

A Summary of Lambeth's Current Plans for Carnegie Library

The Gym

1. The gym would be confined to the basement. The previous plan for GLL to run exercise classes on the ground floor has been abandoned.
2. The basement would be let to GLL rent-free until the expiry in 2022 of its contract to run Lambeth leisure centres and for a further 20 years thereafter at a minimum rent specified in the lease of £40 000 a year.
3. Lambeth and GLL would be able to terminate the lease at any time by mutual agreement. Additionally, GLL would have a right to terminate unilaterally at the time the leisure contract expires.
4. Operation of the leisure centres is expected to generate profits from which the operation of the gym would be subsidised. The profits so used would otherwise be Lambeth's and available to spend on any of the Council's activities, including libraries.
5. Access to the gym would normally be from Ferndene Road by inserting a membership card in a machine in the glazed porch it is proposed to construct at the rear of the building.
6. Additionally access would be available from a reception area in the main entrance lobby of the building if and when the reception area was staffed. A doorway would be knocked through the wall between the stairwell and the adjacent front room, and connected to the front entrance lobby by a corridor inserted along the back of that room. This would provide access to the gym from the front entrance lobby without entering any of the ground floor rooms.
7. Staffing of the reception area would be by Customer Care assistants from GLL's Leisure Division. With the one exception mentioned below, the reception area would only be staffed when GLL decides this is worthwhile for the purpose of recruiting or welcoming new members of the gym. It is expected that the gym will open a few weeks

after the May Council Elections and that for an initial period after the gym opens the reception area would be staffed almost all the hours that the gym was open.

8. Due to its complexity the details of the deal with GLL are still being negotiated.

The Library

9. The library would occupy the two front rooms. One room would be for computers and study space.
10. The other room would contain 18 000 books and a collection of DVDs. It would include a small area furnished for children's use but not a Teen Zone. Overall space would be very limited and group activities would therefore have to take place elsewhere.
11. Access to the library for people with restricted mobility or with buggies or shopping trolleys in tow would be from the basement entrance facing on to Ferndene Road via the lift and the above-mentioned corridor. An accessible toilet would be provided on the ground floor. Library users who are not disabled would use toilets in the basement, gaining access to these via the corridor and the stairs.
12. The library would be staffed by a Library Assistant or Librarian for about two hours most days of each week. At other times the library would not be staffed but it would be open if the gym reception were open.
13. Lambeth intend to open the library from the middle of February and expect to have concluded their deal with GLL by then. They have agreed with GLL that GLL would open the reception for between 36 and 40 hours a week from the mid-February opening until after the Council Elections.

Main Room

14. The wall bookcases have been removed. Lambeth plan to encase the glazed partitions and doors between the main room and the surrounding rooms in panelling, with the consequence that the main room would become a large empty hall with plain walls. The public will not be allowed to see inside it until after the Council Elections.

15. The intention is that the hall will be hired out by Carnegie Community Trust, who might also commission activities there.
16. Possible activities include high-energy types of dance and exercise to music with a heavy bass beat. If these are going on while the library is open library users will be expected either to endure the resulting vibration and noise or to leave. Lambeth refuse to strengthen the floor or insert vibration damping.
17. The adjacent kitchen and small meeting room are being converted into toilets for users of the hall.

Other rooms

18. The Trust and Lambeth expect the two rooms previously used as 28 desk spaces for hire will be returned to this use.
19. The one room remaining was the librarians' workroom and would become the Trust's office.

Running costs

20. Lambeth intend to dispose of Carnegie Library, except for the basement they intend to let to GLL, by a rent-free long lease to the Trust. Lambeth and the Trust's five trustees are still negotiating the details of this Asset Transfer but the basics are reasonably clear.
21. One of the main justifications put forward for the Asset Transfer would be to attempt to obtain grants which could not be obtained while the building remains a public library. The library could therefore only be accommodated by the Trust on the basis that Lambeth occupy the two rooms concerned as a commercial tenant paying the Trust a market rent.
22. The Trust insist that the rent of the library rooms together with the income from the desk spaces and hiring out the hall would not be sufficient to cover their running costs. There is little chance of obtaining grants towards running costs.

23. Lambeth have agreed that while the basement is let rent-free £40 000 a year of charity money from the Lambeth Community Fund would be diverted to the Trust. They have also agreed that when the basement letting terminates the basement would be added to the rent-free lease to the Trust.
24. The lease to the Trust would contain a provision allowing Lambeth to terminate it in the event that the Trust's finances do not work out. This is a standard provision included in the Council's Asset Transfer leases.
25. The sums mentioned in this section are additional to Lambeth's subsidy for the running costs of the proposed gym.

Capital Expenditure

26. Lambeth have made substantial payments to the Trust, its predecessors and their respective advisers. The total amount has not been disclosed but is in six figures.
27. The initial estimate for excavating the basement was £700 000. Some time before the work started this estimate was increased to £1¹/₄ million.
28. The initial estimate for the gym was £1³/₄ million. No subsequent estimates have been disclosed.
29. Estimates for the ground floor works have also not been disclosed.
30. All of the above capital expenditure is being paid by Lambeth. Some of it is money that would be used to improve leisure centres if it were not spent on the gym. The rest is money that Lambeth could use for any capital expenditure.
31. At some point the slate roofs of the library will need to be renewed. A major element in the cost of doing so will be the cost of scaffolding. So while the scaffolding is up it would be sensible to do other work requiring scaffolding, namely, cleaning the building, carrying out cosmetic repairs and replacing aging cast iron rainwater goods with factory-painted aluminium replicas.
32. The last round of Lottery funding for public libraries provided grants to local authorities for 100% of expenditure

up to £2 million. Lambeth knew that the work in the last paragraph will be needed but did not apply. It is not preparing a project in anticipation of a further round.

33. The Trust plan to carry out the above re-roofing etc and substantial alterations, the nature of which has not been disclosed, at an estimated total cost of £5 million. They say they expect to get a grant for 50% of the cost from the Lottery. Lambeth have agreed to pay the other 50%.

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