

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>REPORT NO:</b>	HCWD/03/14
<b>DATE:</b>	14 January 2014
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Hugh Jones (Lead Member for Communities, Partnerships and Collaboration)
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Dylan Hughes (Tel: 298855)
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Library & Information Service – Closures and reductions in opening hours
<b>WARD:</b>	All

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek approval to reduce the Library and Information Service to below two of the nine Public Library Standards for Wales, through the closure of two libraries and a reduction in opening hours as a response to the financial pressures facing the Service.

## **2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report proposes a reduction in library opening hours (across all libraries and the closure of two libraries) to make significant financial savings.
- 2.2 This proposal will impact on the Council's achievement of the Public Library Standards for Wales, but in view of the severe financial constraints facing it, the Council has no alternative but to consider the closure of two libraries, chosen on the basis of their level of usage, cost per visit and proximity to alternative libraries, and a general reduction in hours elsewhere.

### 3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Executive Board approve the closure of Brymbo and Gresford libraries (unless alternative proposals for service delivery are put forward by the local community at no cost to the Council) together with a reduction in opening hours of 19% on average at all other libraries with effect from 01 April 2014.
- 3.2 In the event that alternative community-based proposals are feasible by 01 April 2014, a) Members are asked to approve the submission of a funding bid to CyMAL (Welsh Government) for the re-location of Brymbo library, and b) to continue discussions with the Gresford and Marford Community to facilitate a community solution for the provision of library services.
- 3.3 That a further report be submitted to the Board following a review of alternative methods for the provision of library and cultural services to provide an alternative method of delivery to be operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To enable budget savings in the revenue costs of operating the Library and Information Service

### 4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### Key Issues

- 4.1 The key consideration before the Board is the extent to which required reductions in Council spending can be achieved through the Library and Information service having regard to the Welsh Public Library Standards. In this respect the following five options have been considered.
- a) **Reduce opening hours across all libraries.** This would need to vary from library to library as some already have few opening hours (e.g. Brymbo 14 hours, Overton 15), and Wrexham library would need to maintain a significant proportion of its hours in view of its Borough-wide appeal. Reducing opening hours by an average of 10% would reduce achievement of the Standard for opening hours to the minimum level and result in projected savings of £35k. A reduction of 25% would be needed to make savings of £87k, but would mean that the Council would fail to meet the Standard (by 15% below).
- b) **Close two small libraries with no reduction in hours elsewhere.** This would maintain the Standard at the minimum level, but not make significant savings (c. £37k).
- c) **Close two small libraries and reduce hours elsewhere (by 19% on average).** This would achieve a saving of £92k and would mean that the Council would fail to meet the Standard by 16%. (The total number of opening hours per 1,000 population would be 100.8 compared to the standard of 120).

- d) **Close three libraries whilst maintaining opening hours elsewhere and supplementing them with an additional mobile library.** The saving from closing a third library would be up to £55k depending on which one was selected. The mobile library costs £72k/year, but it would be possible for it to be single-staffed which would reduce costs by around £25k/year. This would maintain the Standard, but not make significant savings (c. £46k), given the cost of the additional mobile library.
- e) **Close three libraries** and not replace them with an additional mobile library. This would make large savings (up to £92k), but take the service below the 120/1000 population minimum Standard for opening hours (down to 107) and below the Standard for aggregate public area offered by the library service (WPLS 9). The Council would continue to deliver the service in a way that meets the majority of the Standards, which is better than some Councils, but carry the risk that WG could intervene to take over the service - although it has not done so to date for other Councils which achieve fewer of the Standards than Wrexham.

4.2 Given the need to make substantial financial savings it is recommended that the Council close Brymbo and Gresford libraries, for the reasons set out in greater detail below, and not replace them with a mobile library and that the opening hours of all other libraries be reduced by 19% on average to achieve necessary savings of £92k.

### Discussion

4.3 The Homes, Environment & Communities Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Library and Information Service Commissioning Review in February 2013 (HCWD/12/13). The Review recommended measures to reduce the level of the service to meet minimum Standards only, listing them in order of least harm to the service as follows:

- Reductions to the book fund and some other measures
- Reduced opening hours at some or all libraries by an average of 5%
- Closing 1 library (Brymbo)
- Closing a second library (Gresford) and replacement by new mobile library (costing £13k per annum)
- Closing a third library (selected from Cefn Mawr, Ruabon and Rhos libraries)

4.4 The Committee resolved that:

- a) [it] does not accept the principle of library closures unless a more suitable cost effective solution can be found as an alternative within the community as part of the asset review, and that options 1 to 8 and 11, as detailed in table 1 contained within Appendix 1 of report HCWD/12/13, be accepted as a means to reduce service costs
- b) further consideration of reduced opening hours at all libraries be considered by this Committee, if further savings were required

4.5 Budgetary savings of £92k were achieved in 2013/14 through the least harmful measures to reduce the service to the minimum Standards, such as increasing income and reducing spending on books and other resources (the "book fund").

4.6 A further report in November 2013 (HCWD/38/13) recommended that the Scrutiny Committee consider the following options:

- a) the closure of Brymbo and Gresford libraries together with a reduction of opening hours of 19% on average at all other libraries with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. A full review of alternative provision of library and cultural services to provide an alternative method of service delivery to be operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.
- b) The closure of Brymbo, Gresford and Rhos libraries with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

4.7 The Committee resolved to recommend that it:

- a) in principle, does not support the closure of any libraries
- b) supports a reduction in hours, if necessary, of, on average, 26% across all libraries to deliver the required level of savings
- c) supports the exploration of moving libraries into other properties as part of a 'hub model', as part of the Community Assets Review.

4.8 The provision of library services is a statutory requirement under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 which requires the Council to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof..."

4.9 The terms 'comprehensive' and 'efficient' are not defined in the Act, but the Welsh Government's (WG) Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS), introduced in 2002, contain 9 Standards which describe the core elements of a public library service that the Council should seek to provide (or face WG intervention to run the service) by ensuring that the public can benefit from:

- a) suitable and appropriate access to libraries, including convenient location and adequate opening hours (120/1000 population)(WPLS 1, 2 & 3)
- b) a suitable and appropriate range of materials for use, including the purchase of sufficient new books and other resources (WPLS 4, 5, 6 & 7)
- c) access to adequate levels of staffing/a skilled workforce (WPLS 8)
- d) adequate capital investment in library facilities, mobile vehicles and technology (WPLS 9)

4.10 The Council is fully achieving 6 of the 9 Standards and partially achieving a further 2, while work being undertaken in 2013/14 will enable the Council fully to achieve these two. The one standard that is not being met is overall staffing levels compared to other Welsh library services, where Wrexham is in the lowest quartile.

4.11 Some other Councils in Wales do not achieve this number of Standards, but despite this have not been the subject of intervention by the Welsh Government (WG) to take over the service. In 2012/13 Flintshire achieved 4, Conwy and Denbighshire 5, Anglesey 6 and Gwynedd 8, but all achieved the opening hours standard.

4.12 The recent letter by the Minister for Culture and Sport stated that: "Public Libraries are as statutory service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and I expect local authorities to be mindful of their statutory responsibilities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service in setting their budgets going forward. The Welsh Public Library Standards provide a performance framework for the delivery of library services and my officials will be closely monitoring the impact of any changes in service provision in relation to these agreed standards. I expect local authorities to consult fully with their communities and conduct impact assessments of any changes to current provision". The Minister also announced "an expert review of current and future plans by local authorities to deliver public library services. The aim will be to identify sustainable future models which maximise the opportunities

obtained through collaboration, partnership and innovation". The Review will report in late Spring 2014.

