



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR R LEWIS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Cabinet Members of the feedback received from the consultation initiated by Cabinet in relation to the proposed changes to the Mobile Library Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Consider the feedback from the consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 Decide whether or not to implement the proposed changes that were consulted on as follows:
- Reduce the number of existing vehicles used for delivery of the Mobile Library Service from 3 to 2.
 - Invest in two new purpose built vehicles, which unlike the existing service vehicles, would have onboard access to Wi-Fi and be suitable from which to provide other Council information services.
 - Change the method of delivery from 393 short stops per fortnight to 48 longer stops every three weeks that would enable the service to expand the range of provision available on the vehicles.
 - Extend the scope of access to, and rebrand the Library Housebound Service to the @HomeLibraryService.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Mobile library provision has remained relatively unchanged since its inception, providing access to a range of books and reading materials in various formats for people who do not live near a static library. Those who receive this service are happy with the service provided as it meets their needs.
- 3.2 However, despite all the efforts made to promote the service the number of customers that access the service is low, and the longer term sustainability of the mobile service is under threat unless new customers can be attracted to the service. There is, therefore, a strong business case for changing the model of delivery and enhancing the service on offer in an effort to attract new customers and make maximum use of Council resources.
- 3.3 It is suggested that the option consulted on, of purchasing two new vehicles that will be used for longer stops and deliver additional opportunities to access advice and support, is the best option over the longer term in respect of ensuring the sustainability of the service and benefitting a wider range of residents.
- 3.4 The expansion of the eligibility criteria for the current Housebound Service and its rebranding as the @homelibraryservice under the proposals would ensure that any adverse effect on those most in need could be mitigated and they would continue to have access to the books they want.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There are currently 3 mobile library vehicles that travel across the county, stopping in 393 locations every 2 weeks. The stops consist of:
- 353 street stops that last for 10-15 minutes
 - 28 stops at sheltered housing units, alcohol/mental health units, and residential homes for 20-40 minutes
 - 12 evening and Saturday stops for 3 hours at locations where static libraries have previously been closed.
- 4.2 The service currently has 3 vehicles but each of these has been deemed to be past its operational and economic life. The financial cost of maintaining the vehicles has risen significantly while the number of missed stops reported under the Welsh Public Library Standards has risen from 72 in 2015/16 to 201 in 2016/17 and 458 in 2017/18. 60 days of service have already been lost between 1st April 2018 and 30th July 2018 due to breakdowns and repairs. This highlights the impact on the continuity of service. In addition, the cost of repairs undertaken on the vehicles now outstrips the financial value of the vehicles.

- 4.3 On 22nd March 2018 the Cabinet agreed to undertake an eight-week consultation period on proposed changes to the Mobile Library Service.

The proposals were to:

- Reduce the number of existing vehicles used for delivery of the Mobile Library Service from 3 to 2.
- Invest in two new purpose built vehicles, which unlike the existing service vehicles, would have onboard access to Wi-Fi and be suitable from which to provide other Council information services.
- Change the method of delivery from 393 short stops per fortnight to 48 longer stops every three weeks that would enable the service to expand the range of provision available on the vehicles.
- Extend the scope of, and access to the Library Housebound Service and re-brand it as the @homelibraryservice to mitigate any potential adverse impact on disabled people, individuals suffering from long-term illness, full-time carers or people living more than 2 miles from a static library.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation took place between 8th May and 3rd July 2018. 389 questionnaires were returned. The responses can be summarised as follows:

- 93.2% of respondents to the questionnaire were users of the mobile service, with 88.6% of the users using a short stop. 96.9% of respondents stated that they use the service fortnightly. 19.2% of respondents also said they also use a branch library.
- 72% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to reduce the vehicles from 3 to 2** (42.9% strongly disagreeing).
- 78.8% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to reduce the number of stops** (49.4% strongly disagreeing).
- 44.6% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to introduce I-pads and free wi-fi on the mobile buses**, compared to 16.2% who agreed with the proposal and 39.1% who did not have a view.
- 37.7% of respondents agreed with the proposal that the Council should **use the mobile vehicles as outreach hubs**, with 34.5% disagreeing.

- 43.1% of respondents agreed that the **proposed vehicles should park in accessible central locations**, however 42.6% disagreed, many of whom disagreed on the basis that they don't know where the proposed central locations would be.

The full Consultation Report including the methodology used to undertake the consultation can be seen at Appendix 1.

