

Appendix E - Due regard given to alternative proposals around co-location

Context:

Preliminary work carried out as part of the North Office Review concluded in March 2018 that the sale of Neuadd Maldwyn would help to reduce the ongoing running costs of £100k a year and save the council £1m worth of renovation costs.

In selling the building front line staff would need to relocate to another building in the town so as to sustain the current service offer to residents.

Each of the alternative co-location ideas put forward during the consultation period were noted and considered by the council's property team using their agreed criteria.

The criteria was based on the relocation building being:

- council owned wherever possible. Renting a private property was unlikely to be financially viable based on the budgetary pressures facing the council and the need to make substantial savings.
- able to provide the best possible solution for all residents in the town and surrounding area who needed to access front line services (planning, environmental health, social services, housing issues) whilst also sustaining both the library and museum service.
- big enough to house the front line staff moving out of Neuadd Maldwyn
- easy to renovate to provide for both front line and agile working needs and with costs kept to a minimum

The table below sets out each of the alternative venues which were put forward by respondents as options to house the relocated staff from Neuadd Maldwyn and the reasons why these have been ruled out.

Alternative venues	Response
The visitors centre	This building is owned by the town council. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio. The building was not considered as an option.
New school site	There are no surplus schools or any schools under review within the timeframe in which the council needs to make these savings.
Dolanog house	The rental cost is high and the Council is seeking to reduce its revenue costs and therefore leasing an external building is not an option.
Ladywell house	It is proposed to relocate a number of back office functions to Newtown whilst retaining a front facing presence in Welshpool. PCC does not seek to relocate all services from Welshpool and therefore needs to retain an office facility in the town.
Youth Centre	The building was deemed insufficient to provide an open plan layout for 60+ staff operating in an agile manner and to provide sufficient space for front facing services and facilities. The building is also part leased commercially to a crèche.
Neuadd Maldwyn	Retention of space within the building is not an option as PCC intend to transfer the freehold of this Grade 2 listed building.

Town Hall	This building is owned by the town council. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio. The building was not considered as an option.
Museum	The building was deemed insufficient to provide an open plan layout for 60+ staff operating in an agile manner and to provide sufficient space for front facing services and facilities.
Old Iceland building	This building is privately owned. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio. Additionally, the building is not large enough for use by PCC.
The job centre building	This building is privately owned. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio. Additionally, the building is not large enough for use by PCC.
The police building	This building is privately owned. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio. Additionally, the building is not large enough for use by PCC.

All of the Council 'owned' assets were reviewed when establishing which building would be most suitable for a front facing office. The library was determined as the most adaptable property that would enable the delivery of the services to continue in Welshpool.

The co-location of the library and the museum provides integrated support to service users and enables revenue cost savings to be made by the service directorate.

To allow PCC services to continue in Welshpool without withdrawing totally from the town requires a building which can be utilised by all service areas. Services will need a building which allows agile working practices to take place in a safe and secure setting.

The library is the only building that meets this criteria as it will allow new modern working practices to take place and allow improved access to council services.