

RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision ✓

SUBJECT: Consultation on the proposed development of a Community Hub at the former Ferndale Infants School, including a change of venue for Ferndale Library.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services.

The report proposes the initiation of a community consultation on the development of a Community Hub at the former Ferndale Infants School including the transfer of Ferndale Library from its current site.

DELEGATED DECISION:

It was **AGREED:**

A community consultation process is undertaken regarding the proposal to develop a Community Hub and relocate Ferndale Library to the former Ferndale Infant School beginning on 19th February for a period of 4 weeks.

In parallel with the consultation exercise, the Council support Fern Partnership in the preparation of bids for external funding to enable the development of the proposed Community Hub.

	PAUL MEE	18/1/18
<i>Chief Officer Signature</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution



CONSULTATION

Jay Lasse

16.1.18

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (if required)

DATE

CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YES NO ✓

Reason for urgency:.....

If deemed urgent - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Mayor)

.....
(Dated)

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.



FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

PUBLICATION

Publication on the Councils Website:- 18th January 2018

DATE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 5 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be 26th January 2018

DATE


Secretary to the Cabinet Signature

CHRISTIAN S'S HANAGAN
Print Name

18/1/18.
Date



Further Information

Directorate:	Community and Children's Services
Contact Name:	Wendy Edwards
Designation:	Head of Community Services
Tel.No.	01443 744111

DELEGATED DECISION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

16TH JANUARY 2018

CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY HUB AT THE FORMER FERNDALE INFANT SCHOOL INCLUDING A CHANGE OF VENUE FOR FERNDALE LIBRARY

AUTHOR: Wendy Edwards, Head of Community Services (01443 744111)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request approval for a community consultation to be initiated on the development of a Community Hub at the former Ferndale Infants School, including a proposal to move Ferndale Library from its current location to the Community Hub.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Approval is given for a community consultation to begin on 19th February 2018 for a period of 4 weeks.
- 2.2 In parallel with the consultation exercise, the Council support Fern Partnership in the preparation of bids for external funding to enable the wider development of the Community Hub.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The current location of the library is no longer suitable for the provision of a modern library service. An opportunity has arisen to relocate to the former Ferndale Infants School. This proposal would be part of the wider development of the facility as a Community Hub in partnership with a third sector organisation, Fern Partnership. Initiating a consultation at this stage will provide residents with an opportunity to consider the proposal and offer feedback prior to a decision being made. In parallel it will be necessary for the Council to support Fern Partnership to prepare external funding bids to enable the development of the Community Hub.



4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 28th September 2018, the Chief Executive set out how the Council will deliver its Corporate Plan – “The Way Ahead” over the next three years, in a climate of further funding reductions, through investing in Rhondda Cynon Taf’s future and by improving and delivering essential services in a different way.
- 4.2 The Council’s approach to early intervention and prevention includes the creation of Community Hubs that provide a range of community based services in one or a number of closely located buildings, which best serve the community. These Community Hubs will include a range of service providers including key Council services, voluntary sector, local businesses and other public sector providers. Bringing similar services together will create economies of scale, in terms of staffing and building costs, which will enable the Council to continue to provide a comprehensive range of services within key communities.
- 4.3 The current Ferndale library was opened in 1989 to serve the community of Ferndale. The size of the library and the facilities it offered reflected local circumstances and also the priorities of library provision at that time.
- 4.4 In the intervening years there have been significant changes to the public libraries serving Rhondda Cynon Taf alongside major changes in what libraries are expected to offer their customers.
- 4.5 Since 1997 the Welsh Government has been responsible for overseeing library services in Wales and ensuring that all public library services adhere to the requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Welsh Government’s strategic development framework for libraries in Wales, *Libraries Inspire*, has outlined the vision and expectations for library services. The priorities of the strategy include:
- Work together to review current models of service delivery in response to the current economic climate, and develop innovative models of service delivery
 - Modernise public library buildings to meet the changing lives of users
 - Maximise the contribution of libraries to developing peoples’ skills to help everyone reach their potential, reduce inequality and improve economic and social well-being
- 4.6 The increasing emphasis on libraries as facilitators of learning that provide access to the development of skills, support for job-searching, internet access and a venue for community meetings, require libraries to have additional facilities. These include a community room and an



education/IT training suite that will facilitate classes as well as providing a quiet area for people who need to apply for jobs or update their CVs.

- 4.7 Each library also needs a dedicated Children's Area to encourage reading and enable activities to be held that support the development of a child's literacy and support their interest in books and literature and technology.
- 4.8 The current library building at Ferndale has no separate room for community meetings or training and there is no space to allow seating areas for customers to use their own devices. In addition there is a general lack of space that affects the provision of Children's activities and the amount of stock available for browsing.
- 4.9 Recent changes to library provision (2014) has increased the problems faced by the library as customers who once used Ynyshir, Maerdy and the Tylorstown libraries now use Ferndale library. The lack of customer parking, not previously an issue when the library just served the Ferndale area, is a problem for some users.
- 4.10 Examples of the responses to the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey (2016) regarding the current library include:

'Parking facilities are appalling. Library is small and unattractive. No private areas for groups, sometimes the library is noisy.'

'Automatic door like we had in Tylorstown. Could also do with improving the appearance inside and out. Rather small considering what we had in Tylorstown library. Parking facilities poor.'

'Not enough new book stock to choose from....inside of the building could do with refurbishment.'

'I would like to see more of a community room (partitioned off) for different agencies to attend to advise local people (i.e. elderly, children and others about crime prevention etc. Maybe once a month as there are no social amenities in the Ferndale area.'

- 4.11 An analysis has been made of the potential to expand the current library by extending to the front or by raising the roof, neither of which are regarded as feasible for a variety of reasons.
- 4.12 There is a need to improve library provision at Ferndale. From a library perspective, this can only be achieved by investigating the opportunities available to move from the current building that is no longer fit-for-purpose.



4.13 The Council is exploring the opportunity to develop the former Ferndale Infants School into a Community Hub in partnership with Fern Partnership, a local third sector organisation. In addition to the provision of enhanced library services the Hub would also provide childcare, community engagement and employment support. By co-locating these services with a third sector anchor organisation there is an opportunity for added value and to greatly enhance the public service offer for the local community.

4.14 It will be necessary for Fern Partnership to seek external funding to support their element of the proposed development. This will also require them to undertake their own consultation exercise. It is proposed that the Council support Fern Partnership to develop funding bids in parallel with the proposed consultation exercise undertaken by the Council.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the report is requesting approval for a consultation only.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 A report summarising the results and feedback from the consultation process will be provided in due course.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There is no statutory obligation to consult on the relocation of Ferndale library as it does not entail a reduction in provision that would potentially adversely affect service users. However, it is good practice to engage with service users to better understand their needs.

8.2 Consultation, when undertaken, should be when a proposal is at a formative stage which is the case in respect of the proposed relocation of Ferndale library.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP

9.1 This request for approval for consultation on the re-location of Ferndale library from its current location to the former Ferndale Infants School site links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.



10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Providing approval for a community consultation at this time will ensure that residents have the potential to influence the decision making process at an early stage and offer an opportunity for them and identify the range of provision they would like the Library Service to provide in Ferndale.

Other Information:-

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



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC
HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

16TH JANUARY 2018

**CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY HUB AT
THE FORMER FERNDALE INFANT SCHOOL INCLUDING A CHANGE OF
VENUE FOR FERNDALE LIBRARY**

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact: Wendy Edwards, Head of Community Services (01443
744111)