### Library Closures

- 4.13 Closing any three of the libraries named in the reports to the Scrutiny Committee would generate the following savings (these figures do not include costs for providing an additional mobile library, decommissioning/demolishing buildings or staff changes).
- Brymbo - £17,685
  - Gresford - £19,266
  - Cefn Mawr - £43,091
  - Rhos - £55,386
  - Ruabon - £38,263
- 4.14 However, libraries have been selected for closure using a broader range of considerations including:
- current levels of usage and cost per capita and percentage change in usage since 2001/02 and since the peak year (**Appendix 1**)
  - the condition of the buildings - based on the Community Assets Review, which will be reported to the Corporate Land & Buildings Strategy Group in February 2014 prior to consideration by Executive Board.
  - levels of recent investment - 10 of the 12 libraries have been rebuilt or refurbished since 2002 so closure of these libraries may necessitate the repayment of some external grants provided for library refurbishment (**Appendix 2**).
  - proximity to other libraries - a map indicating a 2-mile circle around each library is attached as **Appendix 3**
- 4.15 On this basis and bearing in mind consultation undertaken to date (see 'Consultation' below), the closure of the following libraries is recommended:
- a) **Brymbo** - highest net cost per visit; poor location and access with no recent investment; low population base; falling usage between 2001/02 and 2012/13; alternative provision in Brynteg & Coedpoeth libraries
  - b) **Gresford** - 5<sup>th</sup> highest net cost per visit; poor location on busy road with significant parking problems; lack of internal space; no recent investment; alternative provision in Llay & Wrexham libraries
- 4.16 Given the proximity of the affected areas to alternative libraries, service can be provided at the nearest library. The provision of an additional mobile library would be expensive and would not allow the Council to make required savings.
- 4.17 As part of consultation, a proposal to re-locate Brymbo library to the Brymbo Enterprise Centre has been put forward. A location within the present building has been identified and the trustees recognise the benefits of adding library provision to the current range of services (which includes a re-located Post Office). This would provide a core level of service operated by a volunteer team from the local community with some management guidance from the Library Service. The books and other resources would be refreshed periodically and remain the property of the Library Service. The latest round of grants under the Community Learning Libraries programme (WG funding via CyMAL) is currently open with a closing date of 24 January 2014. Bids are competitive with a limited funding pot and projects funded under this scheme should be completed during 2014/15 (with claims submitted by February 2015). It would be possible to submit an application to this fund for the re-

location of Brymbo Library to the Brymbo Enterprise Centre provided the Executive Board approved the preparation of the funding bid.

- 4.18 At Gresford, a public meeting is scheduled for the week commencing 27 January 2014 to discuss alternative provision of library services.

### Opening Hours

- 4.19 The Wales Standard for opening hours is 120 per 1,000 population. Wrexham's current performance is 134 based on a total of 341 hours per week (ranging from 57 at Wrexham library, 20 on the mobile library, to 14 at Brymbo). To reduce the service to this minimum Standard would entail a reduction to 305 hours per week, or a cut of **36 hours** (10.6%) at libraries (the mobile would remain at 20 hours for actual "stops").
- 4.20 This approach will make savings of £35k, but not achieve the required level of total savings, while any increase in the population would take Wrexham's performance below the 120 hours threshold. There is also a risk that external grants provided for library refurbishments may need to be paid back (see Appendix 2 for a list of all external grants).
- 4.21 To achieve savings of £92k would require a 26% reduction in opening hours which, clearly, would mean that the Council would fail to meet the Standard.
- 4.22 A revised pattern of opening hours at all other libraries, taking into account a reduction of 19% on average is being prepared. The rationale for the revised pattern will be based on a survey of actual usage which was compiled during September and will be characterised by fewer evening opening hours, a reduction in morning opening hours and some Saturday closures. However, children and young people will still be able to use libraries for study immediately after school as opening hours will be maintained at this time. Consideration is also being given to geographical coverage so that a closure in one area is compensated by maintaining a service in a neighbouring community. Wrexham library will close at 5.30pm on most evenings although one evening opening and Saturdays will be maintained. Detailed consultation with staff and users on the revised pattern of opening hours will take place if the Board approve the recommendations and the revised pattern will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

### Conclusion

- 4.23 The closure of Brymbo and Gresford libraries would reduce the service to the minimum 120 hour/1000 population opening hours Standard. Closing a third library would drive the Council's performance below the Standard to 107 hours/1000 population, an overall reduction of 20%. Supplementing the service with an additional mobile library in order to meet the Standard would be prohibitively expensive. The closure of 3 libraries would also result in the Council failing to meet a second Standard governing the aggregate public area offered by the library service (WPLS 9).
- 4.24 The recommendation is therefore to close two libraries (Brymbo and Gresford) and to reduce opening hours at all remaining libraries by an average of 19% in order to attain the savings target.

- 4.25 A reduction of opening hours at all libraries by 26%, as recommended by the Scrutiny committee, is not considered a viable option for the following reasons: a failure to meet opening hours standard by 16%, the further negative impact on staffing levels, and, significantly, the service level impact on the ongoing viability of all libraries.
- 4.26 Implementation of the recommendation would result in the Council achieving a likely 6 out of 9 current Public Library Standards as summarised in **Appendix 4**
- 4.27 Officers have begun to evaluate alternative service delivery models, such as trusts, as a means of ensuring a continued service at reduced cost. A further report will be presented to the Board on this issue in due course.
- 4.28 **Policy Framework** - The provision of library services is a statutory requirement under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This Act requires the Council to “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof...” Libraries also contribute to the Council Plan theme of Place.
- 4.29 **Budget** - a budgetary saving of £92k has been achieved in 2013/14. Further savings will depend on the measures taken to reduce opening hours and/or close libraries. The recommendation in this report would save a further £92k in 2014/15.
- 4.30 **Legal** - The provision of library services is a statutory requirement under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and that the Welsh Public Library Standards provide a performance framework for the delivery of library services. It is not known whether there are legal implications of not meeting the Standards. WG has not issued a directive or sanctioned any Council which has failed to achieve all of the standards (by taking over the service). The Minister for Culture and Sport has recently written to all local authorities (see para. 4.11).
- 4.31 **Staffing** - The Council has consulted staff and Trades Unions on the proposals and the staffing implications. A small number of front-line posts are currently vacant and staff have been asked for expressions of interest in VER/VR with a closing date of 10 January 2014. However, the need to alter opening hours will necessitate negotiation of the working hours of the remaining full- and part-time staff. The potential for VER/VR together with the current vacancy rate will mitigate the effects of compulsory redundancies and reduced working hours.
- 4.32 **Equality/Human Rights** - an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed with information from the consultation exercise. A significant number of letters and e-mails have been received from individuals, groups and schools citing the effects of the proposed closure, particularly on children and older people, of Rhos library and these have resulted in a revised recommendation. The impact of library closures affects all groups but particularly the very young, mothers with children and older people. The mitigation for Brymbo and Gresford is to explore alternative methods of delivering the service as described in 4.17/4.18. The travel time from Gresford to Wrexham town centre by public transport is 11 minutes. The reduction in opening hours at other libraries will be mitigated by careful and considered distribution of opening times to provide the best coverage as outlined in 4.22. The “hub model” for community assets, as recommended by the Scrutiny Committee, will also be explored, where appropriate, to maintain or improve library provision.

4.33 **Risks** - there may be public opposition, negative press coverage and legal challenge following any decision to close a library. There is also a risk that external grants provided for library refurbishments may need to be paid back should a library close.

## 5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation with users took place during December 2013. A significant number of comments emphasised that children and elderly people would be especially affected by the closure of libraries. Some comments from local schools reflected the support that libraries provide for children's literacy. A fuller summary of the consultation is attached at **Appendix 5**.
- 5.2 Staff meetings involving the Trades Unions have taken place during November and December.

