

To: Members of the Communities
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 4 January 2024

Direct Dial: 01824 712554

e-mail: democratic@denbighshire.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2024** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**.

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

PART 1 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS PART OF THE MEETING

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Pages 3 - 4)

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 REVIEW OF CABINET DECISION RELATING TO THE LIBRARY/ONE STOP SHOP SAVINGS PROPOSAL (Pages 5 - 130)

To consider a report by the Scrutiny Co-ordinator (copy attached) the purpose of which is to seek the Committee, in accordance with the Council's Call-in Procedure Rules, to examine the decision taken by Cabinet on 19th December 2023 in relation to the Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal.

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Huw Williams (Chair)

Michelle Blakeley-Walker
James Elson
Jon Harland
Carol Holliday
Alan James

Councillor Karen Anne Edwards (Vice-Chair)

Brian Jones
Delyth Jones
Merfyn Parry
Cheryl Williams

COPIES TO:

All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, (<i>name</i>)	<input type="text"/>
a *member/co-opted member of <i>(*please delete as appropriate)</i>	Denbighshire County Council
CONFIRM that I have declared a *personal / personal and prejudicial interest not previously declared in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in respect of the following:- <i>(*please delete as appropriate)</i>	
Date of Disclosure:	<input type="text"/>
Committee (<i>please specify</i>):	<input type="text"/>
Agenda Item No.	<input type="text"/>
Subject Matter:	<input type="text"/>
Nature of Interest: <i>(See the note below)*</i>	<input type="text"/>
Signed	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

*Note: Please provide sufficient detail e.g. 'I am the owner of land adjacent to the application for planning permission made by Mr Jones', or 'My husband / wife is an employee of the company which has made an application for financial assistance'.

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Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	11 January 2024
Head of Service	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Review of Cabinet Decision relating to the Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 A review under the Council's Scrutiny 'call-in' procedure of a decision taken by Cabinet, on 19th December 2023, on 'Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal'.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 A notice of a 'call-in' was submitted by 5 non-Cabinet councillors in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The notice (attached at Annex A) calls for a review by one of the Council's Scrutiny committees into a decision taken by Cabinet on 19th December 2023, on the 'Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal'.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 having considered the information in this report and its appendices, along with the representations made during the course of the discussion, determines whether to refer the decision on the 'Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal', taken on the 19th December 2023, back to Cabinet for further consideration; and

- 3.2 if it requests Cabinet to reconsider its original decision clearly identifies the reasons why it seeks the review and formulates recommendation(s) it would like Cabinet to consider.

4. Report details

- 4.1 On the 19th December 2023 Cabinet considered a report on the 'Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal' (copy of report attached at Annex B).
- 4.2 At the conclusion of its discussion Cabinet resolved to:
- “(a) note the report and approve the proposal to reduce Library/One Stop Shop opening hours by c.40%, together with associated savings in other parts of the service, to release an expected saving of £360k, and*
- (b) confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1 to the report) as part of its consideration.”*
- 4.3 The Council's 'call-in' procedure defines a process for Scrutiny to exercise its statutory powers to review or scrutinise executive decisions, and to request that the decision-maker reconsiders a decision that has been taken, prior to it being implemented.
- 4.4 Cabinet's decision was published on the 21st December 2023. The 'call-in' procedure allows non-Cabinet councillors 5 working days in which to submit a notice of 'call-in'. Councillor Hugh Irving submitted a notice of 'call-in' electronically on 29th December 2023. This request was supported within the permitted timescale (via individual e-mails) by four other non-Cabinet councillors, namely Councillors Terry Mendies, James Elson, Justine Evans and Brian Jones.
- 4.5 Please see below, and in Annex A, the reasons stated for 'calling-in' the decision:
- “The reasons for further scrutiny are as follows:
- (i) The decision to reduce library opening hours by 40% is inappropriate as the reductions will prevent a high performing service maintain its

standards and will affect the Council's Key Performance Indicators. This effect is yet to be clarified.

- (ii) One stop shops located in libraries provide significant support to the community particularly for less able residents who will no longer be as fully supported. Public access to IT technology will be reduced and opportunities for residents just to enter a warm environment for social reasons will be diminished.
- (iii) Potential Redundancy Costs and the impact of losing fully trained experienced staff have not yet been fully calculated or included in figures for corporate savings. Detail anticipated savings have not yet been provided to members.
- (iv) The town/city Councils of Rhuddlan and St Asaph have not yet indicated whether they will continue their financial support for their local libraries in light of the reduced service proposed. These figures need to be known and considered before final decisions are made.
- (v) Outside organisations providing services through library premises have not yet indicated whether they will continue to do so with the resultant effect on community well-being. Financial losses from commercial organisations such as banks from loss of access to library facilities have not yet been calculated or their loss to the community taken into consideration.”

4.6 The Council's 'call-in' procedure does stipulate that a special meeting of a scrutiny committee should be convened within 5 working days of the receipt of the Notice of Call-In of Decision unless a scrutiny committee has a scheduled meeting within that period. The procedure also states that this timeline can be extended if both the decision-maker and the Chair of the scrutiny committee agree to an extension. As there were no meetings of any of the Council's Scrutiny Committees scheduled within the prescribed timescale an extension to the timeline was agreed between the decision-maker and the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the convening of a Special Meeting for the purpose of discussing the decision called-in for scrutiny.

4.7 As background to this item, the discussion that took place at the Cabinet meeting on 19th December 2023 is available to [view](#) on the Council's website.

- 4.8 Following consideration of the Cabinet’s decision on the basis set out for calling the decision in for scrutiny, along with all representations made during the course of the current meeting, Communities Scrutiny Committee must decide whether the decision should be referred back to Cabinet. If it determines that the decision merits being referred back to Cabinet the Committee needs to provide its reasons for referring it back, along with clear information on what it wants Cabinet to consider. If the decision is referred back to it, Cabinet will consider the referral and the reasons submitted in support of the referral at its next available meeting, on 23rd January 2024. At that meeting Cabinet will be expected to demonstrate that appropriate consideration is given to the Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations.
- 4.9 Cabinet will have options to change or re-affirm its original decision.
- 4.10 If Communities Scrutiny Committee decides that Cabinet’s decision should not be referred back to Cabinet, then the original decision can be implemented immediately.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. See Section 5 of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. See Section 6 of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. See Section 7 and Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 This report has been prepared under the provisions and timescales of the Council's Constitution for a 'call-in' of a Cabinet decision.
- 8.2 Details of the consultation carried out prior to Cabinet taking its decision can be seen in Section 8 of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).
- 8.3 Section 8 and appendices 3, 4, 5 & 6(a) to (i) of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached at Annex B) also contain an analysis of the responses received to the public consultation, the Council's response to the key themes raised, along with the responses received from various stakeholders.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. See Section 9 of the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. See Section 10 to the Cabinet report dated 19th December 2023 (attached as Annex B).

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1. Scrutiny's powers in relation to this matter are laid out in:

- Section 21(2) and (3) of the Local Government Act 2000; and
- Sections 7.2.1 and 7.25 of the Council's Constitution

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NOTICE OF CALL IN OF DECISION

To: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

We, the undersigned, wish to call in the following decision (*see note 1*).

Decision taken by (*see note 2*): **Cabinet**

Date decision was taken: **19th December 2023**

Report Title: **LIBRARY/ONE STOP SHOP SAVINGS PROPOSAL**

Decision (*see note 3*): **Parts (a) and (b)**

Reason for Call In:

The reasons for further scrutiny are as follows:

- (i) The decision to reduce library opening hours by 40% is inappropriate as the reductions will prevent a high performing service maintain its standards and will affect the Council's Key Performance Indicators. This effect is yet to be clarified.
- (ii) One stop shops located in libraries provide significant support to the community particularly for less able residents who will no longer be as fully supported. Public access to IT technology will be reduced and opportunities for residents just to enter a warm environment for social reasons will be diminished.
- (iii) Potential Redundancy Costs and the impact of losing fully trained experienced staff have not yet been fully calculated or included in figures for corporate savings. Detail anticipated savings have not yet been provided to members.
- (iv) The town/city Councils of Rhuddlan and St Asaph have not yet indicated whether they will continue their financial support for their local libraries in light of the reduced service proposed. These figures need to be known and considered before final decisions are made.
- (v) Outside organisations providing services through library premises have not yet indicated whether they will continue to do so with the resultant effect on community well-being. Financial losses from commercial organisations such as banks from loss of access to library facilities have not yet been calculated or their loss to the community taken into consideration.

Annex A

We (*see note 4*) request that according to the Council's approved 'call-in' procedure rules (*see note 5*) a meeting of the most appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held within 5 working days (*see note 6*) of the date of your receipt of this notice.

1. Hugh Irving (print) e-mail dated 29/12/2023
2. Terry Mendies (print) confirmation e-mail dated 30/12/2023
3. James Elson (print) confirmation e-mail dated 01/01/2024
4. Justine Evans (print) confirmation e-mail dated 02/01/2024
5. Brian Jones (print) confirmation e-mail dated 02/01/2024

Dated: as above

Guidance Notes

1. Five working days are allowed for a decision to be called-in following its publication on the Council's web-site and notification to Members of the Council. Urgent decisions may proceed despite a call-in if the decision-maker has the agreement of:
 - (i) the chair of the relevant scrutiny committee, or
 - (ii) if there is no such person or that person is unable to act, the Chair of the Council, or
 - (iii) if there is no chair of the relevant scrutiny committee or Chair of the Council, the Vice Chair of the Council.
2. Please state the name of the decision maker e.g. Cabinet or the Lead Member for.....
3. If the decision contains more than one part, please state which are to be called-in, e.g. parts (a), (b), and (d) of the Resolution.
4. Signatories must be non-executive members. Councillors with a prejudicial interest in the decision may not be a signatory to the Notice of Call-in.
5. The Denbighshire Call-in Procedure Rules appear in the Council's Constitution *Part 4.5 – Scrutiny Procedure Rules*.
6. Timescales may be extended in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the decision-maker and the chair of the relevant scrutiny committee.

For Office use only

Received by: Gary Williams Date: 29/12/2023

Date decision was published: 21/12/2023

Notification sent to Leader and the Decision taker (date): 02/01/2024

Notification sent to Chief Executive (date): 02/01/2024

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11/01/2024 Time: 10am Venue: Hybrid (County Hall & Video Conference)

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Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	19 th December 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Lead Member for Welsh Language, Culture & Heritage/Corporate Director: Environment & Economy
Head of Service	Head of Housing & Communities Service
Report author	Head of Housing & Communities Service
Title	Library/One Stop Shop Savings Proposal

1. What is the report about?

1.1. Library/One Stop Shop service cuts for 2024-25

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To detail the potential for savings from the Library/One Stop Shop service.

2.2. To detail the potential impact of making the savings

2.3. To highlight any particular considerations for Cabinet and CET to inform future discussions.

2.4. A decision is required on whether to make the proposed cut to the core Library/One Stop Shop service budget.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. For Cabinet to note the report and approve the proposal to reduce Library/One Stop Shop opening hours by c.40%, together with associated savings in other parts of the service, to release an expected saving of £360k.

3.2. That Cabinet confirms that it has read, understood, and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

Background

- 4.1. The financial challenge faced by the council is unprecedented, and all services will be required to deliver significant savings to meet that challenge.
- 4.2. The proposal to reduce the hours of operation for the Library/One Stop Shop service has come out of this corporate process to identify savings proposals. It is one of the list of major savings proposals that has been shared with Members. The Library/One Stop Shop proposal was subject to its own Member Briefing session on 26th October.
- 4.3. While it is recognised that Libraries are not 'just' places to borrow books, the variety of activities within Libraries should be noted. Key statistics for 2022-23 are:
- Income handled by Libraries/OSS (except Ruthin OSS) amounts to **£845,000**. Most of this was through the cash machines (in place in 5 of 8 libraries – staff cash up at the end of each day and often have to assist customers to use the kiosks), but £370,000 was collected by staff (ie members of the public were not confident in using the cash machines without assistance, or there is no machine at that location).
 - Libraries hosted over **950** partner activities through the year 22/23. These include events such as Talking Points, CAD drop-ins, Working Denbighshire and other DCC Services meeting customers.
 - Libraries submitted over **17,000** C360 enquiries on behalf of members of the public through the year.
 - Libraries hosted nearly **650** Library events (not including Bookstart), with nearly 10,000 attendees.
 - **51%** of the population are registered Library Users.
 - During the year there were **20,646** public IT sessions (ie members of the public using computers in the Library, often needing staff support to get online).
 - There are 54 staff members in the Library Service (32.18 FTE). It is a very loyal staff group: 15 staff members have continuous service of 20 years and over; 3 have worked for Denbighshire for over 30 years.

Proposed Model

- 4.4. There are only two ways to make significant savings in the Library/One Stop Shop service: either close libraries or reduce the opening hours of libraries. CET and Cabinet discussed these options and collectively agreed to try to avoid closing libraries completely.
- 4.5. The proposal for reducing the opening hours of all libraries is seen as a better and fairer way of delivering a significant saving than closing individual libraries, for example by having one Library/One Stop Shop in either Rhyl or Prestatyn; in Corwen or Llangollen; in Ruthin or Denbigh, St Asaph or Rhuddlan. This option ensures that all of Denbighshire's libraries remain open, albeit on a reduced basis, and they are potentially still available for use by communities outside of opening times. It also means that it will be easier to reintroduce the previous opening hours in future if the financial position improves, or if alternative funding can be secured.
- 4.6. A staff and public consultation was launched to seek feedback on a proposal to reduce Library/One Stop Shop opening hours and make associated reductions in service-wide functions.
- 4.7. There was an unprecedented response to the consultation: over **4,590** responses were received from the public and stakeholders.
- 4.8. While acknowledging that savings would need to be found, Cabinet instructed for the model to be amended in response to feedback from staff, customers, and stakeholders: the proposed reduction in opening hours is now just under 40%. Together with associated savings in other parts of the service, the proposed budget reduction is **£359,328** which equates to **21%** of the service budget (23/24 figures).
- 4.9. The model is summarised here, and is detailed in Appendix 2:

	Current Model	Model as consulted (50% reduction in opening hours plus associated savings)	Revised model (40% reduction in opening hours plus associated savings)
Total opening hours	251.5	129	159
Total frontline staff hours	742.7	420	489
Total frontline posts	40	24	30
Total frontline FTEs	20	11.3	10.91

Total posts	55	37	44
Total FTEs	31.12	19.78	20.31
Total savings (23/24 figures)		£450,540	£359,328
% of whole budget (£1.659m)		27%	22%

Savings (23/24 figures)	£
Frontline posts	223,585
Management and Supervisor reductions	55,316
Bookstart (term-time only)	4,305
Home Library Service reduce 25%	5,890
Delivery reduce 30%	5,008
Resources/Bookfund reduce 20%	23,360
Cleaning reduce 20%	21,522
Supplies reduce 30%	2,342
Relief reduction	18,000
TOTAL	359,328

4.10. The model also responds to much of the consultation feedback, for example, maximising opportunities to access the service outside school and working days as much as possible, fewer 'part day' openings, amended opening days.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. Libraries are an important part of delivering our corporate priorities, as well as key tools in achieving equality of access and opportunity, helping the Council and partners to deliver their equality agenda.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. Redundancy costs are difficult to estimate, due to the complexity of the changes. Redundancy costs could be zero if all staff are successfully redeployed, but, based on the most expensive potential redundancies, could be up to £235,500. Obviously, every effort will be made to minimise the need for redundancies and keep associated costs to a minimum. Finance and HR support will be required to deliver any changes.

6.2. A communications plan has been developed and Comms and Engagement support which have been critical to date will need to support the implementation of Cabinet's

decision to ensure that customers and stakeholders are aware of the changes and continue to maximise the use of Libraries/One Stop Shops.

- 6.3. Reducing the Library/One Stop Shop service could impact on some other services. Detailed discussions with services may be required to mitigate any impact.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. Score for the sustainability of the approach: 2 out of 4 stars. Actual score: 21/36
- 7.2. DCC's Library/One Stop Shop Service over the last six years has been developed in order to make an ever greater contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations, so a reduction in service is necessarily going to result in a negative impact on the goals. Mitigation of the negative impacts will need to be considered through engagement with staff, Library/One Stop Shop users and partners.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. Council Workshop 26 October.
- 8.2. Public Consultation 2-30 October. Over 4,500 responses: by far the most successful consultation in recent years. An analysis of the responses is in Appendix 3 but key headlines include:
- 8.2.1. Over 90% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would be able to visit their nearest or next-nearest Library/One Stop Shop when they need to.
- 8.2.2. Nearly 3,400 added comments about the proposals: 96% were negative comments to the proposed changes.
- 8.2.3. Key themes include: Impact on Library Facilities (Books/Computers/Internet Access/Printing); Impact on Community and Social hub/chat sessions; Lack of access due to hours (outside school/work); Cost of Living issues; Impact on access to education/training; Impact on access to help with information and Council Services; transport issues getting to other libraries; Impact on access to Bookstart/Rhymetime; Impact on the vulnerable more generally etc. The Council's response to the themes is outlined in Appendix 4.

- 8.3. The Staff Consultation 2-30 October. Staff comments largely reflected those of the public consultation. Appendix 5 is Unison's response on behalf of its members: the sentiment was largely shared by all other respondents. A response to staff has been published to respond to comments and update staff on next steps.
- 8.4. In response to Cabinet requests, Staff have been engaged in revising the model as consulted and Unison took part in the meeting to discuss it.
- 8.5. Key stakeholders, funders and regulators have been consulted and some responses are included in the pack (Appendix 6a-i)

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. The Council is facing severe real terms reductions in funding over the next few years, alongside increases in cost and demand, especially in services such as adult's and children's social services. This will require all services to make savings which will result in reductions in service. Although services have identified some saving proposals, the gap remains significant for 2024/25 alone, even if all those proposals are agreed and are deliverable. The libraries proposal forms part of these. Although obviously there are a wide range of factors to consider for each and every proposal it is important that the wider financial context for the next 3 years is taken into account when decisions are taken. Savings that are not delivered now will either be just delaying cuts later down the line or shifting the cuts to other valued services.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. Risk of Judicial Review. Given the proposal is that all libraries remain open, this is considered unlikely.
- 10.2. Risk of Employment Tribunal: Legal and HR support is ensuring that policy is being followed. Unions have all been consulted and one has been engaged with revising the model as consulted.
- 10.3. Risk that making cuts will impact DCC's ability to continue to meet WG's Library Standards (12 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators: [Welsh Libraries report 2020 to 2021 \(gov.wales\)](#)). The service as outlined in the paper has mitigated this risk and will continue to plan to mitigate it further in service design and delivery.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Local authorities are required under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.

