

Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture



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18/03/2021

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NOTICE OF INTENDED PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION

The Portfolio Holder has received the following report for a decision to be taken under delegated authority. The decision will be taken on **24 March 2021** (i.e. 3 clear days after the date of this note). The decision will be published on the Council's website but will not be implemented until 5 clear days after the date of publication of the decision) to comply with the call-in process set out in Rule 7.36 of the Constitution.

1.	TRANSFER OF LLANFAIR CAEREINION, LLANWRTYD AND TALGARTH LIBRARIES TO COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT
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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION
by
COUNTY COUNCILLOR RACHEL POWELL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND CULTURE
March 2021

REPORT AUTHOR: Kay Thomas

REPORT TITLE: Transfer of Llanfair Caereinion, Llanwrtyd and Talgarth libraries to community management

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the report is to approve and implement community managed delivery models for Llanfair Caereinion, Llanwrtyd and Talgarth libraries.

2. Background

2.1 The Library Service is working to achieve a transformation in service delivery alongside further budgetary efficiency savings. The service is unable to financially sustain the current network of 2 mobile libraries and 17 static service points for the long term without such transformational activity. We need to develop new operating models, which meet the needs of residents (particularly the most vulnerable) and allow for sustainable local development in a post-covid environment.

2.2 It is difficult to justify the running costs of the 3 smallest libraries, where footfall is relatively low (in 2019/20, Llanfair library had 2353 visits, Talgarth 4,622 and Llanwrtyd 1,669 visitors).

2.3 At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the benefits of using those libraries to local residents cannot be underestimated, and the services are highly valued, particularly by the most vulnerable. Public transport links to the bigger towns are not good, particularly when it comes to carrying heavy books.

2.4 The strength of the existing community support from volunteers, local members and town and community councils cannot be ignored. Llanfair and Llanwrtyd libraries are already operating under a partly community managed model, alongside some staff hours from the library service, whilst Talgarth is developing a strong Friends of the Library group and exploring joint working

with the Tourist Information Resource Centre. Therefore, it is logical to seek a way forward which supports the local commitment and enthusiasm.

- 2.5 The most recent adult user survey showed that the main benefit of these libraries lies in social interaction and book borrowing (particularly collecting requested titles from the countywide stock). Each ranked a 100% positive response, in terms of library use making people feel part of their community.
- 2.6 In the spring of 2019, the library service carried out extensive consultation on the future of the service, including public meetings in 10 areas. Suggestions for local management and development of the 3 smallest libraries came forward as a proposal from the communities themselves, who are willing to invest time and effort in developing local solutions, as long as they have the commitment of the library service in terms of resource networks (books and ICT) and training. A commitment of 5 years' support was sought, for communities to have sufficient time to be able to establish themselves and develop their own funding streams.
- 2.7 On 15 Sept 2020, a library community partnership paper was agreed by Cabinet, which confirmed that the library service would commit to community managed libraries for a period of 5 years, in terms of the ongoing supply of resources (books and ICT), training and support. This commitment still allows for a reduction in the locally controllable running costs, whilst supporting the community to develop a resilient service to meet their needs. Research with other authorities across England and Wales shows that community managed libraries can be effective for the smallest libraries only, with good support from the library service.
- 2.8 The enthusiasm and ideas of the 3 small communities is to be commended, and includes the support of the local members, town and community councils and many other organisations. The development of the libraries in these 3 communities will be a prime example of collaboration and co-production to meet local needs in a post-covid society, and has the potential to deliver a more accessible and inclusive service through a deeper knowledge and understanding of the local community.

3. Advice

- 3.1 The tremendous community support which the 3 smallest libraries have received offers real and exciting new opportunities to deliver a more locally responsive and sustainable library service to residents in those areas for the long term.
- 3.2 The strength of volunteer interest in and support for delivering library books during the coronavirus pandemic gives the service confidence that the model can be sustained for the long term, recruiting new volunteers as required. This would be in addition to existing library volunteer teams in Llanfair Caereinion and Llanwrtyd.

- 3.3 Maintaining a library presence in these communities allows for other services and organisations to also use the location for locality based work e.g. housing, workways+, Job Centre plus staff etc to hold information drop-in sessions.
- 3.4 Advice from other authorities across England and Wales is that the community library model can work for the smallest libraries only, where there is still a strong network of authority run libraries with trained staff within reasonable travel distance and providing support. This will be the case in Powys.
- 3.5 A community managed library is recognised by Welsh Government under the Welsh Public Library Standards definitions.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The transformation described above has the potential to deliver and maintain a local service at reduced cost in the 3 smallest libraries, through working with partners and communities to meet local requirements. The predicted budgetary reduction is £30,110 based on 2020-21 budgets. The table below shows the cost of running each library in 2019-20 and the cost per visit.

Library	Actual Cost 2019-20 £	No of Visits	Cost per Visit	Estimated Running Cost if Recommendation is approved £	Estimated Budget Saving if Recommendation Approved £
Llanwrtyd Library	8,550	1,669	5.12	150	6,510
Llanfair Caereinion Library	12,560	2,353	5.34	150	7,470
Talgarth Library	10,680	4,622	2.31	640	16,130
Total	31,790			940	30,110

The average cost per Library in 2019-20 was £1.10 per visit.

- 4.2 There will be some redundancy costs to be met with this proposal.
- 4.3 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.

6. Monitoring Officer

6.1 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

7. Data Protection

7.1 The proposal does involve processing of personal data for the purpose of providing a library service. The Data Protection Officer comments: Names and addresses and possibly other personal data would need to be shared with delivery partners and volunteers, to facilitate service delivery. Activity will be undertaken to ensure compliance with data protection legislation, such as the identification of relationships between parties, and the development of appropriate documentation to support this proposal.

8. Comment from local member(s)

8.1 Cllr Gareth Jones of Llanfair Caereinion commented:
"I am extremely grateful to Cllr Rachel Powell, Kay Thomas and her team for their communication from the start, they listened to the views of myself, the Town Council and the library volunteers. Working together, a bespoke solution has secured the immediate future of Llanfair Caereinion library. From the beginning we stated that if we were to enter into negotiations with Powys, we wanted a long-term commitment and did not want to be faced with further cuts in a year or two. The community of Llanfair is happy with the five-year commitment from Powys."

9. Integrated Impact Assessment

9.1 An impact assessment for each local proposal has been prepared and is attached.

10. Recommendation

10.1 It is recommended that Powys Library Service implements a community delivery model for Llanfair Caereinion, Llanwrtyd and Talgarth libraries, and works with the local members and communities to support the model for a period of 5 years.

10.2 The enthusiasm and commitment of the communities towards their libraries is to be commended.

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