## 6. EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

- 6.1 A reduction in opening hours of 10% would deliver savings of £35k and maintain the minimum Standard for opening hours.
- 6.2 Closure of two libraries (Brymbo and Gresford) would deliver savings of £37k and enable the Standard for opening hours to be achieved.
- 6.3 Closure of two libraries (Brymbo and Gresford) and a 19% reduction in opening hours in those that remain would deliver savings of £92k, but fail to meet the Standard.
- 6.4 Closure of three libraries and re-provision with an additional mobile library would achieve the Standard, but not make significant savings
- 6.5 Closure of three libraries would make significant savings, but not achieve two of the 9 standards.
- 6.6 A reduction of 26% in opening hours, as proposed by the Homes, Environment & Communities Scrutiny Committee in November 2013, would achieve savings of £92k but fail to meet the Standard.
- 6.7 No change, which would deliver no savings

## 7. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Homes, Environment and Communities Committee resolved to recommend that it:-
- d) in principle, does not support the closure of any libraries
  - e) supports a reduction in hours, if necessary, of, on average, 26% across all libraries to deliver the required level of savings
  - f) supports the exploration of moving libraries into other properties as part of a 'hub model', as part of the Community Assets Review.



<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>WEBSITE INFO.</b>
HCWD/12/13 Library and Information Service Commissioning Review	WCBC web-site	<a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk">http://www.wrexham.gov. uk</a>
HCWD/38/13 Libraries and Information Service	WCBC web-site	<a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk">http://www.wrexham.gov. uk</a>

LIBRARY VISITS (Actual & Virtual) 2001/02 to 2012/13

NOTE: Refurbished libraries marked \*

APPENDIX 1

	Brymbo	Brynteg*	Cefn Mawr*	Chirk	Coedpoeth*	Gresford	Gwersyllt*	Homelink	Llay*	Mobile	Overton*	Rhos*	Ruabon*	Wrexham*	Total
2001/02	4,774	7,402	13,603	11,271	7,233	5,998	2,025	1,084	3,513	16,182	3,517	48,494	10,632	328,052	463,780
2002/03	4,635	30,117	15,304	11,035	6,412	5,822	1,911	3,989	3,907	13,071	3,253	42,573	10,795	273,799	426,623
2003/04	<b>5,779</b>	44,917	28,997	14,992	7,292	<b>9,596</b>	2,872	<b>6,898</b>	3,865	12,098	4,102	<b>54,054</b>	14,893	308,981	519,336
2004/05	4,077	<b>55,592</b>	29,683	15,732	7,107	6,609	2,986	3,307	14,853	13,454	4,217	47,974	16,593	<b>383,912</b>	606,096
2005/06	4,803	51,569	30,638	12,560	7,176	6,580	2,638	3,127	28,791	12,164	4,211	46,646	19,489	383,011	<b>613,403</b>
2006/07	3,478	46,663	27,494	12,746	6,612	6,223	917	3,154	24,230	12,959	4,873	50,469	<b>20,329</b>	366,611	586,758
2007/08	3,164	50,839	25,870	13,324	5,604	5,912	2,924	2,736	36,597	13,567	5,806	33,874	20,270	357,947	578,434
2008/09	3,548	46,493	25,675	13,858	11,058	6,594	24,484	2,786	32,818	11,489	6,107	38,656	18,052	365,782	607,400
2009/10	2,267	46,747	25,449	16,057	14,025	8,048	34,728	2,746	35,415	12,033	6,411	33,703	15,852	260,444	513,925
2010/11	2,817	50,959	18,567	23,232	<b>14,907</b>	7,797	36,237	2,445	35,042	16,370	<b>8,506</b>	39,444	12,529	289,458	558,310
2011/12	4,069	48,986	<b>31,594</b>	<b>23,609</b>	13,523	7,254	39,350	2,662	<b>40,421</b>	<b>16,725</b>	8,047	31,842	18,213	294,296	580,591
2012/13	4,391	41,103	25,997	19,477	11,744	8,050	<b>40,496</b>	2,778	34,056	15,864	5,715	31,339	17,823	296,285	555,118
Order 12/13	13	2	6	7	10	11	3	14	4	9	12	5	8	1	

Wrexham - Items Issued
334,636
313k
305k
313k
299k
299k
313k
<b>354,745</b>
274k
323k
320,308
290,319

% Change 01/02 to 12/13	-8	455	91	73	62	34	1900	156	869	-2	62	<b>-35</b>	68	<b>-10</b>	20
% Change from Peak Year (in bold) to 12/13	<b>-24</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-60</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-33</b>	<b>-42</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-10</b>






<b>-13</b>
<b>-18</b>

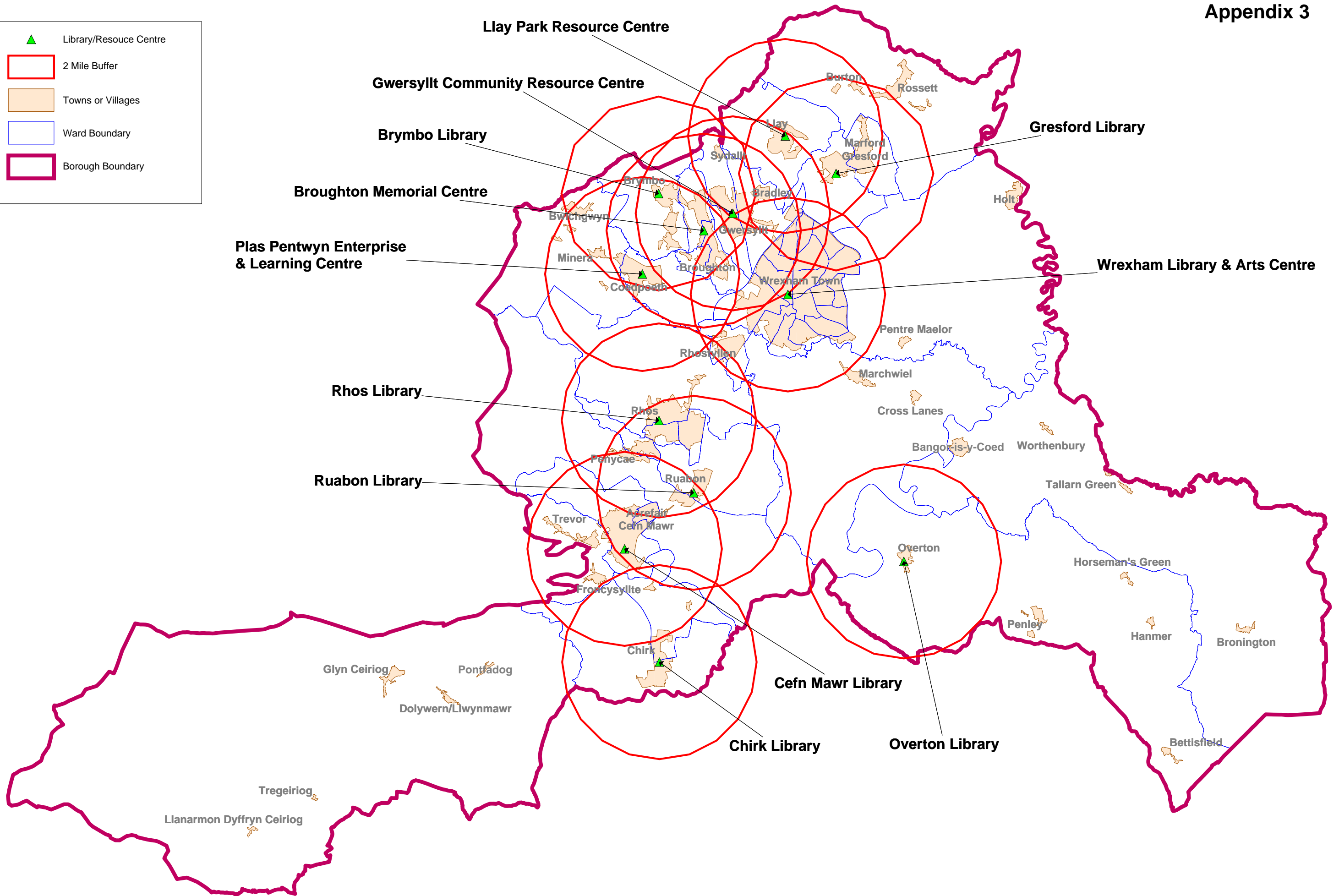
NET COST OF OPERATING EACH LIBRARY PER VISIT (Actual & Virtual)

