

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
27th October 2022**

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

West Glamorgan Archives Service Relocation

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to
 - (a) Seek members approval for the relocation of the West Glamorgan Archives Service from County Hall, Swansea to a City Centre Hub being developed by the City and County of Swansea Council;
 - (b) Update members on the change in management portfolios for the West Glamorgan Archives Service
 - (c) seek delegated authority for the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to amend the Joint Working Agreement to reflect these updates.

Executive Summary

2. The City and County of Swansea Council have now determined that they wish to vacate County Hall as part of their regeneration proposals for the Swansea. This would necessitate the relocation of the West Glamorgan Archive Service.
3. The City and County of Swansea Council have accordingly approached Neath Port Talbot Council to advise they wish to relocate the West Glamorgan Archives Service.
4. The City and County Of Swansea Council are developing a hub, set to be developed in Oxford Street's former BHS and What! store, could be visited by thousands of people every week. The aim is for the building - which could open in 2023 at the heart of the

city centre - to be a welcoming base for services delivered by the council and other organisations.

5. Council services being considered to relocate there include Swansea Library, and Contact Centre and it is proposed by the City and County of Swansea that the West Glamorgan Archives Service be relocated to this venue.
6. Of crucial significance to Neath Port Talbot will be the following criteria:
 - The archives deposited within the West Glamorgan Archives Service remain secure;
 - The level of service for those within the locality who wish to view the archives is not compromised; and
 - There is no financial burden to Neath Port Talbot Council as a result of the proposed changes.

Background

7. The Local Government (Records) Act 1962 empowers all local authorities to acquire records by purchase, gift or deposit and to make records in their possession available for study and to contribute towards the expenses of persons looking after local records. The Local Government Act 1972 also requires all Council to make proper arrangements for the care and preservation of any document which belongs to them or are in their custody and provides scope for local authorities to achieve this purpose by establishing joint committees with other authorities.
8. On the 1st April 1992, the West Glamorgan Archives Service was established and was declared a local place of deposit for public records.
9. Following local government reorganisation in 1996, the West Glamorgan Archives Service continued to provide this service to the City and County of Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.
10. An agreement was subsequently entered into on the 11th April 2014 to establish a Joint Committee comprising representatives of the City and County of Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council to oversee the administrative arrangements associated with the archive service. The City and County of Swansea Council are the host authority for this arrangement and accordingly have the legal responsibility to ensure that the archives deposited with them by Neath Port Talbot Council are secure and the Archives service is in accordance with all national standards for archive keeping.

11. At present, the location of the Archives Service is County Hall, Oystermouth Road, Swansea.

Proposal from Swansea

12. The City and County of Swansea Council have now determined that they wish to vacate County Hall as part of their regeneration proposals for the Swansea. This would necessitate the relocation of the West Glamorgan Archive Service.
13. The City and County of Swansea Council have accordingly approached Neath Port Talbot Council to advise they wish to relocate the West Glamorgan Archives Service.
14. The City and County Of Swansea Council are developing a hub, set to be developed in Oxford Street's former BHS and What! store, could be visited by thousands of people every week. The aim is for the building - which could open in 2023 at the heart of the city centre - to be a welcoming base for services delivered by the council and other organisations.
15. Council services being considered to relocate there include Swansea Library, and Contact Centre and it is proposed by the City and County of Swansea that the West Glamorgan Archives Service be relocated to this venue. Other services due to move to the hub include the council's Revenue and Benefits service, Housing Options and Tenancy Support Unit (TSU), Employability, Life-long Learning and Local Studies and Family History services.

Impact on Neath Port Talbot

16. Of crucial significance to Neath Port Talbot will be the following criteria
 - The archives deposited within the West Glamorgan Archives Service remain secure;
 - The level of service for those within the locality who wish to view the archives is not compromised; and
 - There is no financial burden to Neath Port Talbot Council as a result of the proposed changes.

