

To receive a reports on the library refurbishment project and consider any actions and associated expenditure – refreshment facilities and baby-changing provision

Report to: Library Sub Committee

Date of Report: 12/12/2025

Officer Writing the Report: Community Hub Team Leader

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with all necessary information relating to the library refurbishment project, enabling an informed decision to be made.

Officers Recommendations

Members are advised to:

1. Reconsider the refreshment provision, replacing the proposed vending machine with a coffee machine and revising its location, for the reasons set out in the main body of the report.
2. Note that the vending machine option is unlikely to comply with the Town Council's Environmental Wheel.
3. Ensure that baby-changing facilities are included within the project scope, as outlined in the main body of the report.

Report Summary

Upon consultation with the library staff, the CHTL agrees with the team regarding the stud wall and vending machines being inconsistent with the vision and aesthetic of the newly refurbished library. The following points outline the main concerns around the stud wall and vending machines, taking into consideration the needs of the public and the limitations of the building.

- Placement of the vending machines in the proposed plan would block significant light and obscure the windows that were installed recently, diminishing the natural light and aesthetic of the open space. The demolition of the central reception desk is intended to create an open plan, the addition of a wall making the entranceway feel narrow and closed in is not conducive to this vision.

- Access would be hindered by the proposed stud wall, where users would need to walk around the corner, behind the wall to access the vending machine.
- Safety of children could be hindered by the wall as staff monitor the entrance constantly. Young children will often try to escape when parents/carers back are turned, staff are able to monitor the door from the reception desk to raise the alert if a child leaves the premises. A wall reducing the visibility of the entrance would make it easier for children to go unnoticed. Children are always supervised by adults, however sometimes they are too quick!
- Plumbing and electricity would need to be rerouted to supply vending machines, at a cost to provide the necessary water and electricity.
- Alternative coffee machines would not require mains water and electricity, eradicating the need for a wall to be built. Positioning of the tank-fed machine is much more flexible and can be moved if needed to facilitate events and cleaning/maintenance.
- The cost of commercial vending machines is expensive, and they require regular servicing and maintenance by an external company.
- Vending machines in general do not provide high quality or ethically/responsibly sourced products. Care should be taken to supply the community with quality products that will meet the expectations of our users and support local suppliers who have quality and sustainability as their core values.

Alternative to Commercial Vending Machines

Consideration should be given to an alternative to the commercial vending machine, the most appropriate machine for the services that we would like to offer is the Bean to Cup machine. There are multiple advantages of the Bean to Cup machine as listed below.

- Cheaper to lease or buy.
- Cheaper to run.
- Less maintenance required.
- The ability to choose what coffee beans are supplied, with the option to sell and promote local, ethical companies and support small businesses.
- Coffee beans are easily interchangeable, meaning 'guest roasts' could be promoted and provide unique selling point (USP).
- Better quality products.
- Aesthetically more pleasing than a commercial vending machine.
- Self-service.
- Far smaller in size and footprint compared to a vending machine but still suitable for commercial use.
- No requirement for mains plumbing making it a more flexible option. The Bean to Cup machine has its own water tank which can be easily refilled.
- User friendly with a clear display screen. Easy to use and low waste.

- Two types of machine, one offering black coffee, hot water for hot chocolate and tea. Milk can be offered on the side, next to the machine and be topped up by staff when needed to reduce the amount of wasted milk.
The other type of Bean to Cup machine has a fresh milk tank, should members wish to have a machine that offers milky drinks, however this does increase the likelihood of wastage. With the milk tank on this specific machine, it is easily topped up to monitor milk usage and wastage.
- Fully automatic machine, staff would be required to top up the water tank at the beginning of the day.
- Bean to cup machines are more suitable for the needs of the library in comparison with a commercial vending machine.

Please see **Appendix A** for product specifications.

Location of Coffee Machine

- A bean to cup machine could be located next to the new reception desk which would catch the eye of library users when they approach the reception area. This is an area that will be the main point of contact within the library as most library users approach the reception area with queries. Having the machine situated next to the reception desk would encourage more users and subsequent uptake on profit, provide members with support if needed and allow for monitoring of the machine to avoid misuse or damage.
- The staff would have compostable takeaway cups behind the reception desk and take the payment at the desk for beverages. This would allow reporting of how many drinks were sold and streamline the money handling process as the takings would go directly into the till rather than into a separate vending machine.
- Hot chocolate and tea bags would also be kept behind the desk and given to customers once they have paid for the beverage. Providing compostable cups would also decrease the use of single-use plastic and reduce our negative impact on the environment.
- A discount initiative can also be applied when using a Bean to Cup machine, whereby customers could receive a small discount for bringing in their own cup or travel mug. Not only would this reduce waste, it would also reduce expenditure on takeaway cups.
- A loyalty card scheme could also be introduced to encourage regular purchasing of beverages. This is an incentive to increase profit and can be used as marketing to draw customers in.

Item Description	Length of lease	Unit Price	Total Net Cost
Jura W8 Bean to Cup Machine (CG)	2 years	£19.86 +VAT per week	£1,549
Jura W4 (CG)	2 years	£15.13 per week	£1,180.37
Jura W4 Bean to Cup (A)	3 years	£16 per week,	

Item Description	Purchase of machine	Unit Price	Total Net Cost
Jura W8 Bean to Cup Machine (CG)	TBC		
Jura W4 (CG)	TBC		
Jura W4 Bean to Cup (A)	TBC		

Baby Change Facility

In the original plans, there is no mention of a baby changing facility. It is recommended that one is included in the plans as this would offer a service required by many parents and carers that use the library and make the toilets inclusive to everyone.

This is a standard offer in public toilets to make them accessible to families. Currently, parents and carers must change young children on the floor or tables at the library, which poses risks to the child. Baby changing facilities would make the public toilet accessible to not only those with mobility issues but also to the parents and carers.

Depending on regulations, the fold-down changing table would best be situated in the accessible toilet.

The proposed amendments to the refurbishment plan present a more practical, cost-effective, and user-focused approach to enhancing the library space. Removing the stud wall and replacing commercial vending machines with a flexible Bean to Cup alternative preserves the open, welcoming aesthetic of the entrance, reduces unnecessary expenditure, and avoids operational complications such as plumbing alterations and external servicing demands.

The recommended placement of the coffee station beside the new reception desk further supports staff oversight, efficient service delivery, and improved customer experience. Additionally, the inclusion of a baby changing facility strengthens the library's commitment to accessibility and family-friendly provision.

How Does This Meet the Business Plan?

These proposed changes have been considered extensively, with in depth research and hospitality experience forming the basis for the recommendations.

Collectively, these proposals align with the Strategic Priorities by improving the library's functionality, supporting sustainability, and promoting collaboration with ethical and local suppliers. The changes outlined aim to ensure the refurbished library is an inclusive, attractive, and efficient community space that meets the needs of its users now and in the future

Budgets

Budget Availability:

TBC

Signature of Officer:

Community Hub Team Leader