

DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

DATE OF DECISION 13 October 2021

DATE DECISION PUBLISHED 27 October 2021

DATE DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE and implemented,
unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of
the Gwynedd Council Constitution **3 November 2021**

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas

Cabinet Member – Economy and Community

SUBJECT: Review of the Mobile Libraries Service

DECISION: Review the Mobile Service to operate a different model of service provision, that is a Home and Delivery Service, provided by 2 or 3 smaller vehicles (electric/hybrid vans), each with a driver for Arfon/Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

REASON WHY THE DECISION IS NEEDED

Please see attached officer report

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

None

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Consultation with
Gwynedd Council Statutory Officers

The results of the consultations are reported upon in the attached report

DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S CABINET – OFFICER'S REPORT

Name and title of Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr. Gareth Thomas Cabinet Member – Economy and Community
Name and title of the Report's Author:	Nia Gruffydd Libraries Service Manager
Date Decision was Taken:	13.10.2021
Cabinet Member's Signature:	

Subject: Review of the Mobile Libraries Service

Recommendation for the Decision:

Review the Mobile Service to operate a different model of service provision, that is a Home and Delivery Service, provided by 2 or 3 smaller vehicles (electric/hybrid vans), each with a driver for Arfon/Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

The reason for the need for the Decision:

1. During the period of the pandemic (since restoring services in July 2020), we have been able to provide the Mobile service with three drivers and three smaller vehicles, offering i) A monthly Home Library service for users and ii) An on-demand book delivery service for anyone who lives in Gwynedd. This can include reading packs prepared by staff members or requests for particular books.
2. In a staff consultation held in November 2020 (a response rate of 66%), 90% of Gwynedd Libraries staff indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that Gwynedd Libraries should be offering an on-request delivery service for anyone who wished to receive it.
3. In a user consultation held in December-January 2021, it was asked - Would you like the Book Delivery service to be available in the future - even after libraries re-open? Out of 134 responses, 83% responded that they would like the service to continue to be available. (87% if only on-line responses are considered)
4. In an engagement exercise with registered users of the Mobile Home and Delivery Service conducted between May-July 2021 ([Appendix 1](#)), it was found that 75% of the registered users who aren't currently regular users were happy with the proposed change to the service model, 14% were not happy and 11% did not see the need to respond as they no longer require the service for multiple reasons or their sight has worsened to the point they can no longer read print books.

5. In the same exercise, it was found that 99% of registered current users and current users who receive the Delivery Service were happy with the change in the service, and 1% were unhappy.
6. Having completed the engagement exercise and every effort possible taken to engage with all our users, it is deemed that the best option is to provide a new model of provision based on the Home and Delivery Service that will meet the needs of most of the people of Gwynedd and will be the most effective way of using staff resources and also considering the impact on the climate.

Rationale and justification for reaching the Decision:

1. During the period of the pandemic (since restoring services in July 2020), we have been able to provide the Mobile service on-demand for any user who can't visit their usual library. To enable us to provide this service, the Mobile service was adjusted by using three drivers and three smaller vehicles, and offering a monthly Home Library service for users and an on-demand book delivery service for anyone living in Gwynedd. This can include reading packs prepared by staff members or requests for particular books
2. Covid restrictions and Risk Assessments meant that it was very hard to get a number of users on the Mobile vehicles at a time. For this reason, the larger vehicles were taken out of service and smaller vehicles were used to provide the service.
3. An Impact Assessment was undertaken on this new service - Gwynedd Libraries Home Delivery Service - Phase 1 Service Restoration after Covid-19
4. The use of the Mobile element of the service has reduced over the years, with drivers reporting a reduction in the number of users that visit the mobile waiting areas over recent years.
5. The profile of the users who use the mobile waiting areas show that many of them are older users and they would be eligible to receive the Home delivery Service.
6. With the Council's focus on reducing carbon emissions, the Mobile vehicles are heavy on diesel and by now alternative modes of providing the service on a more environmentally friendly basis need to be considered.
7. The Home Delivery Service has proven to be popular amongst users but we can't provide it in the future without reviewing the Mobile service so that the service's resources are used in the most effective way possible.
8. The report recommends that the current arrangements should continue and therefore there is no change that will have an effect on the findings of the Equality Assessment prepared originally for setting up the system.

Record of any personal interest by any Cabinet Member consulted and any dispensations approved by the Standards Committee:

None

Any consultations undertaken prior to making the decision:

Chief Finance Officer:

"I understand that the change in the service submitted on the decision sheet here isn't asking for any additional resources. Therefore, I support the decision that offers improvement in a service for Gwynedd residents and reduces carbon emissions."

Monitoring Officer:

"No comments to add regarding propriety."

Local Member/s: Not a local matter

APPENDIX 1

Public: Consultation conducted with service users

ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE REPORT: REVIEW OF THE MOBILE LIBRARIES SERVICE

A report was drawn up for a meeting of the Management Team on the 9th of February 2021 to seek guidance on changing our model of providing the Mobile Service for the people of Gwynedd.

On the 15th of April Gwynedd Council's Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee accepted the report to review the Mobile Service, and to note the comments submitted in the meeting. The recommendation was to adopt option 1 in the report as the best provision and operating model for the Mobile Library Service in the future, following the consultation with users.

