

# Consultation on a community hub for Kingswood

The council provides one stop shops, libraries and public toilets within South Gloucestershire. At a time of significant financial constraint for all councils, we need to look to make services more affordable so that we can continue to provide them to local people.

The Council Savings Plan sets out how the council plans to deliver £36M of savings between now and 2020. After careful consideration, the Council believes that some of the required savings in the overall Council Savings Plan could be made by developing community hubs with a view to contributing to a saving target of £500,000 by 2019. We are looking at how we provide a range of services more efficiently by bringing them together into fewer fully accessible locations, whilst maintaining or even improving the level of service to the public. We would therefore value your views on the following options we are considering.

Our One Stop Shops are often the first point of contact for customers requiring advice, help and support on council matters such as council tax, housing benefits, homelessness and housing waiting lists. There are four one stop shops across South Gloucestershire, strategically located to support customers. Our highly trained staff can answer questions, arrange services and resolve problems on behalf of customers.

Our libraries are often the focus for the community, providing a safe place where people of all ages can borrow books and other resources, find things out, use computers and access the internet, develop new skills and attend events and exhibitions.

Kingswood is the first of several sites across South Gloucestershire where we are hoping to bring these services together and develop into community hubs over the next few years.

## **Our Vision:**

Our community hubs service will bring together library services, information and advice from the council and other partners. We will work closely with the voluntary and community sector as well as engage fully with other public sector service providers to help our communities. This will increase access to services, improve the quality of life for our customers and deliver the best possible value for money from our available resources.

## **Customers will be able to:**

- Access different services at one location and be sign posted to other public sector bodies and the wider voluntary sector.

- Seek advice and guidance on a variety of matters
- Get help in dealing with the council and other partner organisations.
- Borrow books and other resources.
- Access computers and the internet for free.
- Be supported to improve literacy, ICT and other skills.
- Take part in engaging and inspirational community events and activities, for adults and children.
- Access public toilet facilities (where there is no other public local facility).
- Be confident that your council is using its resources in the most efficient way.

**We will:**

- Continue to provide a community space for all members of the community.
- Work alongside community and voluntary groups to support the building of community capacity
- Work in new ways to provide a seamless customer service to our residents.
- Seek to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact.
- Use new technology to promote online and self-service options where possible.
- Provide public IT facilities that are reliable and supported by skilled staff and volunteers.
- Promote literacy, ICT skills, innovation and creativity within the hub and in the community.
- Provide access to toilet facilities where there are no other local options.

## What are we proposing for Kingswood?

In Kingswood we are looking to combine a range of services in a single, fully accessible location. This should provide a better service for the public by increasing the number of services you can access at one location and provide savings for the council in running costs and staffing.

There are several options for the location for this new hub: the Kingswood Civic Centre, the existing library or another vacant property in the area.

We hope to be able to provide the following services within the community hub:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Full range of Library Services               | • Police contact point                      |
| • One Stop Shop                                | • Advice services from a range of providers |
| • Access to computers and free internet access | • Event, exhibition and meeting space       |
|  | • Fully accessible public toilets           |

We are currently in the early stages of developing our plans and want the views of service users and other partners with whom we work to help us to shape and refine our plans before any decisions are made.

The hub will bring together staffing from different services and share facilities such as computer points, seating areas, staff areas, toilets, exhibition space and enquiry desks. We are also exploring moving the public toilets located at the entrance to Kingswood Park into the community hub.

## Find out more and have your say

We welcome comments on the proposals outlined between 24 November 2014 until 31 January 2015.

We are particularly keen to hear from organisations or groups wishing to make use of facilities or offer services out of a new community hub and to find out if you feel that all relevant areas are being considered and whether you think there are any specific impacts or alternatives that the council should consider.

Further information is available on our consultation webpage:

[www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation) or from your local South Gloucestershire library and One Stop Shop.

You can find out more or tell us your views by:

- Email: [consultation@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@southglos.gov.uk)
- Completing our consultation feedback survey (online or available on request)
- Write to: FREEPOST RTCT-JXLE-EET, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Kingswood Community Hub Consultation, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BRISTOL, BS15 9TR
- Phone: 01454 868154

We will be holding some staffed drop in sessions at the Library and One Stop Shop where you can find out more and ask questions. Details of these sessions can be found on our website.

If you would like someone to talk to your group or organisation about these proposals, please contact us using the details above to arrange.