11.2. Public library services are funded and either run or commissioned by local government. Library authorities (unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) 'to provide a [comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons](#)' for all those who live, work or study in the area (Section 7).

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Library Cuts: Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 1247

Brief description: A 50% reduction of opening hours and associated reductions amounting to a c30% budget cut for Libraries/One Stop Shops across the county

Date Completed: 30/10/2023 14:38:39 Version: 3

Completed by: Liz Grieve

Responsible Service: Housing and Communities Service

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? Staff; partners (those who deliver services from Library Buildings or who rely on Libraries to support members of the public with access - eg Bus Passes); Library Users, One Stop Shop Users.

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? No

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

2 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 21 / 36

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

While the budget pressures demand a short term response, consideration has been made in developing the proposals to protect Libraries as much as possible - with the hope that when budget allows the service can be expanded again - and to ensure equity of access for Library users by keeping all libraries open, albeit for significantly reduced hours. Some consideration has been put into making use of Library buildings while the library service is closed, so as to maximise use of valuable assets.

Prevention

There will have to be greater access to services through digital means which, by definition, increases independence, although response to the consultation highlights the significant amount of digital exclusion that still exists for all age-groups across the county. Many of the buildings have important historical significance so there will be ongoing costs to managing the buildings: they could be used by DCC or partners during the times that Libraries are closed to the public.

Integration

While Libraries are an important element of DCC's approach to greater individual and community independence and resilience, and they contribute significantly to DCC's commitment to extending the use of the Welsh Language across the County, the budget shortfall is the most urgent demand on the

Library Cuts

Council. Total budget for Libraries is £1.6m, so a 30% cut, while delivering severe service cuts, is a relatively small contributor to the estimated total budget shortfall.

Collaboration

Proposal has been developed with internal partners only at this stage: external partners have been engaged during the consultation process and future discussions will hopefully mitigate against budget cuts by maximising available resources, including funding.

Involvement

Staff, library users and partners have been consulted on the proposals to inform the final decision and implementation. Further engagement will continue to mitigate the impact of budget cuts.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Negative
A resilient Denbighshire	Neutral
A healthier Denbighshire	Negative
A more equal Denbighshire	Negative
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Negative
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Negative
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Neutral

Main conclusions

Library Cuts

DCC's Library Service over the last six years has been developed in order to make an ever greater contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations, so a reduction in service is necessarily going to result in a negative impact on the goals. Mitigation of the negative impacts will need to be considered through engagement with staff, Library users and partners.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important part of the town centre offer; closures will impact on Town Centre useage and associated income.

In addition, redundancies are likely

Further actions required

Explore alternative uses of Library buildings while they are closed to the public

Full use of staff redeployment policy

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Greater use of digital access to services

Fewer journeys

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

No known impacts

Economic development

No known impacts

Quality skills for the long term

No known impacts

Quality jobs for the long term

No known impacts

Childcare

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Longer journeys to open library

Heating/Lighting of buildings not in use

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Libraries are widely recognised as a community asset therefore an important part of community infrastructure.

Economic development

Likely redundancies.

Libraries make an impact to Town Centre spend (£6 per visit), so reduction in physical visits is likely to negatively impact Town Centre vibrancy

Quality skills for the long term

No known impacts

Quality jobs for the long term

Fewer people required to deliver services

Childcare

No known impacts

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

While there are potentially positive and negative impacts they are negligible and probably cancel each other out.

Further actions required

To be discussed during consultation.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

No known impacts

Biodiversity in the built environment

No known impacts

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Less usage of libraries will result in reduced creation of waste.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Possible reduction in energy/fuel consumption if Library buildings are not made available outside Library opening hours.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

No known impacts

Flood risk management

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

No known impacts

Biodiversity in the built environment

No known impacts

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

No known impacts

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

No known impacts

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Libraries are an important place for knowledge and contribute significantly to people's awareness of current issues such as environment and diversity

Flood risk management

No known impacts

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so any reduction in their services will

have a negative impact.

Further actions required

Discuss with partners how access can be maximised during opening hours, or facilitated during hours of closure.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

No known impacts

Access to good quality, healthy food

No known impacts

People's emotional and mental well-being

No known impacts

Access to healthcare

No known impacts

Participation in leisure opportunities

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a source of information and support, partners base themselves there. Libraries are an inclusive place for people to connect and participate in activities, e.g. reading groups, baby and toddler groups etc.

Access to good quality, healthy food

No known impacts

People's emotional and mental well-being

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a source of information and support, partners base themselves there. Libraries are an inclusive place for people to connect and participate in activities, e.g. reading groups, baby and toddler groups etc.

Access to healthcare

Libraries host several health and social care drop-ins and events.

Participation in leisure opportunities

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. There could also be a differential impact, whereby libraries operating at a reduced level in deprived areas disproportionately negatively impact people experiencing exclusion, inequality, socio-economic deprivation.

Further actions required

Seek opportunities to work with partners to mitigate the negative impact

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

No known impacts

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

No known impacts

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

No known impacts

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

Library Cuts

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Further actions required

Consider mitigating actions with partners. Seek to rebuild Library service as soon as budget is available.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

No known impacts

Community participation and resilience

No known impacts

The attractiveness of the area

No known impacts

Connected communities

No known impacts

Rural resilience

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a universally recognised place of refuge: eg Croeso Cynnes/Warm Welcome hubs, access to partner services etc.

Community participation and resilience

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. A reduction in service and services operated by partners from libraries could lead to people participating in community initiatives much less.

The attractiveness of the area

No known impacts

Connected communities

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Rural resilience

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Library Cuts

A reduction in Library opening hours will 'hollow out' the added value of the service provided, including early language development through to Welsh Language reading groups and to dementia-friendly fully bilingual spaces.

Further actions required

Signpost to alternative provision.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

No known impacts

Promoting the Welsh language

No known impacts

Culture and heritage

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. staff in libraries include fluent Welsh speakers. Supportive environments to use or practice Welsh for learners

Promoting the Welsh language

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries regularly host Welsh reading groups, book launches etc. Libraries are a source of information and resources to support the Welsh language.

Culture and heritage

Library Cuts

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

There are small positive and negative impacts which cancel each other out.

Further actions required

Discuss alternatives during consultation.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

No known impacts

Human rights

No known impacts

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

There will remain a Library presence in all 8 towns across the County

Reducing climate change

Reduction in public access to buildings with associated risks of heat loss through open doors

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Library Cuts

No known impacts

Human rights

Libraries an important place to gain knowledge, including of human rights, and therefore a reduced service curtails access

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

Provision will be reduced

Reducing climate change

Empty buildings being kept accessible.

Models of service

Current

	Days	Opening hours
Corwen	3.5	27.5
Llangollen	4.5*	31.5
Rhuddlan	3.5	23
St Asaph	3.5*	22.5
Denbigh	4.5*	34
Ruthin	4.5*	34
Prestatyn	5*	37.5
Rhyl	5.5*	41.5
Total		251.5

*=inc Sat morning

Non contact hours in DE RU PR RL covered with Supervisor time

50% consultation model

	Days	split	Opening hours
Corwen	2	4 x 0.5	12.0
Llangollen	2	4 x 0.5	12.0
Rhuddlan	2	4 x 0.5	12.0
St Asaph	2	4 x 0.5	12.0
Denbigh	3*	2 x 1; 2 x 0.5	19.5
Ruthin	3*	2 x 1; 2 x 0.5	19.5
Prestatyn	3*	2 x 1; 2 x 0.5	19.5
Rhyl	3.5*	2 x 1; 3 x 0.5	22.5
Total			129.0

40% Model

	Days	split	Opening hours
Corwen	2.5	2 x 1, 1 x 0.5	15.0
Llangollen	3*	2 x 1, 2 x 0.5	18.0
Rhuddlan	2.5	2 x 1, 1 x 0.5	15.0
St Asaph	2.5*	2 x 1, 1 x 0.5	15.0
Denbigh	3*	2 x 1, 2 x 0.5	23.0
Ruthin	3*	2 x 1, 2 x 0.5	23.0
Prestatyn	3.5*	3 x 1, 1 x 0.5	24.0
Rhyl	3.5*	2 x 1, 3 x 0.5	26.0
Total			159.0

*=inc Sat morning

6pm closure reinstated in Ruthin and Denbigh 1 day a week
Some of the half days are longer, eg in Rhyl there is a 12-5 and a 10-2

Library Opening Hours Consultation - Results Analysis - Final Report

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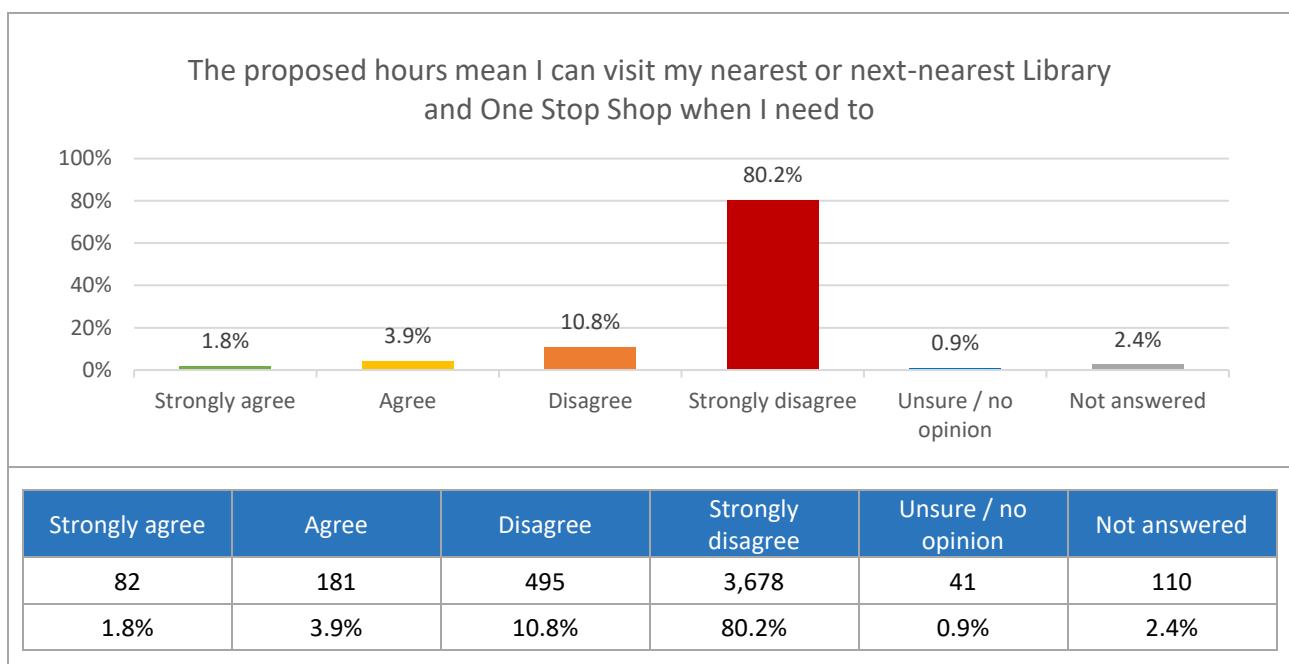
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Consultation responses

The consultation received **4,587** responses.

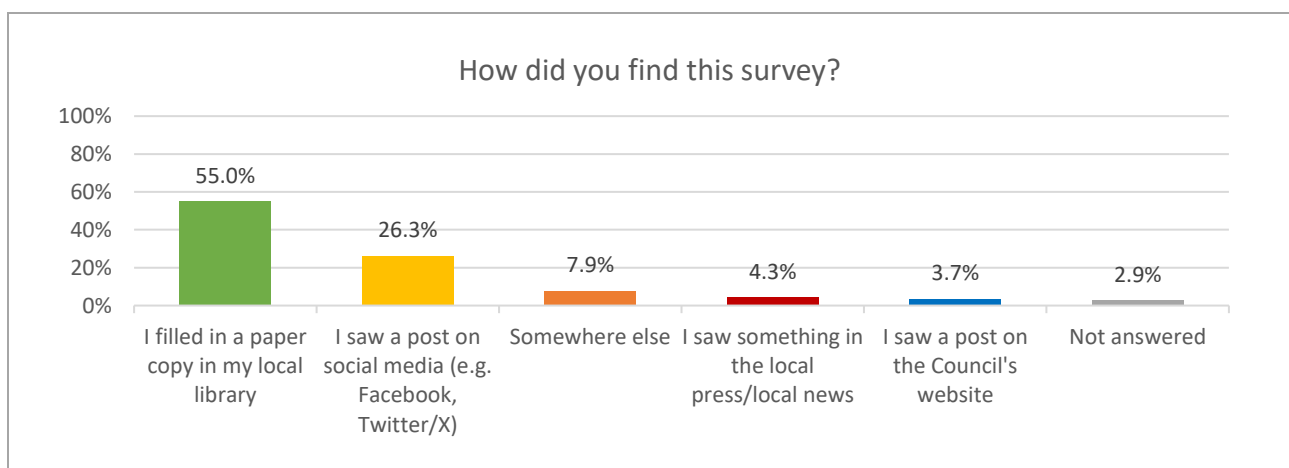
As part of the consultation residents were asked, **to what extent do you agree with the following statement? The proposed hours mean I can visit my nearest or next-nearest Library and One Stop Shop when I need to.**

4,477 residents provided an answer to the question, the results of this can be seen below:



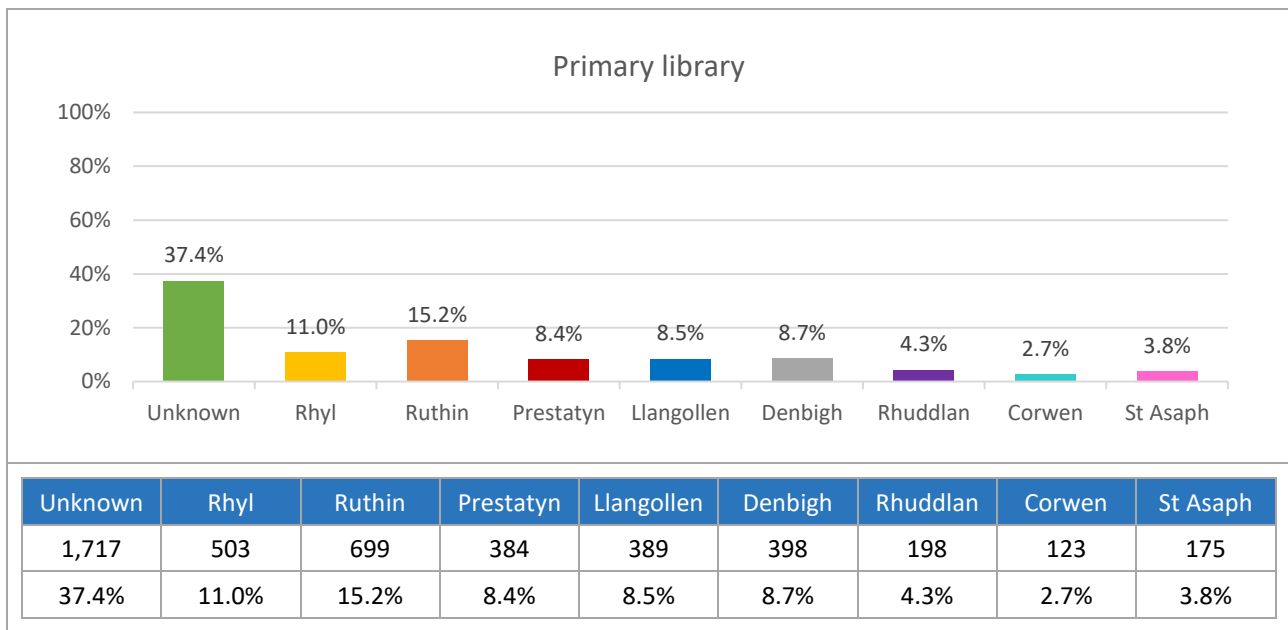
As part of the consultation residents were asked, **How did you find this survey?**

4,453 residents provided an answer to the question, the results of this can be seen below:



As part of the consultation, where residents answered that they filled in a paper copy in their local library, they were then asked, **which library?**

2,522 residents provided an answer to the question, and through analysis of any comments provided we were able to identify another **347**. In total we have been able to identify the primary library for **2,869** of the responses, the results of this can be seen below:



Consultation comments

As part of the consultation residents were asked if they would like to make any comments about the proposed changes to Library opening hours.

3,371 comments were received, **3,157** of these were in English and **214** were in Welsh. These comments have been categorised into whether they were a positive, negative or neutral comment to the proposed changes.

- Positive comments to proposed changes – **56, 1.7%**
- Neutral comments to proposed changes – **97, 2.9%**
- Negative comments to proposed changes – **3,222, 95.6%**

These comments have also been broken down into specific themes to determine how residents feel they will be impacted by the proposed changes. Some comments have been counted more than once when the comment crosses over a number of themes. Some examples of these comments can be seen in *Appendix 3*:

[Impact on library facilities](#)

1,342 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of library facilities. This includes restricting access to:

- Books.
- Computers.
- Internet access.
- Online banking.
- Printing.

[Impact on library activities - Community / Social hub / Chat sessions](#)

850 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of the library as a community space. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities for social interaction.
- Reduction in space for people in the community to meet with others.
- Less opportunities for vulnerable people to use libraries as a safe space.
- Increased chance that people will become isolated.

Lack of non-working hours / after school hours

781 residents said they felt that the proposed changes do not offer enough opening hours after school, after 5pm and on weekends. This includes:

- Wanting more libraries open after 5pm for people who work 9-5 to access libraries.
- Wanting more libraries open after 3pm for school children to visit after school.

