



**COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD DIRPRWYEDIG Y SWYDDOG HANFODOL
RECORD OF KEY OFFICER DELEGATED DECISION**

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

PWNC / SUBJECT: RCT Together, Community Asset Transfer of the former Ferndale Library building, Ferndale to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” (Community Interest Company – CIC)



DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To approve the grant of a 10 year lease of the former Ferndale Library building, High Street Ferndale, in accordance with the provisions of the Community Asset Transfer scheme, to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” (Community Interest Company).

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

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION: (3/3/22)

To approve the grant of a 10 year lease of the former Ferndale Library building to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” (Community Interest Company) as set out in Paragraph 3 of the accompanying officer report.

 Llofnod y Prif Swyddog Chief Officer Signature	Louise Davies Enw (priflythrennau) Print Name	16.03.22 Dyddiad Date
 Llofnod y Prif Swyddog Chief Officer Signature	Dave Powell Enw (priflythrennau) Print Name	16.03.22 Dyddiad Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

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.

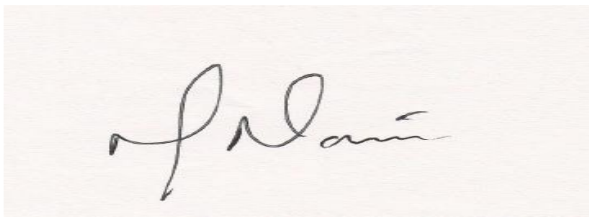
YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION



16.03.22

**LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE**

DYDDIAD / DATE



16.03.22

**LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE**

DYDDIAD / DATE

**LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL
CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (if required)**

DYDDIAD / DATE



RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

**A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN
GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:**

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

NAC YDY | NO ✓

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member 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:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Member)

.....
(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

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.

.....
(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.



AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Councils Website:- 21.03.22

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 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.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call implementation date will be

25.03.22
DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓



Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information

Cyfadrn Directorate:	Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Stephen Smith
Swydd Designation:	Community Development Officer, RCT Together Team.
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	01443 425368



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

3RD MARCH 2022

RCT TOGETHER, COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF THE FORMER FERNDALE LIBRARY BUILDING, FERNDALE TO “Y SIOP FACH SERO” (COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY).

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES AND THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Author(s): Dave Powell - Director of Corporate Estates and Stephen Smith, Community Development Officer, RCT Together Team – 01443 425368

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the grant of a 10 year lease of the former Ferndale Library building, High Street, Ferndale to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” (Community Interest Company).
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Director of Corporate Estates and the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve the grant of a 10 year lease of the former Ferndale Library building situated on High Street, Ferndale, in accordance with the provisions of the Community Asset Transfer scheme, to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” (Community Interest Company) as set out in paragraph 3 and subject to the following conditions:
 - Planning, building consent and “change of use” permissions have been approved.
 - All capital funding is secured to pay for the necessary fit out of the building and statutory compliance is met to enable the zero waste shop to commence trading.



3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The former Ferndale Library building has remained vacant since the transfer of the former RCT Library service to Ferndale Hwb (Community Resilience Hub) in 2019.

3.2 Two costed business plans were submitted in October 2021, by the following organisations for the proposed leasehold transfer of the former Ferndale Library building;

- **Y Siop Fach Sero** – Is a new social enterprise focusing on sales of zero waste household goods and food items, free from plastic packaging, alongside items wrapped in a more environmentally friendly way and includes a free delivery service using an electric vehicle. The shop will also provide / sell at a subsidised cost used sports kits via “Play It Again Sport” social enterprise. The group’s intention is to make these items as accessible as possible to local people and not put cost in the way of living more sustainably.
- **Carmel Church, Blaenllechau** – key focus is to sustain and expand its current delivery of the Carmel Community Clothing project. The church believes the move will help them meet the increased demand for their service during this time, as well as expanding their church services there to be more accessible and visible to the community and enabling sessional use of the building by other community groups.

3.3 At the Strategic Community Asset Transfer Panel meeting held on 16th December 2021, it was recommended to award the lease transfer to **Y Siop Fach Sero** based on the following reasons.

- Y Siop Fach Sero was considered to have the stronger fit with the Council’s Climate Change Strategy priorities of reducing the Borough’s carbon footprint, using less single-use plastics and encouraging residents to shop local. This would be a primarily income generating social business with surpluses used for community health focussed activities.
- Y Siop Fach Sero proposes to support additional small community enterprises such as local community growing projects, bakers and soap makers by providing a regular venue for them to sell their wares.
- The proposal of a free home delivery service via an environmentally friendly electric vehicle will also enable resident’s incapable of accessing locally sourced plastic free products, an opportunity to do so.



