



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Ulverston Library and The Coro

Preferred option consultation

July 2024



We want to hear your views!

Westmorland and Furness Council is committed to developing and protecting library services.

We recognise the huge value of our libraries, not only as places to borrow books, but also as places to study and access IT facilities, places for the arts, for voluntary groups and, increasingly, they are places delivering community-based services and community meeting spaces.

We are also committed to making sure our services can be delivered in modern, fit-for-purpose community buildings. As a new authority, we need to make sure we make best use of our buildings and we need to ensure our services can be delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient way possible, so that they are sustainable in the long-term.

That isn't always easy. Finding the balance between providing the best services and being cost-effective is a challenge.

Which is why we believe it is crucially important to look very carefully at how we provide and invest in important services like libraries before we make any decisions.



We have been through the same process with our library services in Kendal and Barrow, which has resulted more flexible spaces being created for community and arts events. It has also allowed services such as adult learning and family hubs to co-locate in the buildings to make them more accessible to our communities.



In this document you will be able to read how we have examined options for the future of library services in Ulverston since the closure of the library on King's Road due to electrical faults.



We have taken into account how we can protect and enhance the current library service, how much investment would be needed to achieve our community aims, how cost-effective that would be and, importantly for Ulverston, how all of that relates to the future of The Coro.

We have looked at options including the cost of re-opening King's Road and how a permanent co-location in The Coro might work alongside and complement the venue. We wanted to look in detail at how different options, combinations of options and levels of investment would best support and secure the long-term future of both the library service and The Coro.

All the options have now been assessed by independent social and economic research experts Ekosgen against a range of objectives.

The following pages give more detail about the outcome of that appraisal.

The preferred option would result in considerable investment in The Coro to achieve an enhanced and expanded library service - including a new children's library space and community activity room - along with re-modelling of The Coro itself to include a new café and more flexible spaces for community use.

The assessment concludes this would benefit library users and improve the long-term sustainability of The Coro.

We believe it is now vitally important that we understand your thoughts on this proposal before any final decisions are made.

We fully appreciate and understand the level of interest in the future of library services in Ulverston. It is one of our busiest and most popular libraries and I want to reassure you that, throughout this process, we have been committed to looking at opportunities to improve and enhance the library offer in Ulverston, whilst also thinking about the best long-term interests of The Coro and how any investment best supports the Ulverston community and the ambitions in the Ulverston Place Plan.

We very much look forward to receiving your comments.



Councillor Virginia Taylor
Cabinet member for Communities and Localities



Councillor Peter Thornton
Cabinet Member for Highways and Assets

The Ambition

Westmorland and Furness Council has worked with architects and independent consultants to explore a range of options for protecting, enhancing and revitalising The Coro and library services in Ulverston.

In total eight options have been considered, all with different scope and costs.

These ranged from 'do nothing' to light-touch upgrades and extensive refurbishments of the King's Road Library building and The Coro, and various combinations of these approaches.

All the options have been independently assessed against the following objectives:

- Do they deliver **high-quality library services in Ulverston?**
- Do they meet community needs and help create a **strong sense of community?**
- Do they **improve the cultural offer in Ulverston to support vitality, diversity and sustainability** and are they relevant to the Ulverston community?
- Do they protect and ensure the **ongoing operation of The Coro** as a valued **community and cultural asset** and iconic building?
- Do they contribute to the **financial sustainability** of council-owned assets in Ulverston?
- Do they contribute to **wider place-making and regeneration ambitions** for Ulverston, including the **Ulverston Place Plan**, by making the town centre a greater destination for residents and visitors?
- Do they help **reduce energy costs and carbon footprint?**
- Do they **deliver best value for money** (measured as how much social and community benefit is achieved relative to total cost)?
- How **affordable and achievable** are each of the options?



The Proposal

The option with the greatest potential to deliver against the objectives is:

- **Investment in The Coro to enable a co-location of Ulverston Library Service**

This would focus cultural, learning and creative arts on a single destination and require investment to remodel The Coro building and layout to extend the library and create new community spaces and a new café bar area.

ULVERSTON PLACE PLAN

- The **Ulverston Place Plan** was drawn up by Ulverston's Town Team, which is made up of representatives from Ulverston businesses, schools and community and third sector groups alongside the local councils.

The Place Plan vision was agreed following a community consultation, workshops and interviews in 2020, which asked local people and organisations for their views on opportunities to build local pride and confidence in the town and further develop Ulverston's unique selling points.

A list of key projects was identified, including ambitions to:

- Provide improved space for cultural activities
- Protect Ulverston's heritage buildings, specifically The Roxy and The Coronation Hall

The Place Plan states: *"For Ulverston to really assume the mantle of a cultural hub it is important to have a high-quality destination area within the centre which can be a combination of the Coronation Hall, now named The Coro, the Roxy Cinema, the Laurel and Hardy Museum and potentially a public plaza."*



How the new-look expanded library space could be laid out



The Proposal - Library

Architects have looked at ways to re-model The Coro to create an expanded library on the first floor, including a new children's library space and community activity room.

