

Report To: Communities Scrutiny
Date of Meeting: 24th October 2019
Lead Member / Officer: Cllr Tony Thomas / Alan Smith
Report Author: Helen Vaughan-Evans
Title: Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report is about the Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To provide information regarding the Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project, in particular the new service delivery model proposed.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 For Scrutiny to consider and provide observations on the new service delivery model namely:
- i. Creating a single shared Archive Service with Flintshire County Council, operating over 2 sites to begin with (Ruthin and Hawarden); and
 - ii. Subject to securing National Lottery Heritage Funding, delivering a hub and spoke model- a service “hub” in a new building adjacent to Theatr Clwyd in Mold and “spoke” service delivery through a mix of permanent and temporary community outreach provision.
- 3.2 For options to be drawn up for the utilisation of the potential vacated space at Ruthin Gaol if the proposed single shared archive service and the creation of a ‘hub’ proceeds, and that those options be presented to the Committee for consideration during the summer of 2020.
- 3.3 That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix A) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

- 4.1 This project aims to provide a sustainable and improved archive service for Denbighshire & Flintshire via:
- i. the creation of a single shared service.
 - ii. the construction of a new purpose built Passivhaus building adjacent to Theatr Clwyd, Mold, to house both the physical Archives and the new Service operations
 - iii. an associated 3-year activity plan which will deliver a revolutionary and radical archive offer to the public.
- It is proposed element (i) will be delivered even if element (ii) and (iii) are not. Elements (ii) and (iii) are dependent on National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) funding.
- 4.2 The project is being delivered in collaboration with Flintshire County Council (FCC).

- 4.3 Key milestones include:
- April 2020 - Launch of Single Shared Service for Archive
 - December 2020 - Know for sure if we have secured NLHF grant funding
 - January to August 2021 – Development Phase of project
 - December 2021 – January 2024 – Delivery Phase of project
 - 2022 – 2024 Delivery of 3-year activity plan
- 4.4 This project represents the synergy of need, ambition and opportunity for Denbighshire County Council (DCC).
- 4.5 WHAT WILL THE BENEFITS BE TO DCC?
- 4.5.1 A new archive service and bespoke building (c.3000m²), delivering a service “hub” in a new building adjacent to Theatr Clwyd in Mold and “spoke” service delivery through a mix of permanent and temporary community outreach provision.
- 4.5.2 Permanent outreach provision of Archive services within the 7 libraries across Denbighshire. See Appendix B for a visual of Archive locations currently compared to post project state across Denbighshire. These Archive library points provide a service 6 days a week across the County compared to the current service’s 3 days a week opening in 1 location. An injection of funds via the NLHF Activity Plan to revolutionise our purpose and reach by taking collections and services directly into Denbighshire communities e.g. schools, community centres and care homes, leveraging new partnerships and digital technologies. This will enable the service to diversify its visitor base, increasing the number of volunteers, increasing its digitalisation and outreach and in doing so future proofs the services relevance now and in the future.
- 4.5.3 The delivery of an accommodation solution to the issue of no more repository space in Ruthin Gaol by 2021 and cost avoidance of having to use commercial storage and replace the Environmental Management System and equipment at Ruthin Gaol now coming to the end of its life. The building at Mold will be future proofed in terms of repository size and 80% cheaper to run due to its Passivhaus design providing a simplified and lower carbon solution to deliver strict environmental condition standards.
- 4.5.4 A higher quality facility Archive building within which National treasures relating to Denbighshire can be conserved and showcase via specialised exhibition space. For example, The Cerrigydrudion Crown, 405-380 BCE, currently held in The National Museum Wales and the extensive Welsh language Bible collection which is currently in storage and not accessible for public view.
- 4.5.5 A flexible and learning focused Archive building based in Mold within which Denbighshire schools, higher education colleges, children and adult services and volunteers can receive bespoke outreach activities to deliver outcomes in education, skills, wellbeing and mental health.
- 4.5.6 Access to an in house conservation service and state-of-art conservation suite in the new building ensuring Denbighshire’s collections of local, regional and national significance are properly conserved. Alongside a purpose built repository of BSI and Accreditation standard ensuring the Council discharges its statutory duties.

