

Engagement with the Communities of North Ayrshire to help shape the future role of Libraries, Halls and Community Centres across North Ayrshire

Consultation Launch– 5 March 2021

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<p>Q1</p>	<p>What was the outcome of the previous consultation exercise the Council carried out on Libraries, Halls and Community Centres?</p> <p>The previous consultation exercise was paused due to the General Election and furthermore could not proceed due to the pandemic which stuck in March 2020. The feedback from both stage 1 and 2 consultation exercises has helped inform the Plan which has now been developed.</p>
<p>Q2</p>	<p>Where can I find the feedback on the previous consultation exercises?</p> <p>We have published this information at Shaping North Ayrshire - Your Voice Your View (communitychoices.scot)</p>
<p>Q3</p>	<p>Why is the Council undertaking a further consultation exercise?</p> <p>The aim of the previous consultation and engagement exercise was to gather the views on what mattered most to communities and what our communities' views were on exploring a range of options associated with Libraries, Halls and Community Centres.</p> <p>This consultation now presents our proposed plan for each property and seeks your views on the Plan and what it means to you.</p>
<p>Q4</p>	<p>How long is the consultation running?</p> <p>It is running for 9 weeks from the 5th of March to the 5th May 2021.</p>
<p>Q5</p>	<p>Can I speak to someone in person who can talk me through the plan in more detail or can I email my enquiry?</p> <p>If you are unable to access the on-line option, you can call 01294 31000 for a call back request and an officer will take you through the plan and set of questions. Our phone lines will be open from 6th April – 6th May, Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm.</p> <p>You can also email CommunityFacilities@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p> <p>The recommended option is to access the consultation on Consul at Shaping North Ayrshire - Your Voice Your View (communitychoices.scot) as this will give you the opportunity to see the whole Plan and supplementary information.</p>
<p>Q6</p>	<p>Can I post my comments online?</p>

	Yes, the full consultation and Plan is available at Shaping North Ayrshire - Your Voice Your View (communitychoices.scot)
Q7	<p>When are the proposed changes going to be implemented?</p> <p>We do not have a timeframe for changes to be implemented. We want to work with user groups, Community Associations and partners around any changes to the service provision. The pace and timescale for changes will vary for each facility. We would like to work in partnership with stakeholders to design the implementation plans.</p>
Q8	<p>How will the results of this consultation inform the plan?</p> <p>You have the opportunity to share your views, and suggestions on the proposals for each building and service. Your views and all feedback will be taken into consideration when a final report is developed and taken to Council on 9 June 2021.</p>
Q9	<p>How will services currently operating in halls, centres, libraries change in the proposed plan?</p> <p>If the Plan is approved the nature of changes will vary from building to building. If, for example, it has been approved to bring services together our intention is to speak to representative groups and Community Associations to co-design the new delivery model with your views and thoughts considered.</p>
Q10	<p>Will the buildings look and feel different?</p> <p>This may be the case particularly in the scenario of co-locations (when more services come together in one place) but we anticipate any changes made will improve the facility and provide a better customer experience. We will consult with stakeholders on any changes internally to the buildings.</p>
Q11	<p>How much money is being saved from the plans?</p> <p>There has been no target set for savings against the Plan. The Plan is being driven by best practice examples, to reduce the number of assets the Council is directly operating and to secure and support vital services into the future.</p>
Q12	<p>How much will it cost to implement this new model?</p> <p>This is not yet clear since the proposals for Council are yet to be agreed. There will be costs in terms of building changes and the costs of staff changes, however, these will be recovered in time.</p>
Q13	<p>What will happen to the buildings the Service no longer proposes to operate?</p> <p>Our colleagues within Economic Development have been looking into alternative and longer term uses for some of the buildings not identified as part of our Plan. This work will continue to identify realistic and feasible options to re-purpose the buildings we propose to release.</p>

