



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2012

**SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO REOPEN ABERBARGOED LIBRARY, PANT STREET
INCORPORATING A MULTI-AGENCY INFORMATION AND RESOURCE
CENTRE**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- (I) Seek the views of Members with regard to the proposal to reopen the former Library at Pant Street, Aberbargoed and to further develop the facility as a Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

2.1 The reopened Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street with its proposed range of additional services will support the needs of children, families, and older residents in the immediate area and further afield. The facility will contribute positively to a number of the Council's core priorities and strategies including:

- Library Development Plan
- Flying Start Programme Strategic Plan
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Community Strategy
- Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy

3. REPORT

3.1 BACKGROUND

3.1.1 Further to the Cabinet report of Dec 13th 2011 on the future of Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street' the Library provision delivered at this site ceased on March 9th 2012.

3.1.2 Following the closure of the Pant Street Library the take up of services by Aberbargoed residents at the Hanbury Road Chapel, Bargoed has been closely monitored. Some 88 Aberbargoed residents joined the Library at Hanbury Road Chapel since the Pant Street site closed in March 2012 whilst only 38 customers, who had registered previously at Aberbargoed Library, have used any facility in the intervening period.

3.1.3 As part of the formal reporting and decision making process to close Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken. A number of support

measures introduced as a result of the EIA have received little or no community take up since their introduction.

3.2 PROPOSAL

3.2.1 To reopen Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street and to further develop the site as a Multi Agency Information and Resource Centre. The Library component of this joint use facility would include book and non-book resources targeted at children, parents/carers, young people, and older residents.

3.2.2 The Library at Pant Street, Aberbargoed would open for 25 hours per week with a dedicated Senior Library Assistant. Office space within the Multi Agency Information and Resource Centre would be available to Flying Start teams and other related project staff outside of the Library opening times, as and when needed.

3.2.3 The Centre would house a team of three Flying Start Health Visitors, and provide hot desk provision for Flying Start and childcare staff. The Pant Street site would also include a learning suite to complement the provision delivered at the Hangar Youth and Community Centre, Aberbargoed.

3.2.4 The proposed Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre would support the provision of Flying Start services in Bargoed and three expansion areas in Markham and parts of Cefn Forest and Pengam.

3.2.5 The reopened Aberbargoed Library, incorporating a Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre, would be used for a range of additional activities including HENRY (Health exercise and nutrition for the really young) delivered within the newly developed IT suite. The Centre would also be used to provide drop in sessions and activities including the Family Information Service.

3.2.6 In order to deliver the proposals detailed in this report the following modifications and improvements will be required to the Pant Street facility:

- General building works in line with the sites Condition Survey
- Redecoration and refurbishment in line with the Library provision proposed and multi-agency service requirements noted
- Internal modifications to create an open plan Library and learning space and two inter-linked office areas
- Enhanced IT provision including a self-service kiosk to support Library borrowing and return alongside the staff presence noted in 3.2.2
- Improved staff welfare facilities

It is important to note that the Pant Street site has been vacated of all equipment, furniture, and resources. Essential services, including water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications have all been terminated and would need to be reconnected.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The reopening of Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street and the further development of a Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre within this site will support equality of access to services both with regard to the work of the Flying Start project across the areas served and through the re-establishment of publicly accessible community learning and Library facilities within the building.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The estimated cost of bringing the building to a suitable condition for re-use as a Library, and

to incorporate a Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre, is a “one off” Capital works of £83,420 and ongoing revenue fees of £33,263 per annum detailed as follows:

Capital

Building works	Reconnection of essential services	Internal Refurbishment	New stock	IT (inc Self Service)	TOTAL
£35,000	£13,420	£10,000	£10,000	£15,000	£83,420

Revenue

National Non Domestic Rates	Cleaning	Broadband link (BT Learning Stream)	Staffing	TOTAL
£2,000	£2,500	£3,119	£25,644	£33,263

- 5.2 The one off capital costs can be funded from a projected revenue surplus for 2012/13 of just under £400,000 in respect of the revised timescales for the opening of the Caerphilly library.
- 5.3 The on-going revenue costs of this library can be funded by moving budget from Home to school transport where a surplus of £400,000 is anticipated for 2012/13.

6. PERSONNEL ISSUES

- 6.1 A Senior Library Assistant, grade 6, will be employed for 27 hrs per week.
- 6.2 A Library Assistant will be employed on a seasonal basis to support the Senior Library Assistant, in particular during School holidays, and will cover the facility when the site manager is on leave.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member for Education, Lifelong Learning, and Leisure is in agreement with the recommendations of this report.
- 7.2 Local Members, Cllr. Alan Higgs and Cllr. Keith Reynolds Deputy Leader, have been consulted with regard to this Report and are also in agreement with its recommendations.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is recommended that members endorse the proposal to reopen Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street, and further develop the facility as a Multi-Agency Information and Resource Centre.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The multi-agency nature of the provision proposed would facilitate the reopening of Aberbargoed Library, alongside other Council partners and complementary services.

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Background Papers:

Council November 2003 - Future Library Service for Caerphilly County Borough Council

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee 2nd June 2009. Caerphilly County Borough Council Library Service –Five Year Development Plan 2009-14

Cabinet 9th June 2009. Caerphilly County Borough Council Library Service –Five Year Development Plan 2009-14

Cabinet 13th December 2011. Library Services to Smaller Communities – Future of Aberbargoed Library, Pant Street.

Education Senior Management Team 26th June 2012. Flying Start Programme Strategic Plan 2012-15.