General dissatisfaction

There were **528** comments received that did not fit any specific theme which expressed resident's general dissatisfaction to the proposed changes. This includes:

- Feeling that library opening hours should remain the same.
- Stating that proposed hours are not enough.
- Stating that libraries are an essential service.

Cost of living issues

392 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect due the cost of living. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to use libraries as a warm hub in winter.
- Reduction on free activities for children.
- Being unable to afford to travel to an alternative library.
- Less opportunities to use free internet access.
- Being unable to afford computers at home.

Impact on library activities - Education / Training

313 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of the library for education and training purposes. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities for school children to use libraries to do homework.
- Less chances for people to learn to read.
- Fewer opportunities for people to attend computer training courses.

[Impact on one stop facilities - Help & info with Council Services](#)

285 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing help & info with Council Services. This includes restricting access to:

- Help and advice with council tax queries.
- Help and advice with accessing bus passes.
- Help and advice with refuse queries.

[Transport issues getting to other libraries](#)

280 residents stated they will have issues getting to alternative libraries when their local library is closed. This includes:

- Having too far to travel to an alternative library.
- Being unable to afford to travel to an alternative library.
- Don't drive so difficult to travel to an alternative library.

[Impact on library activities - Bookstart Rhyme Time / Children's groups](#)

247 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on children's groups at libraries. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to attend Bookstart sessions.
- Fewer opportunities to attend craft sessions.
- Less chances for children to participate in reading challenges.

[Impact on the vulnerable](#)

220 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative impact on the most vulnerable people in our communities. This includes:

- Restricting access to library facilities for vulnerable people.
- Fewer opportunities for vulnerable people to use libraries as a safe space.

[Suggested ideas for proposed model](#)

193 residents suggested ideas for the proposed changes. This includes:

- Wanting different days/opening hours to the proposed changes.

Some examples of these comments can be seen in *Appendix 4*.

[Suggested ideas for alternative model / cost saving](#)

157 residents suggested ideas for an alternative to the proposed changes. This includes:

- Close some council offices.
- Reduce high salaries in the Council.
- Use volunteers to help staff in libraries.
- Rent out library space.

Some examples of these comments can be seen in Appendix 5.

[Impact on library activities - Health & Wellbeing](#)

149 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on people's health & wellbeing. This includes:

- Negative effects to people's mental health.
- Increased chance that people will become isolated.
- Fewer opportunities to attend health and wellbeing sessions e.g. Talking point.

[Impact on staff](#)

121 residents stated that the proposed changes will have an impact on libraries staff. This includes:

- Loss of jobs for library staff.
- Higher workloads for library staff.
- Less available time for library staff to assist.

[Impact on library activities - Reading groups](#)

61 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on adult reading groups at libraries. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to attend book clubs.
- Fewer opportunities to attend adult reading groups.

[Impact on one stop facilities - Payment Services](#)

51 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing Payment Services. This includes:

- Restricting access for paying council tax.
- Restricting access for paying bills.

[Impact on library activities - Welsh language](#)

53 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the Welsh language. This includes:

- Limiting access to Welsh language books.
- Will limit opportunities to converse in Welsh.
- Fewer opportunities to attend Welsh language reading groups.

[Concern that libraries will close completely](#)

37 residents stated they are concerned that the proposed changes will eventually lead to the full closure of libraries.

[Impact on library activities - Work space](#)

26 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on being able to have a quiet work space away from home.

[Impact on library activities - School sessions](#)

19 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on school sessions at libraries.

[Impact on one stop facilities - Blue badge application service](#)

17 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing the Blue badge application service.

[Sustainability](#)

9 residents stated that the proposed changes are not sustainable.

Appendix 1: Consultation responses area split

The proposed hours mean I can visit my nearest or next-nearest Library and One Stop Shop when I need to	Total	Corwen	Denbigh	Llangollen	Prestatyn	Rhuddlan	Rhyl	Ruthin	St Asaph	Unknown
Strongly agree	82	1	4	4	7	1	13	8	3	41
Agree	181	5	13	4	9	1	12	13	2	122
Disagree	495	9	35	25	20	7	67	52	11	268
Strongly disagree	3,678	107	343	349	345	189	408	612	159	1,166
Unsure / no opinion	41	1	1	4	0	0	1	7	0	27
Not answered	110	0	2	3	3	0	2	7	0	93

Appendix 2: Consultation comments area split

Comments Themes	Total	Corwen	Denbigh	Llangollen	Prestatyn	Rhuddlan	Rhyl	Ruthin	St Asaph	Unknown
Impact on library facilities	1,342	48	116	155	179	68	157	151	44	424
Impact on library activities - Community / Social hub / Chat sessions	850	23	93	64	78	57	85	91	35	324
Lack of non working hours / after school hours	781	40	48	150	29	26	68	43	45	332
General dissatisfaction	528	15	58	39	55	30	57	74	13	186
Cost of living issues e.g. heating etc.	392	16	33	40	24	16	26	45	8	184
Impact on library activities - Education / Training	313	3	35	30	17	11	49	38	8	122
Impact on one stop facilities - Help & info about Council Services	285	29	25	50	22	11	35	9	8	96
Transport issues getting to other libraries	280	12	21	41	24	18	24	31	10	99
Impact on library activities - Bookstart Rhyme Time / Childrens groups	247	0	29	13	28	13	20	47	20	77
Impact on vulnerable	220	12	23	8	14	8	15	24	6	110
Suggested ideas for proposed model	193	7	18	27	18	6	17	11	11	78
Suggested ideas for alternative model	157	5	9	10	9	3	13	22	2	84
Impact on library activities - Health & Wellbeing	149	1	19	9	19	10	21	14	4	52
Impact on staff	121	8	11	4	12	6	16	12	4	48
Impact on library activities - Reading groups	61	1	10	4	9	1	13	7	1	15
Impact on library activities - Welsh language	53	1	12	12	1	2	2	7	0	16
Impact on one stop facilities - Payment Services	51	3	2	5	8	2	5	1	1	24
Concern that libraries will close completely	37	2	4	3	1	0	2	9	0	16
Impact on library activities - Work space	26	0	6	2	2	0	3	5	0	8
Impact on library activities - School sessions	19	1	1	3	1	0	2	3	0	8
Impact on one stop facilities - Blue badge application service	17	0	2	0	2	1	6	0	0	6
Sustainability	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	4

Appendix 3: Consultation comments examples

In agreement with proposed changes

- *“I understand the need to reduce costs and support the reduction in opening hours as long as the excellent and important library service remains.”*
- *“Still a waste of resources. People have plenty of money for Sky, social media etc., why would they need a Library.”*
- *“I think it is perfectly reasonable. The fact is that many access literatures and the other services online. Seems reasonable to me that face to face and physical location later should be part of the choice but also a reflection that it doesn’t need to be there all the time and the shorter hours will I presume save money.”*
- *“We need to be realistic on spend and although the library is a key community establishment, there are other areas where money saved from reduced opening times could be put to more effective use.”*
- *“I came to the survey all guns blazing ready to say “NO” but actually the proposal makes a lot of sense and while I don’t want any cutbacks on what I see as an essential community resource the opening times for my library are still very fair.”*

Impact on library facilities

- *“I work as a Reception teacher teaching children to read. Promoting and encouraging young children to become confident and enthusiastic readers is such a priority in primary schools. I find it really disappointing that local councils are choosing to save money by reducing library opening hours. Libraries help less fortunate families to access books to support their child to read. Furthermore, library reading sessions can raise the significance of teaching children to read amongst people in the community. The ability to read well is a ticket to helping youth navigate their way successfully through a very competitive world. Why make funding cuts that are at the detriment to the younger generation? Keep the libraries open full time!”*
- *“I use the computers and take out books regularly often in the afternoons so these times will not work for me.”*

- *“Our local library provides a much needed service especially for those who don’t have access to a computer.”*
- *“Libraries bridge the digital divide by providing free internet access and computer facilities.”*
- *“Due to disability and work for charity it is not always possible to fit with reduced hours plus I rely on the library for audiobooks and computers.”*
- *“I am looking for work and rely on the library for internet access. Without it I would be lost as I cannot afford it at home.”*
- *“Being a university student myself, and having to travel to Lincoln for uni once a month I depend on my local library for printing, book services and a study space.”*
- *“I often use the printing facilities as I don’t have access at home. It would be a huge loss and shame to do this!”*

Impact on library activities - Community / Social hub / Chat sessions

- *“The library in Prestatyn is a vital resource for our community and needs to be open as much as possible.”*
- *“This would limit schemes such as drop in sessions and helping our older population to socialise which has helped them in the cost of living crisis.”*
- *“Once again, libraries are the soft target for Council cuts. Rural communities like Denbighshire need these vital points of social connection more than anywhere else. For the mental health of the residents and the betterment of the educational levels and social inclusion of all the communities in the County, please try not to reduce any of the opening hours.”*
- *“I currently use the library as a childminder with my minded children and meet up with a network of other childminders. This is vitally important as it allows the children to socialise in a safe space while childminders can discuss issues or share ideas/problems.”*
- *“Cutting opening hours will mean a huge cut in social ability for everyone but especially children and elderly.”*

- *“Terrible news, the libraries are community hubs with a lot of social activities for all ages. They provide safe space for a lot of people who have nowhere else to go or to access the help they need when they need it.”*
- *“Prestatyn library is a hub of the community, as a business owner in Prestatyn many of my customers regularly visit the library and call it a safe space, somewhere warm and even somewhere they can talk to someone. This maybe the only conversation they have in a day and reducing hours will only isolate the community.”*
- *“It's incredible how crucial libraries are as safe spaces for vulnerable people. I've been in this library for two hours today and have observed elderly people, people with additional needs, young children and others all utilize this space. Please don't take this safe space away.”*

Lack of non-working hours / after school hours

- *“As a teacher in a local school to Corwen, I am outraged by the new proposed hours. My class visited Corwen library many times in the last year, and even chose to have our Christmas trip to the library, where they offered hot chocolate and a lovely story experience. Changing the hours of our County's libraries and one stop shop will have a profound impact on future generations, and will add to the decline in the number of people who do not appreciate books and literacy. Those children who love attending the library often cannot afford a huge number of books that is available to them at the moment, (with only one evening available to visit with Corwen's new proposed hours) particularly in today's struggling times. Personally, I believe the less hours you offer, the less people will learn to rely on libraries and one stop shops until they are forced to find other options and stop using it completely - resulting in a complete close in the future. Please rethink your decision!!”*
- *“I currently take my son to the library (St Asaph) several times a week (including Saturday) to assist him with his school work. No Saturday opening will make this much harder.”*

- *“The suggested hours are reflective of people that work (albeit the one offer on a Saturday until 12:30). There is no late evening option. To also close at 5pm gives limited time to use the library. Very poor offering. I for one would not be able to make use of this. The library should be accessible to all.”*
- *“As a family, where both parents work full time, these do not provide any access after 5pm. Our children (as do many other families) have activities Saturday mornings. This will eliminate us from accessing any library services.”*
- *“The library is vital to Llangollen and to reduce the hours in this way makes it in usable to most kids most of the time. I appreciate that the elderly are likely to have libraries more but the hours preclude working people and children.”*
- *“St Asaph library not being open on a weekend is no good for working people. It is already hard enough to get there with it closing at lunchtime and often Saturday mornings are the only time I can make it. These new opening hours mean I will probably stop using the library.”*
- *“As someone who works full time Monday to Friday I will not be able to bring my children to the Library, which I feel is an important activity.”*

Cost of living issues

- *“I have been looking forward to the warm hub over the next few months, with the cost of living I will be even colder this winter without it.”*
- *“These libraries are warm hubs for some of our most vulnerable people during winter. Plenty don't want to advertise they are in need and use facilities without announcing they need somewhere warm to stay. This is a travesty in a cost of living crisis.”*
- *“Many people depend so much on the library, we've gone from making it a warm hub to closing them down.”*
- *“Corwen does not have a warm hub and the library fills that gap. It would be devastating to many.”*
- *“The new proposed hours mean that I would only be able once a week with my school age children. Currently we visit the library after school on a Monday and at least one other afternoon and not to have this available will be devastating. It's one*

of the only free activities for children in the area and my girls have thrived on choosing books which has helped their reading confidence immeasurably.”

- *“These cuts will impact on the poorest in the community who are unable to travel due to financial constraints. The Libraries are also used to provide others services the council provide and these will be affected as well. The cutting of Library hours / services should be the utter last resort. They play a major part in the community in so many different ways and provide a warm safe space full of free educational facilities.”*
- *“With the financial crisis going on it would really be a shame for children to have no access to our library. No free books no access to computers for homework etc. Makes me very sad!!”*
- *“I can't travel anywhere other than Rhyl Library. I often come here during winter to keep warm as the cost of living costs have increased and I can't afford to keep my heating on all day. There are lots of other people using this library who are in the same situation.”*
- *“Leave them alone. As the cost of living crisis continues to hit, libraries should be promoted and you should be investing in them not cutting back.”*
- *“I work full time and both of my nearest libraries would be closed on Saturdays. I don't want to have to travel further, especially with the new restrictions and cost of living.”*

[Impact on library activities - Education / Training](#)

- *“I am 10 years old. I use my library a lot, by halving the hours, I will not be able to learn as much and it will be detrimental to my education and learning.”*
- *“I use library a lot especially printing documents, studying some of my homework and sending different forms and formal business letters. I can't afford to lose library because I used it a lot.”*
- *“Leave our libraries alone. We need these. They are a vital service to our communities. School children being able to pop in and use this service with homework. They cannot pick and choose around closures.”*

- *“Libraries should not see a reduction in opening hours- a detrimental effect on learning, accessing resources. Morally incorrect.”*
- *“I think it’s disgusting that the Welsh government are proposing reducing the library hours. The library is the life blood of our community. Everyone uses the library from the silver surfers learning essential IT skills down through the ages to all the events the library put on for children.”*
- *“I attend classes at Prestatyn and Rhyl. My Prestatyn Tuesday class starts at 9.30 if the proposed plan goes ahead, I will miss out on my learning. I also attend a class in Rhyl on Thursday so I will miss out completely as you propose to close Rhyl on Thursdays. How is this good for the community?”*
- *“I attend a computer course on a Wed afternoon when I finish work which fits my time. There are no computer courses at night time for people who work.”*
- *“This would limit my access to the adult learning I attend and I would be very sad about it. I enjoy my courses and meeting the people in my groups. It would have a big impact on my life”*

[Impact on one stop facilities - Help & info with Council Services](#)

- *“As Russell House reception was closed during Covid 19 the library is used for provisions such as blue badges, council tax queries which is vital for customers of Denbighshire County Council.”*
- *“Don't go reducing library hours, Libraries are an essential part of the community and offer a safe a secure place for young and old alike, how else will I be able to sort my bins, my council tax and borrow the most amazing books in one space. Please rethink this.”*
- *“How will the Council Tax department react if a pensioner cannot pay Council tax due to bad weather on the days the pay point is open.”*
- *“Libraries are essential access points for DCC - For Residents to have the freedom and access to them should be a priority I produce the DCC bus passes, and the library and staff are instrumental in delivering these services. These passes are given to the elderly and disabled meaning they often need help and a human touch to be able to successfully apply.*

They are also restricted in mobility and time - the proposed changes will only have a negative effect on these customers.”

- *“As a pensioner I am concerned where I will be able to access help with many forms like my blue badge and bus pass.”*

Transport issues getting to other libraries

- *“There are so many people who use the library services that would find it difficult to access other libraries as they don't own a car, are disabled or cannot afford to travel by bus or train.”*
- *“I don't drive. My library is a lifeline.”*
- *“The reduced opening hours significantly impact my elderly mother who relies on this library for interaction in her daily life. She cannot travel to other libraries in the area. Please reconsider these reduced hours.”*
- *I use Ruthin library at least twice a week with my daughter. 1st on a Monday morning where we attend the Bookstart session and again on a Thursday where we go and read and choose new book. If you were to close 50% of the times currently open, I wouldn't be able to go to the library because of work commitments and wouldn't travel to Denbigh to visit the library because of cost of fuel/public transport and then also paying for parking.”*
- *“Transport in the rural areas makes it difficult to get to nearest town when library is shut in home town.”*
- *“I don't drive so it will be harder for me to choose an open library. Also, I'm disabled and would find public transport also difficult.”*
- *“CORWEN needs more opening hours not reduced hours. We are 10 miles away from the nearest towns and public transport is not regular.”*

Impact on library activities - Bookstart Rhyme Time / Children's groups

- *“The changes in these hours will stop fundamental groups, sessions and access for our community. I for one want my child to continue attending the bookstart sessions and be brought up within a culture that there is a local library that we can attend to read.”*

- *“Why propose to close St. Asaph Library on a Wednesday when you know fully well that is when the library hosts the very well attended Bookstart sessions for babies and toddlers. These sessions are vital for the learning and development of our little ones and are much loved. Yet more opportunities being taken away from our youngsters.”*
- *“Myself and baby enjoy Bookstart so that will affect the time of that, or even be cancelled altogether if it can't be facilitated.”*
- *“My children will be unable to attend the library due to the reduction in hours. This also means they will not be able to attend Bookstart which will impact my son's socialisation with others.”*
- *“Myself and my 3 month old daughter attend the library at least 3 times a week to attend enriching song and yoga classes and to take out books to read at home. Whenever we attend the library always has people using its facilities - their craft afternoons, card trading for children, using the computers and people using the library for general leisure. All of the classes we attend are full and are currently held during times that the proposed closures will affect. It would be a huge loss to many if the opening times shorten!”*
- *“As a mother of young children, we love and use the library frequently - each year we participate in the summer reading challenge - a great initiative encouraging children to read and use the library. What is the point in doing this if you only ever planned to reduce hours at the libraries? What message is this sending? The rhyme time on a Monday morning is vital part of most Ruthin mums weekly routine- reading, socialising and getting out of the house! What would happen to this if the library is closed on a Monday?”*

Impact on the vulnerable

- *“As a Working Denbighshire employee this will have a significant impact on the participants that we work with as we have specified times whereby participants can access the library. Our participants often have complex needs and the times given will have a significant impact on accessing the library.”*