- Y Siop Fach Sero will highlight the communities desire to move towards a cleaner and greener approach to retail and the wish to support local enterprise. The group are concerned about the impact of human lifestyles on the environment and how best to tackle not only the practicalities of this but also how to inform and educate people around the concept of sustainable living. Their aim is to create a self-sustaining community hub to demonstrate the link between the environment and how people live their lives.
- Y Siop Fach Sero was deemed to be an innovative and exciting new venture to support as the groups' ambition is to provide an open and accessible venue for a number of community enterprises and projects which would benefit the whole community. By partnering with other social enterprises such as "Play It Again Sport", a community social enterprise which takes donations of new and used sports kit and equipment and sells them at reduced prices to remove financial barriers to participation in sport, reduce social isolation and with the proceeds, deliver health and well-being activities throughout the Rhondda.
- Any surpluses from their trading activities will be re-invested and will enable continuation of their existing environmental focus including their health and well-being activities such as walking and running groups, walking rugby, book clubs, repair café and other engagement opportunities, thereby contributing to a self-sustaining business model. The purpose of these activities is to promote physical health and well-being throughout the Rhondda. These are accessible and mostly free activities, the objective of which is to remove barriers to participation in sport and leisure activities so that residents can benefit from social, healthy activities which reduce social isolation and promotes community connections.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's RCT Together Approach for progressing Community Asset Transfers was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 30th October 2014. This approach will see the Council working with communities and partner agencies to sustain delivery of services that the Council may no longer be able to deliver on its own.
- 4.2 Applications are considered from "not for personal profit" voluntary and community groups, social enterprises and Town and Community Councils for activities, services and facilities that benefit residents within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.3 At the Cabinet meeting on 19th May 2016, it was agreed that applications for the asset transfer could now be dealt with under the Council's Delegated Decision framework. High Level Asset Transfers will need to



be reported to Cabinet if Officers and the appropriate Cabinet Member feel that this is required.

- 4.4 A review of RCT Together was undertaken and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 21st November 2018 to ensure any future Community Asset Transfers that are progressed, align with the Council's Community Hub development programme and can deliver the Council's strategic service requirements. Each Hub will support a neighbourhood network of preventative community services and activities that will support people living in our communities to improve their independence, resilience, health and well-being.

Overview of Y Siop Fach Sero

- 4.5 Y Siop Fach Sero was created as a Community Interest Company (Company number 13134688) in March 2021 by a group of like-minded individuals in the Rhondda, concerned about the damage to the environment and how best to tackle not only the practicalities of this, but also how to inform and educate people around the concept of sustainability.
- 4.6 There are four directors alongside a wider membership group, which includes teachers, project managers, artists and retail managers. All have experience of working within communities at differing levels, and working and managing businesses, staff and volunteers in varying capacities.

The proposal

- 4.7 Y Siop Fach Sero will primarily be a zero waste shop of household and food items meaning customers will be encouraged to bring their own containers to fill with the produce, which will be primarily dried goods and basic foodstuffs such as cereals, rice, pasta, pulses, etc. Paper bags will also be provided for those with no containers.
- 4.8 Alongside the food and cleaning goods for sale, the team will partner with "Play It Again Sport", a social enterprise which recycles sports clothing and equipment. The aim is to create a self-sustaining community hub to demonstrate the link between the environment and our lives; by selling second hand and no-plastic items the projects aim is to provide an option that is not currently available in the Rhondda Fach and remove this as a barrier to people shopping more sustainably.
- 4.9 Y Siop Fach Sero will also be a provide toiletries and cleaning items, such as shampoo bars, kitchen cleaner, soap etc. This is to provide as many alternatives to plastic-wrapped items as possible. Y Siop Fach Sero aims to source as many of these items as possible from local, ethical and eco-friendly producers as possible.



- 4.10 To keep the costs low but make a profit Y Siop Fach Sero aims to volunteers and trainees providing them with experience and training whilst paying a living wage.
- 4.11 An on-line delivery service utilising an electric vehicle already sourced via the People and Work Unit will allow the project to access customers who would like to shop using sustainable principles but cannot physically reach the shop location. This will also enable the project to reach a wider audience.