<p>Q14</p>	<p>Will the opening times for Community Centre, Hall or Library change?</p> <p>This depends on the proposal detailed on the Plan for specific buildings.</p> <p>If the Plan is agreed, it is anticipated that most libraries will have different opening hours to meet the changing way services are delivered across North Ayrshire</p>
<p>Q15</p>	<p>What is wrong with the current way that libraries, halls and community centres operate?</p> <p>We do not think there is anything fundamentally wrong with the traditional service delivery model we operate at present however, we strongly believe we have an opportunity to improve the way we deliver services in future to the benefit of local communities.</p>
<p>Q16</p>	<p>What consideration has been given to transport challenges?</p> <p>We have mapped out the geographical locations of all our Libraries, Community Halls and Centres and have considered the data on travel distances when the Plan was developed. In addition to this full equality impact assessments will be completed on the plan for following the June Cabinet meeting.</p>
<p>Q17</p>	<p>How did you select which halls, libraries and community centres would continue to operate?</p> <p>We have considered all existing properties, the condition, the cost, the usage, the location, the space and the future service delivery requirements to shape the proposed Plan.</p>
<p>Q18</p>	<p>What other options have been considered?</p> <p>We completed a year-long review of Halls, Centres and Libraries with representatives from each of the political parties and the North Ayrshire Federation of Community Organisations in 2018. In 2019 we explored which services people valued having local access to and which buildings they went to receive them. This led to many community conversations and we developed the options with communities. These options were discussed with communities in autumn 2019.</p>
<p>Q19</p>	<p>How are you making sure that communities in different parts of North Ayrshire aren't disproportionately affected?</p> <p>We have worked on an approach of providing access to services in each of our communities, often by co-locating services. By bringing services, like the provision of activity space and library services, together in one community building we can ensure local access is maintained while reducing the number of council buildings. Many of our buildings are dedicated to the delivery of one service even though the public have already provided feedback that they understand the need for co-location. The consultation will ask about impacts so that we fully understand the position before we put proposals to the Council in June 2021.</p>
<p>Q20</p>	<p>How have you considered the specific requirements of island communities?</p>

	<p>Yes. As we assessed the feedback from the previous engagements, we simultaneously looked carefully at other local services / community resources and what was available to the local communities. This was particularly important for the island communities where alternative access may be limited, travel not an option and other local resources limited. Based on the learning of the past 12 months, we also considered some of the very unique and specific needs of our island communities and how community facilities can assist and support developments.</p>
Q21	<p>What support is available for groups who might be interested in Community Asset Transfer leading to full ownership or long term lease?</p> <p>The Council have a successful programme to assist and support groups interested in Community Asset Transfers (CAT). Any groups interested will be guided through the stages of a CAT and will be supported throughout by a Single Point of Contact who will be appointed from the staff team.</p> <p>Detail of the process can be accessed at Community Asset Transfer (north-ayrshire.gov.uk)</p>
Q22	<p>What is the difference between CAT and a regular lease?</p> <p>Going through the CAT process means that any group who have been successful will either own the building outright or have secured a long lease on the building - depending on what they choose</p> <p>When the ownership of a building is transferred via a CAT, it is then “owned” by a group. This means that the group have the autonomy to do what they need to do to the facility for it to be fit for purpose e.g. renovating, or re-configuring space. A lease is a bit like a private let and means any alterations to the building will require permission in advance.</p> <p>The cost of the purchase or the value of the lease will potentially be less than the market value as it will reflect the community benefits that having the building in community ownership will have for the local citizens.</p>
Q23	<p>What are the benefits of a CAT or Lease under CAT?</p> <p>Although there is a process to follow and criteria to meet under the CAT process that are not necessary under a regular lease arrangement, the cost of the purchase or the value of the lease will potentially be less than the market value as it will reflect the community benefits that having the building in community ownership will have for the local citizens.</p>
Q24	<p>How can I find out more about key holding?</p> <p>The Community Facilities Team can assess and assist organisations who wish to be considered as key holders. We have an established set of procedures to enable groups and Community Associations to carry out key holding duties safely and effectively. To find out more you can email: communityfacilities@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p>
Q25	<p>Will I still be able to have a lot of my Community Centre?</p>

	<p>This is dependent on the Plan for the building you currently let. If the Plan states that the future use of the building is to provide Community Space then yes, access to the community for letting will still be a service provided.</p>
Q26	<p>Will groups be displaced as a result of other services operating at a Community Hall or Centre?</p> <p>We would hope not, if the Plan is approved we will work with existing organisations and user groups to ensure that suitable space is identified and secured.</p>
Q27	<p>I belong to an organisation that is looking for accommodation, what support is available?</p> <p>If you are looking for a let you can email communityfacilities@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p> <p>If you are looking for permanent and exclusive use of a space or building please contact the CAT team via email communityassetteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p>
Q28	<p>I want to know how much it costs to run a building, where can I get that information?</p> <p>This information can be provided if you email communityfacilities@north-ayrshire.gov.uk</p>
Q29	<p>What is meant by a “Community Hub” and “Locality Hub”?</p> <p>Community hubs most commonly operate out of buildings from which multi-purpose, community-led services are delivered. Community hubs often host other partners and access to public services. These co-location approaches are an efficient and effective use of resources. Community hubs are in themselves a good use of local assets, and the model can help to underpin an enterprising and resilient community resource. The design and programming will be created in a co-production model working closely with Community Associations and management groups to ensure that the needs of the community are at the heart of the design process.</p> <p>A locality hub is where there is a full-time North Ayrshire Council staff presence. The council’s proposal for locality hubs will be in premises that are accessible, high quality and versatile. There will still be spaces in some hubs to enable activities and programmes to be delivered and letting spaces. Any office space available will be maximised by Council staff and local voluntary and community sector organisations. Also, in some hubs this will include HSCP colleagues. They will be equipped with free Wi-Fi access.</p> <p>Each community and locality hub will be different and will vary in response to local requirements and needs. Larger hubs could accommodate several different activities at the same time, allowing for the possibility of different organisations delivering activities at the same time.</p>
Q30	<p>Will jobs be lost as a result of this?</p>