Security

17. Processes will be embarked on to provide a secure Strong room for the Archives service and to ensure that the deposit of materials within the Archives are secured:
 - The Archive Strong room is located within a buffered space - created from two layers of lightweight partition with cavity between and 'airlock' between doors; an extremely

high level of air tightness is provided through Blowerproof Paint applied to the partitions and interfaces with floor and roof. The roof is to be provided with a new, high performance membrane and insulation to achieve a U-value of 0.18Wm²K, and the existing floor slab is to be enhanced to achieve 0.23Wm²K

- Controls of the Environmental Conditions Thermal modelling has been carried out during RIBA Stages 2 and 3 to aid the Archive Strong room design, helping to understand the environmental conditions of the constructed strong room, and to demonstrate alignment with the required national standards. Engineers have noted: “the modelling process evidences that archive temperatures are within the ranges stated within the appropriate standards; and that relative humidity ranges from 32% to 64%, which is marginally outside of the 35-60%RH threshold. With additional calculation, taking into account the mass of stored paper within the space and its properties for absorbing moisture in the air, the humidity ranges stabilise around the 47-51% RH range.⁴ To summarise: the thermal modelling process suggests that no HVAC control is required to maintain environmental conditions within the BS4971 tolerances. The design will be further developed by the appointed Main Contractor team who are to explore conditioning options for the buffer zone surrounding the archive - potentially a low energy fan that will reduce internal temperatures without additional heating and cooling - in order to provide assurance that stable environmental conditions during unforeseen periods of excess heat can readily be achieved.
- A Fire Strategy has been developed. Structure to the Community Hub is to be upgraded to 2 hour fire resistance. To ensure fire spread will be minimised, in the low probability of a fire starting it has been proposed to include an automatic fire suppression system in accordance throughout the building (but not within the Archive Store itself). The Archive Strong room will be an independent fire compartment allowing for 2 hours Fire resistance that has the capability of electrical supply isolation and the capability to prevent water ingress in the event of a sprinkler system activating in close proximity. The whole building will be covered with a fire alarm system designed in accordance national standards. The primary detection system will be utilising an aspirated system for early warning and detection. Early intervention from the Fire Service has been determined based on the proximity of the local Fire Service stations and response time directives set out by the Welsh Government.
- A security strategy has been developed. New intruder alarm system and CCTV provision will be installed and to be appropriate for hours of occupation, out of hours, and during emergency evacuation. Security staff will be present within the building during hours of operation. Movement sensors are to be installed to the Archive Strong room approach. Door activated sensor contacts with a pin code panel or similar to be included for staff to use when disabling the alarm when the Archive Strong room door is unlocked will be provided. An Electrical locking mechanism is to be installed for

access during hours of occupation with a key deadlock to be included for out of hours. The Archive Strong room will be located within its own compartment with no external walls; enclosing walls and doors. Doors, frames, mountings and hardware to the Archive Strong room are to be constructed to resist unauthorised entry. Only Archive staff to have access rights to the Archive Strong room and services are to be kept out of the Archive Strong room wherever possible to avoid maintenance work / non-Archive staff within the space.

Service Provision

18. The new Archive Searchroom will have capacity for 10 visitors and is provided with four PC stations (one for checking the catalogue, one for special family history websites not freely accessible in the library, one for microfilm reader, and one for the WGAS film and sound archive). This is a reduction from the 20 which are currently present at the facility in County Hall but it is expected that it will meet the demand that is required. The National Broadcast Archive will be available near or immediately outside the Archive Searchroom public area. The Reception will have a tablet device kept behind the desk for visitors who need to register for a reader's ticket at point of entry. Entrance and exit to and from the Searchroom will be through a 'garden gate' which will be button-controlled by staff from behind the staff desk. A bank of lockers and coat storage will be provided to prevent bags and coats entering the Searchroom. The staff area has good passive supervision sightlines and will use a portable belt barrier to prevent public access. A waist high document lift is provided and allows direct connection with the Archive Strong room above.
19. It is proposed that the relocation to the City Centre will allow for improved accessibility for those wishing to travel and at the same time make the West Glamorgan Archives Service a more visible service to the community.

