



CYNGOR TREF Y  
**RHYL**  
TOWN COUNCIL

Our Ref / Ein Cyf: D01/Dcc/011123

Your Ref / Eich Cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

Town Mayor / Maer y Dref: Councillor / Cynghorydd 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 Rhyll 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.

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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

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