- *“I work for DCC children's services. Sometimes we have families who can't access online meetings at home (they may not have IT at home or the ability to access IT, or it may not be safe for them to do so because of domestic abuse), so our families have been able to rely on our libraries to access a quiet and confidential space to join meetings. However, the reduced hours proposed are going to limit some families' ability to take a full part in their child's care plan because there will inevitably be times when professionals cannot limit their own availability to fit around the opening and closing times of our libraries. I do think the reduction in opening hours could be to the detriment of our residents.”*
- *“I work for the Integrated Autism Service, we hold 'drop in sessions' in Denbigh, Corwen and Rhuthun Libraries on a monthly basis. These have allowed some of our clients and potential clients to see us and find out about our service. The libraries are always busy when i am in there. It is disappointing when the axe falls on services.”*
- *“The detrimental impact this will have on the vulnerable people in our society is huge.”*
- *“They are a meeting place for the Lonely and a life line for many vulnerable groups in our county. Keep opening times as I'd do not cut the opening times.”*
- *“Centralising or moving services for people who are already vulnerable and face challenges might save money - but at a great cost to the wellbeing of our communities.”*

Impact on library activities - Health & Wellbeing

- *“We Wrexham County Borough Council, Children's Social Care - Social Services. We have been using the Rhyl Library as a venue to facilitate Supervised Contacts between parents and children. It is an excellent venue to provide a safe and controlled environment to provide stability and regular contacts between parents and their children. These contacts can be for a duration of 12 months to 2 years depending on the case. Unfortunately, there is no other venue that we can use in the Rhyl area. We have been using Rhyl Library since 2021 - present. 4 days a week Times can vary from am to pm so having the flexibility of having the times available is crucial. As some of our clients have to travel a fair distance. All staff at Rhyl library are also a big part for our children as familiarity is paramount. The regular payments paid, I would hope would be beneficial in taking into account the financial income you receive. The new days and times would have a major impact on being able to continue.”*
- *“With my current role we use the small community room to run events which are free to the residents to help with their wellbeing. This would also be affected!”*
- *“Rhyl is the main hub for many people, providing access for deaf people to use a variety of services. People will become isolated without this service.”*
- *“The proposed hours restrict access to the facility. I often attend the Silent Book Club, by closing I would not be able to do so. This impacts my mental health + wellbeing.”*
- *“With these new opening hours there will no longer be a reading group as I live alone the library is an important part of my mental health.”*

Impact on staff

- *“What about the poor Staff!!!!”*
- *“The Staff will be overworked in such few hours and will no doubt end up leaving.”*
- *“Jobs will be lost!! And many more issues will be affected by reducing library hours!!”*
- *“Job losses or reduction in hours for staff is just not fair in the current financial climate.”*

Impact on library activities - Reading groups

- *“Reduced days mean that the library is likely to be busier on the days it is open. Currently it is a peaceful haven and I would imagine that will change if it’s open on a reduced number of days. Groups will be less likely to run from libraries due to reduced opening times allowing less groups to frequent the library. These groups are an absolute lifeline for some.”*
- *“This will restrict my opportunity to other facilities i.e. One Stop Shop, book club, warm place. This will also affect my mental health & wellbeing, if I am unable to visit the book club.”*
- *“Will miss the reading group in Rhyl as it is my only social contact.”*
- *“We would miss our Thursday Book Club.”*

Impact on library activities - Welsh language

- *“The times proposed mean I will not be able to take my children to choose books after school. It is important to us that our children can access Welsh books easily to enhance their Welsh education.”*
- *“As a teacher and parent of young children living in Llangollen these hours will cut this service off from me entirely. I run clubs after school on Friday and cannot get home before 5pm. The Saturday morning time is really key for me as it means I can bring my children to the library. We either need one more day with later hours (like the Friday) or we need to Saturday morning slot. My children attend Welsh medium school and as I do not speak Welsh well the library is also essential to us as a place where the children can get additional Welsh reading books without us having to buy a large number of age appropriate books for each reading stage.”*
- *“I work full time. I usually visit the library after work so after 5pm or on a Saturday. The proposed changes mean that I will be unable to go at all. They are fabulous at helping me practice my Welsh and provide appropriate reading materials for me. The proposed changes will mean I will lose it all.”*

- *“I am an expectant mother who will depend on the socialisation that Denbigh library can offer both me and my baby. My ability to speak Welsh is limited as is my partners and we would like to promote the language with our son. We will struggle to do so if the cuts go ahead.”*
- *“The new hours proposed are ridiculous. We use our library regularly and with the change of times we will lose our Welsh groups which ARE extremely important to myself and my kids.”*

Appendix 4: Suggested ideas for proposed model

Primary library – Corwen

- *“If reducing hours at least have a weekend option available at all sites.”*
- *“Corwen open on Sat mornings.”*
- *“Saturday morning is a very busy time in Corwen and would facilitate all ages using the library so maybe open then at the expense of other times during the week.”*
- *“I'd advise one more afternoon in Corwen (instead of the morning). The current proposal limits schoolkids to only Thursday afternoons. Giving parents with school children a couple of options would be helpful.”*
- *“It would be good to open 9am one morning when the shops open.”*
- *“Why not just open 2-3 complete days a week!! bitty hours are no good to anyone.”*
- *“Another afternoon time would help access.”*

Primary library – Denbigh

- *“Do feel Denbigh library needs to be open Mon, Weds, Fri and Sat please. 10- 1 pm or 2- 5pm, in order for people to access their services.”*
- *“I cannot believe closing half day Wednesday for Denbigh. It's "market" day!! Why not open 10-4 or 9-1 on a Thursday - that was always Denbigh half day. Then 10-1 on a Saturday. Daily access plus a weekend for workers.”*
- *“Instead of closing 2 days e.g. in Denbigh just close for 1 day as proposal suggests for Rhyl.”*
- *“Denbigh Library should be open Monday to Friday, in order that all ages of the residents (including school age) can take advantage of the opportunities available via our Library service.”*
- *“Could you not keep them open afternoons/evenings instead? Il sure a 9am start is not necessary in the week.”*
- *“If hours are reduced you may wish to reconsider opening times over school holidays and perhaps extend hours over these periods.”*

- *“Re: Denbigh Library opening hours & proposed changes, it surely would be better to keep Monday, Wednesday and Friday the same - opening from 10-5pm. I hope that no librarians are losing their jobs over this plan.”*
- *“Longer hours on a Saturday preferred.”*
- *“Consideration should be given to more evening hours and weekends, when workers can visit outside of normal working hours (9-5).”*
- *“Denbigh Library should be open on Thursdays and Tuesdays.”*
- *“One stop shop needs to be available every day * Tuesday is a busy day at the library so to close Denbigh branch on that day is wrong. Wednesday is a market day in Denbigh, so the library needs to be open.”*
- *“Maybe you could open Mon, Tues, Wed as there are more activities at Denbigh Library on these days.”*
- *“DENBIGH/ ALL LIBRARIES SHOULD BE OPEN MONDAY TO SATURDAY.”*
- *“If anything, trial evening hours.”*
- *“They should be open for some at the evening till 7pm sometimes, for those people working.”*
- *“Denbigh Library should also be open on a Thursday.”*

Primary library – Llangollen

- *“Due to school commitments we are unable to use the library on a Thursday/Friday after school meaning we wouldn't have any access to the library at all! Cut Rhyl's hours if u want to save money leave Llan alone.”*
- *“As a teacher and parent of young children living in Llangollen these hours will cut this service off from me entirely. I run clubs after school on Friday and cannot get home before 5pm. The Saturday morning time is really key for me as it means I can bring my children to the library. We either need one more day with later hours (like the Friday) or we need to Saturday morning slot.”*
- *“I am teacher and therefore don't get home before 5pm Monday to Friday. Late night opening and weekend would be more beneficial for most people.”*
- *“I really think a Saturday morning is essential to meet the need of this community.”*

- *“If half days are preferred, I'd prefer the afternoon, because at least school age children can visit during the afternoon. Ideally the library would be open during the afternoons and evenings, and be open all day on Saturday.”*
- *“I need Llangollen Library open Saturdays for many reasons. It would be good if it opened more hours and on Sundays.”*
- *“I understand the need to reduce hours in total but ask that it is considered to open Llangollen library on a Saturday instead of one of the week days - Saturdays are the only day when working families can access libraries.”*
- *“I feel a Saturday or a late evening is needed.”*
- *“Not opening Llangollen library on a Saturday is a mistake and should not be done.”*
- *“I respectfully request that your review retain at least one full day and Saturday mornings for Llangollen & Corwen.”*
- *“At least consider an evening/ Saturday opening plenty!”*
- *“I understand the rationale for the cuts, but I feel Saturday opening hours are really important for the community and would urge you to prioritise that day over others.”*
- *“It would be very disappointing if the library would not be open on a Saturday and I would feel like children are being let down by Denbighshire County council!”*
- *“It seems to me that the idea to have Saturday access at both Ruthin and Denbigh at the expense of Llangollen is very unfair. I'd also prefer to see an equal split of an am/pm sessions across the week at Llangollen.”*
- *“I suggest the hours to be the same as Prestatyn or Rhyl.”*
- *“Llangollen library should be open on the weekend to encourage children and 9-5 workers to use it and benefit from the service.”*
- *“Very Sad Maybe one more afternoon.”*
- *“I think the town of Llangollen would be better served with some full days - (9-5) and also a late opening to 7 (perhaps 2-7pm) and a half day on Saturday (as now).”*
- *“Saturday opening essential.”*
- *“What a pity you have opted for a Saturday closure when that is the time everyone needs access.”*

- *“Need Saturday access in Llangollen for families.”*
- *“Please consider a Saturday opening or all day Friday.”*
- *“Llangollen library needs access Saturdays.”*
- *“I would suggest as a minimum, that you at least restore Saturday morning opening to Llangollen.”*

Primary library – Prestatyn

- *“I cannot believe that Prestatyn library is planned to be closed 2 days per week when Rhyl is only planned on 1 day per week. Surely this should be done on footfall, issues etc. Prestatyn library is far busier and friendlier.”*
- *“Why don’t libraries have one evening a week when they stay open later enabling people who work to use the library. Being open on a Saturday would encourage families to visit the library encouraging a love of books with their children.”*
- *“More practically, I would say that it might be worth considering more hours on a weekend, rather than on week days, so that people working standard hours have more opportunities to visit the library. Thank you.”*
- *“Why is it that Prestatyn library lose 2 day opening but Rhyl only lose 1. Why close Friday some people can't get into town in the mornings so no library from Thursday to Monday in Prestatyn.”*
- *“The libraries are needed to be open every day.”*
- *“Prestatyn library needs to remain open as it is and on Fridays especially.”*
- *“It would help if Rhyl and Prestatyn had been different days.”*
- *“You cannot close Prestatyn library on a Friday.”*
- *“There isn't enough afternoons open.”*
- *“If you insist on reducing library hours then at least give us half a day everyday rather than open 2 full days and close for 2 full days and please keep the opening time at 9:30.”*
- *“Cut the Saturday out. We manage banking days Monday to Friday.”*

- *“It would be preferable that some days especially Saturday that the library would be open earlier from 9am, as myself and my family would only be able to attend on a Saturday but have conflicts with the opening times due to prior commitments at 10.50-11.20 which doesn’t leave much time for browsing the library.”*
- *“I would like Prestatyn to open at 9am.”*
- *“Friday is not the right day to be closed all day. It is just a busy shopping day for most people.”*
- *“Not on Friday - shopping day!”*
- *“I like the late Mondays in Prestatyn Library but no provision for this.”*

Primary library – Rhuddlan

- *“Would you consider opening slightly later until 6pm on the late days if the days were reduced?”*
- *“These proposals do not meet the needs of our community. I would rather the library was open for longer hours, such as on a Saturday.”*
- *“The proposal would be better having two full days rather than a few hours here or there. This is my idea for Rhuddlan which is the most convenient Library for me.”*
- *“Do not feel that being open for only 12 hours per week is offering meaningful service to the residents of Rhuddlan. I also find it extremely puzzling as to why you have never been open on a Saturday morning.”*
- *“Think you could at least have one library in each area open for a full day once a week.”*

Primary library – Rhyl

- *“Close on the Saturday, as two and half hours is a waste of time, it'll save money. Completely beside these new hours.”*
- *“Absolutely for this reduction in hours, how about getting rid of the Saturdays altogether, I've walked passed the library in Rhyl in the mornings and the lights are on early but no staff, surely that's a waste of council income.”*
- *“Maybe Mon 10-5, Tue 10-3, Wed 10-3, Thur 10-1, Fri 10-5, Sat ---- would be better (Rhyl hours).”*

- *“I think Rhyl library should be open for longer on a Saturday for the children, when not in school.”*
- *“Saturday should be open all day. Rather a weekday close early.”*
- *“Rhyl and Prestatyn should close all day on the Saturday, Friday 9.30-5 for the art on Friday.”*
- *“If you open on Thursdays more people would be susceptible to these proposals.”*
- *“May I suggest if you have to cut the hours maybe opening & closing 30 minutes later & earlier would not have such a devastating impact on the community.”*
- *“Bad idea. 1pm is far too early to close the library.”*
- *“While I have no objection to the library being closed for the whole of one day, I think it should be open all day the rest of the week, except Saturday, maybe until 2, for families with children.”*
- *“The library in Rhyl needs to be open Monday 10-5, Tuesday 10-5, Wednesday 10-5, Thursday 10-5, Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-12:30. Rhyl needs this library.”*
- *“Would prefer more afternoon opening in Rhyl.”*
- *“Why not have one late opening until 7pm or so? This would enable many more to use the facility. I would recommend opening until at least 2pm on Saturday.”*
- *“We need longer at weekends, cutting times is ridiculous.”*
- *“Should be open on Thursday.”*
- *“So, the current 6pm closing on a Monday for Rhyl is really handy because I don't finish work until 5 so I'd prefer a later start to keep it open later. Also the 9:30am current open time on a Saturday morning is much more suitable to get parking especially in the summer months with children so I wouldn't want to lose that.”*

Primary library – Ruthin

- *“I would plead that the library remains open on a Monday as most things are closed elsewhere in the town.”*
- *“Opening from 9 am -12.30 on Saturdays would be more accessible for parents with children who also in town doing other things such as swimming.”*

- *“Ruthin Mon - 9.30-5.00 Tues - 9.30-7.30 Thurs - 9.30-7.30 Fri - 9.30-5 Sat - 9.30-12.30.”*
- *“I would like it to be open when shops are open, so I am likely to get all jobs done at once.”*
- *“Parents would use it at 9am after dropping children off at school.”*
- *“Extend hours on Wednesdays.”*
- *“I would prefer to have Ruthin Library open on a Monday rather than a Saturday.”*
- *“Open for full days reduce days open per week.”*
- *“Please do not choose Monday in Ruthin as everywhere else is closed especially in the winter.”*
- *“I’m a college student in Ruthin and use the library regularly. If you’d like to reduce the hours please consider opening later and closing later. Such as open till 6-7pm. This would benefit a lot of students in various institutions across Denbighshire.”*

Primary library – St Asaph

- *“Would love to see St Asaph library open to 7pm one night a week.”*
- *“Wednesday would be ideal to be opened and Saturdays because children can come with parents.”*
- *“I think the hours of opening of need to be reduced should be of a balance that means most can still access such as some mornings, some afternoons and weekend access.”*
- *“Think there should be more hours on Saturday, especially for children.”*
- *“We need more hours , especially we need in morning hours on Friday, because we have a computer class at this time at the library.”*
- *“The Library should remain open on a Saturday morning.”*
- *“Disagree with Saturday Closure for St Asaph.”*
- *“Alternative Saturdays for school children who live outside of St Asaph - e.g. Bodelwyddan.”*

- *“Can I suggest that any changes should keep to the days ST Asaph Library is open. Ideally as many hours as possible on those days i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday.”*
- *“I live in St Asaph, where the proposed reduction in hours would mean that anyone who would like to use the facilities but works a standard 9-5 job would be unable to. Children would also struggle if they wanted to expand their reading. Opening on a Saturday would allow locals to make use of the service in these circumstances.”*

Appendix 5: Suggested ideas for alternative model / cost saving

- *"I would like to see Denbighshire explore the use of models similar to that at the StoreyHouse in Chester, where the library is integrated into a slick cafe/bar experience - this sort of model could invite local social enterprises to run such a venture to create not only a sustainable in."*
- *"Totally disgusting decision. It's a pity the big wigs don't take a cut in their ridiculously high salaries if they want to save money."*
- *"I suspect there are better ways to make savings - cutting back on the fact of managers and limiting the excessive pension contributions made to all local government and civil service pensions would be a good start."*
- *"Denbighshire provide a venue for all services to utilise to meet the people they support which could result in cost savings where rooms are currently hired in external venues. The libraries could also be used by staff should the council be forced to make office closures as they have the infrastructure."*
- *"I appreciate that budgets are tight but I'm sure there other ways to cut costs. One such thing might be the ridiculous new recycling scheme being introduced at huge expense that nobody wants."*
- *"Reduce council office space in county hall etc and offer offices to council staff in libraries to keep them open!"*
- *"Could a mix of employees alongside volunteers increase opening hours?"*
- *"Get the Senedd to allocate more cash for essential services rather than wasting money on things not in the public interest."*
- *"How about a voluntary levy for those who can afford it?"*
- *"Perhaps budget cuts could be made by not sending duplicate information to tenants in a language not required i.e. I am a tenant and receive reams of paper in English and Welsh when i only speak English. It may be regulations but it's also a waste."*