The plans would see:

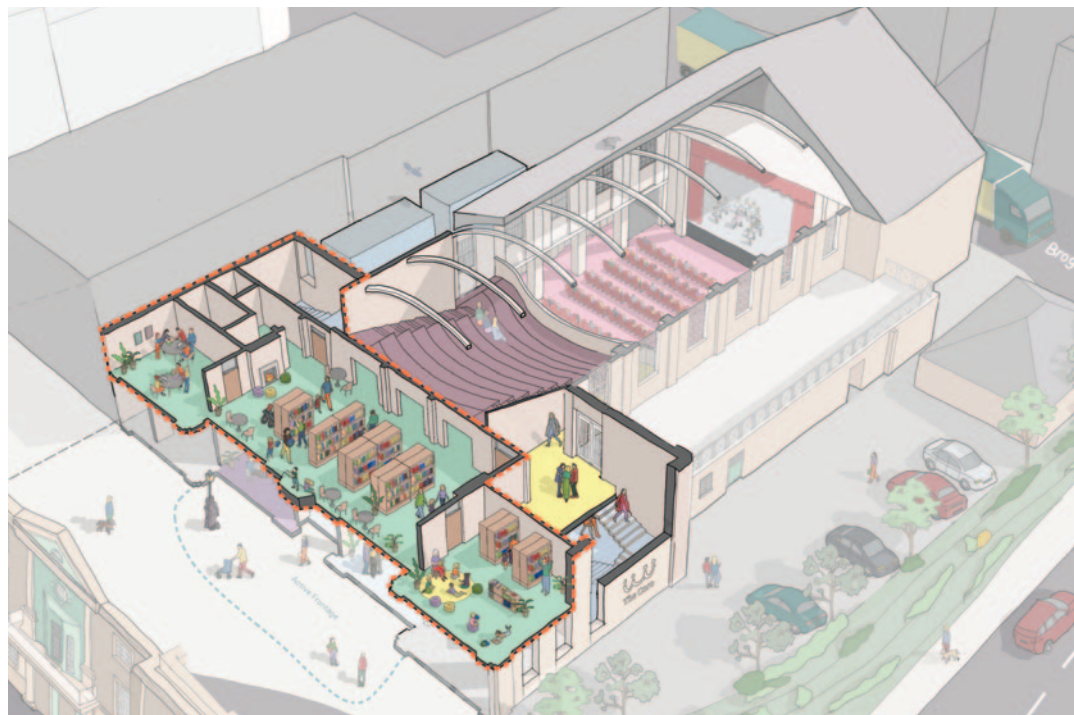
- Potential for wider selection of books for browsing and borrowing than was available at King's Road
- Improved and expanded children's library
- More flexible spaces for community use/events/meetings/study
- Improved IT facilities, including PCs and printers
- Access to the wider building for events linked to the library (author talks, children's storytime activities etc)
- Access to The Coro's community café for library users
- Library as an 'anchor tenant' helps drive footfall and supports financial viability and sustainability of The Coro

How the flexible space could be used for an evening exhibition



The relocation of the library to The Coro would align with national government guidance from The Department of Culture Media and Sport, which states:

“There may be opportunities to integrate and co-locate library services with other government and partner services who share library values or user groups. This can join up services for users, allow buildings to be opened for longer, and enable costs to be shared.”



The Proposal - The Coro

By moving staff offices to the currently unused attic floor, architects have been able to open up the ground floor to create more flexible customer and community spaces, including a community café bar, meeting rooms and event spaces.

The plans would see:

- More flexible community use spaces, including in the main function hall by use of an 'acoustic curtain' to segregate the floorspace
- More flexible event spaces, including in the library area, to support cultural programming
- A flexible café bar at the front of the building able to serve refreshments during the day, including for library users - but will also mean people attending evening events will be able to access refreshments before the main bar in the function hall is open



Reception cafe visualisation - daytime

- Relocation of the first floor bar to the ground floor will release additional space for the library
- Main customer information desk/box office in a more central, accessible location at the front of the building
- Creation of accessible toilet facilities on both the ground and first floors
- Improved storage facilities on both the ground and first floors
- Improved income generation through better hospitality offerings and more flexible spaces supports financial sustainability of The Coro



Cafe bar visualisation - evening

The Options Assessed

Options with the greatest number of criteria scored as GREEN in the following chart are considered as having the potential to make a stronger contribution to the key objectives.

		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	PREFERRED OPTION	Option 8
Library		In the Coro as is	All required works and re-opening of Kings Road	In the Coro as is	In the Coro as is	Kings Road re-open	Kings Road re-open	Enhanced at the Coro	Enhanced at the Coro
Coro		Do nothing	Do nothing	Essential works only'	Minor upgrades and essential works	Minor upgrades and essential works	Coro redeveloped	Coro redeveloped	Full extension
Cultural programming and participation	Cultural programming and participation	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
	Community	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Library provision	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Financial Sustainability	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
	Protect the Coro	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Ulverston Place Plan	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Carbon	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Value for Money	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	
Affordability	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	
Achievability	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	

Key

The option has the potential to make a strong contribution to the investment objective or critical success factor (CSF)	
The option has the potential to make a partial or limited contribution to the investment objective or CSF, but the option is not in conflict with these criteria	
The option has the potential to be incompatible with or make no contribution to the investment objective or CSF	

Share your views on the preferred option

Thank you for reading the information in this booklet.

We would now love to hear your views on the preferred option, what you like and what you'd change and what services you currently use at the library and The Coro.

The deadline for sending us your responses is **23 August 2024**.

You can share your thoughts in a number of ways:

- Complete our online consultation by following this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UlvLibraryCoroWF> or by scanning the QR code:



The online survey includes a link to a walk-through video showing how the proposed layout could look.

- You can complete a comment card at the temporary library in Ulverston and drop it in to the comment box next time you are visiting.
- Print off the survey from the link above and either email your responses to us at: ulverston.library@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

or post back to us at:

Library and Coro consultation
Temporary Library at The Coro
County Square
Ulverston
LA12 7LZ



Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال 0300 373 3300

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