	Brymbo	Brynteg*	Cefn Mawr*	Chirk	Coedpoeth*	Gresford	Gwersyllt*	Homelink	Llay*	Mobile	Overton*	Rhos*	Ruabon*	Wrexham*	Total
2008/09	7.70	<b>2.12</b>	1.77	<b>3.20</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>11.63</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>5.98</b>	2.62	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>1.37</b>	49.89
2009/10	<b>12.13</b>	2.26	1.66	2.01	1.68	<b>2.74</b>	2.19	12.41	1.07	5.46	2.57	2.16	2.26	<b>1.93</b>	<b>52.53</b>
2010/11	7.27	2.39	<b>2.21</b>	<b>1.66</b>	1.59	2.75	2.27	<b>13.01</b>	1.07	4.53	<b>1.61</b>	2.07	<b>2.98</b>	1.90	47.31
2011/12	<b>4.85</b>	2.46	<b>1.53</b>	1.70	<b>1.58</b>	2.93	1.65	12.15	<b>0.98</b>	<b>4.30</b>	1.76	2.35	2.42	1.46	<b>42.11</b>
2012/13	5.21	<b>3.13</b>	2.00	3.03	1.99	3.12	<b>1.63</b>	12.16	1.11	4.74	<b>3.14</b>	<b>2.66</b>	2.62	1.47	48.02
Order 12/13 (cheapest)	13	10	5	8	4	9	3	14	1	12	11	7	6	2	

## Libraries Capital Investment – External Grants only

Library	Year	Amount	Source	Description
Brymbo				No investment
Brynteg	2002	£960,000	WG: Local Regeneration Fund and EC: URBAN II	Full refurbishment of Broughton Memorial Hall and Brynteg Library with extension to provide ICT suite/meeting rooms/creche
Cefn Mawr	2011	£80,000	WG: CyMAL	Remodelling and new library furniture
Chirk	2013	£120,000	WG: CyMAL	
Coedpoeth	2008	£2,200,000	EC: URBAN II	New build – community resource centre
Gresford				No investment
Gwersyllt	2007	£1,800,000	EC: URBAN II and WG: Physical Regeneration Fund	New build – community resource centre
Llay	2005	£1,200,000	EC: URBAN II	New build – community resource centre
Overton	2009	£35,000	WG: CyMAL	Remodelling and new library furniture
Rhos	2008	£100,000	WG: CyMAL	Full refurbishment
Ruabon	2011	£120,000	WG: CyMAL	Full refurbishment
Wrexham	2010	£310,000	WG: CyMAL	Full refurbishment and extension of mezzanine floor

-  Library/Resource Centre
-  2 Mile Buffer
-  Towns or Villages
-  Ward Boundary
-  Borough Boundary



## Appendix 4

	Framework 4 Standard	Impact of proposal	Would the current standard be met in future?
1	<p>(i) Authorities whose resident population density is 20 or more persons per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 2 miles of a static library service point will be at least 95%</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>(ii) Authorities whose resident population density is between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 2.5 miles of a static library service point (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) will be at least 75%</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>(iii) Authorities whose resident population density is 1.0 persons or less per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 3 miles (or 15 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static library service point shall be at least 70%</p> <p>Authorities who are failing to meet the stipulated requirement in (i) (ii) or (iii) shall also report on the number of households within a quarter of a mile of each scheduled mobile stop and within 2 miles of any other kind of service outlet providing access to library materials.</p> <p><i>Library services should briefly describe the nature of that provision and the numbers of households served in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p>	<p>Section (ii) applies to Wrexham County Borough.</p> <p><b>Some communities are within the specified distance and could be “covered” by another library (although the specified community would lose its local library service):-</b></p> <p><b>a) Brymbo “covered” by Coedpoeth and Brynteg libraries</b></p> <p><b>b) Gresford “covered” by Llay library</b></p> <p><b>c) Rationalisation of the Cefn Mawr/Rhos/Ruabon cluster of libraries by closing 1 library. Users would therefore go to the nearest remaining library. Road distances are 2.1 miles from Cefn Mawr to Ruabon and 2.3 miles from Ruabon to Rhos libraries</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
2	<p>(i) Library authorities shall provide access to the service for those not able to use conventional service points</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities will continue to provide specialised assistance, facilities and equipment for people with particular access requirements</p> <p><i>Library services should briefly describe the nature of the provision in the Authority self-assessment column</i></p>	<p>Remains part of general service delivery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
3	<p>(i) Library authorities will ensure that the aggregate annual opening hours for all service points shall be no less than 120 hours per 1,000 resident population. Library authorities having 4 or less static service points shall ensure that the aggregate annual opening hours shall be no less than 104 hours per 1,000 resident population</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities will ensure that emergency non-opening hours of static libraries will be no more than 1% of total planned opening hours in any year</p> <p>(iii) Library authorities will ensure that mobile library visits/stops missed or cancelled will be no more than 2.5% of total planned number of visits/stops in any year</p> <p><i>The extent of any disruption caused by unusually severe winter weather should be considered and allowed for in the above returns for (ii) and (iii) by removing any losses of service due to severe weather from the calculations.</i></p>	<p><b>a) The closure of Brymbo and Gresford libraries without any alternative provision would reduce the performance to 120 hours per 1,000 resident population – the level of the standard.</b></p> <p><b>b) The closure of a third library (selected from Cefn Mawr/Ruabon/Rhos) would reduce the performance to around 107 to 109 hours per 1,000 resident population</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No</p>

4	<p>(i) Library authorities will provide the following ICT <i>facilities</i> for users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) At least 7 networked public access personal or laptop computers per 10,000 resident population, providing free access to the Internet and full access to the authority's on-line catalogue of total holdings</li> <li>(b) Current hardware and software at library service points, renewed or refurbished according to corporate policies</li> <li>(c) Facilities that enable residents to use their own laptop computers in the libraries</li> <li>(d) WiFi at all larger service points (open for 30 hours or more per week) by March 2014</li> <li>(e) Scanning and printing facilities</li> <li>(f) Plug-in facilities for digital media sources and portable devices</li> <li>(g) Free email access</li> <li>(h) Access to free introductory or basic support in the use of ICT facilities</li> <li>(i) Information literacy sessions for users (to develop use of library services and facilities)</li> </ul> <p>(ii) Library authorities will provide the following ICT-based <i>resources</i> for users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) General and reference information services (please describe briefly in the Authority self-assessment column)</li> <li>(b) Newspapers and other current information sources online</li> <li>(c) Community information</li> <li>(d) Local history and family history sources</li> <li>(e) Local authority and other governmental information sources</li> <li>(f) Access to e-learning resources and services</li> </ul>	<p>Standard is currently <u>partially met</u> and requires the installation of more wi-fi access in some libraries. This is planned for 2013/14.</p> <p>This standard for the number of computers per 10,000 resident population would be met after the closure of 3 libraries (and providing wi-fi is installed).</p>	<b>Yes</b>
5	<p>Library authorities shall achieve the following target for annual acquisitions of new collection items (in all formats) made available for public use in each year (per 1,000 total resident population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) For use by adults – 124 items per annum</li> <li>(b) For users under 16 – 61 items per annum</li> </ul>	<p>“Bookfund” has been reduced to the minimum but the standard for the number of titles acquired should be met.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
6	<p>(i) (a) Library authorities shall maintain a level of expenditure on collection items for adults per 1,000 total resident population that does not fall below the lowest quartile (UK 09/10) on average throughout the period to March 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowest quartile £1685</li> <li>• Median £1925</li> <li>• Top quartile £2137</li> </ul> <p>(b) Library authorities shall maintain a level of expenditure on collection items for those under 16 per 1,000 total resident population that does not fall below the lowest quartile on average throughout the period up to March 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowest quartile £263</li> <li>• Median £322</li> <li>• Top quartile £426</li> </ul>	<p>“Bookfund” has been reduced to the minimum but the standard for the level of expenditure should be met.</p>	<b>Yes</b>