- *"Another potential would be a mobile library which could serve the whole county and attend more than one location a day. Perhaps there are also other ways the library buildings can offer combined use to make them more cost effective?"*
- *"If the council has budget pressures, you can think about charging penalty for overdue books (that also makes people more responsible in returning their books), or charge a small fee for membership (we will be happy to pay an annual small fee). And the library can also open a small cafe/coffee shop so you can get profits from selling coffee, cakes, pastry, etc. (We would love to sit down and have some snacks at the library sometimes)."*
- *"The library could look to capitalise on this by offering a self service drink option in the foyer with seating or pay as you go desk space for remote workers. If it works for the goal it should be used to support the library."*
- *"The council should look into renting the rooms in the library to groups for a fee."*
- *"The Council should try to keep the existing hours and encourage the use of volunteers to assist staff. other local authorities encourage "Friends" groups e.g. Friends of Denbigh Library. Get the community involved more in the running of libraries. Alternatively look at savings by consolidating the library into other buildings."*
- *"Perhaps investing in increasing engagement but maintaining locations and opening hours will bring savings in the form of a scale of economy?"*
- *"Maybe think about all the unnecessary managers Denbighshire has, I know of three departments that has at least 8 managers in it, maybe have a look at the Chief Executive and below, I know of a few hundred thousand in savings there."*
- *"Be like Storyhouse, Chester and use the building and library setting for complimentary activities. Promote work stations. Offer book clubs. Think laterally."*
- *"You should advertise that the library is open for students to use and the facilities that they offer. Maybe along with teaming up with schools and colleges to reduce printer charges etc."*

- *"Could there not be a way of coordinating volunteers to work there on certain days so the library can stay open but perhaps certain services not available? I would give up 2 hours of my week to help if necessary."*
- *"Is there any way of mediating this? Is there any way of monetising spaces in libraries e.g. Rhyl has a big space which used to be a cafe. Could DCC not get charity funding to turn it into a cold weather hub for example in order to keep the whole building open? Apply to tech giants like google to see if they could help with funding for a computer space."*
- *"You should explore a mailing service for people who cannot access books due to the change in opening hours."*
- *"Please lower cost of renting out rooms for groups (it would bring people in.)"*
- *"It would also be useful to have a locker system for picking up books that have been reserved online. This could be a simple set of lockers with combination locks, or a more expensive Amazon/DHL style vending machine. I'd say a simple set of lockers would be sufficient. Ideally this would be accessible all of the time, but if located in Tourist Information in Llangollen that would at least allow better access. In the long term I'd like to see the library open for more hours with staffing. In the medium term I wonder whether the building could be open with minimal security, swipe card access, and self service tills as seen in some town libraries (Wrexham), and very prevalent in university libraries."*
- *"Is it possible to make more use of volunteers?"*
- *"Could the library service undertake community activities which are done elsewhere?"*
- *"DCC should look to cut their heavy HQ overheads before slashing another public service cherished by many locals. Yet again the public pays for public sector mismanagement."*

- *" GET CREATIVE - link with craft fayres and markets, offer courses and classes in practical time windows for people rather than during the day when most are working (I assure you, many would rather be able to take part in a community event or course!)."*
- *"Don't do it. Cut the overheads in the office - managers, stationery, etc. not essential services. The library is so much more than a place to borrow books; it is a community hub offering a safe haven for many. Ensure the Senedd in Cardiff doesn't take in extra members and lobby them for more money."*
- *"If raising money would help maybe you could look at having coffee machines or similar like many libraries have now to make it into a meeting place?"*
- *"I understand budget restrictions mean that changes are necessary at this time, but please consider alternatives e.g. volunteer support, joint working with local businesses, income generation opportunities, conversion to CIC or social enterprise status, diversification e.g. to a wellbeing hub, etc."*
- *"I am not sure that closing the libraries during most days will help the upkeep I would prefer to consider the opposite: attract organisations/charities/local groups to use the library for events, esp. In the evening and at weekends. Why not establishing a cafe based in the library?"*
- *"Keep the libraries open and slash overhead costs in the Council offices instead! As far as I can see there are far too many managers, middle managers and other office staff! There is a HUGE saving to be made by looking at head count and getting rid of posts that are not required."*
- *"Recent years has seen an expansion of "products" libraries offer bringing more people through the doors and to an extent additional income streams. A great deal more could be done for example addressing the extremely poor adult and continuing education offer, "home working" space, more partnerships; here in Ruthin there is a lot of potential to be explored through conversations with for example ReSource or outreach from the Craft Centre."*
- *"More items available through borrow box/greater awareness raising could help ensure people can access."*

- *"Do not make any changes to the hours. Perhaps look at changes within the building encouraging the use as a shared community space. Promote Internet use along the lines of an Internet cafe, community hub etc."*
- *"Cut the pay of the managers."*
- *"Surely these building can combine functions with other dcc services."*
- *"Could it manage with just fewer staff or more volunteers?"*
- *"DDC needs to consider getting rid of its over paid senior executives to make realistic savings not tinkering at the edges attacking lower paid staff and community who use library resources. It occupies 3 major sites at Ruthin, Denbigh and Rhyl. A good start would be to sell off two of these hubs and relocating business in Ruthin."*
- *"If you consider the oncosts, this amount could be saved by cutting 3 or 4 middle management roles, which would have no impact on our delivery or the Public."*
- *"If money needs to be saved, the council leader can get rid of his two recently appointed assistants who earn over 100 k each. Now that's a waste of money!!!"*
- *"How about slashing part of Gymnasium Budget to help out the Library opening hours?"*
- *"See if volunteers will help run, advertise in high schools that you need helpers. Don't cut the hours!"*
- *"Could you strike a deal with banks and have a space for them to operate from (I appreciate there would be security implications, but it could be computer based queries rather than cash handling). I feel like there is room to think outside the box to boost our services, and perhaps we could have longer open hours during school holidays, but appreciate the situation is difficult."*
- *"Whilst I was living in New Zealand the local library held community events with small choirs singing, activities for young an old maybe looking at semi regular events like this on Saturday mornings would bring more footfall to the library??"*
- *"In many libraries over the whole of UK they have to supplement the work of professionals with help from volunteers. Maybe the Libraries could stay open for longer each week with just one official and help from one or two volunteers "*

- *"Can it not be opened with volunteers? I'd volunteer a couple of hours on a Saturday myself if I knew it would be keeping it accessible to my child."*
- *"Art exhibitions, poetry readings book club and writing groups could be formed to really give the library the support it needs both financially and in terms of community engagement maybe even a small tea and coffee area."*
- *"The council could make savings by being more efficient in other areas e.g. repair roads / pot holes properly, use one sub divided wagon to collect waste, repurpose empty buildings."*
- *"A way forward is ask for or one off funding and link ups to large retailers. ASDA, MORRISONS, B&Q. These large retailers might like to sponsor a theme or project around things that matter. Food and healthy eating. Welsh agriculture. Garden improvements. Make the library involved to promote themes and products for funding. Schools do this with the token scheme."*
- *"There needs to be more investments into co-working spaces for young people. Especially in Ruthin / Denbigh. Rhyl has 'Costigans' which would be great here too!"*
- *"DO NOT REDUCE HOURS. MAKE SAVINGS ON COUNCILLORS EXPENSES & EMPLOYEES SALARIES."*
- *"The Council should be safeguarding the Libraries. They could reduce some of the library facilities in order to house DCC staff. For example, Russell House could be closed and the top floor of Rhyl Library could house an open plan office. The library would lose that space for booking out to people or as a flexible working space, but since the council wouldn't be spending money keeping Russell House open, it could afford it. Same with Caledfryn and Denbigh Library. The top floor or top two floors could be closed to the public and Caledfryn staff moved into there."*
- *"More could be done to promote those services more e.g. the museum display, history of the building and public spaces upstairs available to use/rent."*
- *"Look at Chester library (Northgate St) to see how reinvented itself (multi purpose) rather than close DCC libraries."*
- *"If the council needs to save money they should get rid of management who seem to increase in direct proportion to the removal of worker's, the management earn*

proportionately more, parks dept only has one or two workers but still the same management, why do we need a county council to not provide the services."

- *"How about the overpaid managers falling on their swords and take the bullet for the underfunded and vital libraries."*
- *"Reduce the wages of managers not the frontline staff who actually do the work!"*
- *"Use of volunteer services and community input to help run the library."*
- *"I know it's expensive keeping the doors open, but aren't there other ways to save money? Turn off half the lights? Reduce other running costs across the county? Emergency funds?"*
- *"Why not extend the use of libraries as a 'one stop' Make more use of meeting space, include the tourist information service and other services that have face to face contact with the public."*
- *"Should be encouraging community groups like the U3A to use facilities. The only way to make real saving is to rearrange LG into larger units."*
- *"I feel that the council should be encouraging more uses for the buildings rather than reducing the hours."*
- *"Is there no way to diversify, hire out room space, offer certain groups children, art classes or seasonal."*
- *"Can the council not consider making savings in terms of agile works using technology for meetings, and savings from travel allowance for staff to be ring fenced for local libraries. "*
- *"If part of the problem is the cost of staff wages, why cannot DCC consider training a local group of volunteers to assist the paid member of staff. This in turn would provide an opportunity for individuals who may be lonely, lack regular contact with others and to provide them with a sense of purpose. Wouldn't it be amazing if Denbighshire were a county that were seen as a council that worked with the community in encouraging & promoting volunteering opportunities rather than taking services away xxx"*

- *"The library is the hub of the community. It would be nice to have the cafe open again."*
- *"Some of the space in the library is woefully underused, such as the large room at the back. Could the council consider how to employ the space to generate additional income to preserve the library service rather than dismantling the opening hours."*
- *"Why not cut your hours back at the Churton Road and Denbigh offices instead."*
- *"Cut your own hrs at Housing and other Denbighshire offices. We need Rhyl library, no car, can't afford to travel elsewhere. Staff are excellent, so helpful and kind. Stop spending it on rubbish on Rhyl promenade, flowers, waste of time junk"*
- *"In order to make savings it would be a good idea if you stopped 'paying' councillors for attending meetings, the travel costs would be sufficient. They are mostly retired and if not, get paid by their employers,"*
- *"We have civic office buildings that are half full, open 5 days a week. Some of these buildings (Russell House and Caledfryn) are not open to the public. I feel we should be looking at reduced opening hours for staff at civic offices, rather than reduced opening hours for the public in our libraries. (I am an employee of the council, and I am fully embraced with flexible and home working. I am an avid reader and habitual user of Ruthin library)."*
- *"Accept donated books, good quality clean ones. Maybe provide a list of books required. Massive savings if you consider Hardback books are generally about £20 each and paperbacks are about £9 approx... Anything not required could be re-donated to charity shops..."*
- *"I do not drive, and cannot afford a bus. there are 3 Libraries in the North of the County with 8 miles of each other, and regular bus services. SCC should look at closing at least one of them. DCC have not thought this through, each end every One Stop Shop, should be looked at individually."*
- *"I would like to understand what alternatives have been considered such as reduced staffing or asking for volunteers to support paid staff."*

- *"I have been in Prestatyn Library many times and at different times of the day and saw 4 staff members just sitting chatting. Why not reduce staff hours. Not have 4 staff on at once but say 2 (or 3)with a part time staff member in addition at the busy times or to cover lunch."*
- *"Today I happened to visit Prestatyn library, they have resourced their space to include various organisations including for example banking facilities. Surely our esteemed members of DCC should be looking on how to utilise this facility to enhance rather than reduce."*
- *"Instead of reducing hours why aren't new income streams being considered such as providing locally sourced refreshments. A self serve drinks machine with locally sourced coffee so no additional staffing costs and supporting local supplier. "*
- *"I am unsure how you feel that you can make cuts here when you have two county halls that are pretty much empty- being fully heated and using energy when they are practically derelict as all the staff are working from home- maybe look at selling off the masses of equipment that these buildings contain, some of which are no longer needed! I know that County hall is empty as I spent two days there conducting interviews and the places was like a ghost town! Also the money you spend getting your logos printed on paper napkins and other promotional material is a massive waste- ok a drop in the ocean you might say, but all these things cost money and any small savings be it £3k or £2.50 so maybe DCC Should look a bit closer to home before they start cutting valuable assets to the community."*
- *"Why not consider asking if users would be prepared to contribute / or even put a small charge against books borrowed? We all have to match our outgoings to our household budgets/income but there must be a better way of raising some extra income from users - or is the library budget really being slashed by 50%. ? What about other services? Perhaps the recycling proposals should be put on hold for a while or something similar? Either way, where is the proposal to raise either voluntary or mandatory contributions for those who aren't on low incomes or benefits?"*

- *"I find it quite unbelievable cutting social amenities hours to save money when council workers are not putting in the hours they are contracted by working from home and for promoting staff and then accepting redundancy terms at inflated rates! Plus, as workers are working from home then rent out or mothball part of the D.C.C. offices."*
- *"I would suggest the hours for example at Ruthin as noted on the attached form. This could probably be achieved at no additional cost using the existing library staff supported by 'Friends of the library'. Such a development should be fully promoted to help the library become a vibrant part of the community."*
- *"Councillors should be looking at their allowances and reducing redundant offices rather than lose vital community hubs."*
- *"Why not reduce heating in council offices by a couple of degrees?"*
- *"Cut funding to Denbighshire Leisure instead. They are a limited company."*
- *"I therefore suggest that staff from the multiple (and expensive to run) other council buildings be asked to use spaces within libraries when working from 'the office' (the technology is readily available for efficient Hot Desking) This would mean libraries could open longer not less, and council staff and the general public could be to interact again."*
- *"Try saving money by ditching the unwanted change to the bin collections. This would pay for the library services for years."*
- *"What other options have been considered e.g. some libraries are close to each other - would it be better to close some, or transfer smaller libraries to a community group "*
- *"In Ruthin the building is very old and inefficient to heat etc, would it not be more sensible to cut costs by moving the library into the council office which is mostly empty and has a good car park. This would be better than damaging one of the few excellent services that Denbighshire provides"*
- *"Online payment facilities and 24 hour payment line ensures customers can make service payments."*
- *" Save money by stopping buying new council vehicles. Pointless!"*

- *"Are staff still working from home? Could they not be based more at Libraries that have good IT connectivity, to help keep them open?"*
- *"Be creative with cost savings: look to the largely empty offices, the vanity projects (you know what they are as well as I do) & why not look at Councillors allowances and salaries of certain officers too? This is a time to support communities and loyal staff. Stand together!"*
- *"Is there any chance of finding funding from charities/ social projects to keep this excellent service going? "*
- *"It is suggested a small membership library fee for locals is introduced notwithstanding that charges should be applied to tourists and other holidaymakers using a free service. KEEP HOURS OPEN"*
- *"Could there be a fee for the older population, not children, to pay £1 each to use the library, and also, £1 to use the public toilets, as cold nights ahead, no money for school laptops, etc."*
- *"As with the green bin payments, people could pay £50 a year to use the library."*
- *"Try charging less for the conference rooms too and you might get more people hiring them."*
- *"If this consultation is going to be used to Save money then 1, why not sell off/ rent office space and car parking. Since covid the number of staff working from home had drastically increased . Offices are half empty and car parks are under used."*
- *"Maybe look at the council offices, which from the under used car park you can tell is not functioning efficiently. Maybe it's time office workers return to their desks and do a full days work. Covid has been and you leave the library available as it is!!!"*
- *"Perhaps we could look at some of the roles in council offices and vote on whether we'd like to keep them? I think we all know what the outcome would be then. I'd rather pay more council tax than see important community facilities that cater for the young cut down. "*
- *"Perhaps things like coffee machines, snacks, drinks could bring extra revenue into the libraries to help."*

- *"Perhaps you could consider using volunteers in order to increase the proposed opening hours."*
- *"Have you thought of using volunteers to assist staff - Llangollen is an excellent place for such folk."*
- *"Why not freeze the salaries of the higher paid staff and cut councillors expenses - this may help Denbighshire save a huge amount of money."*
- *"The role of the library needs to be broadened, potentially by making available a Speakers Corner space and time, for history, geography, interest groups, local enterprises, etc."*
- *"Another service being cut!! Let the public park in the empty council office car park or turn off all lights there as they all work from home. DISGUSTED."*
- *"Why not stop the issue of new bins and use the money for the libraries?"*
- *"Make your cuts in the salaries at the top, not the services. And stop wasting money on things like cutting grass verges so often or junkets for councillors."*
- *"Maybe introduce knitting circles, talks, and other groups to add to the facility, grow it instead of slow it."*
- *"Maybe reduce the CEO and other overpaid top management to fund amenities that local populations need. Too many overpaid managers getting too big a salary, golden hello/goodby handshakes and pensions. Do what you should be doing and that is ensuring that local amenities remain in the community."*
- *"Maybe the council can save money in other ways - possibly reduce the management and office staff?"*
- *"A good place to start reducing expenses across the County Council is switching OFF the lights in the Council buildings out of working hours and days. Kind regards Daniel."*
- *"If savings are needed why not go back to everyone paying a small sum to use the library for books and computer use on a yearly basis."*
- *"Maybe an option to recoup some money by allowing public to hire the space or rent the area for another use?"*

- *"If cuts need to be made, then please look at reducing senior staff salaries. Abandon your defined benefit pension, put your staff on a DC scheme."*
- *"Has the council thought of bringing in more partners into the library space. E.g. job Centre, CAB, age cymru. I understand the need for savings, the libraries offer the communities enormous benefit to their health and wellbeing."*
- *"As more people work from home, is there still a need for the existence of the county offices?!!"*
- *"Is there a possibility of funding from the levelling up money, if its money thats the problem."*
- *"Before this happens the council should look at balancing it's books in other ways. If it is inevitable then looking at making changes that cause least impact: i.e. moving libraries into council buildings to reduce overheads. Considering a wider range of opening times e.g. after 5pm for working people. Saturday opening in the Dee Valley. Seek funding/re use funds for a library bus."*
- *"May I suggest a voluntary payment of 5p per book borrowed. A TRIAL period could produce income. I suspect many people would be happy to pay. Based on the outcome a further plan might be better than the one proposed."*
- *"Suggestions of tourist information centres, possibly getting volunteers in to help with manning, which would have helped with increasing tourism revenue, were dismissed out of hand."*
- *"Why not include the role of libraries as Tourist Information Centres in key towns, such as Denbigh and Ruthin? Has this been given any thought?"*
- *"I believe we should get Central Government to send more funds to Wales, they certainly would if the Sened was run by the Conservatives"*
- *"How about moving the Ruthin library into another council owned building with parking? (County Hall or craft centre for example - as they are utilised less with many working from home now)this would bring savings (running costs of building) and make it more easily accessible with parking nearby."*
- *"If the heating was turned down a bit perhaps the hours could be extended? And I hope the free tea and coffee isn't being abused."*

Library Opening Hours Consultation: DCC Response

[Impact on library facilities](#)

1,342 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of library facilities. This includes restricting access to:

- Books.
- Computers.
- Internet access.
- Online banking.
- Printing.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise Library/One Stop Shop opening hours.

