre needs to improve

Halifax is the largest town and shopping centre in Calderdale. It is where many businesses and public services are based – including Council offices, the law courts, the theatre and arts centres, Lloyds Banking Group, the Halifax Minster and Eureka! National Children's Museum.

Reports[1] show that Halifax town centre is less prosperous than in previous years compared to other similar sized towns. This means that:

- shoppers say there is not much choice in Halifax
- the town centre has fewer of the top 20 national shop chains than expected
- current shops are too small, some retailers want bigger shops than are available so they do not open in Halifax

Piece Hall, Square Chapel & Square Spire

The result is that when Calderdale residents want new clothes or shoes nearly half go to **Leeds, Huddersfield, Bradford, Manchester, or the White Rose Centre** rather than coming to Halifax town centre.[2]

An artrist impression of a new library and archive at Square Spire

The new **Broad Street Plaza** development in the town centre will open in autumn 2012 providing leisure facilities including a cinema, gym, restaurants, bars and 429 parking spaces. The majority of the space in Broad Street Plaza is already let.

Halifax town centre has many beautiful and historic buildings which are ideal for small independent shops but these shops are too small for what larger national retailers want now. The town needs larger retailers to attract shoppers to the town centre to enable smaller independent stores to prosper. **The Northgate site as a whole** would be an ideal area to build these new larger shops to attract new retailers and shoppers to Halifax.[3] Its location, adjacent to Woolshops (the prime shopping centre), presents an opportunity to build larger retail units which are currently lacking in the town centre and would also link this part of town with the Broad Street Plaza. The Council has already decided to move staff out of the Northgate House building, next to the current Central Library and Archive, and relocate the staff to its other buildings in the town centre. The Council however does not believe Northgate House site in isolation would be attractive to larger retailers as the site is too small and is disjointed from the rest of the retail provision. An alternative for this area is to demolish Northgate House and create a green space there, but an opportunity to improve the retail provision in the town centre would be lost.

DTZ has advised that redeveloping the whole Northgate site for a new retail development could bring **230 new jobs** to Calderdale.[4] This would bring an estimated £7.47million to the local economy every year, and would also increase the business rates revenue that the Council can use for local services. To do this though it would be necessary to move the Central Library and Archive. The Council has identified a site next to the Square Spire, near to the Piece Hall, as a possible location for a new library and archive.

Other improvements planned for the town centre include the Piece Hall redevelopment,[5] which is a visitor attraction set to include a new Heritage Interpretation Centre and Visitor Orientation Centre (subject to lottery funding), Orangebox (the new young people's centre next to the Piece Hall) and Cornerstone (the proposed extension of Square Chapel) to create a cultural quarter in Halifax town centre. Moving the Central Library and Archive to the Square Spire site next to the Piece Hall could also attract more people to the Piece Hall and to other cultural attractions around there.

We cannot 'do nothing' to the **existing Central Library and Archive building** as the heating, lighting, lifts, etc. are all out of date and the building does not meet modern day standards. As a result the library is inefficient and expensive to run. Therefore, if it is kept where it is there must be at least some essential refurbishment including separation of the main services from Northgate House which would involve building a new plant room.[6]

1 The Retail Needs Assessment 2009, carried out by White Young Green, the Town Centre Report 2012, written by Calderdale Council, and the Retail Needs Assessment: Population and Expenditure Report 2012, written by Calderdale Council. Copies of these reports can be found on the website: http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/consultations/towncentre-library/index.html 2 Retail Needs Assessment 2009, produced by White Young Green 3 DTZ report on Economic Impact Assessment , DTZ is an independent property agent 4 DTZ report on Economic Impact Assessment , DTZ is an independent property agent 5 An application for lottery funding has been made for this, and the Council will hear on this in the summer. 6 'Options Appraisal for Separating Halifax Central Library from Northgate House' Report written by Darton EGS, Cyril Sweett, JNP Group and DTA 7 See: The Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method website: www.BREEAM.org 8 In 2008/09 44,200 people used the King Cross library, in 2011/12 61,350 people used the new King Cross

The Council believes that it can provide a library and archive service more efficiently and cost effectively if a new building is designed and built, without compromising the amount of space available for public use. The new building would also be more environmentally friendly with the aim of achieving a BREEAM 'excellent' rating.[7] Previous experience across the country shows that people are more likely to use a **new modern library that meets the needs of its users.** Since the Council opened the new King Cross library the number of visitors has increased by 39%.[8] A new modern Archive would mean better storage and greater integration with the local studies service.

