The Future of the Worcestershire County Library Service and Rubery Library

You will probably be aware that our library in Rubery is under threat. Set out below is a brief summary of the background to this situation and proposals for action to express our dissatisfaction with the proposals and to try and minimise the changes to the service and facilities that are so valuable to our community.

Background

The Worcestershire Library Service (WLS) has issued a consultation document about the future of the library service.

1. The WLS has a vision to meet local need and strengthen communities.

2. The role of libraries has been changing in the last 10 years and will continue to change in response to financial challenges, developments in technology and changing customer needs and expectations.

3. A libraries transformation programme was launched in 2011 which has seen over £3.7 million of savings through a) local community support for libraries, b) sharing library buildings, c) changes to the mobile library service, d) streamlining staff and management structures and e) investing in self service technology.

4. The council faces continuing financial pressures which mean that the WLS has to find savings of £800,000.

Consultation Process

The consultation is the process to share the WLS initial suggestions with residents and community organisations.

The WLS have carried out an assessment of community need for libraries and run a public survey to find out what residents value most about their libraries. They have identified six possible options for the 23 libraries in the county. They are as follows.

 1. No change - 7 libraries

 2. Reduce opening hours

 3. Implement 'Open Library' technology - 6 libraries

 4. Change community supported libraries to community managed libraries - 3 libraries

 5. Introduce new community managed libraries or 'partner' managed libraries - 6 libraries

 6. Co-locate with new community services (shared spaces) - 1 library

The proposal for Rubery and five other libraries is to introduce a new community run library (item 5 above), and seek new partners and volunteers to develop a managed library.

What Happens Next?

The outline consultation will run until 2nd February 2019. The deadline for the return of printed questionnaires is 4th February. The WLS will consider the responses received and come to a conclusion to the beat way forward, and their proposals will be presented to the County Cabinet in late spring 2019.

Local Consultation Opportunity

Members of the public are invited to attend a two hour open session at Rubery Library on Friday 21st December from 10.00am to 12.00noon to discuss the proposed changes to library services with the WLS management team.

More info

If you wish to study the consultation document, the link is as follows. www.worcestershire.gov.uk.uk/libraries