<p>(ii) Library authorities shall ensure that they spend</p> <p><b>Either</b></p> <p>(a) a minimum average for the three-year period to March 2014 of £750 per annum per 1,000 Welsh speaker total resident population (adult and children under 16) on the purchase, marketing and promotion of Welsh-language materials</p> <p><b>Or</b></p> <p>(b) a minimum of 4% of the total library materials purchasing fund on average for the three-year period to March 2014 on the purchase, marketing and promotion of Welsh-language materials for adults and children under 16</p> <p>(iii) Library authorities will compare their acquisition performance against an indicative selected list of Welsh Writing in English titles to be circulated after consultation with the Welsh Books Council. Authorities should purchase a minimum of 75% of those titles listed annually and an average of at least 3 copies of those titles</p> <p>(iv) (a) Library authorities shall ensure that the time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access for adult users is no more than 8.9 years</p> <p>(b) Library authorities shall ensure that the time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access for users under 16 is no more than 8.9 years</p> <p><i>Note: reserve stocks should not be included in the calculation of performances against part (iv) (a) and (b) this Standard</i></p>	Standard met	Yes
<p><b>7</b> Library authorities will ensure that no less than</p> <p>(a) 64% of all requests shall be supplied within 7 calendar days</p> <p>(b) 79% within 15 calendar days</p> <p>(c) 89% within 30 calendar days</p> <p>on average over the three-year period to March 2014</p> <p><i>Calendar days are to be calculated from when the request/reservation was made to the time when the borrower was informed that the material was available. Requests for pre-publication material should be calculated only from the date when materials are made available for purchase to the library service, i.e. exclude pre-publication requests still in the system.</i></p> <p>Note: Please indicate (insert ✓ or x) whether this data has been:</p> <p>▪ calculated via the service LMS</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>▪ calculated on the basis of a sample period survey</p>	Standard met	Yes

8	<p>(i) Library authorities shall ensure that total staffing establishment levels shall not fall below 0.37 per 1,000 resident population</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities shall ensure that at least 23% of total staff shall be formally qualified in library and information studies / science</p> <p><i>For parts (i) and (ii) of this Standard please comment in the Authority self-assessment column on the position relating to any library service establishment posts vacant on 31 March 2012, and the length of time they have been vacant</i></p> <p>(iii) Library authorities shall ensure that the designated operational manager of library services shall be the holder of recognised professional qualifications in librarianship or information science or information management</p> <p>(iv) Library authorities that use volunteer staff shall ensure that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a designated volunteer coordinator from the permanent staffing establishment</li> <li>• provide a written role description for each volunteer</li> <li>• meet the legal requirements for each volunteer in relation to the role being undertaken</li> <li>• provide induction training for volunteers</li> <li>• provide continuing training for volunteers</li> <li>• provide appropriate supervision for volunteers</li> <li>• are aiming to achieve accreditation status recognising that the organisation is meeting the standards noted in the National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers and Investing in Volunteers</li> </ul>	Standard not met	No
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9	<p>Library authorities will indicate:</p> <p>(i) Capital investment in their library service points (including mobile services) from</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the authority's own resources</li> <li>b) from external sources</li> </ol> <p><i>State sources of any external capital investment in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p> <p>(ii) Their actual repair and maintenance expenditure for each year of the Framework per 1,000 resident population, including any actual central charge levied on the library service for use of buildings as service points</p> <p>(iii) That they have undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an asset/condition survey for their service points or internally reviewed such surveys on one occasion in the five year from March 2009 to April 2014</li> <li>▪ a disability audit on one occasion in the five-year period from March 2009 to April 2014</li> </ul> <p>(iv) The total aggregate public area offered by the library service points per 1,000 resident population. The indicative standard is 27 square metres</p> <p>(v) Any other capital expenditure on the library service not relating to buildings incurred during the year <i>State nature of expenditure in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p>	<p>Standard currently met</p> <p>A total floor space of over 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> is required to meet this standard. The current floor space is 4000 m<sup>2</sup>. The closure of 2 libraries would mean that the Council would still meet the standard. Closing a third library would push it below the required level.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
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## LIBRARIES PROPOSALS CONSULTATION REPORT

### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update the Executive Board on public consultation regarding the proposals for the Library Service contained in report HCWD/03/14

### 2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 A range of methods have been used to obtain public and customer feedback on the proposals, including letters & e-mails, questionnaires, comments books, petitions and other data. There were over 60 written responses to the consultation; in addition, petitions against the closure of Rhos library listing 308 signatures were submitted. A full list of representations, comments and views to date are attached below.
- 2.2 The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated to take account of the responses to the consultation.
- 2.3 In summary, the responses to wider public consultation on the Reshaping Services budget proposals for 2014/15 (**Part 1**) included comments on Library Services as follows:
- a) Mixed views with almost as many people supporting a rationalisation in the number of libraries as those expressing concerns that libraries are important facilities promoting reading, learning and access to resources and so need to be maintained
  - b) Some suggested reduction in opening hours across all libraries rather than closures, with access to Wrexham library and evening and weekend opening for people who work being particularly important
  - c) Others suggested mitigating actions such as the mobile library, increasing grant funding and charges and improving advertising and promotion to increase use
- 2.4 In addition, some specific issues were also raised:
- a) The value of libraries for literacy and education
  - b) The use of libraries by children, especially for homework studies
  - c) Changes in welfare reform increasing the need for free internet access by unemployed people
  - d) More work with local communities to deliver the service
- 2.5 The library proposals received amongst the lowest level of agreement overall (38% agreed and 50% disagreed) when compared to all the Council's budget proposals:

Proposal	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither agree/ disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Net
Libraries Review	13%	25%	12%	23%	27%	-12%

2.6 There are ongoing petitions relating to the potential closure of the following libraries (with the number of signatures as at 06 January 2014):

- a) Brymbo library (16 signatures)
- b) Gresford library (9 signatures)
- c) Rhos library (441 signatures)

2.7 The Leisure & Libraries Manager attended a meeting of the Reshaping Services EIA Support Group co-ordinated by the Community Diversity Manager. This group identified key groups of people most likely to be affected by the proposals and the possible implications (**Part 2**).

2.8 The proposals impact on all sectors of the community, with the consultation responses indicating that many people place a high value on their library, using terms such as “lifeline” and expressing concerns about the overall effects on communities of losing a local library.