4.5.7 The ability for Denbighshire to access an additional resource- 10 more members of staff- via the combined service to deliver on its statutory duty as well as its ambitions for increased digitalisation, community outreach provision in addition to reducing the likelihood of unplanned closures at the existing archive centre and increased opening hours at the new archive centre (once opened).

4.6 PLANS FOR RUTHIN GAOL

4.6.1 Ruthin Gaol will continue as a visitor attraction. The vacation of the Archive service from Ruthin Gaol provides an opportunity for the Heritage Attraction, currently occupying 30% of the site, to significantly expand its current offer. The visitor attraction is managed and operated by the Countryside and Heritage Service and currently receives 11,000 visitors per year. Options for the developing and expanding this attraction, maximising the opportunity of utilising more space, are currently being explored including analysis of cost and potential return. The Council currently has a large number of museum exhibits and artefacts held in storage and these could form the basis of a new museum offer for the town and in doing so potentially increase visitor numbers as well as the length of their visit.

4.6.3 Other options include potential partnerships with external organisations in developing and marketing the site as an attraction and looking at an additional usage of the space by other services.

5. **How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1 The project contributes to the following priorities (please see appendix C):

- *“The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience”* and *“Offer young people the opportunity to develop skills for life and work through volunteering opportunities and meaningful work experience.”*
- *“The environment is attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity”* and *“Climate and Ecological Emergency”*
- *“The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015”*

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

6.1 The estimated cost of delivering this project is £16,650,344; of which DCC would be asked to contribute £2,034,521 (12%). The project as is will only go ahead if £11,588,041 (70%) NLHF Heritage Horizons grant monies is secured.

6.2 It is estimated the project will generate an additional £12,150 per annum in income. The total estimated figure of cost avoidance is £2,000 per annum from 2021/22 moving to £15,000 per annum (commercial storage) and a one off cost of >£640,000 (replacement of environmental management system and building improvements).

6.3 Impact on other services as follows:

- Legal – support required in drawing up legal documentation relating to the creation of a single shared service.
- HR- support required in creation of a single shared service.
- Archive- engagement with the design process and working across 2 counties.
- Countryside Services – the vacation of Archive service from Ruthin Gaol providing an opportunity for Heritage Attraction currently occupying 30% of the site.
- Strategic Assets – the requirement to manage the Ruthin Gaol site in a different way and advise on the occupation of an asset outside County boundaries.

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

7.1 Please see appendix A for impact summary and full WIA report.

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

8.1 Reports have been presented to Cabinet Briefing (November 2018, October 2019) and Asset Management Group (July 2019). Specific engagement meetings have been had with internal political and operational stakeholders within DCC and consultation will be ongoing.

8.3 Externally the following have been engaged with: Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Theatr Clwyd, The National Archive (TNA) and The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

8.4 Consultation and engagement with our key funder NLHF, archive users and traditionally non users and activity plan delivery partners will be ongoing. So far the public have been engaged as follows:

- Stand and questionnaire at the Flint and Denbigh Show (08/ 2019)
- Public Briefing and online questionnaire launched via social media (09/ 2019)

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 As part of the assessment of this project and its level of prioritisation due regard should be taken of the benefits of the project around cost avoidance, partnership working, leverage of £11.6m external funding and improvements to service provision. However as can be seen in the report there is a need to identify how DCC's prudential borrowing costs of approximately £123k annually could be funded if Members choose to prioritise this project. Although further work will continue to identify savings the following options have been identified:

- As the majority of the spend falls in 2022/23 and 2023/24 which is beyond the current Corporate Plan Members could choose to reallocate unspent Base Budget which currently remains within the Corporate Plan funding assumptions due to changes to the re-profiling of some projects.
- Members could approve the acceptance of a growth pressure which would be placed in the Medium Term Financial Plan from 2023/24. This would impact on the savings required for that year.

