Flintshire County Council

Equality Monitoring and Impact Assessment

Equality Monitoring

Proposal to transfer provision of library services from the current service points at Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney as Community Asset Transfers

Officers responsible for developing and implementing the policy: Chief Officer Organisational Change 1, Principal Libraries & Arts Officer

1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 ("The Act") sets a General Duty out that as a public body within Wales, Flintshire County Council is required to have due regard in its decision making processes (including financial decisions) to three factors:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation,

- To advance equality of opportunity, and
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected

Characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religious belief and non-belief, race, sex, sexual orientation and Welsh Language) and those who do not. (Equality Act 2010).

Duties within the Act require that public authorities demonstrate that the financial decisions they make are carried out in a fair, transparent and accountable way and consider the needs and the rights of different members of the community.

The specific equality duties of the Act set out that a local authority needs to:

- Make appropriate arrangement for assessing the likely impact of its policies and practices on its ability to comply with the General Duty;

- Monitor these impacts; and

- Publish reports in respect of any assessment.

2. Background to the proposal

2.1 The Medium Term Plan for Libraries, agreed by the council in 2015, to meet the anticipated savings of 30-50% by 2018 includes the proposal to have full Community Asset Transfer at Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney.

2.2 During 2013 the council reviewed all assets with the aim of reducing the property portfolio in order to sustain services within the reduced budgets of the next five years. Libraries were reviewed and some closures were recommended.

2.3 Welsh Public Library Standards require that where there is a population density between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare, a static library service point should be within 2.5 miles (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) of at least 75% of the population. In Flintshire 90.1% of the population are within 2.5 miles of a static library. The library network is served by too many buildings, some of which are have substantial maintenance and repair backlogs. It was recommended that some services be collocated where possible.

2.4 Library opening hours were reviewed in 2012. Some libraries were found to be open for too many hours for the levels of use, with staffing resources not deployed efficiently. Opening hours were recommended to be reduced by 18% in April 2015 as part of measures to achieve required 30% budget savings. Therefore some library buildings will be open for business for less than 20 hours per week making the buildings unsustainable.

2.5 The Community Asset Transfer of current libraries at Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney form part of budget efficiency proposals for the year 2016/17.

- **Hope Library** is situated on the campus of Castell Alun High School and, as part of ongoing efficiencies, has been integrated with the school library since summer 2015, with separate opening times for school and community.
- **Mynydd Isa Library** is situated in Mynydd Isa Community Centre, which also houses a youth club and Community Council office.
- **Saltney Library** has been operated from temporary, leased premises since 2008. The current premises cost is unsustainable for the 11 hours it is open per week.

3. Objectives of the proposal

3.1 Sustain some library provision to the communities Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney by transferring buildings as community assets, and offering funding in the form of capital support and one off revenue funding to community groups who put forward a feasible plan.

4. Impact of the proposal

4.1 All residents in the 3 communities would be able to access the network of libraries provided by the council, and the mobile service and service to housebound people.

4.2 Residents at Mynydd Isa could use Buckley or Mold libraries (Mynydd Isa to Buckley 1.5 miles or Mynydd Isa to Mold 1.8 miles) Saltney residents could access

Broughton Library (2.7 miles). The mobile library currently serves Caergwrle and Abermorddu and would also visit Hope. The proposal, whilst sustaining some library provision in the communities will replace the current provision at the three libraries. The necessary reduction of 30% to the library budget by 2016-17 has put smaller libraries at risk of closure and the proposal is intended to mitigate the effects of the loss of three small local libraries.

5. Financial impact for Flintshire County Council

The council would make savings of £88,000.

Library	Cost £
Hope	13,000
Mynydd Isa	34,000
Saltney	41,000
Total	88,000

6. Impact on the community

6.1 These groups will be affected by this policy:

i) Library service users of Hope, Mynydd Isa and Saltney
ii) Potential library service users in the communities
iii) Specific impacts on groups of people within the protected characteristics categories.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

iv) Library service users

Registered users

	Hope	Mynydd Isa	Saltney
Adults	655	1426	699
Children	858	955	793
Exempt from charges/special situations	57	15	12
Playgroups	4	9	2
Classes	3	0	6
Reading groups	0	1	0
Total	**1577**	**2406**	**1512**

Active users (i.e have borrowed books in 2014-15)

	Hope	Mynydd Isa	Saltney
Adults	166	368	165
Children	314	294	322
Exempt from charges/special situations	24	8	6
Playgroups	0	5	1
Classes	0	0	3
Reading groups	0	1	0
Total	**504**	**676**	**497**

Use of Book stock - percentage on loan at 1.4.15

	Hope	Mynydd Isa	Saltney	All Flintshire libraries
On shelves	5433	7768	5462	203,341
On loan	1554	1951	1482	50,559
Total	6987	9719	6944	253,900
Percentage on loan	**22.24%**	**20.07%**	**21.34%**	**19.91%**