[Impact on library activities - Community / Social hub / Chat sessions](#)

850 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of the library as a community space. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities for social interaction.
- Reduction in space for people in the community to meet with others.
- Less opportunities for vulnerable people to use libraries as a safe space.
- Increased chance that people will become isolated.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery.

[Lack of non-working hours / after school hours](#)

781 residents said they felt that the proposed changes do not offer enough opening hours after school and after 5pm. This includes:

- Wanting more libraries open after 5pm for people who work 9-5 to access libraries.
- Wanting more libraries open after 3pm for school children to visit after school.

The amended model has responded to this by revising the proposed opening hours/days.

General dissatisfaction

There were **528** comments received that did not fit any specific theme which expressed resident's general dissatisfaction to the proposed changes. This includes:

- Feeling that library opening hours should remain the same.
- Stating that proposed hours are not enough.
- Stating that libraries are an essential service.

The Council will endeavour to maximise library opening hours with resources available.

Cost of living issues

392 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect due the cost of living. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to use libraries as a warm hub in winter.
- Reduction on free activities for children.
- Being unable to afford to travel to an alternative library.
- Less opportunities to use free internet access.
- Being unable to afford computers at home.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Council will continue to work with partners to reduce digital exclusion and tackle economic deprivation.

Impact on library activities - Education / Training

313 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the use of the library for education and training purposes. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities for school children to use libraries to do homework.
- Less chances for people to learn to read.

- Fewer opportunities for people to attend computer training courses.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. This will include talks with Education colleagues to address access to libraries and computers outside lesson times.

[Impact on one stop facilities - Help & info with Council Services](#)

285 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing help & info with Council Services. This includes restricting access to:

- Help and advice with council tax queries.
- Help and advice with accessing bus passes.
- Help and advice with refuse queries.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise Library/One Stop Shop opening hours for customers who need help and advice.

[Transport issues getting to other libraries](#)

280 residents stated they will have issues getting to alternative libraries when their local library is closed. This includes:

- Having too far to travel to an alternative library.
- Being unable to afford to travel to an alternative library.
- Don't drive so difficult to travel to an alternative library.

The amended model has responded to this by revising the proposed opening hours/days.

[Impact on library activities - Bookstart Rhyme Time / Children's groups](#)

247 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on children's groups at libraries. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to attend Bookstart sessions.
- Fewer opportunities to attend craft sessions.

- Less chances for children to participate in reading challenges.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Council will continue to work with partners to maximise opportunities to access Bookstart sessions; the Summer Reading Challenge will remain a high priority for the service.

Impact on the vulnerable

220 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative impact on the most vulnerable people in our communities. This includes:

- Restricting access to library facilities for vulnerable people.
- Fewer opportunities for vulnerable people to use libraries as a safe space.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Council will continue to work with partners to support vulnerable people.

Suggested ideas for proposed model

193 residents suggested ideas for the proposed changes. This includes:

- Wanting different days/opening hours to the proposed changes.

The amended model has responded to this by revising the proposed opening hours/days.

Suggested ideas for alternative model/cost saving

157 residents suggested ideas for an alternative to the proposed changes. This includes:

- Close some council offices.
- Reduce high salaries in the Council.
- Use volunteers to help staff in libraries.
- Rent out library space.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Library/One Stop Shop Volunteering and Room Hire Policies will be reviewed and updated to maximise their contribution to an accessible Library/One Stop Shop service.

[Impact on library activities - Health & Wellbeing](#)

149 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on people's health & wellbeing. This includes:

- Negative effects to people's mental health.
- Increased chance that people will become isolated.
- Fewer opportunities to attend health and wellbeing sessions e.g. Talking point.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Council will continue to work with partners to reduce mental ill-health and social isolation and to maximise well-being across the County.

[Impact on staff](#)

121 residents stated that the proposed changes will have an impact on libraries staff. This includes:

- Loss of jobs for library staff.
- Higher workloads for library staff.
- Less available time for library staff to assist.

While there is a risk of redundancies, the Council will support staff through redeployment where possible. The impact on workload will be carefully monitored to ensure maximum support for staff and customers.

[Impact on library activities - Reading groups](#)

61 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on adult reading groups at libraries. This includes:

- Fewer opportunities to attend book clubs.
- Fewer opportunities to attend adult reading groups.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery.

Impact on one stop facilities - Payment Services

51 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing Payment Services. This includes:

- Restricting access for paying council tax.
- Restricting access for paying bills.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise Library/One Stop Shop opening hours.

Impact on library activities - Welsh language

53 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the Welsh language. This includes:

- Limiting access to Welsh language books.
- Will limit opportunities to converse in Welsh.
- Fewer opportunities to attend Welsh language reading groups.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise Library/One Stop Shop opening hours. Access to Welsh language books remains a priority for the service.

Concern that libraries will close completely

37 residents stated they are concerned that the proposed changes will eventually lead to the full closure of libraries.

The Council considers Libraries to be essential for communities across the County so has committed to keeping them all open, albeit for reduced hours. The service will continue to work hard to maintain Libraries as the beating hearts of the

communities, despite the reduction in core funding, ready to expand again when the economic climate improves.

Impact on library activities - Work space

26 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on being able to have a quiet work space away from home.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery.

Impact on library activities - School sessions

19 residents stated that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on school sessions at libraries.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. This will include talks with Education colleagues to ensure access to libraries.

Impact on one stop facilities - Blue badge application service

17 residents said they felt that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on accessing the Blue badge application service.

The Council will seek to mitigate the reduction in budget by working in partnership to maximise use of Library Buildings during and outside the hours of Library Service delivery. The Council will continue to work with partners to support vulnerable people.

Sustainability

9 residents stated that the proposed changes are not sustainable.

The Council will work hard to make the proposed changes sustainable by working with residents and partners to maximise Libraries' contribution to individual and community resilience.

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1. Problems with the process

1.1. The rationale for the scale of the cuts is unclear

The paper issued to staff claims 'an unsustainable budget shortfall of between £10m and £28m for the next financial year'. This is an unacceptably vague assertion. The margin of error of £18m is so large as to cover completely different scenarios with completely different requirements. Separately UNISON have been told that between £8m and £15m are required. It is necessary for there to be clarity on what is required at a corporate level rather than the current policy which appears to be cut as much as you can even if this potentially means £18m or more of unnecessary cuts and untold damage to services, the reputation of the council and lives of affected staff and their families.

We would usually expect a proposal for service change of this magnitude to include:

- detailed figures of the savings requirement
- a rationale of why the cut needs to fall on this particular service
- an options appraisal which considers a range of possible options weighing the strengths and weaknesses including the impact on services and staff as well as the finance.

1.2. The Wellbeing Impact assessment fails to consider some key issues

1.2.1 The library has services for groups of people with specific protected characteristics but these have not been involved in the writing of the Wellbeing Impact Assessment

Disabled people receive many services through the libraries including blue badges, RADAR keys and for information advice and support but representative groups for disabled people have not been involved in the impact assessment.

Women's groups utilise the libraries as a safe reporting space and for information, advice and support but representatives of these groups have not been involved in the impact assessment.

LGBTQ+ groups utilise the libraries as a safe reporting space and for information, advice and support but representatives of these groups have not been involved in the impact assessment.

Older people's groups utilise the libraries as a social space and for information, advice and support but representatives of these groups have not been involved in the impact assessment.

1.3. The public consultation is insufficiently detailed and unclear

Since the launch of the public consultation library staff have received many submitted forms but all had fielded many questions about what the options actually are, and what will be affected by the proposals. It is clear from this that some members of the public believe they are being asked to choose between accepting the proposal or facing the prospect of all libraries being closed. As far as we are concerned this is not the case and such confusion has only arisen due to a lack of clarity in the consultation document itself.

In other cases it is clear that members of the public do not realise that the One Stop Shop service will also be affected by the reductions of service believing this only affects the 'book service'.

We believe it would be much better to have consulted the public on a range of options rather than the approach taken.

2. Arguments against the current proposals

2.1. The problems of process outlined above mean the current proposal is untenable

Without a proper understanding of the savings requirement, without the consideration of alternative options and without the benefit of a comprehensive Wellbeing Impact Assessment it would be totally irresponsible for Cabinet to approve the proposals in their current form.

2.2. The proposals would see libraries closed at some of their busiest times

Our analysis of the new proposed opening hours and data on visitor numbers, available from our website [here](#), shows that the proposals would see the libraries closed during some of their busiest times.

2.3. The negative impact on service users and partners would be enormous

Libraries are a key source of books and vital to a literate society developing reading skills throughout the community. Reading books benefits both your physical and mental health, and those benefits can last a lifetime. They begin in early childhood and continue through the senior years.

- Reading strengthens your brain
- Increases your ability to empathize
- Builds your vocabulary
- Helps prevent age-related cognitive decline
- Reduces stress
- Prepares you for a good night's rest
- Helps alleviate depression symptoms

But libraries are not just about books. The Council's One Stop Shop facilities are run in each of the libraries (with the exception of Ruthin). For the vast majority of people these provide their only means of face to face contact with the council's services. We detail the DCC services affected below, but libraries also operate as a community hub and are essential to many services offered to the community by a multitude of providers. Examples include:

- **Banking service** – the presence of Barclays service in Llangollen library is a lifeline in a rural community without other access to banks.
- **Post Office**- rural outreach
- **Transport for Wales** – information and bus passes
- **Wrexham Social Services** – utilise the library as a safe meeting space for families placed in Denbighshire.

Many more deliver advice or training sessions from libraries, utilise library meeting spaces, access to computers and reference books and receive referrals through library staff signposting including:

- **Citizen's Advice**
- **Working Denbighshire, Job Centre and Working Wales**
- **Coleg Llandrillo and Coleg Cambria**
- **Food bank – Trussell Trust**
- **Homeless charities the Wallich and Shelter**
- **Vision Support**
- **Audiology**
- **Women's Centre**
- **Victim Support**
- **Help Me Quit (Stop Smoking)**
- **Hafod**
- **Adfeiriad**
- **Hafal**
- **Red Cross**
- **Local schools**
- **VIVA**

- **Unique**
- **Nurseries**
- **DVSC**
- **Baby Basics**
- **Stepping Stones**
- **Good Things Foundation (combatting digital exclusion)**

These are services that people rely on. If the cuts go ahead our ability to provide all these services, and those DCC services listed below, will be compromised due to staffing levels and time constraints. Many of the enquiries are time sensitive and this will impact on us offering an efficient and timely service.

2.4. The negative impact on other DCC services would be enormous

By removing capacity from the library these proposals jeopardise our abilities to provide these services and support these groups. They will not remove the demand for these services. Instead, they will transfer that demand directly on to the partner agencies and other DCC departments that rely on the library service to act as their 'front of house' facility.

Either Denbighshire County Council begins to fail its citizens or these demands will have to be supported by increasing capacity in other areas despite the fact that the customer services functions, carried out by the libraries, have been deliberately centralised in this way precisely to save resources and meet customer needs. Each department does not need to cover these functions through its own staff while the libraries can support them but without that support the impact is potentially huge.

Libraries support the Benefits system through:

- Reporting via email notification of change of circumstance including no. of occupants, rent increase, wage increase/decrease, change of personal details, change of benefits received
- Assisting with making payments on kiosk by cash and card and also processing cheque payments through Pay360
- Assistance completing forms including Council Tax Reduction applications and Discretionary Housing Payment applications (online/paper)
- Providing telephone access to benefits department where further information is needed. Speaking on behalf of customers who are unable /don't feel confident communicating their issues.
- Scanning and emailing proofs to support applications made online/changes in circumstance.
- Supporting customers in accessing any additional benefit schemes they are entitled to such as the Winter Fuel Support Scheme
- Supporting customers in making applications for School Uniform Grants and Free School Meals

- Taking payment for housing benefit overpayment

Libraries support the Council Tax systems by:

- Assisting with the processing and setting up of direct debit mandates
- Assisting with applications for council tax discounts and exemptions
- Liaising between the council tax department and customers to solve any problems
- Take payments for council tax by card, cash or cheque
- Assisting with reporting a change in circumstance

Libraries support the Business Rates system by:

- Taking payments for business rates by cash, card and cheque
- Taking Rhyl BID payments

Libraries support the Refuse service by:

- Processing payments for garden waste bins
- Ordering replacement containers and taking payments
- Arranging bulky household collections and taking payment
- Reporting missed bin collections
- Distributing food waste bags
- Processing trade waste and trade recycling bag purchases
- Completing Van Ban applications and taking proofs to support applications
- Booking slots at recycling park

Libraries support the Licensing service by:

- Assisting in completion of hackney carriage/private hire driver and vehicle licence application forms, taking payment and scanning forms and proofs to Licensing Department.
- Taking payment for other licences e.g. small lotteries, street traders and providing confirmation of this to the licensing department.

Libraries support the Homelessness service by:

- Providing telephone access for customers to report homelessness
- Scanning documents to the Homelessness Prevention Team
- Signposting customers to My Home Denbighshire

Libraries support the Housing Service by:

- Providing telephone access to the Housing Register (SARTH)
- Scanning application and medical forms to the Housing Department
- Taking payment for housing rents

- Providing telephone access for council house repairs (often an emergency)
- Reporting anti-social behaviour by council tenants

Libraries support the Welsh Government's Blue Badge service by:

- Completing online application for those who are unable to do so due to digital exclusion (minimum of one hour staff time required for full application appointments)
- Taking photos of applicants and scanning over supporting evidence to the council's Blue Badge department
- Receiving and disposing of expired blue badges and arranging and taking payment for lost badges

Libraries support Social Services by:

- Referring customers to Talking Point sessions held in the library
- Providing access to food bank referrals via SPOA
- Taking invoice payments for care fees by card, cash and cheque
- Providing telephone access for contacting Social Services

Libraries support the Heritage service by:

- Receiving and passing on donations of artefacts brought in by customers
- Staffing school visits to Rhyl Museum
- Maintenance of Museum equipment

Libraries support the Education Service by:

- Assisting with school admission forms
- Providing books and other reference materials
- Providing access to online educational content
- Providing early years educational service including BOOKSTART
- Providing a venue and resources for lifelong learning in partnership with the colleges

Libraries support the Parking service by:

- Issuing long stay and seasonal car park permits, concessionary parking permits and visitor parking permits
- Processing resident parking permits
- Processing change of address or vehicle details
- Replacing lost permits
- Processing parking dispensations
- Taking payment for parking fines and assisting with parking penalty charges
- Reporting broken car park payment machines

Libraries support the Environmental Health service by:

- Providing a face to face means of reporting fly tipping, pollution and infestation/hygiene matters

Libraries support the Highways service by:

- Providing a face to face means of reporting pot holes, street lighting, street furniture and traffic issues.

Libraries support the Planning service by:

- Assisting the public in viewing planning applications online
- Displaying plans for major projects

Libraries support the Transport service by:

- Completion of online applications via Transport for Wales for over 60s and Disabled bus passes including taking photo and copies of proofs
- Assistance in applying for a disabled pass with companion included
- Providing bus timetables (no longer available in printed format)

Libraries support the Facilities service by:

- Processing and payment of applications for RADAR keys

Libraries support the Finance service by:

- Processing payment of miscellaneous invoices for services provided/ fees incurred

2.5. The negative impact on staff would be enormous

These proposals will have a huge impact on staff. The proposals carry with them the threat of a substantial number of job losses or a massive reduction of hours for already low paid individuals struggling to cope with the cost of living crisis.

There are lots of euphemisms for firing people – downsizing, outsourcing, rationalisation, organisational change, company review, restructuring and redundancy. Irrespective of which labels organisations use, people’s emotional reactions tend to be the same. Apart from the financial implications, job loss can mean a significant loss of identity and an individual’s self-confidence may be eroded. In addition a person may feel excluded from society...The most common reaction to job loss is physical shock accompanied by some of the classic symptoms associated with grief – disbelief, denial, anger, feeling stunned, becoming withdrawn, loss of confidence, and a feeling of ‘why me?’ This is particularly true when an individual had no prior warning or sense that they would lose their job.

Job loss, like any other form of major loss can have many of the emotions akin to those of bereavement.ⁱ

Even where job losses are avoided the dramatic cut in people's hours will force many people into in-work poverty and place an increasing burden on the tax payer through the benefits system. In-work poverty, is already a reality for many local government workers.ⁱⁱ

2.6. Servicing the same public demand but within the reduced timeframes would require more staff at any given time

The proposal suggests that by retaining the same number of staff (FTE) but for less time, it will be possible to meet the same level of demand despite the reduced hours. This clearly is not going to be the case since library staffing levels have been carefully managed and are already aligned to meet the current demand. This includes the regular, almost perpetual, use of relief staff at the busier libraries at the busier times.

3. Arguments for retaining a full library service

Our libraries serve a social and educational need. *Public libraries provide positive outcomes for people and communities in a variety of ways, beyond simply providing access to books. They contribute to the formation of human capital, the maintenance of mental and physical wellbeing, social inclusivity and community cohesion.*ⁱⁱⁱ

3.1. Libraries engage children of all ages

Libraries offer pre-school singing and rhyme sessions, summer reading challenges for older children and direct support for local schools.

Libraries play a key role in providing books for children: research has shown that where library usage has increased for an individual, the most common reason given was 'I wanted to encourage my child to read books', selected by 20% of people, closely followed by 'I like to read/wish to read more' (18%)^{iv}.

3.2. Libraries help to combat social exclusion and promote health and wellbeing

Denbighshire includes some of the most deprived communities in Wales as well as pockets of rural poverty and an aging population struggling with the cost of living crisis and social isolation. Libraries play a huge role in supporting residents to access digital facilities, adult education, advice, cultural events and all sorts of other support, including book prescription schemes and many other services. These all have positive impacts on wellbeing.

Research funded by Arts Council England in 2015 found that after controlling for a wide range of factors, library use is positively associated with subjective wellbeing, with library users having higher life satisfaction, happiness and sense of purpose in life.