The decision is very much one of prioritisation. Allocation of funds to this project from either source will in essence either limit funding available for other future projects or increase the budget gap which can only be funded by either increasing Council Tax or making service savings.

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

10.1 The top 5 risks for the project as outlined in Appendix D.

11. Power to make the Decision

11.1 The report is not asking for a decision to be made.

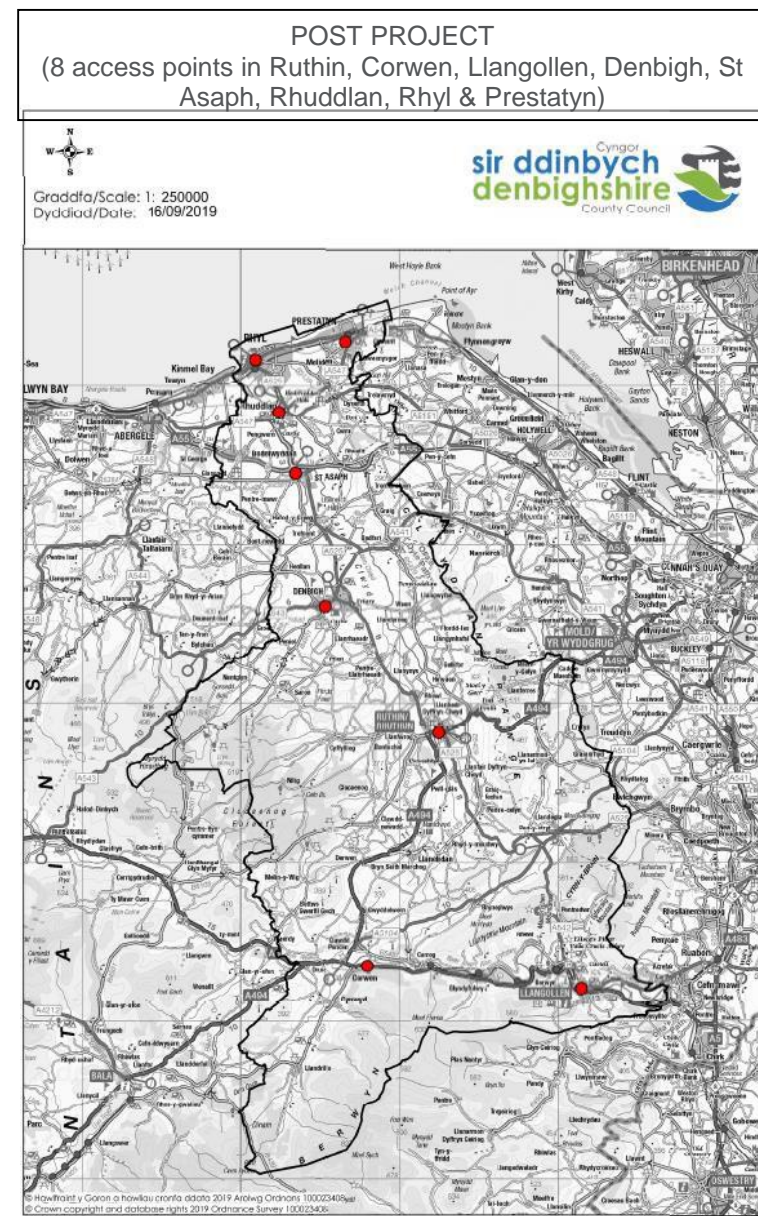
Appendix A – Wellbeing Impact Assessment Report

The assessment of the Well-being Impact Assessment as developed via facilitated workshop on 11th September 2019 was as follows:

- A prosperous Denbighshire and Flintshire - Positive
- A resilient Denbighshire and Flintshire - Neutral
- A healthier Denbighshire and Flintshire – Positive
- A more equal Denbighshire and Flintshire- Positive
- A Denbighshire and Flintshire of cohesive communities- Positive
- A Denbighshire and Flintshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language- Positive
- A globally responsible Denbighshire and Flintshire – Neutral

Please see separate PDF report for full wellbeing impact assessment report.

