



MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL OF DECISION TO BUILD A NEW LIBRARY IN ABERGAVENNY

MEETING: Council

DATE: 26th February 2015

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

To rescind the decision taken by Council to build a new library on the old cattle market site, Abergavenny and adjust the capital budget accordingly.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That members rescind the decision taken in 2010 to build a new library on the old cattle market site, Abergavenny, thereby releasing funding of £3.433m.

2.2 That Cabinet recommend to Council specific capital budgets to develop a Community Hub along with projects to improve the public realm that supports regeneration of the town centre (the Better Bryn Y Cwm Plan) from the funding released in 2.1

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The capital budget currently includes approval of a budget of £3.433m for the design and build of a new library building on the old cattle market site in Abergavenny.

- 3.2 Work was undertaken on a design in conjunction with Morrison's architects. Whilst this work was underway analysis was carried out into the revenue costs associated with a new build and more widely debate ensued into the prudence of the development of a bespoke library during a period of major financial pressure upon public services and local government particularly.
- 3.3 Additional overhead costs for rates, heating, lighting etc. were estimated as an additional £60,000, exclusive of any labour costs that might be incurred in utilizing a building some three times larger than the existing library. Investigations took place into whether other organisations might wish to share the building thereby defraying the overhead costs. However none came forward.
- 3.4 More recently discussions amongst MCC members, town council, town team and other stakeholder groups have publicly been about alternative venues within Abergavenny where a community hub might be situated. Furthermore budget estimates and designs for alternative venues have been commissioned to advise future decisions.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 There is recognition amongst those involved with the wider debate about the future of library services in Abergavenny that investment is required to create a suitable venue but a new build library is not necessary to provide a better facility.
- 4.2 Although Morrison's architects have done no further work on the design or commission of a new library building on the old cattle market site they are aware that the Council decision remains to build on the site. Removal of the capital budget would confirm the Council's decision not to proceed and remove any ambiguity.
- 4.3 A decision that the site is not to be used for a library building would allow officers to investigate alternative uses for the site.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Release of £3.433m funding within the capital budget for the new build library. Alternative schemes that support the development of a Community Hub and the Better Bryn y Cwm Plan will be reported to Cabinet for subsequent recommendation to Council for inclusion in the capital budget.

- 5.2 Possible additional capital receipt from the sale of the site?
6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT** : provided in appendix 1 below
7. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS:** provided in appendix 2 below
8. **CONSULTEES:**
SLT
Cabinet
9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**
Revenue and Capital budget report – 22nd January 2015
Link: <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2014/08/8-Revenue-and-Capital-Budget-201516-Final-Proposals.pdf>
<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2014/08/8a-Appendices-Revenue-and-Capital-Budget-2015162.pdf>
9. **AUTHOR:** Roger Hoggins, Head of Operations, Debra Hill-Howells, Head of Community Services
10. **CONTACT DETAILS:** Tel: 01633 644644 Email: rogerhoggins@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Email: debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Appendix 1

The “Equality Challenge” (Screening document)

Name of the Officer completing “the Equality challenge” Roger Hoggins		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration This is a decision to no longer build a new library and to approve the development of proposals to provide a combined library and One stop shop in a single venue elsewhere within Abergavenny Town along with other improvements to the public realm within the town. As such no alteration to service is proposed within this report, any adjustments to library and One stop shop services being described in separate reports to Council and Cabinet under the heading ‘Community Hub and Contact Centre.	
Name of the Division or service area: Library service		Date “Challenge” form completed 18 th February 2015	
Protected characteristic affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Welsh Language		X	

What are the potential negative Impacts.	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments or engagement with affected parties).
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➤ <i>A new build library would offer better access for the disabled than the current library building</i>	➤ <i>The alternative site for the Community Hub will be designed to offer good access to disabled users.</i>
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below:

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed:

Designation:

dated:

Appendix 2

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Name of the Officer Roger Hoggins		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration This is a decision to no longer build a new library and to approve the development of proposals to provide a combined library and One stop shop in a single venue elsewhere within Abergavenny Town along with other improvements to the public realm within the town. As such no alteration to service is proposed within this report, any adjustments to library and One stop shop services being described in separate reports to Council and Cabinet under the heading 'Community Hub and Contact Centre.	
Name Library and One stop shop service		Date 18 th February 2015	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE		X	
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision		X	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		X	
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		X	
Targets socially excluded		X	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		X	

Improve access to education and training		X	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		X	
PLANET			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		X	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		X	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		X	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		X	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		X	
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and services		X	
Link local production with local consumption		X	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		X	
Increase employment for local people		X	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		X	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade,		X	

sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc			
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		X	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤ <i>This decision withdraws the construction of a new building on a brown field site which will now remain vacant until new proposals for the use of the site are prepared.</i>	➤ <i>The proposal includes the refurbishment of an existing building to create a community hub that will help to sustain services during financial cut backs</i>
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed R Hoggins

Dated 6th March 2014