Review of Y Siop Fach Sero Business Plan

- 4.12 Y Siop Fach Sero is a new Community Interest Company and so the skills and experience of the individuals involved with the company is key to their success. This involves four directors; all bringing a strong skills base and knowledge in a variety of areas and together make a strong structure for the company to develop.
- 4.13 There is also a wide membership group in place who also bring experience with retail management, teaching and artists all having an input at this level and this membership is open to everyone. Regular monthly meetings of this group have helped shape the business plan.
- 4.14 **Clear delivery plans in place** – Y Siop Fach Sero believe the former Ferndale Library building is the ideal location for a zero waste and ethical shop for food, household goods like cleaning items, a shop for second hand sports goods and a hub for community activities including a monthly repair shop and community kitchen as well as a venue for community groups to access.
- 4.15 Y Siop Fach Sero have already secured 68% of the capital funding it requires to make the building fit for its intended use.
- 4.16 **Arrangements and capacity to manage the premises** – The day-to-day decisions will be taken by the shop manager and they have responsibility for the zero waste shop and sports clothing enterprise. The manager will also oversee the volunteers and trainees and it is expected the shop will initially require 2 members of staff supported by local volunteers.
- 4.17 **Market Appraisal** – As there is no other similar offer within the Rhondda Fach it is likely that Y Siop Fach Sero could benefit from people wishing to engage in zero waste and ethical shopping. Y Siop Fach's main strategy is to promote itself via its website and social media where all orders will be managed from, and this will support the Siop to attract a wider audience. It could also boost footfall across the town if these new shoppers decide to visit Y Siop Fach Sero and may visit other places in



Ferndale. They will also offer a delivery service via their electric vehicle within a 15-mile radius, enabling them to expand their customer base and supporting individuals with mobility and/or transport barriers to access household items in a sustainable way.

- 4.18 **Financial Appraisal** – As a new community interest company “Y Siop Fach Sero” has no previous trading history and with a new innovative zero waste social enterprise proposal, it is difficult to assess the viability of their forecasted sales. This was acknowledged as the biggest unknown risk for the proposal. However, the panel acknowledged the group have already secured 68% of the capital funding required to start trading through supportive grant funders and were also keen to support this innovative proposal. Should the venture not be viable in the long term, the community asset would be returned to the Council in an improved condition so felt the risk to the Council was low.
- 4.19 **Risk Assessment and Management** – The panel felt the potential benefits to this innovative proposal far outweighed any potential risks.
- The unique offering within the Rhondda that an ethical and green sourced zero waste shop offers in partnership with Play it Again Sport’s recycled sports equipment and clothing is a strength and it is hoped will bring in a wide variety of customers who may not have considered zero waste shopping previously.
 - The option of free delivery via an electric car means that shoppers may utilise this ethical and environmentally beneficial way of shopping especially those with transport barriers or difficulty with mobility.
 - The threat from a new Zero Waste shop opening in Treorchy has been examined and due to Y Siop Fach Sero being the only community not for profit business allows for lower prices and it is believed this will avoid some perceptions of zero waste shops being unaffordable for many.
- 4.20 **Outcomes** – Y Siop Fach Sero aims to support the long term use of the Old Library building by ensuring that the building is available, maintained and operated to a high standard.
- 4.21 Working together with local partners, Y Siop Fach Sero believe they will provide for the growing interest and provision of ethically sourced, zero plastic and zero waste food and household items.
- 4.22 Securing the long term future of the venue will maintain and improve the facilities for local people which will impact on the social engagement and health & wellbeing outcomes for its users.



5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as one was previously completed in March 2018 when the building was formally declared surplus to need and the existing Ferndale Library service was relocated to Ferndale Hwb building. There are no equality or diversity implication as a result of recommendations set out in this report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Y Siop Fach Sero have spoken at length with the local and wider communities and have undertaken an on-line survey to gauge the interest in this development.
- 7.2 Y Siop Fach Sero and their partners have attended and actively participated in the development of RCT Together Neighbourhood Network for the Rhondda

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There will be no ongoing cost implications to the Council associated with the leasehold transfer of The Old Ferndale Library, Ferndale. **Y Siop Fach Sero** will be responsible for all future capital and revenue costs associated with the operation of the building. This will include repair, maintenance and statutory compliance responsibilities.
- 8.2 The transfer will give **Y Siop Fach Sero** the ability to invest in key refurbishment and fit-out requirements for the building and the group have already secured 68% of the capital funding requirements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council's property legal team completed an examination of the Council's title deed for the building (report on title). There is nothing apparent within the deed wallet restricting the proposed use.
- 9.2 Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, Council's can dispose of land and buildings provided that best consideration is achieved. An "Open Market Rent" will be charged for use of this building.