Financial Impact

20. The proposal is being led by the City and County of Swansea Council who are in receipt of a contribution from Welsh Government by way of a grant and accordingly there would be no additional financial commitment from Neath Port Talbot Council for the relocation.

Alternative Options

21. In the event that Neath Port Talbot Council did not wish to agree to the proposed relocation of the West Glamorgan Archives Services then it is anticipated that the Joint Committee Agreement referenced above will have to be terminated by both parties. The City and County of Swansea have made the determination to relocate the West Glamorgan Archives Service as a result of their sale of County Hall and therefore

Neath Port Talbot Council will either have to agree to this relocation or seek an alternative home for the Neath Port Talbot records.

22. In the event members were minded to not accept the proposed relocation, the only other options (given the statutory requirement to have an archives service) would be to either develop a Neath Port Talbot archive or to enter into a joint agreement with another local authority.
23. Developing a Neath Port Talbot only Archives Service would prove complex and a significant financial commitment for this authority. It would require the identity of a suitable venue, ensuring that venue meets the appropriate British standards and engaging staff to ensure that an archives service can be offered.
24. Entering into a joint agreement with another authority, would unlikely see a financial saving being realised but perhaps significantly it would mean the relocation of archives away from the region. Research has shown that the nearest alternative Archive Services are based in either Carmarthen or Cardiff.

Ongoing Review

25. It remains open to members to change their approach at any point. The agreement for the establishment of the joint service provides that Neath Port Talbot can provide one calendar years notice of withdrawal at any time from the agreement. Therefore, it remains open for Neath Port Talbot Council to keep the ongoing service under review to ensure the proposed venue meets all requirements.

Management Changes

26. During the spring of 2022, the Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council undertook a review of internal management structures with the aim of achieving an organisational design that enables the Council to do its work most effectively and efficiently to achieve our Corporate Plan, while delivering a high quality customer and employee experience. One of the complementary aims was to ensure more logical officer portfolios to drive greater synergy and value.
27. One of the outcomes of management review is that the Chief Executive has determined that the responsibility of the Archive Service should transfer from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to the Council's Head of Support Services and Transformation, who is the appropriate head of service with the responsibility for the Council's libraries and cultural services. The Chief Executive has done this pursuant to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the associated statutory responsibility to ensure the manner in which the Council exercises its different functions are co-ordinated are appropriate, and regularly reviewed.

28. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is the officer nominee to the West Glamorgan Archives Committee so accordingly approval would be sought from members to substitute the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for the Head of Support Services and Transformation.

Financial Implications

29. The Council currently contributes the sum of £99,600 per year to the administration and running of the West Glamorgan Archives Service. The proposed relocation will have no impact on this amount.

Integrated Impact Assessment

30. 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, attached at Appendix 1, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required

Legal Impacts

31. The legal impacts are as set out in in paragraph 7 of this report.

Risk Management

33. As indicated at paragraphs 22 to 25, failure to agree to the proposed relocation of the West Glamorgan Archives Service, the only other options (given the statutory requirement to have an archives service) would be to either develop a Neath Port Talbot archive or to enter into a joint agreement with another local authority. Agreeing to the proposed relocation will ensure the continued arrangements with the City and County of Swansea Council and the future development of the archives service.

Consultation

32. There is no requirement for consultation for this report though discussions have been ongoing with the City and County of Swansea Council as part of their ongoing development work.