A decision needs to be made about the future of the town centre and the implications for the location of the Central Library and Archive building. The Council has looked at many different options but all essentially come down to the two shown below.

The Options - Option A

Build larger retail units on the Northgate site to attract larger retailers to Halifax. Build a new Central Library and Archive on the Square Spire site

Advantages

- Northgate site would be large enough to attract larger national retailers / shops
- A new development on the Northgate site could attract up to 230 new jobs and £7.47m a year into the local economy
- The existing library and archive building would remain open until the new one is built and is open
- A new library and archive would be less expensive to run as a building and would be more efficient and environmentally friendly than the existing Central Library and Archive building

Disadvantages

- Moving Central Library and Archive would mean people will have to get used to a new location
- The route between the bus station and the new location of the Central Library and Archive at Square Spire includes a hill and cobbled paths
- The New Central Library and Archive facility would not be as close to the bus station, or to Broad Street Plaza
- Option A is more expensive initially than Option B, but provides a library and archive with 21st century technology that, over time, costs less.

Estimated cost: £9.25 million total cost inclusive of professional fees and fit out (provided by cost consultants Gleeds)

The Options - Option B

Undertake basic and essential refurbishment at the existing Central Library and Archive Building. Demolish Northgate House and replace with a green space

Advantages

- The current Central Library and Archive building is close to the bus station, Woolshops and Broad Street Plaza
- Demolishing Northgate House would provide a green, landscaped space in the town centre
- Option B is cheaper initially than Option A, but further work on the existing building would be needed within a few years

Disadvantages

- A smaller Northgate site is not likely to be attractive to developers, and an opportunity to attract new larger national retailers and therefore jobs and money to the local economy would be lost.
- The opportunity to link the new Broad Street Plaza leisure scheme with the Woolshops would be lost
- Refurbishment would only address essential issues with the Central Library and Archive Building and would not provide a modern 21st Century library and archive
- The potential to increase visitors to the Central Library and Archive through provision of modern services and facilities would be lost
- An opportunity to rebuild the library adjacent to the Piece Hall to further enhance the cultural quarter would have been lost

Estimated cost: £3.9 million total refurbishment cost plus demolition of Northgate House and creation of green space (provided by Summers Inman Construction and Property Consultants and CMBC)

Reasons To Improve Halifax Town Centre

- Halifax has a beautiful and unique town centre, recognised by English Heritage [9]
- It makes the town a place people want to live, work, visit and spend money
- It helps existing businesses to thrive and helps stop further decline
- It provides jobs and supports the local economy
- It increases choice and the range of shops to bring people into Halifax
- It attracts further development to the town centre
- It brings more businesses to Calderdale

Halifax town centre: Southgate, Woolshops, Westgate

Have your say

The representative survey

If you have been asked to take part in the **representative survey of adult residents** and a Response Form is posted to your home address it can be completed by anybody aged 18 or over who is living at that address.

The open consultation

We would like to hear your views, whatever your age, about the future of Halifax town centre and Central Library and Archive.

You can take part in **the open consultation** by:

- Filling in the Response Form online at www.ipsos-mori.com/YourCalderdaleYourFuture
- Filling in a paper Response Form, you can get a paper version at Northgate House, Central Library and Archive and the Town Hall in Halifax
- Writing your comments and sending them to:
  Ipsos MORI, Your Calderdale Your Future consultation, Freepost RSHB-BXZH-YECK, Research Services House, Elmgrove Road, Harrow HA1 2QG

Please note that Calderdale Council has appointed Ipsos MORI to carry out this consultation on their behalf. All completed Response Forms sent to Calderdale Council will be forwarded to Ipsos MORI for evaluation.

Telling us what you think about these issues will help inform the Council's decision later in the year. Thank you for taking part.

[9] See: http://www.visitcalderdale.com/calderdaletourism/Whattoseeanddo/CultureandHeritage/tabid/147/language/en-US/Default.aspx