- 5.2 It was anticipated in the previous report to Cabinet that there would be resistance to change on the part of customers who have been used to having books delivered if not to their door, then to their street. This is evident from the questionnaires that were returned.
- 5.3 Despite every effort made to engage with the wider community very few responses were received from people who do not currently benefit from the service which may indicate that the service as it is currently delivered is deemed to be irrelevant to their needs.
- 5.4 In terms of customer profile 86% of respondents to the questionnaire were over the age of 65 while 34% identified themselves as disabled. The age profile highlights the dilemma faced by the Library Service – balancing current customer needs with the need to ensure a sustainable service for the future.
- 5.5 Despite the negative response to the proposal for longer stops it is interesting to note that there was some support for using the vehicles for the provision of health and well-being advice and information while there was almost an equal split between those who favoured the vehicles being used as outreach hubs and those against this idea. Similarly, there was an almost equal split between those who wanted to see the vehicles parked in accessible central locations and those who responded negatively to this. (Some respondents who disagreed with this option noted that they did so as they were not provided with information on the proposed locations).
- 5.6 Some of the written comments suggest that there is a lack of understanding of how the Housebound Service operates (e.g. fears that the customer would be unable to identify the books they want) while a few responses would suggest that the mobile service is currently used by some customers who should have been referred onto the Housebound Service due to their ill-health/disability.

6. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.1 Due to significant further deterioration in the performance of the library vehicles since the last report to Cabinet, (as indicated in 4.2 above) two new vehicles have been ordered and are currently being prepared for deployment in September. Any decision to purchase a third

replacement vehicle is subject to Cabinet's decisions on the recommendations at paragraph 2.

- 6.2 Should Members support the recommendation to reduce the number of vehicles to two, then this will require a decision to be made on how the service is operated from September 2018, as two vehicles cannot deliver the same service as three vehicles.

7. PROPOSED WAY AHEAD

- 7.1 The purpose of proposing changes to the Mobile Library Service was to ensure its future sustainability by offering a high-quality service that would be attractive to more customers and offer access to a wider range of advice and support. The only way to accomplish this is to change the model of delivery.

- 7.2 In order to mitigate any adverse effect on the most vulnerable customers the eligibility criteria for the Housebound Service should be amended to include:

- individuals who suffer from long-term illness
- individuals who have mobility problems
- full-time carers
- people who live over 2 miles from the nearest static library

Re-branding the service to the @homelibraryservice may enable it to be marketed more effectively and make it more appealing to relevant customers.

- 7.3 It is anticipated that the @homelibraryservice will be able to accommodate an additional 100-130 customers without requiring additional resources. However, it should be noted that it is uncertain how any additional applications for this service would be received if the longer stops option is approved.

- 7.4 A reduction in the number of vehicles will result in an unavoidable reduction in staffing. However, some staff have previously expressed an interest in redundancy/early retirement and there may be opportunities to find employment for staff in static libraries.

- 7.5 If the proposal to move to longer stops is approved by Cabinet, Library Service Management will consult with communities and all relevant stakeholders, including Elected Members and the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Committee in order to identify the most suitable locations with a list of possible sites given to encourage discussion. As part of the proposal it is suggested that no stops are placed within a one mile radius of a static library.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a general equality duty and a specific public sector equality duty that is applicable to Councils. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Single Equality Duty) requires public authorities to demonstrate that they have paid 'due regard' in their decision-making process to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

8.2 The Council must have due regard to the impact of any proposals on those with a protected characteristic. The Council has a specific duty to publish information to demonstrate how it has paid due regard to the aims above as part of its decision-making. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment screening exercise (and if necessary a full Equality Impact Assessment) would be evidence that the Council has considered its legal obligations in making the decision on the recommendations in this report.

8.3 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken informed by the consultation feedback and included at Appendix 2.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 An eight week consultation was undertaken and the full results can be seen at Appendix 1.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It has been calculated that the proposed changes to the Library Service would result in revenue savings of £54,499 per annum.

10.2 Two new mobile library vehicles have been purchased at a cost of £215,000, funded as part of the Council's Fleet replacement strategy.

11. LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 There is no statutory requirement for the Council to provide a Mobile Library Service and eight local authorities in Wales have no mobile library provision at all. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 simply

requires local authorities to ensure the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient service' without providing any criteria for what can be considered as 'comprehensive and efficient.' In Wales the Welsh Public Library Standards has clear quality indicators that library services have to abide by. These do not specify the need for a Mobile Library Service. However, if a Mobile library Service is provided there is an expectation that it will provide an efficient service and, ideally, access to Wi-Fi on its vehicles.

12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 This proposal links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring that the Council continues to deliver a mobile library service for people who live in an area where there is no static library provision so that they can continue to access books and materials that will enrich their lives. The enhanced facilities that would be offered through the purchase of two new vehicles will further benefit customers, by facilitating access to a wider range of information, advice and training including access to free Wi-Fi.
- 12.2 This proposal is designed to ensure that the mobile library service can be sustained over the **longer-term** and remain relevant in the face of changing patterns of customer usage and raised expectations of modern library services. In order to provide the maximum benefit possible to customers, it is intended to **collaborate** with other Council services and partner organisations to facilitate outreach advice and training sessions on the mobile vehicles. This collaboration will add significant value to the service provided and maximise the use of resources thereby contributing to the creation of a more **integrative** model of provision.
- 12.3 The re-branding of the Housebound Service as the @homelibraryservice, and the expansion of the criteria for eligibility of the home library service, is designed to **prevent** the most vulnerable customers from being adversely affected by the proposed change in mobile library provision. Customers will be **involved** in a review of the service and feedback from customers will be gathered for analysis prior to any changes being introduced.
- 12.4 This proposal contributes to the following well-being goals:
- **A prosperous Wales** – Ensuring a sustainable mobile library service will ensure access to a world of lifelong learning through relevant book stock and materials. Using the vehicles for longer stops that will enable access to Wi-Fi and training opportunities will support the development of a more skilled and employable population.
 - **A healthier Wales** – By providing information through books, online resources and access to advice and support sessions through partner

organisations and services, customers will be able to make more informed choices for the benefit of their health. They can also be helped through the Book Prescription Scheme that directly supports people with health concerns.

