

REPORT TO THE CABINET

2 June 2015

Cabinet Members: Coun. Ioan Thomas and Coun. Mair Rowlands

Subject: The Colocation of Porthmadog Library and Glaslyn Leisure Centre

Contact Officer: Sioned Williams, Head of Economy and Community

The decision sought

To support the relocation of Porthmadog Library to Glaslyn Leisure Centre with the acceptance of a Welsh Government grant.

To approve the use of all capital receipts received following the sale of the current library building towards the costs of relocating and adapting the Leisure Centre Building.

Local Members' view

Coun. Selwyn Griffiths

"In support of the movement. By operating this way, it ensures the Centre and the Library for the future and ensuring an excellent service to the community area of Porthmadog. "

Coun. Jason Humphreys

"The report identifies several advantages of co-locating the library with other services at Ganolfan Glaslyn and I welcome this.

I note the in intention to consult. The library's existing location at Chapel Street is far more accessible to more people by foot than Ganolfan Glaslyn. Relocation could therefore present particular difficulties to certain elderly, infirm or disabled users. I hope that in the interim period prior to relocation, library staff will routinely and effectively engage with users to identify and record the concerns of those who may be adversely affected so that measures can be considered to assist them."

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Library Service Review (2014) has identified a new strategic direction and purpose for the Library Service to the future. Collocating with other Services has been identified as a means to address efficiencies; and also as a means to address the Gwynedd residents' needs to Access multiple services from a single location.
- 1.2 The Leisure Review has also identified that collocating Services within Leisure centres could lead to an increase in those leisure facilities. This would contribute towards health improvements for residents, due to increased engagement with physical activity for those not currently accessing these facilities.
- 1.3 This proposal to relocate the Library Service to Glaslyn Leisure Centre will address the findings of the above named reviews; will continue to deliver against Efficiency Plans; and will improve the provision for local residents in the Porthmadog area.

2. Reasons for recommending the decision

Ffordd Gwynedd

- 2.1 Relocating the Library to Glaslyn Centre will offer a better integrated service for local residents. Some of the benefits of collocation to local residents would be seen mainly within Health and Wellbeing. The collocation would allow for core health and well-being services to link into preventative provision across both service areas such as Book on Prescription, Exercise by Referral, Macmillan Support Group, Physiotherapy Service (Public Health Wales) would all be available and accessible from the one building.
- 2.2 The relocation would also provide easy, comfortable and community access for residents to Council Services, and to access information on other council services.
- 2.3 Residents would also see the benefits in adult and community learning with improved links with the primary and secondary school, and easier access for pupils to information and homework resources via the Library.

Efficiency

- 2.4 Collocating the library with another Council service offer efficiency savings in respect to building maintenance. It is estimated that the services will save £18k per year.
- 2.5 Collocating will also lead to staff collaboration between Library and Leisure staff which could lead to efficiencies by sharing staff functions.

Service

- 2.6 "More Than Books: A Strategy for Gwynedd Library Service" denotes Porthmadog as a Main Library within the county. This relocation, which leads to increased floor space, opportunities for improved opening hours, access to other multi-purpose rooms, and its proximity to public transport stops, would allow the Library Service in Porthmadog to meet the National Standards expected by main libraries.
- 2.7 Main libraries are open for more than 20 hours per week, receive more than 20,000 visits, and lends more than 30,000 items per annum, and can service a wider geographical area. It is expected that visit with the library will increase by 10% as a result of relocating.
- 2.8 From a Leisure Service perspective this collocation will lead to increased footfall and visits which in turn will provide an opportunity to increase in income by having more people participating in their programme of activities, and an increase in secondary income from catering and sales of goods.

3. Material considerations

Consultation

- 3.1 The Library Service is currently undertaking a public consultation on the future of the service within the county.
- 3.2 Some of the initial findings from residents during the consultation have indicated a support for collocating library services with other services within communities.
- 3.3 As part of this consultation undertaken by the Library Service, a Drop-In session has been held in Porthmadog on May the 13th to gather the opinion of local people on the future of library service in this area, and also to gather feedback on the option for relocating.

Financial

3.4 The estimated cost for relocating is £388,359 and this will be funded by:-

CYMAL (Welsh Government) Grant	£258,659
Gwynedd Council contribution	£129,700

3.5 Gwynedd Council's contribution is dependent upon the Cabinet approving that all capital receipts received from the sale of the current library would go towards the relocating costs (an estimated value of £80,000).

3.6 The remainder of the Council's contribution, up to £49,700, will be funded from the Economy and Community Department's budget.

Sustainability

3.7 One of the main risks for the collocation project is to presume the outcome of those decisions currently being discussed by the Cabinet and Council in respect to cuts to services.

3.8 The collocating project and offer of grant are time scaled for 2015-16 and form part of the currently approved efficiency programme for the same period.

3.9 However, the future of the Library Service and Leisure Service within the Porthmadog area within the context of Challenge Gwynedd should be considered prior to a decision being taken on relocating.

Equality

3.10 The Library Service has undertaken an Initial Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the current public consultation. The service has also undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment for the relocation project.

3.11 The Impact Assessment shows that one of the main advantages of the relocating would be improved accessibility for disabled users, parking facilities, and WC facilities for the disabled and for carers / parents of young children.

4. Next steps and timetable

4.1 A Project Group has been established to manage the collocation project which includes representatives from the Library Service,

Leisure Service, and Property Service. The Project Group will be responsible for implementing and overseeing the project.

Group Project Meeting	April 2015
Porthmadog Consultation Drop-In	May 2015
Cabinet Decision	May 2015
Tendering Process	June 2015
Building Works	September 2015 / January 2016
Internal Equipment	February 2016
Open to the public	March 2016
Official Opening	May 2016

The views of the Statutory Officers

Chief Executive:

“The relocation being recommended is sensible and reasonable and the Head of Finance have drawn the Cabinet’s attention to the financial constraints that need to be considered before they reach a decision. Another consideration, which is also applicable to several other matters currently being discussed within the Council, is that any discussions in the coming months around cuts to services will impact significantly on the context that efficiency proposals are being discussed within.

Monitoring Officer:

“The Cabinet should consider the public response to the public consultation event held on the 13th of May, as referred to in 3.3. This information will be available at the cabinet meeting. No further comments in respect to propriety.”

Head of Finance:

Whilst achieving efficiency savings will decrease the cuts required, on first glance the £18,000 saving here is not substantial, as it requires an investment of £388,359 to be achieved. However, as part 3.4 states a CYMAL grant for £258,659 will finance part of the capital cost. As part of the remaining £129,700 to be financed by the Council, The Head of Economy and Community seeks the Cabinets decision to allocate the whole of the capital receipts from the sale of the current library building (estimated at £80,000). In the current climate of saving it is a matter for the members to decide on their priorities for this capital receipt; which has not been included in the Corporate Asset Plan (as no prior presumption to dispose of the building had been identified). I can confirm that the

Department has sufficient unallocated capital receipts (from previous historical sale of properties) to fund the remaining balance (up to £50,000).

Appendices