Usage – from CIPFA sample surveys 2014-15 and Library Management System

	Hope	% age of Flintshire total	Mynydd Isa	% age of Flintshire total	Saltney	% age of Flintshire total
Weekly Requests	73		45		51	
Total Annual Enquiries	1,650	1.5	3,450	5.6	2,250	3.4
Annual Visits - Adults	5,000	0.9	20,250	3.6	7,475	1.3
Annual Visits - Children	9,050	8.7	3,100	3	10,075	9.7
Total Annual Visits	14,050	2	23,350	3.5	17,550	2.7
Total annual loans	21,024	3	23,447	3.5	19,229	2.8

Number of children participating in Summer Reading Challenge 2015

Registered at Hope Library   =   120 children
Registered at Mynydd Isa Library   =   82 children
Registered at Saltney Library   =   106 children

Numbers participating by school (4-11yrs)

School	No. of pupils	Number of children participating in SRC
Ysgol Estyn	229	61
Abermorddu	217	27
Ysgol Mynydd Isa Infants and Junior	555	77
Wood Memorial	186	42
Saltney Ferry	105	4
St Anthony's	165	54
Castell Alun H S	1359	12
St David's H S	508	3
Argoed	580	7

Rhymetime sessions for under 5s and parents/carers 2014-15

Hope   24 sessions 232 total participants (p*arents & children)*

Mynydd Isa   10 sessions 149 total participants (p*arents & children)*

Saltney   13 sessions 262 total participants (p*arents & children)*

Learning Events

Hope
- 2 chatterbox sessions – 13 parents and 13 children
- 6 class visits – total attendance 150 children

Mynydd Isa
- 2 summer activity sessions – 28 parents and children attended

Saltney
- 1 Author visit
- Class visits from St. Anthony's Nursery – approx. 400 children visited over the year.

ii) <u>Potential library service users in the communities</u>

Population (census 2011)

ward	Number of people	% male	% female	%Age 0-15	%Age 16-64	%Age 65+
Hope 1		49.2	50.8	18.1	62	19.9
Hope 2	2606	49.6	50.4	19.3	62.2	18.5
Argoed 1	1241	47.5	52.5	18.3	65.4	16.3
Argoed 2	1579	50.4	49.6	16.6	60.8	22.6
New Brighton 1	1651	48.7	51.1	16.7	65.7	17.6
New Brighton 2	1319	47.8	52.2	15.7	61.9	22.5
Saltney Mold Junction	1375	49.1	50.9	21.9	63.7	14.5
Saltney Stonebridge 1	2202	49.7	50.3	23.4	64.8	11.8
Saltney Stonebridge 2	1574	49.7	50.3	17.3	70.2	12.5

Economy and employment

ward	Hope 1	Hope 2	Argoed 1	Argoed 2	New Brighton 1	New Brighton 2	Saltney Mold Jn	Saltney stonebridge 1	Saltney Stonebridge 2	Flintshire
Percentage of 16-24 yr olds who are unemployed	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.9	1	2.5	1.6	0.8	26.7
Percentage of economically active people who are full-time employees	39.7	40	44.2	37.9	43.5	36.6	41.2	45.2	44.9	43.4

Health - Percentage of people whose day to day activities are not limited by their health

Hope1	Hope 2	Argoed 1	Argoed 2	New Brighton 1	New Brighton 2	Saltney Mold Jn	Saltney stonebridge 1	Saltney Stonebridge 2	Flintshire	Wales
82.3	80.9	84.7	80.4	83	79.5	81.9	81.4	82.9	80	77

Transport – percentage of households with no access to a a car or van

Hope 1	Hope 2	Argoed 1	Argoed 2	New Brighton 1	New Brighton 2	Saltney Mold Jn	Saltney stonebridge 1	Saltney Stonebridge 2	Flintshire	Wales
5	17.8	8	9.6	5.6	11.2	28.8	27.3	16.9	17	22.9

Children and Education

School	No. of pupils	%age of pupils receiving Free School Meals	% of pupils achieving expected level in core subjects at KS2	% of pupils achieving expected level in core subjects at KS3
Ysgol Estyn	229	9.2	92.6	
Abermorddu	217	8.6	96.7	
Ysgol Mynydd Isa Infants and Junior	555	8.5	89.3	
Wood Memorial	186	27.4	85.7	
Saltney Ferry	105	29.1	70	
St Anthony's	165	15.2	100	
Castell Alun H S	1359	5.2		86.1
St David's H S	508	16.2		79.8
Argoed	580	8.1		91.4

iii) <u>Specific impacts on groups of people within the protected characteristics categories.</u>

Library membership is free, accessible and inclusive. No specific information is recorded as to age (except for children), ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

Adults provide name, address and gender information.

Children provide name, address, gender and date of birth.

Library services are free to all who join and access to libraries is free to all. Membership is required only for using ICT facilities and for borrowing items.