- **A more equal Wales** – a transformed mobile library service will be better placed to support customers to achieve their potential as they will have access to more online learning as well as books and printed materials. In addition, the new model of longer stops with Wi-Fi accessible vehicles and support to use digital equipment will help to promote and facilitate digital inclusion.
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** – having longer stops at central locations within communities will allow better opportunities for people to connect with each other. In addition, people will be able to access information on the mobile vehicle about their local community, its events and activities.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** – the vehicles carry a collection of Welsh-medium books for adults and children as well as materials related to local history and culture. With the addition of Wi-Fi, customers will be able to access further information on any cultural or historical matters of interest as well as gaining access to local history and family history sites. The mobile vehicles carry promotional materials such as theatre programmes etc and promote local events.
- **A globally responsible Wales** – Rhondda Cynon Taf's Library Service works with other library services across Wales to procure book stock and e-books/online stock to ensure that resources are used most efficiently.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 This report has provided Cabinet Members with details of the feedback from the consultation initiated by Cabinet in relation to the proposed changes to the mobile library service.
- 13.2 It is hoped that upon consideration of the consultation findings within this report, and the additional information provided, that Cabinet Members have the information required to enable them to make an informed decision on the proposed changes.
- 13.3 Should Members agree to the recommendation to modernise the mobile library service, a proactive marketing campaign will be undertaken to promote the enhancements to the new service.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

Background Papers

[Cabinet - 22nd March 2018](#)

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APPENDIX 1

Mobile Library Consultation Report

August 2018



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on proposals to improve the quality and range of services provided by the Mobile Library Service to a standard comparable with that of static libraries whilst ensuring that the Library service remains accessible to communities throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The consultation ran for 8 weeks, from the 8th May to 3rd July 2018. The approach taken included a webpage with information on the proposals, including an FAQ booklet and an online survey for members of the public and service users to take part in. 389 questionnaires were returned. There were 3 engagement events and an email/letter was sent to all mobile library service users.
- 93.2% of respondents to the questionnaire were users of the mobile service, with 88.6% of the users using a short stop. 96.9% of respondents stated that they use the service fortnightly. 19.2% of respondents also said they also use a branch library
- 72% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to reduce the vehicles from 3 to 2** (42.9% strongly disagreeing).
- 78.8% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to reduce the number of stops** (49.4% strongly disagreeing).
- 44.6% of respondents disagreed with the **proposal to introduce I-pads and free wi-fi** on the mobile buses, 16.2% agreed and 39.1% neither agreed or disagreed or didn't know.
- Service users were asked what they would use wi-fi for, if it was introduced. 28.9% of people who answered this question said they would use it for email and research, with 27.6% stating that they would use it to check their online library account, reserve items and renew loans.
- 86.1% of respondents agreed with the **proposal to continue to offer books/e-books** and other printed materials on the mobile buses.
- 37.7% of respondents agreed with the proposal that the Council should **use the mobile vehicles as outreach hubs**, with 34.5% disagreeing.
- Respondents were asked what services they would like to see on any vehicle used as an outreach hub. 52.8% said they would like to see health and well-being information. A number of comments were concerned about potential privacy issues on the vehicle, if discussions were of a sensitive nature.

- 43.1% of respondents agreed that the **proposed vehicles should park in accessible central locations**, however 42.6% disagreed, many of which disagreed on the basis that they don't know where the proposed central locations would be.
- Respondents were asked to provide further comments on the proposals and the following are a selection of the themes that emerged;
 - Keep Existing Service
 - Would no longer use if proposals go ahead
 - Accessibility issues (linked to Age/Disability)
 - Housebound comments
 - Wi-fi not needed
 - In agreement/positive
 - Depends on where the stops are