Being a regular library user is also associated with a 1.4 per cent increase in the likelihood of reporting good general health, valued at a medical-cost saving associated with library engagement at £1.32 per person per year. The aggregate

NHS cost savings across the library-using English population is £27.5 million per year.^v

3.3. Library facilities allow the unemployed to get online to search for work

In addition our libraries in Denbighshire host Working Denbighshire 1-2-1 mentoring sessions and training events, as well as Rhyl library hosting the Working Denbighshire Service itself.

3.4. Libraries are vital safe spaces for vulnerable members of the community

Libraries are safe spaces not only as they participate in the North Wales Police Scheme for acting as alternative reporting centres for Hate Crime and Domestic Violence but also because they offer a public space in which many and diverse people and groups feel comfortable.

They are utilised by the LGBTQ+ community, particularly the trans community as a venue where people can be themselves without fear of harm.

They are also havens of tranquillity for many people including neuro-diverse people and people with learning disabilities who thrive in the quiet and calming atmosphere not offered by any other public space.

Our libraries (particularly in Rhyl library) are used by many homeless families and individuals that are in temporary or poor-quality accommodation without a suitable social space.

3.5. Libraries support flexible working in DCC and for businesses across the county

Since the pandemic we have seen a massive increase in remote workers using libraries, taking advantage of the free desk space, wi-fi, charging points and quiet environment. Remote workers, frequently do not have an appropriate space in which to work at home or struggle with the additional costs of home working, such as energy bills. Having access to these facilities at their local library is crucial to their well-being and ability to do their job.

3.6 Libraries have become a vital warm space in this cost-of-living crisis

Our libraries have embraced the Croeso Cynnes - Warm Welcome scheme. The scheme is so important for the reasons explained on the Warm Welcome website and reproduced below.

Poverty - The rising cost-of-living means that too many vulnerable people are falling into debt and struggling to keep warm or buy the food or essentials they need.

Safety - The top reasons visitors had for coming to a Warm Welcome space were its warmth, its safety, to meet new and old friends, and because it was free.

Loneliness - Across Britain over 7 million people experience chronic loneliness. We all lived through the pandemic and experienced the impact of social isolation. Feeling isolated and alone can affect your physical and mental health.

Cold - Over half of visitors would have been at home with the heating off if they had not been at a Warm Welcome Space.^{vi}

3.7 Libraries help to combat digital exclusion and promote digital inclusion.

Digital inclusion is a social issue.

A lack of digital skills and access can have a huge negative impact on a person's life, leading to poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy, increased loneliness and social isolation, less access to jobs and education.

It can mean paying more for essentials, financial exclusion, an increased risk of experiencing poverty. People who are digitally excluded also lack a voice and visibility in the modern world, as government services and democracy increasingly move online.

What's more, it's those already at a disadvantage – through age, education, income, disability, or unemployment – who are most likely to be missing out, further widening the social inequality gap.^{vii}

At present the One Stop Shops are the only place customers can make council enquiries in person. Due to the channel shift towards online/telephone services numerous customers are unable to access online services making them digitally excluded. The Library and One Stop Shop helps to break down this barrier by offering a face to face service. It is vital that a full, consistent frontline service continues to be provided to ensure that nobody is excluded from engaging with the council and other services.

Barriers to digital inclusion include:

- Voice problems
- Mental health issues
- Learning difficulties
- Stammering
- Hearing impairment
- Neurological impairment
- Stroke
- Head injury
- Parkinson's disease
- Dementia
- Age
- Education
- Financial difficulties – unable to afford own mobile phone / internet connection

We often fill in forms online with people who struggle to do this themselves and provide assistance to build their confidence in being able to do this independently. Also the public network PCs and free WIFI facilities allow customers who cannot finance their own device/ internet connection to access online services.

4. Alternative Options

4.1. Alternative savings that can be made within the Library Service

We have based our arguments on demonstrating the broad benefits of the Libraries Service as the front face of the council, a valued public service that brings huge benefits and is a preventative service that relieves pressure (including cost pressure) on other services. We believe the library service deserves to be fully funded and should be a priority for the council, as we are sure consultation will demonstrate it is a priority for the citizens of Denbighshire.

This said, we would like to see the remaining time we have within the year used for a period in which staff can work together with managers to try to find savings that are not so harmful to the service. Staff are the vital resource and trusted support for the public that enables the service to flourish as a community hub.

We are asking the staff and managers be allowed the time to complete further work on potential savings to avoid redundancies that in themselves may be costly including, review use of payment kiosks, review relief staff hours.

Finally, we believe libraries have evolved to be **the** essential community hub, delivering their core mission in line with their statutory mandate from Welsh Government, and bringing together a broad array of council, public agency and voluntary services. Libraries are already essential but there is scope to travel further down this road.

A review is needed to investigate what further services could be delivered through libraries including our departmental commitments and our grants and commissioned services. Utilising the space and staff resources we already have should be a consideration in service planning, procurement and commissioning.

5.1 Sources of revenue that could be accessed by the Library Service

5.1.1 Revenue from room hire can be substantially increased

There is great potential to generate an increase in the income libraries currently produce. Libraries need to embrace the business opportunities within their communities which will provide much needed income generation. There are several viable options which can achieve this:

Libraries have rooms that can be hired out to agencies, community groups, businesses or members of the public, However, the full potential has not yet been realised. Two elements need to be explored:

- Where services using the library are supported by grant funding, or other revenue external to the council then these services should be charged rent to utilise the library space.
- There is significant scope to advertise room space in libraries and enter into longer 'timeshare' style bookings rather than one off arrangements.

5.1.2 Libraries already work with many community groups who receive grants. Joint projects can bring in additional funds

UK government produces a web page entitled potential funding sources for libraries.^{viii} The page details a range of funds that are available to support community groups that utilise libraries. We believe there is significant scope to develop joint proposals along with partners that can gain access to these funds for specific projects and which can relieve pressure which would otherwise rest on the libraries' budget.

5.1.3 Increase prices of printing and photocopying and offer a printing service to GPs and other support providers

Currently the revenue generated by printing and copying in libraries is relatively modest. However, there are two changes that should be considered. Firstly, a general increase in the rates is possible whilst still remaining below commercial rates.

Secondly, library staff frequently support individuals with completing paperwork from a huge range of support providers including GPs and many third sector organisations who support citizens. We believe these organisations could be offered a service that included the printing of their forms and supporting the citizens to fill them out, for a fee.

ⁱ [The Emotional and Psychological Effects of Redundancy | Counselling Practice Matters](#)

ⁱⁱ [Unison Cost Of living - YouTube](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20\(18%25\).](https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20(18%25).)

^{iv} [https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20\(18%25\).](https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20(18%25).)

^v [https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20\(18%25\).](https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/001-library-facts/#:~:text=Libraries%20play%20a%20key%20role,read%20more'%20(18%25).)

^{vi} <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Warm-Spaces-Croeso-Cynnes.aspx>

^{vii} [The digital divide - Good Things Foundation](#)

^{viii} [Potential funding sources for libraries - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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Cyngor Sir Ddinbych

Annwyl Gynghorwyr

Ysgrifennaf ar ran CILIP Cymru Wales, i annog Cyngor Sir Ddinbych i ystyried yr effaith bydd toriadau i oriau agor llyfrgelloedd yn cael ar boblogaeth Sir Ddinbych.

Mae CILIP, Cymdeithas Siartredig Llyfrgelloedd a Gwybodaeth yn llais annibynnol blaenllaw yn y Deyrnas Unedig ar gyfer y proffesiwn llyfrgelloedd a rheolaeth gwybodaeth.

Mae darpariaeth llyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus yn statudol o dan y Ddeddf Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus ac Amgueddfeydd 1964 ac yn gwaredu ar bob un o'r saith o nodau llesiant o dan Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015.

Mae llyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus yn hanfodol yn sicrhau mynediad at lyfrau, yn gwella llythrennedd yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, yn y ddarpariaeth o'r sgiliau craidd ar gyfer pob oedran, mewn mynd i'r afael ag ynysu cymdeithasol, a chefnogi iechyd meddwl a llesiant. Mae llyfrgelloedd yn chwarae rhan allweddol yn y gefnogaeth i strategaeth gyfredol y Cyngor ar eithrio digidol drwy ddarparu mynediad am ddim i rai sydd heb fynediad i'r rhyngwrwd gartref, a darparu buddion sylweddol democrataidd, cymdeithasol, ac economaidd i ddinasyddion a chymunedau, yn ogystal ag helpu pobl i chwilio am swyddi a budd-daliadau. Mae llyfrgelloedd hefyd wedi bod yn hanfodol yn darparu manau cynnes yn ystod yr argyfwng cost o fyw cyfredol.

Yn ôl y National Literacy Trust, mae 1 o bob 8 oedolyn yn Gymru â diffyg sgiliau llythrennedd sylfaenol. Drwy beidio â sicrhau cyllid digonol ar gyfer gwasanaethau llyfrgell leol sydd yn cefnogi mynediad i sgiliau sylfaenol a digidol, mae Cyngor Sir Ddinbych mewn peryg o adael eu poblogaeth ar ôl yn Economi Digidol heddiw. Gwasanaeth allweddol a gynigir gan holl llyfrgelloedd Sir Ddinbych yw cynhwysiad digidol – mynediad i ddefnydd am ddim o'r rhyngwrwd a chyfrifiaduron. Yn ôl Adroddiad Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus 2021-20221 Sir Ddinbych mae llyfrgelloedd yn bartner allweddol yn y prosiect i leihau eithrio digidol o fewn y Sir. Pe byddai'r toriadau arfaethedig yn cael eu gweithredu bydd effaith andwyol ar allu'r Cyngor i leihau eithrio digidol a gwella sgiliau llythrennedd safonol. O ganlyniad bydd bwlch economaidd ag addysgol yr awdurdod yn cynyddu, yn enwedig mewn ardaloedd o'r sir sydd eisoes dan anfantais economaidd, fel Y Rhyf².

Ar gyfer Adroddiad Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus 2021-20221 mae Sir Ddinbych yn cwrdd â phob un o'r 12 gofynion craidd. Un o'r gofynion craidd yw i "ddarparu mynediad at amrywiaeth o wasanaethau, gweithgareddau ac adnoddau o ansawdd uchel mewn amrywiaeth o fformatau i gefnogi dysgu, lles a datblygiad personol" ar gyfer pawb mewn cymdeithas gan gynnwys y bregus, yr henoed, plant ag unigolion a grwpiau ag anghenion arbennig. Mae llyfrgelloedd Sir Ddinbych yn gweithio'n agos gyda nifer o fudiadau ac yn darparu amryw o wasanaethau a gweithgareddau sy'n darparu ymyrraeth gynnar yn erbyn tlodi, iechyd gwael, ayyb. Byddai lleihad mewn oriau agor yn sicrhau arbedion tymor-byr; ar y llaw arall byddai buddion llyfrgelloedd wrth gefnogi iechyd a llesiant a mynediad i wasanaethau digidol yn lleihad ag o ganlyniad bydd galw'r gymuned ar wasanaethau eraill yn cynyddu gan gynyddu'r gost o'u darparu yn y tymor hir.

Yn ôl Adroddiad Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus 2019-20201 mae Sir Ddinbych yn dathlu fod oriau agor llyfrgelloedd y sir wedi aros yn un fath ers dechrau adrodd ar berfformiad yn erbyn y Fframwaith. Byddai'r toriadau arfaethedig i'r oriau agor yn golygu na fyddai Sir Ddinbych yn gallu adrodd eu bod yn cwrdd â'r hawliau craidd yn llawn.

Er ein bod yn cymeradwyo penderfyniad Cyngor Sir Ddinbych i beidio cau llyfrgelloedd, rydym yn apelio arnynt i ail-ystyried gostyngiad o 50% yn oriau agar a fydd yn cael effaith ar y mwyaf bregus mewn cymdeithas.

Yn gywir,

Sioned Jacques

Swyddog Datblygu Cymuned CILIP Cymru Wales-
CILIP Cymru Wales Community Development Manager

Email/Ebost: Sioned.Jacques@cilip.org.uk

Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg

Happy to communicate in Welsh or English

1. [Welsh public library standards: annual reports 2021 to 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#)
2. [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(full Index update with ranks\): 2019 | GOV.WALES](#)
3. [Public library service annual report 2019 to 2020: Denbighshire | GOV.WALES](#)



Denbighshire Council

Dear Councillors

I am writing on behalf of CILIP Cymru Wales, to urge Denbighshire County Council to consider the impact that cuts to library hours will have on the population of Denbighshire.

CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is the leading independent voice for the UK's information, knowledge management and library profession.

Public libraries are a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and deliver on all seven long-term well-being goals set out in the statutory duty of the Well-being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Public libraries are essential in providing access to books, improving literacy in both Welsh and English, providing core skills for all ages, tackling social isolation, and supporting mental health and wellbeing. Libraries play a key role in supporting the Council's current digital exclusion strategy by providing free access for people unable to get online at home, delivering substantial democratic, social, and economic benefits to citizens and communities, as well as helping people to search and apply for jobs and welfare. Libraries have also been essential warm spaces during the current cost of living crisis.

According to the National Literacy Trust, 1 in 8 adults in Wales lack basic literacy skills. By failing to provide adequate funding for local library services which support digital access and basic skills, Denbighshire Council risks permanently leaving people behind in today's Digital Economy. A key service, offered in all Denbighshire libraries is digital inclusion – access to free use of the internet and computers. In the Welsh Public Library Standards Report for 2021-2022¹ libraries are a key partner in the delivery of Denbighshire County Council's project to reduce digital exclusion. If the proposed cuts are implemented there will be a considerable impact on the Council's ability to reduce digital exclusions as well as improve basic literacy skills. This will result in the education and economic gap of the authority increasing, particularly in those areas of the county that are already economically disadvantaged, such as Rhyl².

In the Welsh Public Library Standards Report for 2021-2022¹ Denbighshire Libraries fully met all 12 of the core entitlements. One core entitlement is to "provide access to a range of services, activities and resources that support learning, personal development and well-being" for all in society including the vulnerable, the elderly, children and individuals and groups with special needs. Denbighshire Libraries work closely with a number of organisations and provide a number of services and activities that give early intervention or prevention for poverty, ill-health, etc.

The reduction in hours may provide short-term saving solutions; however, benefits of the libraries support for health and well-being and digital access will be greatly reduced resulting in an increase in the community's demand for other Council services and therefore an increase in long term costs for those services.

In the Welsh Public Library Standards Report for 2019-2020³ Denbighshire celebrates that library opening hours have remained largely the same as when reporting for the first time on the

Framework. The proposed cuts to hours would mean Denbighshire will no longer be able to report that they have met these criteria in full.

Although we applaud Denbighshire Council's decision not to close libraries, we would appeal for them to reconsider a 50% reduction in opening hours as this will impact the most vulnerable in society.

Yours sincerely,

Sioned Jacques

Swyddog Datblygu Cymuned CILIP Cymru Wales-
CILIP Cymru Wales Community Development Manager

Email/Ebost: Sioned.Jacques@cilip.org.uk

Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg

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2. [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(full Index update with ranks\): 2019 | GOV.WALES](#)
3. [Public library service annual report 2019 to 2020: Denbighshire | GOV.WALES](#)

Dear Councillor Jason McLellan,

I am writing with regards to the current consultation on Denbighshire County Council proposals to cut library opening hours. I write as a librarian (at Aberystwyth University) and as the former Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Relationship Manager for Wales.

I appreciate the increasingly difficult financial position local government is finding itself in across Wales and the complex budgetary decision making that this must involve. I would ask, however, that Denbighshire County Council rethinks the cuts and considers opportunities for continuing to be innovative in its approach to public library provision.

The consideration of access to opening hours in the proposal is very clear but this focus undermines the true value of a library service – especially a successful one like that in Denbighshire. One look at the service's social media demonstrates its role as a vehicle for delivering local government. In October 2023 alone there has been a Dementia Aware memory box event, Bookstart and Rhymetime sessions, a 'Remember When' Cuppa and Chat, a family photo marathon, a Halloween Craft and Chat, a writing workshop, and a book launch and many more activities on top of the ever present electronic and physical resources that the whole community has access to. These activities and collections serve young and old, parents and families. They promote the Welsh language, develop skills and share information about health. You don't have another trusted service that can reach your communities like this. No local authority does.

The integrated library and One Stop Shop Service delivers the face-to-face customer service for the Council, supporting and enabling people who are often the most excluded or disadvantaged to access council services – to make cash payments, to request a service, for help around homelessness, for help to complete benefits forms, to apply online for a Blue Badge. I know first hand that your staffs' skills and empathy are key to providing this service for so many people who face challenges in life – people who will have nowhere else to go if the library isn't open and properly staffed – and this will have an onward impact on social care, housing and health services.

The Welsh Public Libraries Standards show that you successfully use libraries to provide your communities with ICT, E-government support, and literacy and skills training. Via Book Prescription Wales, Better with Books, designated health and well-being collections and local government sign posting you have delivered support for health and well-being. You have committed to your Welsh language collections and continued to offer access to the internet and Wi-Fi.

Although good, these statistics don't explain that it is the skills and dedication of the staff who do so much more than keep a branch open. They engage with your communities - digitally and in person. They work to understand who your communities are and what they need. They share best practice and reach out to collaborate with programs in health and

education. They are the people who will ensure the Council will meet the aims of national government programming, in digital skills for example, or in delivering the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan. It was working on the latter that I relied on staff like yours in Denbighshire to share how the library profession can implement anti-racism in communities.

I understand the pressure to focus on opening hours but I would encourage Denbighshire County Council to be more proactive and to lead in more long term approaches to budget cuts. People appreciate that there is a financial crisis. People also know that reductions in staff result in permanent reductions in service. Staff who survive a crisis like this need to know that there is a future worthy of their investment of energy and passion, where they can contribute professionally, as librarians, to the delivery of local government. This means that as an employer the Council should be focusing on the staff and skills at risk here and how to ensure their survival so that as you emerge from this crisis, your communities find that they still have a dedicated professional service to turn to.

I'm sure that, as the national professional body, CILIP would be very happy to work with you to find a positive path through today's challenges.