Appendix B – Current access points to Archive Service compared to number of access points created by the project



Appendix C- Contribution to Corporate Priorities

PRIORITY	CONTRIBUTION
<p><i>“The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience”</i></p> <p><i>“Offer young people the opportunity to develop skills for life and work through volunteering opportunities and meaningful work experience.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project will support people to access information that supports people’s independence and resilience and help to shape their communities. The vision for the Joint Archive Service is: “Harnessing the power of our shared documentary heritage to promote education, well-being and identity for the people and communities of North-East Wales.” • Although the new archive centre will represent a key part of the joint service, it only represents a small part of the transformation with a major shift to focussing on community engagement through local hubs, the 3rd sector and other partners. This will be supported via an increase in digital offerings. • Pilot and embed resilience through a three-year programme of vibrant engagement with target audiences including young people and low-income groups, enabling local people to delve into collections on their own terms in ways that bring value to them e.g. creating shared experiences; developing learning and knowledge; supporting mental wellbeing in a safe, welcoming environment; informing and affirming identity through personal understanding of the past and the heritage of the Welsh language. This will support our Corporate Plan priority “Resilient Communities” by working with people and communities to build independence and resilience. • Nurture our communities’ skills and experience through extensive volunteer and apprenticeship opportunities. This will support our Corporate Plan priority “Resilient Communities” and “Young People” by working with people and communities to build independence and resilience and offering young people the opportunity to develop skills for life and work through volunteering opportunities and meaningful work experience.
<p><i>“The environment is attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity”</i></p> <p><i>“Climate and Ecological Emergency”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project will contribute to reducing carbon emissions from Council assets by moving the archive operation from a retrofit listed building to a purpose built Passivhaus building. Stringent BSI standards must be adhered in housing archival materials. The operation of a building to these standards comes at a significant cost when an archive function is retrofitted into existing buildings. The building of a purpose built archive site built to Passivhaus represents the opportunity to reduce annual running costs and therefore carbon emissions by 80%.

PRIORITY	CONTRIBUTION
<p><i>The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint archive service covering both Denbighshire and Flintshire will help to deliver the long-term creation of a resilient, relevant combined service: delivering into the heart of its communities to support skills, involvement, mental health, identity and community cohesion; securing historic collections, diversifying audiences, volunteers and depositors.

Appendix D- Top 5 risks for the project

Title	Inherent Risk	Mitigating Action	Residual Risk
Cannot secure Grant Funding for the project	1C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and continued engagement with NLHF • Appointing external consultancy to assist us with the grant application process • Ensuring synergy with our plans and NLHF objectives • Preparing well for EOI presentation 	1D
Cannot secure Match Funding for the project	1C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and continued engagement with finance stakeholders in FCC and DCC • Meeting with political members and key stakeholders in FCC and DCC • Clear and robust business case • Realistic repayment strategy for any prudential borrowing • Explore other options of funding and or repaying the debt • Exploring options for the surplus space at Ruthin Gaol and presenting positive scenarios for this site 	1B
Failure to gain overall staff support for the new service model	1C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing consultation / communication with Staff • Comprehensive Communications Plan / Strategy 	1D
Delays in obtaining permits/ permissions for the Build	2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful planning on implementation including application for any Permits in good time • Commencing Design / Planning work/consultations in good time • Allowing float to cope with any time overruns in process 	2D

Title	Inherent Risk	Mitigating Action	Residual Risk
Surplus space at Ruthin Gaol	2A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued engagement with Ruthin residents and local members • Clearly communicating the hub and spoke model of service delivery for the Archive service • Installing permanent and temporary service offerings in Ruthin-building costs within Activity Plan • Progressing talks with external partners around the ongoing operation of the site as a tourist attraction • Developing options for the site with Countryside and Heritage Management Team 	4A