



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

4th July 2019

Joint Report of the Head of Transformation and the Head of Property and Regeneration

Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected: Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North,
Coedffranc West**

Relocation of Skewen Library to Carnegie Hall

Purpose of the Report:

To seek Members authorisation to enter into negotiation with Coedffranc Town Council for the Authority to take an initial 5 year internal repairing lease of part of Carnegie Hall for use as a Public library for the Skewen area on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Property and Regeneration.

On the basis the lease is concluded and library relocated authorisation is also sought for the existing library at New Road, Skewen be declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and transferred to the Head of Property & Regeneration for disposal or lease.

Executive Summary:

The existing library building at New Road, Skewen has been identified in the Library Service Strategy 2016 – 2021 as no longer being fit for purpose in that it is too small to provide the full range of services required of a Tier 2 library and has significant long term maintenance issues which will impact on the future viability of operating a library service from the existing building.

It is therefore proposed to enter into a partnership arrangement with Coedffranc Town Council whereby the library would relocate to accommodation within Carnegie Hall Skewen and for the existing library at New Road, Skewen to be declared surplus to operational requirements and transferred to the Head of Property & Regeneration for disposal or lease.

Background:

Public libraries are a statutory service under the Public libraries and Museums Act (1964).

As identified in the Library service strategy 2016 – 21, the existing building at New Road, Skewen as approximately shown edged in Black on the attached copy plan 1 is no longer fit for purpose in that it is too small to provide the full range of services required of a Tier 2 library. In addition, the existing building which has operated as a library since the mid 1960's requires substantial capital investment to upgrade the exterior of the building and overcome long term maintenance problems such as the heating system and flat roof which will impact on the long term sustainability of a library service from this building.

Following the budget consultation process which originally identified Skewen library for possible transfer to the community or closure, local elected Members have worked with officers to find alternative premises in the Skewen area such as at Carnegie Hall which would

enable the council to continue to deliver a relevant, cost effective and sustainable library service for the Skewen area.

Carnegie Hall, as approximately shown edged in Black on the attached copy plan 2 is owned and managed by Coedffranc Town Council and offers improved public facilities in terms of access, availability of space, catering facilities and enable an improved ICT offer to the public.

A grant of £106,000 is available from the Welsh Government via MALD (Museums, Archives and Libraries Division) which will cover the costs of relocating the library and any additional building works that may be necessary as a result of transferring the library.

The proposal is for the Authority to enter into an initial 5 year internal repairing lease from Coedffranc Town Council of part of Carnegie Hall, Skewen for use as a library and once relocated the existing library at New Road, Skewen to be declared surplus to operational requirements and transferred to the Head of Property & Regeneration for disposal or lease.

Financial Impacts:

The Library Service has been offered a Welsh Government grant of £106,000 towards the costs of the relocation of the library. However, a match funding element of 10% is required, which would be used to provide improved IT facilities in the new library. The 10% contribution has already been identified within the Service's existing IT budget in the 2019-2020 financial year.

There are potential operational revenue savings associated with shared use of Carnegie Hall which will be developed as part of the lease negotiation process and it is anticipated that there will only be a small annual rent.

The relocation of the library will overcome the need for substantial capital investment to overcome the long term maintenance issues at the current premises.

There is a potential for a capital receipt or rental income from the sale/rent of the existing site.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. This is because the negotiation of a lease is an internal procedure and has no detrimental effect on frontline services.

The original proposal that Skewen Library be relocated to Carnegie Hall underwent an Equality Screening Report in February 2019. This screening resulted in no further action being required

Valleys Communities Impacts:

"No implications".

Workforce Impacts:

"No implications".

Legal Impacts:

"No implications".

Risk Management Impacts:

If a formal lease cannot be negotiated, this could impact on the long term sustainability of a library service at Skewen.

Consultation:

As part of the authority's budget proposals over the last two years Skewen Library has been subject to consultation. The results from public meetings, online surveys and through letters have been in favour of maintaining a statutory library service in Skewen, but recognising the limitations of the existing building.

Local Elected Members and officers have discussed options since the public consultation exercise.

The local Ward Councillor is generally supportive of the proposal.

There is no requirement to consult on the negotiation of a lease.

Recommendations:

To seek Members authorisation to enter into negotiation with Coedffranc Town Council for the Authority to take an initial 5 year internal repairing lease of part of Carnegie Hall for use as a Public library for the Skewen area on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Property and Regeneration.

On the basis the lease is concluded and library relocated authorisation is also sought for the existing library at New Road, Skewen be declared surplus to the operational requirements of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and transferred to the Head of Property & Regeneration for disposal or lease.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To enable the Authority to continue to deliver a sustainable, statutory library service at Skewen.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period'

Appendices:

Attached copy plans1 & 2.

List of Background Papers:

Library Strategy 2016 - 2021

Officer Contact:

Wayne John,

County Librarian

☎ 01639 899829

✉ w.john@npt.gov.uk

David Phillips,

Strategic Property & Valuation Manager

☎ 01639 686980

✉ d.phillips@npt.gov.uk