Best wishes

Amy Staniforth

Dr A. Staniforth, MCLIP



Cyngor Tref Llangollen Town Council

19 October 2023.

Ms. Liz Grieve
Head of Housing & Communities Service
Denbighshire County Council
PO Box 62
Ruthin
LL15 9AZ.

Dear Ms. Grieve.

Proposals put forward to reduce Denbighshire library hours.

The Members of Llangollen Town Council recently considered the proposals to reduce opening hours in respect of Llangollen library.

Whilst the members were sympathetic with the situation facing the County Council in the forthcoming financial year, they felt that the reduction in services were not acceptable and that the current operation of 37 hours per week was considered a minimum.

Members were also cognisant of the significant importance that the library services offers within the town which is reflected in your Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 objective of a healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire and the desire to promote the safety, resilience and well-being of people of all ages, using strong community networks that enable people to live safely, happily, independently, and receive support when needed and in particular to support the well-being, mental-health and resilience of individuals within communities by ensuring access to the right information, advice and assistance through our Single Point of Access, Community Navigator, and Library Services.

Indeed, it was only last this time last year that the library services were seen to offer a critical role in the provision of warm hubs across the county, which is surely indicative of the vital role they play in serving communities.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Thomas, BSc (Hons), Dip TP, PGDip Tour, CMS, CiLCA, FSLCC.
Clerc y Dref a'r Swyddog Ariannol Cyfrifol.
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Neuadd Y Dref, Llangollen, Sir Ddinbych LL20 8PW
Ffôn 01978 861345

Town Hall, Llangollen, Denbighshire LL20 8PW.
Tel: 01978 861345.

townclerk@llangollentowncouncil.gov.uk



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Rhuddlan Town Council strongly opposes Denbighshire County Council proposals to reduce opening hours at Rhuddlan Library by 50% from 1st April 2024.

The Town Council has always seen the library as one of the key community facilities provided in Rhuddlan by the County Council. This is shown by the fact that the town council provides a contribution of £12,000 a year to help with the library's running costs, this is nearly 20% of the library's costs. The council feels that this strong partnership arrangement is being ignored by the fact that Rhuddlan's library will suffer the same cuts as those libraries where no support is made by a local council.

The proposals for a 50% cut will have a massive negative affect on those residents who use the library and for the wider community. They will also have a negative effect on all of the fantastic work done by the library team, other County Council support teams, the Town Council, residents and community groups; all of which have made the library as successful as it is now.

The proposals will have a negative impact on:

1. **Education** – reduced hours will mean a massive loss in the opportunity for children to visit the library, to borrow books and participate in other educational activities. There will be less opportunities for older people to learn new skills especially IT skills which the library has done significant work in recent years to improve.
2. **Wellbeing of residents** – there will be less opportunity for residents, including older people and vulnerable people, to visit the library to meet friends, read the newspapers, use the internet and more importantly interface with support services to help them. There will be less opportunity for health and wellbeing promotion.
3. **The Welsh Language** – the library makes a major contribution in promoting the Welsh language and culture with its work with Menter Iaith, will this be lost?
4. **Community Engagement** – the library's position as a focal community point within the town will be massively reduced.

The town council strongly believes that the proposals for a 50% cut will massively damage the library's position and all of the years of work done to get it where it is today. The councils' Town Plan includes proposals to work with DCC and the library team to have a museum attached the library; which would be a major development of this facility. Reducing hours by 50% is a massive step backwards.

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Liz Grieve - HoS

From: Amanda Heyward (BCUHB - CAMHS EIPT) <Amanda.Heyward@wales.nhs.uk>
Sent: 26 October 2023 13:20
To: Liz Grieve - HoS
Subject: Library closures / reduced service proposal

FAO : Liz Grieve and Bethan Hughes

I am writing win response to the proposed cuts to library services in Denbighshire within my capacity as Senior Education Mental Health Practitioner for CAMHS School In Reach Service for Conwy and Denbighshire.

Our service offers support to all schools, education staff and learners with their mental health and wellbeing and liaising with local stakeholders. We know first hand of the benefit and value of libraries and the contribution that they have to the mental health and wellbeing of communities and individuals.

We are involved in the provision and distribution of The Reading Well books to all local high schools that cover a range of topics on mental health and wellbeing for young people. These books are also held within local libraries and are a valuable resource contributing to the health and wellbeing of our young people.

The Welsh Assembly Government have highlighted the importance of health and wellbeing being everybody's business, working together within our communities to build a healthy and resilient future generation and workforce. The Whole School Approach Framework legislation further highlights the need for schools to work closely with all local stakeholders within the community for young people in recognition that this provides the best health outcomes for our nation.

We know that community spaces such as libraries can provide a safe space to learn and access information, resources and support for all our young people, particularly so for some of our more vulnerable young people who are unable to access this at home.

I am therefore concerned about the potential negative impact on young people and their mental health and wellbeing if services are reduced by 50% in 2024 as proposed.

I would ask that these concerns are given due consideration and would add that I happy to support in any way we can as a service.

Kind Regards

Amanda Heyward

CAMHS SIRS Senior Education Mental Health Practitioner for Conwy and Denbighshire

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Denbighshire County Council
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
LL15 1YN

Our Ref: JD20890

30 October 2023

To whom it may concern,

I write in response to Denbighshire County Council's public consultation exercise regarding a proposed 50% reduction to the opening hours of all eight of the county's Libraries and One Stop Shops.

I appreciate that this proposal is part of a wider cost-cutting exercise to realise significant savings the council needs to make. However, I am concerned that reducing the operating hours of these vital facilities would incur a significant and detrimental impact on the lives of large numbers of residents who rely on the many services they provide.

Many residents have written to me in opposition to a reduction in library opening hours.

Denbighshire is home to a high proportion of older residents, the socially-isolated, those living in poorly-accessible rural areas and people on low incomes. As DCC's own website promotes, apart from the obvious wide-reaching benefits of book-borrowing and research services, the county's libraries offer residents many other valuable amenities, such as free public internet access and Wi-Fi, photocopying, printing, scanning, and cloud-printing. Some rely on these services to help them look for work or to progress applications for appropriate support.

I have been in contact with people who depend on libraries to maintain contact with their families, friends and services – owing to the good quality internet access. The reduction in library opening hours would prove difficult for those without adequate access to internet at home.

In addition, the One Stop Shops offer help and information about council services, the Blue Badge application service, and cash payment kiosks; these being all the more pertinent now that so many of Denbighshire's council offices and bank branches have closed.

Libraries are an essential tool in the battle against loneliness – whether among the older generation, lone workers, or new parents - providing meeting rooms and co-working spaces and children's rhymetime sessions. It is also important not to forget the voluntary groups and organisations which run their own vital services from within – for example the valued meetings of the reader's group in Rhyl library.

Furthermore, the Welsh Reading Group, Sgwrs a Sangria, promotes the Welsh language as much as our literature, culture, and heritage.

Our libraries served an important function as warm hubs for local people last winter. They provided somewhere people could sit quietly, read or interact with others over a hot drink - a welcome facility for the elderly, in particular, who were worried about their heating bills.

Libraries enable and encourage education, professional and personal development, entertainment, leisure activities, companionship, and more. They connect people with books

but they connect people with people and at no time has that been more crucial than now and nowhere is that more important than here, in Denbighshire. The reduction in service would impact the most vulnerable in our society.

In addition, of course, we must not forget the staff whose livelihoods also depend on these services and would be severely financially impacted by the reduction to their working hours.

In summary, our libraries and One Stop Shops are indispensable, and I firmly oppose the proposition to reduce their opening hours.

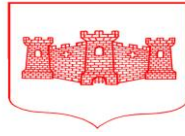
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Davies', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr James Davies MP

CYNGOR TREF RHUTHUN RUTHIN TOWN COUNCIL

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Clerc y Dref / Town Clerk: Iolo Williams

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2 Tachwedd 2023

2 November 2023

Ms. Liz Grieve,
Head of Housing & Communities Service
Denbighshire County Council
Via Email.

Ymateb Cyngor Tref Rhuthun i'r cynnig gerbron y Cabinet i leihau oriau agor y Gwasanaeth Llyfrgell

Ruthin Town Council's response to the proposal before Cabinet to reduce the Library Service opening hours

Trafodwyd y cynnig o doriadau i'r gwasanaeth llyfrgell yn ein cyfarfod o'r Cyngor Tref ar 23 Hydref 2023.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, a oedd yn cynnwys cyfraniad gan y Cyngorydd Emrys Wynne, ac rydym yn ddiolchgar o'r atebion y gallodd eu darparu, byddem yn gwrthwynebu'n gryf y cynnig fel y'i lluniwyd am y rhesymau canlynol.

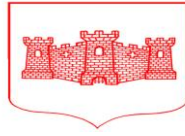
Nid yw'r cynnig yn seiliedig ar dystiolaeth sy'n dangos y defnydd gwirioneddol o'r llyfrgell o ddydd i ddydd. Y cynnig yw cau Llyfrgell Rhuthun ar ddydd Llun, ond mae'r cynllun Dechrau Da (Bookstart) i blant o dan 3 oed, sy'n cael ei gynnal yn y Llyfrgell ar y diwrnod hwnnw, mor boblogaidd fel bod dwy sesiwn bellach yn cael eu cynnal ar ddydd Llun.

Rydym yn pryderu y gall unrhyw ddata a ddarparwyd ynghylch y defnydd o'r llyfrgell fod yn anghywir gan fy mod wedi sylwi bod yr offer cyfrif ymwelwyr wedi ei leoli yr ochr i mewn i ddrws mewnol y llyfrgell ond mae defnyddwyr yr ardal ddarllen a diodydd poeth y tu mewn i'r cyntedd, a defnyddwyr yr offer chwarae yn yr un ardal. Mae'r llyfrgell yn annog pobl i ddychwelyd llyfrau a'u rhoi ar silff yn yr ardal hon hefyd. Ni fydd yr un o'r defnyddwyr hyn yn cael eu cyfrif gan yr offer cyfrif ac rydym yn pryderu y bydd unrhyw ddata o ran defnyddwyr yn artiffisial o isel.

Mae'r llyfrgell yn fwy na llyfrgell yn unig oherwydd bod adrannau eraill o fewn Cyngor Sir Ddinbych, fel y Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid hefyd yn defnyddio cyfleusterau'r llyfrgell, ac rydym yn pryderu y bydd y cynnig hwn yn cael effaith negyddol o ran faint o wasanaethau hanfodol fydd ar gael i'r rheiny sydd eu hangen fwyaf. Byddem hefyd yn pryderu am golli lleoliad ar gyfer y cynllun Croeso Cynnes.

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Clerc y Dref / Town Clerk: Iolo Williams

Pe bai'r cynnig hwn yn cael ei dderbyn, rydym yn pryderu y bydd defnyddwyr Llyfrgell o Rhuthun, nad ydyn nhw'n gyrru, yn wynebu gwasanaeth bws bob awr i Ddinbych, sy'n cymryd dros 25 munud ac weithiau llawer hwy oherwydd y cyfygniadau cyflymder a gyflwynwyd yn ddiweddar. Mae defnyddwyr trafniadaeth gyhoeddus yn ne'r Sir dan anfantais gan fod y gwasanaethau ar y llwybr X51 bob awr lle mae'r gwasanaethau yng ngogledd y Sir ar y llwybr bws 51 bob hanner awr gan wella mynediad at gyfleusterau'n fawr i'r rheiny sy'n byw yn Ninbych ac ymhellach i'r gogledd.

Byddem felly yn annog aelodau'r Cabinet i ailystyried y cynnig hwn gan gydnabod y cyfraniad a'r gwasanaeth pwysig a ddarperir gan y llyfrgell sy'n allweddol i'r gwasanaethau statudol a gynigir gan y Sir, a'r problemau y bydd hyn yn ei achosi i'r rhai mwyaf bregus sy'n dibynnu ar y llyfrgell.

The Library Cuts proposal was discussed at our Town Council Meeting on the 23rd October 2023.

After a debate which included input from Councillor Emrys Wynne, and we are grateful for the answers he was able to provide, we would strongly object to the proposal as drawn for the following reasons.

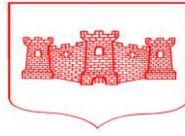
The proposal is not based on evidence which shows the actual day to day usage of the library. The proposal is to close Ruthin Library on a Monday, but such is the popularity of the Bookstart scheme for children under the age of three, held in the Library on that day that two sessions are now held on a Monday.

We are concerned that any data provided regarding usage of the Library may be inaccurate as I have seen that the counting equipment is located within the internal door to the library but there are users of the reading and hot drinks area inside the porch, also users of play equipment in the same area, further the library encourages the returning of books to a shelf in this area too. None of these users will trigger the counting equipment and we are concerned that any usage data will be artificially low

The library is more than just a library in that other departments within Denbighshire County Council, such as Youth Services also use the library facilities, and we are concerned that this proposal will have a negative impact on the availability of essential services to those who need them the most. We would also be concerned at the loss of a Warm Welcome Scheme location.

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We are concerned that Library users from Ruthin who don't drive face an hourly bus service to Denbigh taking upwards of 25 minutes sometimes much longer due to the recently introduced speed limits, should this proposal be accepted. Public Transport users in the South of the County are disadvantaged as the services based on the X51 route are hourly whereas the services in the North of the County based on the 51 bus route are half hourly dramatically improving access to facilities for those living in Denbigh and Northwards.

We would therefore urge Cabinet members to reconsider this proposal recognising the important contribution and service provided by the library as a key to the statutory services offered by the County and the problems this will cause to the most vulnerable who rely on the library.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely
Iolo Williams

Clerc y Dref / Town Clerk

-

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Town Mayor / Maer y Dref: Councillor / Cyngorydd Ms Jacquie L. McAlpine

Town Clerk / Clerc y Dref: Mr Gareth J. Nickels

Ms. Liz Grieve
Head of Housing and Communities Service
Denbighshire County Council

Dear Ms. Grieve

Library and One-Stop Shop's Opening Hours Consultation

The Town Council has considered the current consultation in respect of the proposed reduction of library hours across Denbighshire and particularly in how the proposal will impact on Rhyl residents.

The Town Council recognises and understands the dire financial situation that the County Council finds itself in and understands that inevitably this will necessitate a reduction in some services. The Town Council considers that this situation demands that the County Council evaluates each aspect of its service delivery based on its impact on the community it serves and the relative level of consequences that will result from withdrawing a particular service from specific communities.

The current proposal appears to be an across-the-board reduction with the impact being shared equally amongst the county's library services. There is no indication within the consultation paper of the relative impact that the reductions will have on the respective communities. The Town Council believes that it is imperative that a proper assessment is made of the impact of the reductions on the actual users, and that the County Council subsequently utilises the reduced finances to maximise the benefit and minimise the negative impact on the greater number of residents. There is a real danger that without such an assessment, under the current proposals, individual libraries will operate at below capacity while others will be unable to meet demand.

The Town Council also believes that there needs to be a proper evaluation of how the individual libraries are being utilised by the residents. In this respect the Town Council can only comment upon its own library and from information provided by the Head of Service Ms Grieve for which the Council expresses its appreciation.

Over the 2022/23 financial year the library itself had 58,268 visits of approximately 27,000 residents. This high figure speaks for itself, however 3,984 residents also borrowed or utilised the library's IT systems reflecting the lack of internet access to a significant number of the Rhyl population, where ownership/access to a computer remains an unobtainable luxury. It is known that a sizeable proportion of Rhyl residents rely on these computers for submission of documentation for benefits and other services.

In addition, members believe that the library provides a safe, warm hub during this prolonged period of financial hardship, giving residents the option of being warm within the building rather than having to heat their homes.

The One Stop Shop facility is also an essential resource for residents and its closure on certain days will have a significant negative impact.

While residents in other communities would still be able to access Denbighshire County Council face-to-face, in Rhyl the County's largest town, the library is now the only such face-to-face access available, unlike in other areas.

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places a general duty on library authorities (of which Denbighshire County Council is one), to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof. The same Act also requires that the Library Authority encourages both adults and children to make full use of the library service.

As such the Town Council believes that if the proposals are implemented, the County Council will be in breach of its statutory duty, and therefore it strongly opposes them and believes that if imposed they will disproportionately impact on the Rhyl community.

Yours sincerely



Town Clerk

Dear Liz

Thank you for meeting with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and I to discuss Denbighshire's proposals to reduce library opening hours. As agreed, we have reported back to the City Council at a meeting last night, so it could give its response to the proposals.

As you are aware, for the last six years, the City Council has entered into a service level agreement and paid towards the running costs of the library, so that it could keep the library open. You will know from previous correspondence the City Council has very limited budgets, especially as it manages some 50 acres of open spaces and has just 1500 dwellings to share the precept costs. Nevertheless, the Council is well aware of the benefits the library brings to the community and was prepared to contribute £12,000 per annum to ensure the library service is protected. The City Councillors had always believed that each community council supported its library proportionately in this way, and they were very shocked and disappointed to learn that only one other community council makes this contribution, or is expected to do so. This does seem to be unfair to the council tax-payers of St Asaph as they are paying a double taxation for the library service, which is provided by Denbighshire in other communities at no extra cost, particularly as two very large town councils do not contribute.

The Councillors also noted the usage statistics for St Asaph are better than the average for Denbighshire. St Asaph library is open as a warm hub on Friday afternoons, thanks to the hard work of the staff in setting this up and obtaining grant funding. The Council is very concerned about the impact the proposed reduction in opening hours will have on our residents.

St Asaph City Council has contributed £12,000 per annum for the last six years to protect the library and therefore it does not believe we should be facing the same reduction in service as other community libraries whose councils have contributed nothing. For this reason the City Council has offered the following two options:

1. The City Council will continue to contribute £12,000 per annum on the condition that St Asaph library's opening hours are maintained as at present; or
2. If Denbighshire cuts the library's opening hours, the City Council will withdraw its funding.

Surely, in view of the financial contribution the City Council has made, and can ill afford, option 1 could easily be justified to the other community councils and may indeed encourage them to contribute to their own library in the same manner. The City Council's commitment to its library has been demonstrated by giving this financial support.

Kind Regards

Jill Ellison

Clerk and Finance Officer to St Asaph City Council

Email: clerk@stasaphcitycouncil.gov.uk

Web: www.stasaphcitycouncil.gov.uk

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