

## ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
<b>Report Subject</b>	Medium Term Libraries Plan – An Assessment of the Feasibility of the Community Asset Transfer of Rural Libraries
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer Organisational Change

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2015 Cabinet agreed a Medium Term Libraries Plan that outlined a sustainable libraries infrastructure for the future. This included designated hub libraries in Mold, Holywell, Connahs Quay, Deeside Leisure Centre, Buckley and Flint. For rural libraries it recommended, during the autumn of 2015, assessing the feasibility of community asset transfers.

The re-location of libraries in Queensferry, Mancot and Hawarden to a new library in Deeside Leisure Centre was recommended and approved by Cabinet and this will be completed by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. The last element of the proposal was to progress with the transfer of library buildings, not services, to communities in Holywell and Broughton, this approach along with a continuing mobile and housebound provision is seen as a sustainable library service for the foreseeable future in Flintshire.

This report provides feedback on the assessment of the feasibility of community asset transfers in the areas of Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney. It seeks scrutiny committee's views and comments prior to final Council decisions on the feasibility of community asset transfers in these locations. This is within the context of delivering the medium term libraries plan and supporting the achievement of the £0.544m of savings through Community Asset Transfers (CATs) put forward as a budget efficiency proposal for 2016/17.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To consider the assessment of the feasibility of community asset transfers for the libraries in Hope, Mynydd Isa, and Saltney in particular reviewing the formal consultation with communities.
2	To provide views and comments on the feasibility of Community Asset transfers for these three libraries.

### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE FEASIBILITY OF A</b>
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COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER FOR RURAL LIBRARIES	
1.01	At the March 2015 Cabinet a Medium Term Plan for Libraries was proposed and agreed. This report deals specifically with the rural libraries (Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney). As agreed in the Medium Term Plan for Libraries an assessment of the feasibility of a CAT of these libraries has taken place and this report now proposes a way forward.
1.02	<p>Since March 2015 work has taken place to support ideas brought forward by each of the three communities. This includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope, supporting the local Ward Member and the school to look at how integrating the school library and community library might enable the library to be more sustainable.</li> <li>• Mynydd Isa, work has taken place to provide details to Argoed Community Council of how a CAT might work and supporting Café Isa to consider if a CAT of the community centre, youth centre, and library might be feasible.</li> <li>• Saltney, where information has been requested about the community library then this has been provided, initially an expression of interest was received for the CAT of Saltney Library, although little discussion has taken place since about finding a solution for a CAT of the library to the community.</li> </ul>
1.03	To ensure formal as well as informal consultation about the feasibility of a CAT of these libraries has been undertaken an information document asking for formal responses was sent out in November 2015 to town and community councils and schools and was made available in libraries to library users. The deadline for responses was Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2015. A detailed analysis of these responses is provided at Appendix A including a copy of the consultation document.
1.04	<p>In summary the responses can be detailed as follows</p> <p>Hope – Interest in a CAT from both an emerging ‘Friends of Hope Library Group’ and Hope Community Council. Castell Alun School are supportive of working with the community and enabling the library to be open to the community during school time. The local Ward Member, while supporting the integration of school and community library, asks for the retention of a professional library service.</p> <p>Mynydd Isa – Interest in a CAT from Caffi Isa. Local Ward Members and residents have a range of queries about how this CAT may work</p> <p>Saltney – No interest from the Community Council in taking forward the CAT, Ward Members both ask for an extension for consideration of a CAT but have differing views about how this might best be achieved.</p>
1.05	<p>There are two potential solutions for a Community Asset Transfer as outlined in the consultation document and in line with Welsh Government identified best practice</p> <p>(1) The community operate a book stock and IT equipment with no professional library input. This is relatively low cost with only the</p>

	<p>costs of the building and replacement of book stock and IT equipment required.</p> <p>(2) The community buy back professional librarians and / or access to the library management system for recording and ordering issues. In this way the library remains part of the library network but the community have to pick up a large proportion of the current costs of the library. This model is already operating well at Halkyn library.</p>
1.06	The early work to support the communities and the formal consultation show that a CAT is feasible in both Hope and Mynydd Isa as there are community organisations coming forward with a commitment to make a CAT work. In both instances it is likely that option (1) in 1.05 is the more likely solution. More work will be required to support the communities to finalise their plans for CATs if they are to be successful.
1.07	The early work to support the community and the formal consultation show that a CAT at present is not feasible in Saltney. The consultation responses ask for more time.
1.08	If a CAT is not feasible then the Medium Term Libraries Plan states that professional services are not sustainable in these areas.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>										
2.01	<p><b>Financial Implications</b></p> <p>The cost of current library provision in each area are as follow:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Library</th> <th>Cost £</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hope</td> <td>£13,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mynydd Isa</td> <td>£34,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saltney</td> <td>£41,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Total</td> <td>£88,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A Community Asset Transfer of these libraries or a cessation of service would, on an annual basis, save the amounts indicated above.</p> <p>In 2016/17 budget a target efficiency range has been established of between £0.067m and £0.088m.</p>	Library	Cost £	Hope	£13,000	Mynydd Isa	£34,000	Saltney	£41,000	Total	£88,000
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Total	£88,000										
2.02	<p><b>Human Resource Implications</b></p> <p>If either CATs are progressed as identified in option 1 in 1.05 or a cessation of service occurs then no library staff will be required in future.</p> <p>If either CATs are progressed as identified in option 1 in 1.05 or a cessation of service occurs then no library staff will be required in future. The total number of staff employed at these libraries at present are 5 people or 1.08 ftes. The way forward for this is to follow normal Human Resource procedure including staff consultation. It is likely in this instance that staff will be redeployed/assimilated into vacant posts in the library</p>										

	<p>network.</p> <p>If communities did identify funding to continue a professional library service then posts would be retained, however, this is considered unlikely.</p>
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
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3.01	<p>Informal consultation has taken place with parties interested in CATs including Town and Community Councils, school and community groups.</p> <p>Formal consultation with Town and Community, schools and library users as detailed in Appendix A.</p>
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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4.01	<p>Key Risks and Mitigation</p> <p>(1) That communities do not come forward with a sustainable CAT proposal – services potentially cease in these areas.</p> <p>(2) Communities do not have the required skills and capacity to take on a CAT – support will be provided by the library service and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council.</p> <p>(3) Communities can manage a CAT for a short period of time but not in the long term – the building returns to the Council and the Council consider best use of the asset.</p> <p>(4) Loss of these services puts at risk performance against Public Library Standards – Flintshire will still meet the standard of providing libraries for 75% of the population within 2.5 miles.</p>
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	<p>Appendix A – Library Service Consultation In Relation to the Feasibility of a Community Asset Transfer of Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney Libraries : Summary Report</p> <p>Appendix B – Equality Monitoring and Impact Assessment – CAT for Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney Libraries</p>
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	<p>Medium Term Libraries Plan – Cabinet March 2015</p> <p><b>Contact Officers:</b> Pennie Corbett, Principal Librarian  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704402  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:pennie.corbett@flintshire.gov.uk">pennie.corbett@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
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7.01	Community Asset Transfer – The transfer of a building to a community organisation with a 27 year lease and peppercorn rent.
7.02	Public Library Standards – Welsh Governments assessment of the quality of public library services, it is not an assessment of whether library services meet their statutory duty.