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the consultation on proposals to improve the quality and range of services provided by the Mobile Library Service to a standard comparable with that of static libraries whilst ensuring that the Library service remains accessible to communities throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 presents the results from the questionnaire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The way people use libraries and interact with the Library Service is changing. Static libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been transformed to better meet customer needs and make the best possible use of public money. Visitor numbers to static libraries are now improving and customers can access a wider range of services and support at libraries particularly those that are co-located with other Council services.
- 2.2 Mobile library provision has remained relatively unchanged since its inception. It currently focuses on providing access to a range of books and reading materials in various formats for people who do not live near a static library, as well as providing some information and recycling bags. Customers can choose books on the vehicle itself or order books online or by phone and pick them up when the mobile library visits their area.
- 2.3 There are 3 mobile library vehicles that travel across the county, stopping in 393 locations every 2 weeks. The stops consist of:
 - 353 street stops that last for 10-15 minutes
 - 28 stops at sheltered housing units, alcohol/mental health units, and residential homes for 20-40 minutes
 - 12 evening and Saturday stops for 3 hours at locations where static libraries have previously been closed.
- 2.4 Although the geographical coverage is good, what is on offer is limited, in part due to the restrictive time slots. This situation has been exacerbated recently due to the fragile state of the mobile vehicles that has resulted in an inconsistent and unreliable service. 100 days of service were lost in 2016 due to vehicle breakdowns. 64 days were

lost due to vehicle breakdowns between April and September 2017. In addition the cost of maintenance has escalated.

- 2.5 The Council's Fleet Management Service has concluded that the vehicles are at the end of their economic and operational life and need to be replaced if a mobile library service is to continue.
- 2.6 The numbers of users that access the service remain low, despite all the efforts made to promote the service. There are currently 1,693 mobile library members in the county (compared to 39,272 static library members). The percentage of over 60s using the mobile library service is consistent across each geographical area of Rhondda Cynon Taf at between 67% and 73%.
- 2.7 Combined book issues for 2016/17 on all mobile library vehicles was 39,900 which is less than the annual book issues for some of the individual branch libraries (e.g. Church Village library issued 45,846 books in the same period).
- 2.8 The impact of technology with access to e-books and materials online provides a different way for people who live further from a static library, to access reading materials. Over time, the percentage of people who will choose to download books is expected to increase, so mobile libraries will need to offer something extra if they are to be sustainable and of benefit to customers over the longer term.
- 2.9 The current model of mainly short stops does not make it practical to facilitate access to Wi-Fi or allow customers to use public access computers that are now available on new library vehicles. There is no requirement under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, or the Welsh Public Libraries Standards to deliver a mobile library service. However, if a library authority provides this service it is important that the mobile vehicle can offer free and reliable access to Wi-Fi. Short stops do not allow for this and the current fleet of vehicles do not have this facility.
- 2.10 Many local authorities across England and Wales that continue to maintain a mobile library service have remodelled their service to ensure it better replicates the services provided by a static library, and as a result, the mobile libraries in those communities are better utilised by the residents.
- 2.11 The mobile library service currently costs the Council £134,114. The average cost of a visit to a static library in 2016/17 was £2.29. The average cost of a visit to a mobile library in 2016/17 was £8.50 or £4.70 if we exclude the recent down-time and the cost of vehicle repairs. We need to ensure we maximise resident take-up of the Mobile Library Service, particularly in an economic climate where all public services are being challenged in terms of whether they offer value for money.

- 2.12 In reviewing the future of the Service, we need to consider how we can continue to widen access to library services across the County Borough but also improve the range and quality of services provided.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

- 2.13 The Library Service Management Team has reviewed the Service and there are opportunities to remodel the operational delivery of the Service, expanding the services available on mobile libraries to attract more customers and make it a service that is fit for the 21st Century.
- 2.14 The proposal is to:
- Purchase 2 new purpose built library vehicles with access to Wi-Fi and easy to set up awnings/canopies.
 - Reduce the number of mobile stops to 48 long stops of 2.5 hours each every three weeks focussed on communities where there are no static libraries.
 - Continue to offer access to books, e-books and other printed material. Introduce access to I-pads and free Wi-Fi so that customers can access the internet and the Service will offer training from a volunteer or tutor on how to use digital equipment etc.
 - Use the mobile vehicles as outreach hubs that can facilitate the delivery of advice and guidance to customers by other Council services and partner agencies on a rota basis, e.g. One4All customer service staff; the Council's Consultation team; MacMillan Cancer; and
 - Park at central locations e.g. close to schools, supermarkets or GP surgeries to encourage more visits.
- 2.15 It is also proposed to expand the eligibility criteria for the Housebound Service in order to mitigate any adverse effect of reducing the number of stops and centralising the locations of the Mobile library Service, to include:
- People who suffer from mobility problems.
 - People who suffer from long-term illness.
 - People who live in excess of 2 miles from a library service point (static or mobile).
 - Full-time carers.
- 2.16 In addition, it is proposed to rebrand the Housebound Service as the @HomeLibraryService to reflect these changes (The Housebound Service is currently only available for individuals who, through ill-health or disability, cannot leave their homes. It delivers books to an individual's home on a monthly basis). It is anticipated that this can be done within existing resources, although it is uncertain how many additional applications for this service we will receive.

- 2.17 The success of this service model will be dependent on the location of the new library stops. It is proposed that communities and all relevant stakeholders, including the Public Services Delivery, Community and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and Elected Members would be canvassed via a consultation in order to identify the most suitable location with a list of possible sites given to encourage discussion. As part of the proposal it is suggested that no stops are placed within a one mile radius of a static library.