Library services for people from protected characteristics groups are provided in the following ways:

- Age

Special collections of books and other items are provided for different ages and stages of childhood, as well as Parents Collections

- Disability
  - ✓ Books are provided in different formats such as Large Print, audio, downloadable audio (e-audio)
  - ✓ RNIB membership is funded and administered by the library service for visually impaired people
  - ✓ The libraries are all DDA compliant
  - ✓ Adapted ICT facilities are available for people with physical and learning needs
  - ✓ A library service to people who are housebound is available
  - ✓ Library members who have additional needs are exempted from some library charges
- Gender reassignment
  - ✓ Libraries can access information on reading material and support information for all requirements.

- Pregnancy and maternity
  - ✓ Libraries are child friendly with books for children and parents
  - ✓ accessible for prams and buggies
  - ✓ Rhymetime sessions for under 5s and parents/carers held fortnightly
- Race
- Religion of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
  - ✓ Library book stock covers a wide range of ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age and language in representation of subjects and authorship to provide a diverse stock.
  - ✓ Language – Library books and stock are provided in Welsh across all categories. Bilingual activities are provided and all communications are bilingual. Library staff have access to Language Line to assist customers whose first language is not English or Welsh.

v) Library staff will be at risk of redundancy but will be considered for any library positions that become vacant due to retirement etc. FCC guidelines and procedures will be followed.

7. **How the proposal will meet the needs of the community**

7.1 Any community run, or community funded facilities provided for the three communities would offer local provision and could be used by residents to complement the networked library service provided by the council, as a local amenity providing some library services.

7.2 Library service users of the three communities will still be able to access the library hubs in the main towns of Broughton, Buckley, Connahs Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold and at Deeside Leisure Centre. These locations ensure that 82.2% of Flintshire's population are within 2.5 miles of a library.

a) The hub libraries provide the core entitlements of a Welsh Public Library:

- *free inclusive access for all/ total community access reaching older people, children and families, minority and deprived communities*
- *Outcomes: learning, reading support (wide range of reader development activities that actively feed in to the health and wellbeing agenda), health offer, digital support (supported, free online access), information offer (staff skilled in info management), inspirational spaces (network of neutral, trusted and accessible community spaces), support for under 5s and parent/carers, service to people with additional needs (RNIB, LP, audio, housebound, residential homes etc)*

b)   Mobile Library will visit the three locations on a 3 weekly rota in addition to the existing visits to Saltney Ferry, Abermorddu, Caergwrle, Cymau.

c)   Services to people who are housebound will be available for residents unable to access the hub libraries or the mobile library

7.3   <u>Potential library service users in the communities</u>

As above

7.4   <u>Specific impacts on groups of people within the protected characteristics categories.</u>

The services described at i) and ii) above would be available to all residents

8.   <u>Additional Financial implications of the proposal</u>

8.1   Infrastructure costs such as IT, HR and management costs could be reduced as a result of the 3 libraries ceasing service as part of the network.

8.2   The library budget has to be reduced by 30% thus making it necessary to reduce library provision in Flintshire. By reducing the number of library buildings and co-locating the service with other services costs are reduced and library services to the county are sustainable.

9.   <u>How the communities are to be consulted</u>

- Communities will be consulted during November to December 2015 via the following methods:
- All residents (including library users) - information bulletin (paper and online)
- Community groups to have meetings with Chief Officer and Principal Libraries Officer by request.
- Community Councils, schools and places of worship will be consulted by correspondence
- Individuals, groups and societies can contact Chief Officer and Principal Librarian with any specific concerns or questions.
- People from the protected characteristics groups will be consulted via the EIA Quality Assurance group
- All consultation documents would be bilingual in line with council policy.

10.   <u>Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy</u>

- Current users will be given notice of any changes to provision and explanations as to how and where alternative services can be accessed.
- The Library Service for housebound people will be promoted to those with mobility impairments in this community who may be eligible to receive it.

- Online resources can be accessed from home 24/7, e.g. E-book service and Online Catalogue, books can be reserved for collection at any service point.

11. Measures we will take to strengthen the proposal and foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity

- Ensuring that the remaining library network library and mobile service offers an all-round better customer experience for all library service users.
- Increased partnership working with local community groups to ensure we make them aware of any new services we offer (including protected characteristic groups)
- Ensure robust support, financial and provision of resources and training support to community groups prior to transition of CAT

Measures we will take to reduce or remove any adverse impact.

- By ceasing to provide fragmented opening hours for services at rural locations, we will attain more consistency in the number of opening hours (and days) that libraries of a larger size (or with higher usage figures) are open.
- To ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of the changes to the library service to these communities, so we can continue to adapt to the changing needs and demands of users and potential users in our local communities.

12. <u>Sources used</u>
- ➢ CIPFA
- ➢ Flintshire County Council Infobase
- ➢ Welsh Government
- ➢ Library Management System data for Flintshire Libraries

13. <u>Action Plan</u>

Action	Responsible Officer	By When	Progress
Publish summary of EIA[1]	I. Bancroft	December	
Consult Library users	P. Corbett	November - December	
Consult Community Councils, FCC local	P. Corbett	November -	

[1] summaries of EIAs where there is substantial impact will need to be published

members, schools, community groups		December	
Decision	I. Bancroft	December/January	