2.9 Whilst many people will be affected, it appears that the groups who could be disadvantaged by the proposals are:

- a) Older people
- b) Children and young people, but proportionally children aged 7-11 years.
- c) Families, including those with young children
- d) People with limited access to transport (or limited incomes to pay for public transport). Adverse weather would limit their ability to travel.
- e) Adult females who use libraries more than adult males
- f) Schools and their pupils

2.10 Of more significance is the likely effect on people because of the way that they use libraries with many representations against closure or reductions in hours based on the purpose for which people use libraries:

- a) Access to a wide range of resources for reading and learning
- b) Contributing to literacy, in particular when families may be reducing their purchase of books at a time of austerity
- c) Access to computers for universal credit as part of Welfare Reform
- d) Supporting children with their homework
- e) Locations where people meet and socialise which helps to address isolation, especially for older people and the activities that take place in libraries such as book clubs and craft groups
- f) The convenience of having local libraries within communities

- g) The perception that libraries are happy and pleasant places to visit with helpful staff
- 2.11 The views of users of Brymbo and Gresford libraries are summarised in **Part 3**, together with representations in favour of Rhos library which had been considered for closure as a result of the Libraries Commissioning Review
- 2.12 Around 19% of the resident population of Gresford are library members; the proportion at Brymbo is around 14% (**Part 4**). However, the composition of the membership differs with 50.6% of members aged under 16 at Brymbo compared to 39.4% at Gresford.
- 2.13 Some people suggested introducing a charge for library use, but this would contravene Section 8 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964). There were a number of other suggestions about improving library facilities and increasing usage through improved publicity.
- 2.14 Reducing opening hours at all libraries was generally viewed as preferable to the closure of some libraries, but there were comments about ensuring that there are sufficient opening hours in particular for people who are in work (at evenings and weekends).

## CONCLUSION

- 2.15 The proposals will impact on all sectors but particularly older people, children and young people, families, adult females and people with limited access to transport. There will also be an impact on other institutions that use libraries especially schools.
- 2.16 The proposals remain to close 2 libraries (Gresford and Brymbo) and to reduce opening hours in the other libraries. Mitigating the effects of the proposals will need to have due regard to:
  - a) Agreeing a pattern of reduced opening hours which is broadly suitable for the majority of users and which helps provide some protection for more vulnerable groups (e.g. ensuring that children and young people are able to use libraries for study immediately after school by maintaining opening hours at this time). In this respect, further consultation with users, stakeholders and staff on the revised opening hours will be carried out in late-January for a period of 3 weeks.
  - b) Geographical coverage so that the closures are compensated by maintaining a service in an accessible alternative location (e.g. Wrexham).
  - c) Maintaining other key services which provide access to disadvantaged groups such as the Homelink service to housebound people and the mobile library service to rural and outlying areas (and in this respect, to review the mobile library service for efficiency and effectiveness)
  - d) Continuing to develop online access to e-services such as e-books and e-audio.
  - e) Evaluate and implement other technological service improvements such as book self-issue equipment (linked to a new library management system) and Wi-Fi access

- f) Develop a volunteer programme for service enhancement (e.g. to provide books to people in residential homes)
- g) Implement the findings of the Community Assets Review and explore where co-location with other services can establish a community “hub”.
- h) Work with partners to develop library services (e.g. Glyndwr, Coleg Cambria)

2.17 In terms of the individual libraries, some possible mitigating measures have been considered including:

- a) the re-location of Brymbo Library to the Enterprise Centre (but to achieve this external funding from Welsh Government would need to be sought)
- b) continuing to work with the local community in Gresford and Marford to facilitate a community solution (a public meeting will be held during January to consider the alternative provision of library services).

## Part 1: Reshaping Services Consultation

### Rationalise the number of libraries

The number of libraries could be reduced significantly.

The existing provision of Community Centres and Libraries is excessive particularly in the smaller communities. The levels of usage do not justify the need for these facilities and more should be closed

How many people still use the library? With modern technology why not have an e-library?

What's more important, books or keeping the vulnerable safe?!

What is the statutory number of libraries that should be provided? I do think they are massively important but I think perhaps more could be closed than you suggest.

Close all libraries except Wrexham Library.

Gresford Library is a luxury considering there is a regular bus service to Wrexham. The same may apply to the other two libraries threatened with closure.

Agree that where small libraries are poorly used they should be closed.

Totally agree. We don't need more than one in Wrexham in this day and age. More should be invested in e-book provision.

The proposal to cut all library hours by approx 26% in order to avoid library closures is seriously misguided. I would never advocate wholesale closure of libraries but the reality is that in one or two cases the facility is not really viable. Recent new-build and refurbished library facilities in shared premises have been very successful and in my opinion this should be the strategy for all libraries in Wrexham communities even if a temporary loss of obsolete standalone facilities in one or two cases means a wait of a few years while alternative (better) facilities are planned. Demographics in Wrexham changed significantly and a future library service needs to reflect and embrace this. In the short term every effort should be made to maintain a strong core library service to provide a platform for future development. A broader outlook needs to be taken.

Need to ensure enough facilities still exist for Libraries and leisure to maintain support for students and health families/people.

Closure of the three libraries should go ahead, if there is a genuine need then the local community councils should fund them.

Close libraries and invest in e-books

Just keep 1 Library.

### Consider closing the least used libraries, but ensure other library facilities are accessible via public transport or a mobile library service

Only those that are undersubscribed should be considered for closure, consideration should be given to residents who do not have private transport and those who do not qualify for a bus pass.

Provided there are sufficient to enable people in rural areas to have reasonable access.

Why not provide a mobile service this would reduce the cost and give a service to all that needs it and just have the main library at Wrexham open any elderly person that wishes to have books could have them delivered by home helps if they visit or have small van visits.

Library's should only be closed in areas that have easy access via public transport to another library.

A 'mobile librarian' could work from different library facilities on different days allowing a library facility to be retained in the communities but perhaps not in the traditional facility.

Travelling libraries could be increased instead.

I agree to closing some libraries as technology is such now that they are not needed as much, however, I do think we should maintain some well stocked libraries with decent opening hours as people who work 9-5 Monday to Friday would struggle to get there if hours were cut to say 10 -4. Maybe stagger the opening 10 – 2 shift and a 6 – 8 shift. As a child I used to love going to the main library and I think children should still be able to have that facility and experience. Also family history has become a new past time for people and so they would want to go to the library to look stuff up, use the computers, etc.

**Libraries should not be closed - they are important facilities for communities for reading, learning and accessing resources.**

Libraries are also worth far more than numbers in a budget.

You will be removing provision for the residents of Wrexham to read, learn and exercise.

I do not use them like I used to; but if they are used by others then it is important to keep them open.

Libraries are main hubs and focus for the changes to the Universal Credit system and job search functions. Closing any library or reducing hours will have a direct impact on the communities and people within it that rely heavily on them and will be required by central government policy to rely further on them. In addition to this - closing any library should be an absolute anathema to a supposedly left leaning council. Once they are closed they cannot be reopened. I fear they are hugely undervalued by the council and you may not realise just what you have lost until it is far far too late.

Libraries are facilities where every community member can have access to a wide range of resources. To cut these in number and hours would be a travesty.

Libraries should be protected at all costs.

Libraries and leisure facilities offer a hive of activity that people and children can access that support and improve their life I don't think they should have to close.

No library should be closed or have its hours reduced.

The closure of libraries is wrong. End of. Closure of libraries is an issue I would go to the barricades for.

It would be extremely foolish & short-sighted to close (or even reduce the hours) of any of the libraries in WCB. Libraries provide so many services these days (the unemployed - who in many cases don't have internet access, can [& do, with great frequency] use the net in libraries to do job searches). The elderly & the ill-educated gain valuable

support, guidance & advice - from the librarians, on how to use the internet, how to fill in Job Application Forms & create CVs. In England, authorities have been successfully sued for shutting down libraries as it breaches Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("Without due regard..." for those who use the services I describe above).

Closure of Rhos Library - I want to register my objection as it is a well-used library

The main purpose of libraries is to offer a book lending service to local residents. With the high number of members at Rhos Library, why are you even thinking of cutting its opening hours, or even talking about closing it?