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3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation ran for 8 weeks, from the 8th May to 3rd July 2018.
- 3.2 The aim of the consultation was to gather the views of library service users on the proposals to improve the quality and range of services provided by the Mobile Library Service to a standard comparable with that of static libraries whilst ensuring that the Library service remains accessible to communities throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.3 The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;
- A paper questionnaire distributed on the mobile libraries.
 - An email/letter to all mobile library service users (1693)
 - 3 Drop in Engagement events;
 - Aberdare library (6th June)
 - Treorchy Library (8th June)
 - Pontypridd library (15th June)
 - A dedicated email address (consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk) and freepost address if needed.
 - Online survey and FAQ sheet.
 - Poster in all libraries.
 - Older Persons Advisory Group.
 - Rhondda Cynon Taf Disability Forum.
 - The Public Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4 389 questionnaires were returned.

4 Questionnaire Results

- 4.1 93.2% of respondents to the questionnaire were users of the mobile service, with 88.6% of the users using a short stop. 96.9% of respondents stated that they use the service fortnightly.
- 4.2 19.2% of respondents also said they also use a branch library, as follows;

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	75 100.0%
Q5. If yes, which one?	
Abercynon Library	5 6.7%
Aberdare Library	21 28.0%
Church Village Library	2 2.7%
Ferndale Library	3 4.0%
Hirwaun Library	6 8.0%
Llantrisant Library	1 1.3%
Mountain Ash Library	5 6.7%
Pontyclun Library	3 4.0%
Pontypridd Library	5 6.7%
Porth Library	3 4.0%
Rhydyfelin Library	2 2.7%
Tonypandy Library	6 8.0%
Treorchy Library	13 17.3%

Table 1 – Branch Libraries

4.3 72% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce the vehicles from 3 to 2 (42.9% strongly disagreeing).

Counts Analysis %	
	Base 354 100.0%
Reduce vehicles from 3 to 2, investing in 2 new vehicles, with onboard Wi-Fi	
Strongly agree	13 3.7%
Agree	29 8.2%
Neither agree or disagree	44 12.4%
Disagree	103 29.1%
Strongly Disagree	152 42.9%
Don't know	13 3.7%

Table 2 – Views on reducing mobile library vehicles

4.4 78.8% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce the number of stops (49.4% strongly disagreeing).

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
	Base 354 100.0%
Reduce the number of stops to 48 long stops of 2.5 hours each every three weeks, focusing on communities where there are no static libraries	
Strongly agree	10 2.8%
Agree	27 7.6%
Neither agree or disagree	25 7.1%
Disagree	104 29.4%
Strongly Disagree	175 49.4%
Don't know	13 3.7%

Table 3 – Views on reducing the number of stops

4.5 44.6% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to introduce I-pads and free wi-fi on the mobile buses, 16.2% agreed and 39.1% neither agreed or disagreed or didn't know.

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	327 100.0%
Introduce access to i-pads and free Wi-Fi	
Strongly agree	10 3.1%
Agree	43 13.1%
Neither agree or disagree	92 28.1%
Disagree	74 22.6%
Strongly Disagree	72 22.0%
Don't know	36 11.0%

Table 4 – Views on Wi-fi

4.6 Service users were asked what they would use wi-fi for, if it was introduced. 28.9% of people who answered this question said they would use it for email and research, with 27.6% stating that they would use it to check their online library account, reserve items and renew loans.

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	76 100.0%
If we introduced Wi-Fi on the vehicles, what would you use it for?	
Email	22 28.9%
Internet shopping	5 6.6%
Research (including family/local history research etc)	22 28.9%
Jobsearching	10 13.2%
Universal Credit	4 5.3%
Social media platforms such as Facebook....	12 15.8%

Check online library account, reserve items, renew loans	21 27.6%
Download free e-books, e-magazines or e-audio books from the libraries online subscriptions	17 22.4%
Other	26 34.2%

Table 5 – Wi-fi usage

There were 167 other comments. The majority of the comments were based on respondents saying they would not use the wi-fi (none/nothing/would not use). The following are a selection of views received;

(note: this differs from the figure in the table above (26), as many respondents did not tick the other box, as they wanted to state opposition to the wi-fi proposal)

- *Have it at home*
- *Not suitable for short stops*
- *I have no use for wi-fi on vehicles*
- *I am not computer literate*
- *Would not use it*

4.7 86.1% of respondents agreed with the proposal to continue to offer books/e-books and other printed materials on the mobile buses.

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	338 100.0%
Continue to offer books/e-books and other printed material	
Strongly agree	176 52.1%
Agree	115 34.0%
Neither agree or disagree	14 4.1%
Disagree	9 2.7%
Strongly Disagree	15 4.4%
Don't know	9 2.7%

Table 6 – Views on books and printed materials

- 4.8 37.7% of respondents agreed that the Council should use the mobile vehicles as outreach hubs, with 34.5% disagreeing.