	Until the Plan is presented to Council and a decision has been made we cannot predict the impact on staffing resources. We will undertake a separate review of staffing if the Plan is approved at Council on 9 June 2021.
Q31	<p>What do staff think of these proposals?</p> <p>Employees who may be impacted as a result of the Plan are being consulted separately through the Council’s Human Resource procedures. We have issued our staff with a communication and a copy of the Plan in advance of the consultation launching.</p>

Q32	<p>What do you mean by “a library service”?</p> <p>A modern library service challenges the thinking that services can only be delivered from within the 4 walls of a traditional library building. Learning from other areas has been looked at and, the learning from delivering services during Covid has shaped our thinking.</p> <p>A library service would still have strong roots in the community and a focus on encouraging reading, nurturing the love of books, improving literacy, delivering events and promoting opportunities to be involved in local and national activities.</p> <p>In addition, a library service would still work with partners to ensure that local communities have a strong digital offer with access to wifi as well as devices as and when needed.</p> <p>All of this may happen in something resembling a modern library building and some may be delivered in a space that is shared with other community services such as in a community centre or a voluntary group’s own premises. Some need no physical space at all. For example, if a library service is co located in a community centre and has a smaller space, Bookbug could still happen on a regular basis - just in another room in the centre. There can still be a digital offer if there isn't a traditional IT suite. We can offer public wifi and space for people to bring in their own devices and or loan out a laptop for use while with us.</p> <p>Events and activities could be targeted to groups with library staff visiting groups as such as family support services or health and well-being groups - taking the service to where people are. In doing so, we could reach those who would not traditionally visit a library but who would benefit greatly from being included.</p> <p>Alongside these could be an enhanced digital offer with members accessing resources online. These have grown immensely during lockdown.</p> <p>Book deliveries and call, click and collect have been a lifeline to many in 2020 and could be developed as part of a library service in key areas to meet local needs.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the mobile library can also support this work as we use a range of options to deliver a library service.</p> <p>In summary – a library service is a modern way of delivering a high-quality library service in partnership with local communities, staff from across other teams,</p>
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	digitally and when appropriate, in a targeted way to maximise impact. It is all about the services and the impact of involvement, not the name above the building.
Q33	<p>How can a library “relocate”?</p> <p>We have initial thoughts on how this could work but if the Plans are agreed we will work in partnership with Community Associations, library staff and representative user groups on the co-design of the library space to minimise impact to existing groups and ensure the space identified is fit for purpose.</p> <p>There are many things we can do to help give spaces flexibility in order that they can be used for different things at different times such as introduce more mobile shelving, flexible access to PC’s and laptops and offer library services and activities in different locations.</p>
Q34	<p>What will happen to access to PC and Wi-Fi if the library relocates?</p> <p>The library service would still work with partners to ensure that local communities have a strong digital offer with access to wifi as well as devices as and when needed.</p>
Q35	<p>What about the staff in the libraries that are affected?</p> <p>If the Plan is agreed, we will work with all staff as we progress with a restructuring process that will lead to a staffing structure that meets the new needs of the service.</p>
Q36	<p>Will I still be able to get books? Will I have a reduced selection of books to choose from?</p> <p>The Plan offers a strong network of libraries across North Ayrshire that has the potential to deliver a high-quality library service to the citizens of North Ayrshire. Although some libraries may be in a smaller space than before, you will still be able to browse the books that are carefully selected based on the regular, lending pattern of each library. If you can’t find the book you are looking for you will still be able to request the books you want and, if we have them in the system, we can reserve a copy for you and have it delivered to your local library. In addition, there will be various other ways to access books – online, via Call, Click and Collect as well as book deliveries for those who need it.</p>
Q3	<p>Will I still be able to get advice and assistance from library staff?</p> <p>Library staff will be on hand to help and support visitors. In addition, at certain times, there will be other staff from Connected Communities, other NAC services and partner organisations who can offer a wider range of help and assistance.</p>
Q38	<p>How far will I have to travel to collect books?</p> <p>Although we can’t say exactly how far, we hope to be able to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations in order to establish a network of Book Collection points as part of the Call, Click and Collect service. In addition, we will be delighted to work with anyone who would like to be part of the emerging library service and work on developing different local solutions to meet local needs and</p>

	aspirations. All of these initiatives will help those who are not as close to a building that has a library in it.
Q39	Can I get books delivered to my home? The Home Library service will still be operational for those who need this style of library service. We would also like to continue to work with the local organisations and befriending services who supported the library service for the past 12 months delivering books to vulnerable individuals and families.