No library should close nor reduce hours. This would be against government policy of making the internet accessible to all. It would be detrimental to school children wanting to use libraries for homework activities, this is particularly important in the light of education proposals. Libraries could recruit volunteers.

Libraries are required in all areas and are a very important part of the integrated life's of people from basic learning for the under 5s - to reading for fun, for research for older youngsters.

For the pensioners a place to meet and socialise and learn all about using a computer – which the government wants EVERYONE to do. They are a VERY, VERY IMPORTANT part of lifestyle.

Libraries are a fundamental part of town life and an important part of all our lives - LEARNING – and for young and old it is VITAL they are kept OPEN always"

I believe you should look at keeping, if not increasing the investment in work and educational opportunities including keeping libraries and ensure that they are modern and that they meet the needs of the population they serve. You should look at building links between Coleg Cambria, iTec, and Glyndŵr University and the libraries, and environmental projects so that those that use them can gain extra qualifications and venture to the business world.

**Reduce opening hours across all libraries rather than close libraries, but ensure some evening and weekend so that they are accessible for people who are working.**

Some of the suggestions are front line services, is it fair to get rid of three library's a community's loss for another community's gain no it is not, you are hurting the electorate reduce the hours in all library's that is the fair way and in future when things pick up we all still have a library to go to

Support reducing library opening hours but not closing them completely.

Shorter hours in all libraries seems better than closing a minority. (Unless figures show that minority are rarely used). Would be sensible to have a (long) day in the week (e.g. to 9pm) and a Saturday on opening hours though to ensure all working groups are able to access still.

I have been a library member for nearly 60 years and think that they play a very important role in the community. A flexible, reduction of opening hours could save money.

If we are to limit library hours, then please ensure that main libraries are open on Saturdays, not just working days.

By all means reduce library hours but make sure you make them open when working people can get to them. i.e. avoid 9-5 and open them in evenings or weekends. Libraries: do not close any; reduce by more hours instead



Cut hours of libraries if you must but closing them - no look at ways to bring in money to them.

Need to resist reduction in opening hours in main Wrexham library if possible.

Libraries, leisure services should be reduced in hours, not closed.

I am against the closure of public libraries because I believe they are a valuable part of the community. Rather than closing completely, I agree that there could be reduced hours as well as using them for community use if possible such as a place to meet. This seems to have worked in other communities.

Libraries - it would be fairer to reduce the hours of all libraries rather than close any.

Particularly against any library closures. A reduction in opening hours would be acceptable.

**Look at other ways of funding libraries such as increased charges and grant funding, improve efficiency and advertise and promote facilities to increase usage**

Introduce a charge to use the libraries & museum.

Perhaps an annual fee, with concessions, could be introduced.

Charge to borrow books or turn them through community partnerships and request donations of books from communities.

Library Review - I'm in two minds with this one. Which ones would close and what would be the impact? I believe this service needs to be better promoted, and could certainly be run more efficiently. I would prefer that they did not close.

Great shame regarding libraries - perhaps could be used as community meeting places. Coffee shop/shop to provide extra income, local businesses could be levied a small charge to advertise, we need to encourage people to read, for many reasons.

Community libraries could be initiated and grant funding sought.

The Community centres, libraries and leisure centres should be reviewed so as to make them more efficient. It is too easy to say let's take a facility away without a proper review being carried out. There must be ways of making these facilities more efficient.

WCBC could do downloadable versions of books for a fee. Like you can get from Amazon, possibly work with Amazon or other suppliers to provide this. Again try and look at the service as a small business, but maintain the value for money/free aspect. Have a coffee shop in the library where you can pick up a book and go and read it, like Waterstone's do. Make it a comfy place to go and relax not a cafeteria where you feel you need to eat and leave. Again utilize other Council buildings to provide a condensed service or a pick up/drop off ordering system for books from the main library, internal mail is delivered why can't they deliver books too.

If these 3 libraries are not being used enough, more publicity is needed about the splendid service they offer.

If you cannot run them at least work with the communities in which they are sited to offer voluntary or part voluntary schemes. There are a lot of retired people out there who could with some support from professional librarians easily maintain the local libraries. Use your imagination and find out about the best practice in England where this has happened already.

For goodness sake don't close any more libraries - talk to the communities about effective partnerships and strategies.

I agree to closing some libraries as technology is such now that they are not needed as much, however, I do think we should maintain some well stocked libraries with decent opening hours as people who work 9-5 Monday to Friday would struggle to get there if hours were cut to say 10 -4. Maybe stagger the opening 10 – 2 shift and a 6 – 8 shift. As a child I used to love going to the main library and I think children should still be able to have that facility and experience. Also family history has become a new past time for people and so they would want to go to the library to look stuff up, use the computers, etc. WCBC could do downloadable versions of books for a fee. Like you can get from Amazon, possibly work with Amazon or other suppliers to provide this. Again try and look at the service as a small business, but maintain the value for money/free aspect. Have a coffee shop in the library where you can pick up a book and go and read it, like Waterstone's do. Make it a comfy place to go and relax not a cafeteria where you feel you need to eat and leave. Again utilize other Council buildings to provide a condensed service or a pick up/drop off ordering system for books from the main library, internal mail is delivered why can't they deliver books too.

Move libraries to other building to share costs.

## **Part 2: Reshaping Services: EIA Support Group**

The purpose of this group is to provide an additional opportunity for Council officers to consider potential community impacts that might occur as result of their proposal. The Library Review proposals were presented to Group on 22 November 2013.

### **Comments and recommendations from group:**

Key groups affected:

- Poor people - Community First areas / areas of economic deprivation
- Children and young people and students
- Older people
- People with a disability
- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Groups
- Welsh speakers/learners
- Service providers using/potentially using venues (public, voluntary and community sector)
- Faith groups (capacity to provide support/venues)

Possible implications:

- Poverty: reduced access to benefits online, study aids, books, learning opportunities
- C+YP reduced access to reading – lower literacy levels
- Reduced access to information – young people applying to university, research; unemployed people – benefits and job search; community information (including leaflets etc)
- Mother and toddler – reduced access to pre reading groups – literacy levels?

- Social exclusion – reduced access to latest best sellers (adults, children and young people)
- Loss of community hub – impact on sense of belonging, poverty implications, have nots have even less, less opportunity for communities to come together, cohesion implications

#### Mitigation:

- Try reduced hours first
- Co-location of leisure and libraries [physical and mental health gains]
- Mobile library and housebound service are important [address access and social isolation issues]
- Reduced hours – split shifts to accommodate different groups of users e.g. older people, students, working families
- Groups to use library space routinely e.g. Brownies, Guides etc when closed
- Share staff between libraries with staggered opening hours to reduce staff costs
- Self service system and better promotion of what's available
- Volunteers e.g. residential homes. Young people on benefits have to secure volunteering credits – work in local library = social capital gains
- Link to Coleg Cambria and Glyndwr University libraries [and with school libraries?] Economies of scale?
- Include consideration of all and poorer service users needs to access services / leisure /learning opportunities – opportunity to increase social inclusion

### **Part 3: Comments from Library Users at Brymbo, Gresford and Rhos Libraries**

#### **Brymbo**

This library is a lifeline to the village, and to me. The service is wonderful, Carol is so helpful and will arrange any book to be obtained for you. The refurbishment has brightened everything up, a building to be proud of.

Also there have been circa a dozen verbal comments not wanting the library to close including:-

- One lady said she was not very happy if the library closed, she could not carry books from Brynteg on the bus.
- Another said that in winter when the weather is bad she would not be able to go elsewhere.
- One user and her husband are not happy, they use the computers in Brymbo most days

## Gresford

Please do not close Gresford Library! It is such a good service, just needs a little more publicity.

Just when I get to retirement – they might close the library! No, please don't.

Please do not close Gresford Library. It is such a good service and a happy atmosphere to spend time choosing books.