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
	Base 342 100.0%
Use the mobile vehicles as outreach hubs, that offer advice and guidance to customers	
Strongly agree	63 18.4%
Agree	66 19.3%
Neither agree or disagree	61 17.8%
Disagree	65 19.0%
Strongly Disagree	53 15.5%
Don't know	34 9.9%

Table 7 – Views on outreach hubs

- 4.9 Respondents were asked what services they would like to see on any vehicle used as an outreach hub. 52.8% said they would like to see health and well-being information, the full list is shown below.

Counts Analysis %	
	Base 108
Q10. If we use the vehicles as outreach hubs, what advice...	
Money and budgeting advice	26 24.1%
Advice on welfare benefits	51 47.2%
Health and well-being information	57 52.8%
Short training sessions e.g. improving digital skills	37 34.3%
Resident engagement (having your say on Council Services)	42 38.9%
Advice on other council services (possible One4all outreach?)	47 43.5%

Other	18 16.7%
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Table 8 – Views on services for outreach hub

Almost all of the 108 other comments stated none/not interested/would not use. The following services were suggested;

(note: this differs from the figure in the table above (18) as many respondents did not tick the 'other' box, as they wanted to state opposition to the proposal for outreach hubs generally)

- Children and adults sections, arts/crafts etc.
- Community projects – volunteering
- Information on services available at other libraries or centres in the community
- Local transport details
- Universal Credit

A number of comments were concerned about potential privacy issues on the vehicle, if discussions were of a sensitive nature.

4.10 43.1% of respondents agreed that the proposed vehicles should park in accessible central locations, however 42.6% disagreed.

Counts	
Analysis %	
Respondents	
	Base 343 100.0%
Park at accessible central locations	
Strongly agree	82 23.9%
Agree	66 19.2%
Neither agree or disagree	34 9.9%
Disagree	60 17.5%
Strongly Disagree	86 25.1%
Don't know	15 4.4%

Table 9 – Views on accessible locations

4.11 Respondents were asked to provide further comments on the proposals and the following are a selection of the themes and comments that emerged;

- Keep Existing Service

“As a long time user of the mobile service I would not want to see it change for the sake of change.”

“change is unavoidable but I would like things to stay the same”

“I think the mobile library is one of the best services provided to the public. I would be very sorry to lose it”

- Would no longer use if proposals go ahead

“I use the mobile library because it stops nearby and is convenient. If I had to go any distance to use it I probably wouldn't. If I were to use the at home service I wouldn't be able to choose books or to request any...”

“I would not use Library if have to walk to a long stop.”

- Accessibility issues (linked to Age/Disability)

“As an elderly person of 87, having the library service call to my street is a vital service to myself as I am unable to visit a branch library as my local one (Pontypridd) is too far to walk to.”

“.....I am disabled, can't drive, and would be unable to get to these accessible central locations. The mobile library stops just outside my house, so haven't got far to walk...”

“Because of illness and disability I rely on the mobile library as I'm unable to travel to branch library”

- Housebound

“All very well to park up but what about house bound people like my husband. If I am not at home when library make calls he knows my husband can't walk so he brings him books he knows he's interested in.”

“I would be affected because of age and disability. A door to door service is given to those who are housebound. How would this be adopted with the service decreased?”

“I am housebound, and enjoy my services. Once fortnightly with the mobile library if this service stops it will affect my life severely. I spend time reading every day.”

- Wi-fi not needed

“As I am 77 years young living on my own, I know nothing about WiFi computers or any other new fangdangled things. I am quite happy with the mobile library and it's very helpful driver thank you.”

“Free wifi is not needed in most locations as customers are usually elderly.”

- In agreement/positive

“Provided they are not too far away and people using buses don't have too far to walk”

“Reducing service to 3 weekly is logical. The Central locations need to have plenty of parking, which my nearest branch library (Ferndale) does not. Thank you.”

“I am 76 years old I am not a user of computers but I love reading books. I like the mobile library. But I am the only one to use it at this stop so I would miss it, but I realise it might be expensive for 1 person”

- Depends on where the stops are

“Depends where the stops are, as being elderly don't want to walk far carrying books good service with recycling bags”

“Depends where the bus parks / stops”

“Until locations have been identified I will not know how it will affect me.”

- 4.12 Respondents were asked to provide any further suggestions or alternative proposals. The responses often mirrored the themes in section 4.11 these above. The following are a selection of additional comments/suggestions;

“... the book allowance would need to be increased if the service was reduced”

“how can the person driving the van be qualified to deliver these services”

“I would like to see a better turn over on books, ie. audio books”

“If there was a suitable venue in the village (eg. community centre, YRP office) offer to supply and stock a bookshelf with books...”

“It would be more suitable to have 1 or 2 vans to complement the library service separately, not all together, most people would like a

separate service. All subjects which would need advice private and personal.”

“no privacy on van – plenty of advice in central i.e. Aberdare Library”

“refresh stock more frequently”

“renew vehicles anyway and keep service to fortnightly. Routes could be rearranged to, as some areas still have an actual library....”