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

- 10.1 Y Siop Fach Sero proposals align with a raft of national and local objectives and priorities thus re-enforcing the public benefit that is delivered through the project, in turn contributing to the Council's vision:

"To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous."

They aim to address these ambitions by sourcing items from local producers as part of their ethos of committing to the local community and promoting the foundational economy within the Rhondda. This will also reduce the carbon footprint of items they sell and underpins the sustainability of their enterprise. Where possible, they will source products that are "plastic free" as locally as possible and aim to source Fairtrade items which cause no harm to the environment. Surpluses will be reinvested back into providing community health and well-being activities.

- 10.2 Y Siop Fach Sero outline a number of proposals that would contribute positively towards regional, national and global Climate Change ambitions which include;

- Delivery of goods using an electric vehicle.
- No use of plastics will reduce the carbon footprint of items sold.
- Sourcing of Fairtrade/ethical goods.
- Reducing excess packaging.
- Repair Café Rhondda activities.
- Training and awareness raising on "sustainable lifestyles".

- 10.3 Executing proposals will also deliver against the three main priorities outlined within the Council's Corporate Plan "Making A Difference" 2020-2024:

- *Ensuring **People**: are independent, healthy and successful.*
- *Creating **Places**: where people are proud to live, work and play.*
- *Enabling **Prosperity**: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.*

- 10.4 Along with 44 public bodies across Wales, the Council is subject to the statutory requirements of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, which sets a common vision for the long-term well-being of people and communities through seven national well-being goals and provides a framework for public services to work differently through five sustainable development principles. These principles



include thinking about the **long-term** impact of our actions, seeking to **prevent** issues from occurring in the first place or from worsening, **involving** people and communities in decisions made that affect them, working together **collaboratively** with other organisations and **integrating** our work to understand the knock-on effects of what we do. “**Y Siop Fach Sero**” proposal aims to contribute towards these well-being goals and sustainable principles by;

- Contributing towards the Councils Sustainable Food Place agenda by adopting a more sustainable way of sourcing and procuring foods and products and educating communities on the importance of this approach.
- Eliminating single-use plastics from their trading practice and use of an electric vehicle to provide free delivery for those residents who wish to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint in the Rhondda but may not be able to physically access the high street location in Ferndale.
- Working with like-minded social enterprises such as “Play It Again Sport” to re-use sports clothing and remove any economic barriers to enabling residents to access sports and recreational opportunities.
- By utilising any surplus profits and re-investing in providing a wide range of social engagement and health and wellbeing opportunities at little or no cost to residents in the Rhondda.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Y Siop Fawr Sero proposal offers an innovative and sustainable opportunity to retain and improve a valued community asset and to meet the identified and future needs of the local community and residents across the Rhondda and contribute to Climate Change ambitions.
- 11.2 It will enable Y Siop Fawr Sero an opportunity to develop volunteers with the skills and experience to enter into employment in retail and to possibly expand their planned delivery programme.
- 11.3 The benefits of transferring an asset to a Community Group on a long term leasehold transfer are substantial and varied, unlocking community enterprise, encouraging volunteer commitment, helping utilise local intelligence and allowing the organisation to attract the necessary capital investment to create a thriving community enterprise.
- 11.4 A lease transfer will increase the sense of ownership, enabling local people to protect a valuable asset, empowering the community to design and deliver services to meet local need.
- 11.5 The Council actively encourages both “Y Siop Fach Sero” and “Carmel Church” to continue to explore opportunities to maximise use of the



former Ferndale Library building and where possible to consider working collaboratively together (if appropriate).

- 11.6 The recommendation is therefore to approve the grant of a 10 year lease to “**Y Siop Fach Sero**”, in accordance with the provisions of the Community Asset Transfer scheme, as the preferred tenant for managing this much valued community asset.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION
3RD MARCH 2022
REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
CORPORATE ESTATES AND THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH,
PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

RCT TOGETHER, COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF THE FORMER
FERNDAL LIBRARY BUILDING TO “Y SHOP FACH SERO”
(COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY)

Background Papers:

- Cabinet – 30th October 2014;
- Cabinet - 19th May 2016;
- RCT Together – Review of the Community Asset Transfer Process;
Cabinet – 21st November 2018.

Officer to contact:

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