Please don't close the library. It is a friendly and pleasant place to go and have books. I read a treat deal and would be really upset.

Libraries are so important to me (retired) and to my grandchildren 8 and 11. Please do not close small (or large) libraries.

Very dependant on library. The village really needs this facility.

I love Gresford Library! Please do not close our library, the local libraries are the best in the County.

Please don't do it!

My husband and I use this service because it is within walking distance of our home now we are OAP.

Please re-consider the closing of Gresford Library, it provides a good service for **all** ages.

This library is essential for the use of the community. Please reconsider this when making your decision for closing the library.

The library is well used by all age groups. Mums with young children without their own transport will find it difficult to use other libraries – also expensive to travel on public transport and impossible to get to Llay – The library staff so helpful. Very sad if Gresford closes.

I grew up in Inverness during WW2 and visited the library regularly. I love books and though I have a kindle I still borrow books because a kindle is efficient and useful on holiday but it has no soul! Libraries are havens of learning and research and essential to aid education which is vital to our future.

Any attempt to close the library will greatly diminish the Gresford and Marford area. It provides a great service and when in these days great emphasis is placed on the reading ability of young people, removing this service can only be seen as a very retro grade step. Please keep the library open.

Trist iawn fydde colli llyfrgell Gresford. Rwyf yn mynychu grwp gwnio sydd yn cwrdd yno bob bore dydd Gwener – wiyh ohonyn o gwmpas y bwrdd o sawl ardal gwahanol. Wrth I ni wnio daw pobl i mewn yn gyson i ddefnyddio'r cyfrifiaduron, dewis llyfrau neu plant i liwio. Mi fydde'n gywilydd ei golli!

I have used this library for the past 10 years. I am almost 88 years of age and I remember when libraries were first introduced. Surely, this Council will not dum-down everything in this area. I love the outing here and taking home my large print books!

This is an excellent library with the most helpful staff. I have lived here for 34 years and myself and my family value the library very highly. We need libraries.

My daughter and I use the library regularly and strongly believe that its closure would be a great loss to the village.

I use this library routinely throughout the whole year.

Please do not close the library. It is clearly well used – there were many people in this afternoon. The library is not just for books but internet access for those who can't afford or are unsure, there is a book group, children's library as well. There is lots of talk about isolation of older and/or vulnerable people – this is a village amenity and much valued. Also, what about literacy in Wales, PISA results etc – we should make access to books etc easier not harder. In hard economic times families will cut back on buying books so library is vital.

Please do not close the library. The service the librarians provide is second to none in locating books and providing a wide and valuable service. I rely on my local library as I have to use public transport and need assistance to get to other libraries. This library is well used by all ages of the community and is a valuable asset.

Used this wonderful library for 35 years. Don't close it. Staff amazing they are angels. Wonderful place.

When we want children to read more books it is important that libraries such as Gresford should remain open as not all people have an access to a car to use a library in Wrexham. Local libraries are important for the community. Gresford is well used and should remain open.

It would be a tragedy to close this library at Gresford – many customers live very close and walk here. They would be unable to travel to Llay, and Wrexham may be too far and too difficult to park for many. It has a wide customer base and would be sorely missed.

Myself and my two children aged 4 and 2 use the library regularly. It is so handy being a short walk away from the primary school and the play group in the memorial hall. We would rarely get the opportunity to visit the town library and carry home heavy books. We should all be actively encouraging the children in the village to make full use of what is a wonderful local facility. Keep the library open!!!

Please do not close Gresford Library. It is a source of life to the village, as an eighty plus I cannot go very far. Please let this library live.

Please keep this good library open. It serves many people and is really needed.

Please keep the Gresford Library open, the older generation need it.

Gresford library is vital for us older residents as reading is one of our great pleasures, we really do need it.

My husband, son (3) and I all use the library on a regular basis and we enjoy this facility very much. We need a library! As a parent I'm very aware that, as a boy, my son has around 20% lower chance of passing his GCSE English. I want him to read and love reading. Closing the library is, to be frank, short sighted.

I have four children and along with my husband we use the library on a weekly basis. I don't think we would be able to use a library as a family very often if Gresford closes.

Please don't close Gresford Library. It's such a friendly library and we are so grateful to have the use of the back room each Friday for our quilting class.

I very much oppose the closing of Gresford Library. It is a tremendous community resource which has given great service. Please reconsider this unbelievable decision.

Please, please keep this library open. It is a life line for me – I don't drive and would find it difficult in the winter months travelling to the Wrexham Library. Please listen to your voters.

Please do not close this very popular library. It is well used by all.

Do not close this library as it is so much better run than Wrexham and we don't have to pay to park.

I understand that the closure of Gresford library is presently being discussed. I would like to know if eth closure will go ahead and when the decision will be made. I'd also like to know what action members of the community can take to protest this closure.

## **Rhos**

Letters/e-mails were received from the following institutions:-

Rhos Community Council: "I have been requested, on behalf of Rhos Community Council, to advise you that council are totally disgusted that you are considering closing such a vital centre to this community and oppose any such recommendations..... Members would support the recommendation to reduce hours in all libraries and to maintain the facility for all communities".

Ysgol I.D. Hooson: "A large number of pupils at the school use the library and all the classes visit during their time at the school. During the holidays, a number of pupils participate in the library's programmes. I think that this is very important at a time when young people use a lot (possibly too much) of the digital resources available without the opportunity to lose themselves completely in a book and enjoy the library's atmosphere. In future, with the threat to the schools' library service, children in the Rhos area will be deprived twice. This is not fair at all. As well as this, at a time when the whole community finds it difficult to survive, it's very important that the Council does its best to protect essential services in these areas outside the town centre...".

Ysgol y Grango: "I must stress how detrimental this proposed action would be to the students of Ysgol y Grango and their families who use the library. At a time when Welsh Government is prioritising the improvement of literacy, and trying to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational attainment, the proposed closure would seriously impede both aims".

Nene (Papur Bro Rhos, Ponciau, Johnstown a Phen-y-cae): "We are writing this letter as editors and officials of Rhos Welsh Community paper, which represents a readership of 2,000, to express our dismay, disappointment and concern that a committee of Wrexham Council will be discussing the possible closure of Rhos Public Library. For over a century, the readers of Rhos have prided themselves on their libraries.....It would be a tragedy if all this were to be lost".

Plas y Delph: “I wish to express my dismay and objection to your proposed closure of the Library at Rhosllanerchrugog.....The Library is the hub of our community with activities going on constantly”. (The letter also contained a petition signed by 23 names).

A further 6 letters were received from individuals and a petition objecting to the proposed closure of Rhos library, with 285 signatures, has also been received by the Council.

A letter from Aled Roberts, AM, was also received on then Reshaping Services consultation and referred to the original proposal to close 3 libraries.

#### **Part 4: Library Membership Analysis**

Brymbo Library has 382 registered members (190 adult and 192 juniors under 16).

The current level of active membership (i.e. members who have made recent use of the library total 99 (25.9% of registered members) made up as follows:-

- 51 adults (26.8% of registered members)
- 45 juniors under 16 (23.4% of registered members)

Adult members are:-

- Males: 35.2%
- Females: 64.8%

Junior members cover the age spectrum but proportionally, children aged 7 – 10 years are the most significant proportion. Amongst girls, there are also a high proportion of 11 – 12 year olds.

Gresford Library has 1007 registered members (613 adult and 394 juniors under 16).

The current level of active membership (i.e. members who have made recent use of the library total 337 (33.5% of registered members) made up as follows:-

- 212 adults (34.6% of registered members)
- 120 juniors under 16 (30.5% of registered members)

Adult members are:-

- Males: 27.3%
- Females: 72.7%

Junior members range from early years up to 13/14 year olds.