

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

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (attached as Annex B).
- 8.3 Section 8 and appendices 3, 4, 5 & 6(a) to (i) of the Cabinet report dated 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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