Recommendation

33. It is recommended, that having due regard to the integrated impact screening assessment that:

- (a) members agree to the proposed relocation of the West Glamorgan Archives Service from County Hall, Swansea to the Former British Home Stores and What! store;
- (b) members note the proposed transfer of management responsibilities from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to the Head of Support Services and Transformation; and
- (c) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to agree and complete a deed of variation to the Joint Committee Agreement of the 11th April 2014 to implement recommendations (a) and (b).

Reason for Decision

- 34. To ensure the Neath Port Talbot Council obligations pursuant to the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and Local Government Act 1972 are fulfilled in respect of the arrangement of an archive service and access to the service remains for the residents of Neath Port Talbot.

Implementation of Decision

- 35. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

List of Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

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Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

1. Details of the initiative

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| Initiative description and summary: Proposed relocation of the West Glamorgan Archives Services |
| Service Area: Legal and Democratic Services |
| Directorate: Chief Executives |

2. Does the initiative affect:

| | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Service users | x | |
| Staff | | x |
| Wider community | x | |
| Internal administrative process only | | x |

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

| | Yes | No | None/ Negligible | Don't Know | Impact H/M/L | Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact? |
|----------------------------|-----|----|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| Age | | X | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. The hope would that this could allow for greater access to the service and remove any potential barriers that might currently exist in respect of usage. |
| Disability | | X | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. The hope would that this could allow for greater access to the service and remove any potential barriers that might currently exist in respect of usage. |
| Gender Reassignment | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |
| Marriage/Civil Partnership | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |
| Pregnancy/Maternity | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| Race | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |
| Religion/Belief | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |
| Sex | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |
| Sexual orientation | | x | | | | There are no impacts on this protected characteristic as there will be no change in service provision merely the relocation of the service to a City Centre location. |

4. Does the initiative impact on:

| | Yes | No | None/ Negligible | Don't know | Impact H/M/L | Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact? |
|---|-----|----|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| People's opportunities to use the Welsh language | | x | | | | There is no impact on the opportunity to use the Welsh Language |
| Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English | | x | | | | There is no impact on treating the Welsh language less favourable than English |

5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

| | Yes | No | None/ Negligible | Don't know | Impact H/M/L | Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact? |
|--|-----|----|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| To maintain and enhance biodiversity | | x | | | | There is no impact on the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity |
| To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc. | | x | | | | There is no impact on the promotion of the resilience of ecosystems |

6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

| | Yes | No | Details |
|---|-----|----|--|
| Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people | x | | It is proposed that the relocation to the City Centre will allow for improved accessibility for those wishing to travel and at the same time make the West Glamorgan Archives Service a more visible service to the community. |
| Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives | x | | The proposed relocation of the archives service will ensure the service can continue to be accessed which will contribute to our objective of ensuring that |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | | our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations. |
| Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative | x | | Discussions have been ongoing with officers of Neath Port Talbot Council and the City and County of Swansea Council on the viability of the proposed location to meet the demands of the Archives Services. As part of their proposals, the City and County of Swansea have engaged with national overseeing bodies to ensure the proposed venue meets all requirements for archive storage and meets any proposed accreditations that are necessary. |
| Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions | x | | Discussions have been ongoing with officers of Neath Port Talbot Council and the City and County of Swansea Council on the viability of the proposed location to meet the demands of the Archives Services. As part of their proposals, the City and County of Swansea have engaged with national overseeing bodies to ensure the proposed venue meets all requirements for archive storage and meets any proposed accreditations that are necessary. Options for liaising with other archive services have been explored but given the potential costs impact and the impact a proposed relocation would have these have not been explored further. |
| Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse | x | | It is proposed that the relocation to the City Centre will allow for improved accessibility for those wishing to travel and at the same time make the West Glamorgan Archives Service a more visible service to the community and will continue to ensure the Archives Service continues to operate to the benefit of the residents of Neath Port Talbot. |

7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

| | |
|--|---|
| A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required | x |
| Reasons for this conclusion | |
| There would be no impact on particular characteristics, the ability to use the welsh language, biodiversity impacts and is designed to ensure sustainable development. | |