“The outreach hub is a laudable idea, but will there be enough (suitably qualified) staff to provide the wide range of services...”

“To include all of these you would need a very large bus and a private room to discuss things”

“When choosing books it would be very disconcerting for one when all this proposed business going on around you, especially in a confined space....”

Respondent Profile

- 4.13 86% of the respondents were over 65 and 34.6% stated that they were disabled.

Age

Counts	Analysis %
Base	364 100.0%
Q14. Age;	
Under 16	2 0.5%
16-24	2 0.5%
25-34	5 1.4%
35-44	4 1.1%
45-54	5 1.4%
55-64	33 9.1%
65-74	128 35.2%
75+	185 50.8%

Table 10 – Age of Respondents

Disability

Counts	
Analysis %	
Base	350 100.0%
Q15. Disability The definition of disability in the Equal...	
Yes	121 34.6%
No	189 54.0%
Prefer not to say	40 11.4%

Table 11 - Disability

- 4.14 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents felt the proposal would affect them because of age and disability characteristics, the following are a small selection of the comments received;

Age

"I would not be able to carry my books"

"too old now to go to static library"

"older people would stop using the service..."

"for older people, who probably don't see anybody, a chat in the library with other people is probably the highlight of the day"

Disability

"89 year old housebound, I rely on the current service a great deal"

"disabled residents unable to access the service. This is the only contact some residents have, even if for only 15 minutes a fortnight"

Gender/Relationship status

"single parent would be unable to pay the bus fare when weather is bad"

"These proposals would mean less room for books because of the outreach hub. This might affect the availability of women's books".

- 4.15 Under the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on the Welsh Language. The following are a selection of the comments received.

“As long as you offer Welsh language books as well that’s fine”

“As welsh books can be obtained from this service, welsh readers who are housebound would be left with no welsh reading material”

“I cannot see how it would have any effect on the Welsh language”

“I do not feel that our Welsh language is less favourably dealt with and although I have not taken advantage of it, I am sure any special request will be dealt with as do my requests in English”

“If access is restricted to locality then getting hold of welsh reading material would be reduced”

“The impact of the proposals on the Welsh Language would seem to depend on the general policy of the Council”

DRAFT

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Please ensure that you refer to the 'Equality Impact Assessment Guidance' when completing this form. If you would like further assistance please contact the Equality & Diversity Team.

Details

Name of initiative to be assessed: Transforming the Mobile Library Service

Name of responsible officer: Wendy Edwards

Group/Directorate: Public Health, Protection and Community Services

Service Area: Community Services

Date: 11 January (updated 13th August)

a) What are you assessing for impact?

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal	Information/ Position statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Please name and describe below:

The proposal is to re-model the Mobile Library Service by investing in 2 new vehicles, enabling access to wi-fi and computers and working with other services to develop an outreach community hub that enhances what is available to customers. It involves moving away from a service that consists of 10-15 minutes short-stops to stops of 2-2.5 hours and reducing the stops from 393 short stops to 48 long stops. It also requires the service to move from a two weekly to a three weekly service.

c) Is the delivery of this initiative affected by legislation or other drivers such as codes of practice?

If so, please identify what and how

There is no legislative requirement to have a mobile library service. However there are Welsh Public Library Standards that the service has to abide by that have a range of quality indicators that are reported on annually. None of these specifically relates to mobile library provision but the success (or otherwise) of mobile libraries contributes to quality indicators such as visitor numbers, book issues etc.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act Wales) 2015 places an emphasis on sustainable development. This proposal makes a contribution to the well-being goals, in particular, a healthier Wales (as the mobile library will be able to work with partners in health to deliver advice to communities) and a prosperous Wales (providing access to a range of advice to support employability.) The re-modelled service will effectively be an outreach community hub.

Evidence gathered from the Population Assessment 2016 indicated that

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

provision of advice and information and organisations working better together are important to people with support needs.

d) Does the initiative directly affect service users, employees or the wider community?

Yes
No

Continue assessment

No need to continue screening or carry out an EqIA

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Screening/Relevance Test: Is an equality impact assessment required?

Screening is used to decide whether the initiative you are responsible for has a high or medium impact on any of the protected groups and will require a full EqIA.

Please provide details of the possible impact your proposal may have on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

You should also identify whether this constitutes a high, medium or low impact.

Please refer to Equality Impact Assessment Guidelines for further information.

Protected Characteristic	Impact
Age	High - there are potentially negative and positive impacts. Currently approximately 70% of customers of the service are over the age of 65 so older people will be more affected than other groups of people as they enjoy access to the service on their doorstep at present. However, centralising the service so that the stops can be longer could benefit older people who wish to access the internet. The development of an outreach community hub service which is core to the proposal would also enable older people to access a wider range of advice services than is currently available in some local areas.
Disability	High - as with older residents there are potentially negative and positive impacts on disabled people. Some disabled people could be affected if the service no longer stops on their street. This is particularly so for people who have mobility problems and who currently do not have access to the Housebound service as they do not meet the eligibility criteria. However, as with older customers, they could benefit from longer stops as they would be able to access the internet free of charge and also access a wider range of advice services than is currently available in some local areas.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Race	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.