The change means a (monthly) Home and Delivery Service provided by 3 smaller vehicles (electric/hybrid vans), each with a driver for: -

1. Arfon
2. Dwyfor
3. Meirionnydd

Following the retirement of a driver in the next 1-2 years, a (monthly) Home and Delivery Service provided by 2 smaller vehicles (electric/hybrid vans), each with a driver for: -

1. Arfon/Dwyfor
2. Meirionnydd

Engagement process conducted with service users regarding this change, between May and July 2021.

Three modes of engagement were chosen, namely:

1. Correspondence with users who used the Mobile Home and Delivery Service in the period 01/01/2019 to 18/02/2021 but who were not regular current users
2. Sending an on-line questionnaire to users with an email address who used the Mobile Service in the period 01/01/2019 to 18/02/2021 but who were not regular current users.
3. Question all present users of the Home and Delivery Service face to face.

A copy of the questionnaire sent via 1 and 2 above, can be seen in Appendix A:

The questions asked in the face to face engagement exercise were:

Do you believe that this service will meet your requirements?

Below, are two tables which collate the engagement results, where answers from procedure 1 and 2 were pulled together, and then combined with results from procedure 3 to create a table to show the whole engagement.

Total number of questionnaires sent by letter or on-line was 366 with 83 responses received, a response rate of 20%.

TABLE OF RESPONSES BY LETTER AND ON-LINE	Responses	Agree	Disagree	Not relevant
Meirionnydd	34	23	5	6
Dwyfor	34	29	4	1
Arfon	15	10	3	2
Total	83	62	12	9
Percentage	100%	75%	14%	11%
Total number of letter responses	74	57	8	9
Total number of on-line responses	9	5	4	0
Total responses	83	62	12	9
Questionnaires sent by letter	331			
On-line questionnaires	35			
Total number of people asked	366			
Percentage	20%			

Total number of questionnaires sent by letter or on-line or engaged with face to face was 497 with 214 responses received, a response rate of 43%.

TABLE OF RESPONSES BY LETTER AND ON-LINE AND FACE TO FACE	Responses	Agree	Disagree	Not relevant
Meirionnydd	94	82	6	6
Dwyfor	70	65	4	1
Arfon	50	45	3	2
Total	214	192	13	9

Percentage	100%	90%	6%	4%
Total number of letter responses	74	57	8	9
Total number of on-line responses	9	5	4	0
Total number of face to face responses	131	130	1	0
Total responses	214	192	13	9
Questionnaires sent by letter	331			
On-line questionnaires	35			
Face to face questionnaires	131			
Total number of people asked	497			
Percentage	43%			

It was found that 75% of the registered users who aren't present regular users are happy with the proposed change to the service model provided, 14% aren't happy and 11% don't see the need to respond as they no longer need the service for multiple reasons or their sight has worsened to the point they can no longer read print books.

Considering the results of the registered users and the present users (that receive the Home and Delivery service), it was found that 90% are happy with the changes to the service, 6% are unhappy and 4% don't see the need to respond for the reasons noted.

We believe that the engagement by now is completed and that every effort possible was taken to engage with all our users. Based on the responses received, we believe that the option to provide a new model of provision on the basis of a Home and Delivery Service will meet the needs of most of the people of Gwynedd.

These were some observations made through the three engagement procedures:

Engagement Questionnaire Letter

“I have not used the mobile service for some years as I attend the library in Dolgellau due to being able to now that I have no young children at home which was when I used the mobile service last.”

"I like to browse in the books that are in the van. Despite this, Bob, the Librarian was very good at choosing books for me over a temporary period when I had surgery. I live halfway between Aberdyfi and Pennal and I don't see a library van coming up the hill 1/2 a mile from the main road."

"no opportunity to browse and choose a subject I wouldn't normally see. I would miss the social [...] of hearing others talk about new books..."

"I welcome the change due to mobility difficulties, I can't use the Mobile service. I'm a regular user of the books and the on-line audio books - I appreciate it greatly and also the e-magazines service. MANY THANKS!"

"Part of the pleasure of visiting the mobile library is being able to browse the shelves and choose books myself. It would be a great shame to lose this,"

"Don't read anymore"

On-line Engagement Questionnaire.

"My mum depends on the mobile library calling monthly. She doesn't want to phone to request and isn't on the internet. The gentleman in the library van helps her choose books."

"I haven't used the mobile library for some time as I prefer going to the library in Dolgellau as more choice is available there."

"I use a computer to choose and order books which I have done when we used to have the mobile coming so it will be just the same for me."

"I preferred choosing books from the van, chatting with the driver & local people I didn't normally see. I looked forward to its visit & enjoyed that facility, it was part of a lovely routine which I miss."

Face to face engagement

"I am totally happy with the service and am very thankful. Wil is very kind. He has made a big difference to people like me who are unable to go to the Library."

"Could not be better, without this Service I would be lost, many, many thanks, great staff"

"Thank you for your service over the Pandemic."

"I find that choosing off the internet and providing the driver with the list is more convenient."

"I like this service very much - excellent."

"Exceptionally pleased with the librarian's choice of books"

"With big thanks - I appreciate your good service, which provides comfort to us as readers. A big thanks to you from the bottom of my heart."

"The service of distributing books is excellent, thank you very much."

“We really do appreciate seeing our Library man – Wil every week bringing our books and CDs for us. Thank you.”

“How you have made a miserable life so much more tolerable this last year.”

"Excellent service over the years. No, complaints at all. Dafydd is polite and is always ready to help."

“Don’t know what I would have done without books during lockdown.”

“I couldn’t do without the Library”