

Appendix C - Due regard given to alternative proposals for Welshpool Library and Powysland Museum

Context:

Each of the alternative co-location ideas put forward during the consultation period by staff and the public were noted and considered by the Library Service and Museum Service using their agreed criteria.

The criteria was based on the relocation building being:

- To provide a sustainable and long term future for both the museum and library in Welshpool
- Able to provide space for both services, including library stock, public access computers, children's area, study and activities space, temporary and permanent exhibition galleries
- 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.
- Low refurbishment and conversion costs

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

Alternative venues	Response
The 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. This Town Hall was also included as an option for the library in Welshpool Town Council's Business Case, but it lacked clarity its financial information, which did not show a realistic revenue budget for running the library.
The 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.
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.
The Visitor 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.
The Job Centre	This building is privately owned. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio.

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.
New school site	There are no surplus schools or any schools under review due to be completed within the timeframe in which the council needs to make these savings.
Youth Centre	The building was deemed insufficient to provide enough space to accommodate both the museum and library, but would have been sufficient for the library. However the edge of town location was considered a significant disadvantage for service users. The building is also part leased commercially to a crèche.
Co-locating the museum in the library building; Neuadd Maldwyn staff in Powysland Museum	<p>The library building could accommodate the museum. However Powysland Museum building is insufficient to provide an open plan layout for 60+ staff operating in an agile manner. Since there are no other Council services seeking accommodation in Welshpool then the alternative would be disposal.</p> <p>Local organisations, supported by the town council and PCC wish to develop the wharf area into a cultural hub. Disposing of the building at this time for commercial/residential development would significantly impact on those plans.</p> <p>The building occupied by Powysland Museum is Grade II listed and in itself presents a popular visitor attraction, and contributes to the historic presentation of displays and exhibitions.</p>
Housing the relocated staff from Neuadd Maldwyn in the current library with the library	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 the library
Nat West bank	This building is privately owned. PCC is reviewing its own assets and running costs currently and is not seeking to increase its property portfolio.

All of the Council 'owned' assets were reviewed when establishing which building would be most suitable for the library and/or museum. Powysland Museum was determined as the most adaptable property that would enable the delivery of the library 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.

Co-locating the library with the museum provides a sustainable future for both services, and allows the current library building to be reconfigured for agile working practices to take place in a safe and secure setting.

Co-locations projects have been done successfully in other locations – most notably Llanidloes. Libraries and museums naturally enjoy symbiotic relationships and work well if housed together.

Powysland Museum is located on the canal in Welshpool which is recognised as one of the county's most significant tourism assets, and plans to regenerate the canal will bring significant economic benefits to the town.