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Religion or Belief	Neutral- there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Sex	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Other Characteristics	
Welsh Language	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.
Carers	High - carers who use the service may be negatively affected if they are unable to get to a central location to access books. However, a potential positive impact could be access to outreach provision and advice services that may not be currently accessible within their community.
Armed Forces Community	Neutral - there is no evidence to suggest that an impact is likely.

If after completing the EqIA screening/relevance test, you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EqIA you must provide adequate explanation below. (Please use additional pages if necessary).

Are you happy that you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes No

Signed: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

N.B. If the initial screening process has identified actual or potential high or medium negative impact on a particular group or groups then you MUST carry out a full EqIA.

Approved by Head of Service or Director

Signed: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Full Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impact and clearly identify which groups are affected.

In terms of any disproportionate/negative/adverse impact that the proposal may have on a protected group, what steps (if any) could be taken to reduce that impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan if necessary.

Customers who are unable to attend a static library or a new library stop, due to infirmity, disability, or full-time caring responsibilities, may request visits from what is currently the Housebound Service. At the moment this service requires its customers to be housebound due to ill-health or disability. It is intended to expand the eligibility criteria and re-brand the service as the @HomeLibraryService so that every effort can be made to accommodate former mobile library customers who may be unable to attend their nearest mobile library stop or static library in the future.

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

Evidence Sources

(i) Give details of any data or research that has led to your reasoning above, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users.

The Library Service has undertaken an analysis of the ages of all customers who currently use the service and it has indicated the following:

Age	Number	Percentage
Over 60	1186	71%
40 – 59	175	10%
20 – 39	151	9%
10 - 19	107	6%
Under 10	74	4%

A Customer Satisfaction Survey of mobile users in 2016 (to which 180 people responded) indicated the following:

- 60% of respondents stated that they used the mobile service because it was 'convenient.
- 23% stated that they used the mobile service because they found it difficult to visit a static library.
- 16% of mobile library customers stated that they also used a static library

There are currently 1,693 mobile library customers. If the above percentages are replicated across the customer base it is anticipated that the majority of customers will be able to attend a central location within their area to make use of the mobile library or attend their nearest static library.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Those who cannot, due to infirmity, disability or full-time caring responsibilities could be offered a visit from what was formerly known as the Housebound service but what will be re-branded the @HomeLibraryService. (Levels of demand for this service can only be estimated at the moment.)

(ii) Give details of how you have engaged with service users on the proposals and steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group and how you have used any feedback to influence your decision.

Responses to the 8-week consultation undertaken in relation to the proposal to re-model the service indicated that 389 people responded to the questionnaire, 74 of whom also used a static library. This is broadly consistent with the results of the Library Service's Customer satisfaction Survey undertaken in 2016.

93.2% of respondents to the questionnaire were users of the mobile service, with 88.6% of the users using a short stop. 96.9% of respondents stated that they use the service fortnightly.

The vast majority of respondents(78.8%) disagreed with the proposal to reduce the number of stops while 72% disagreed with reducing the number of vehicles..

Just over one third agreed that the Council should use the vehicles as outreach hubs while a similar number disagreed with this.

The response as to parking locations was generally evenly split with 43.1% of respondents to the questionnaire agreeing that the vehicles should stop at accessible central locations compared to 42.6% who disagreed with this.

In respect of profile of respondents, perhaps unsurprisingly, over 88% were aged 60 or over with just over 50% being over 75.

A close analysis of the responses especially individual comments highlight the concerns of older customers and those who are disabled. There is some evidence to suggest that not all respondents had understood that they would be able to access the @homelibraryservice if they were disabled, or had mobility problems or were full-time carers and this may have influenced their responses as they rely on access to books for their well-being.

The responses highlight the importance of ensuring that older or disabled people whose quality of life is linked to being able to access books on a regular basis on their doorstep is protected. It strengthens the need to ensure that the current Housebound Service is expanded to include individuals not currently covered by its criteria (as identified above) and re-branded as the @homelibraryservice. Furthermore it highlights the importance of consulting with customers, stakeholders and Elected Members in respect of the location of longer stops if the proposal will be approved by Cabinet.

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Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality Duties?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Decision Log - detail how Elected Members and Senior Managers have been involved in the decision process (give dates of key meetings and decisions made).
The final report will be submitted to Cabinet on 20 th September.

Review

Date of Next Review:	
If review is not required, explain why:	

Completed by:	Wendy Edwards
Signature:	
Job Title:	Head of Community Services
Date:	13 August 2018

This assessment must be approved by an appropriate Head of Service or Director

Approved by:	
Signature:	
Job Title:	
Approval date:	

Please return a copy to:

Equality & Diversity Team
The Pavilions

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale
CF40 2XX

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