

Report To: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 15th January 2015

Lead Member: Lead Member for Tourism Leisure & Youth

Report Author: Principal Officer: Libraries and Arts

Title: Meeting the new framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

1. What is the report about?

The report outlines the requirements of the new Fifth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17 and its implications for Denbighshire.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report was requested by committee following the Information Report circulated to Members in May 2014.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 provides observations on the requirements of the Fifth Framework of Library Standard and the Library Service's estimated performance for 2014-17; and
- 3.2 considers CyMAL's Annual Assessment in October 2015 based on the Library Service's 2014-15 performance.

4. Report details.

Background

- 4.1 Each library authority in Wales has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to deliver a 'comprehensive and efficient' service to its residents. Since 2002, the Frameworks of Welsh Public Library Standards have enabled CyMAL (Welsh Government Museums, Archives and Libraries division) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties. The new Fifth Framework was launched by the Minister for Culture and Sport at the Prestatyn Library+ on May 1st 2014
- 4.2 Library Services are required to submit an Annual Report each July to CyMAL, noting performances against core entitlements and quality indicators for the previous financial year. CyMAL's assessment of the Annual Report will be forwarded in September with a request for each authority to scrutinise the

feedback, according to local practices, and to consider actions for improvements to any identified weaknesses.

- 4.3 CyMAL acknowledges that Denbighshire is an example of a good and popular library service, being ranked 2nd highest for Library Visits, 5th highest for Book Issues, and joint 1st for Customer Satisfaction by Under 16s, and 7th by over 16s, which is a particularly strong endorsement by Denbighshire's residents.
- 4.4 Although Denbighshire does not meet 3 of the 8 national standards –
- It consistently delivers high performance (as detailed above) with less than CyMAL's recommended minimum staffing levels
 - The building portfolio is of a particularly high quality despite Denbighshire not meeting the requirement to undertake a condition survey of library buildings every 3 years (last survey undertaken by building services in 2007)
 - CyMAL requires all libraries to provide free Wifi for the public, but the facility is currently available in 6 of the 8 libraries (plans to extend to all 8 in 2015)
- 4.5 The new Fifth Framework of Library Standards (2014-2017) takes a different approach, and focuses on outcomes relating to wider government agendas such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, tackling poverty, and health and well-being. This is consistent with Denbighshire's proposed transformation of libraries as Community Hubs (see Appendix 2) which contributes to Denbighshire's Well Being Plan 2014-18, and was endorsed by the Director of CyMAL at a meeting in November 2014.

18 Core Entitlements

- 4.6 The 18 Core Entitlements outline what local residents can expect from their Library Service. These range from being free to join, to having friendly, knowledgeable staff on hand to help, to providing free access to books, information, internet and Wifi. (Appendix A). Authorities are required to submit a self-assessment narrative against each Entitlement, which will then be assessed to determine how many are met, partially met, or not met. Initial analysis of the Entitlements suggests that Denbighshire will meet all 18 requirements in 2014-15.

16 Quality Indicators

- 4.7 The Framework also consists of 16 Quality Indicators (QI), of which only 6 have been given a specific target by Welsh Government. These include:
- QI 5 - location of service points
 - QI 8 - expenditure on books
 - QI 9 - percentage expenditure on Welsh books and children's books
 - QI 10 - public access computers / devices
 - QI 13 - staffing levels
 - QI 16 - opening hours

4.8 It is estimated that Denbighshire will meet 4 of the 6 set targets in throughout the three year cycle of the new Framework, but will not reach the minimum staffing levels nor the minimum expenditure on books and resources for the public. (See Appendix 1 for more details.) It is worth noting that staffing levels were not met within the Fourth Framework, despite the Library Service ranking 2nd for Library Visits and 3rd for Book Issues. The developing Library Transformation and Modernisation Programme is designed to develop front-line library services fit for the future within a challenging economic climate whilst recognising that existing staff numbers cannot be maintained.

4.9 The remaining 10 Quality Indicators are a combination of comparative indicators (where comparisons can be made against other authorities and against the authorities' own performance over time) and qualitative narrative self-assessment response. There are no set targets, but authorities will be ranked by their performance in September 2015 following CyMAL's assessment of the 2014-15 data, which is to be submitted in July 2015. These indicators include:

- QI 3 - support for individual development (e.g. ICT, literacy, numeracy, websites, reader development support etc)
- QI 4 - provision of formal and informal training sessions for local users
- QI 6 - library visits
- QI 7 - attendance at library events
- QI 11 - use of ICT
- QI 12 - supply of requests
- QI 14 - operational expenditure (staff, buildings, books, etc.)
- QI 15 - cost per visit

4.10 Two indicators are to be completed only once every three years, and the authority's performance will be ranked once data from all authorities have been collated by CyMAL.

- QI 1 - survey to measure impact of library use on people's lives (e.g.: in developing new skills, learning, finding information for health and wellbeing)
- QI 2 – customer satisfaction with choice of books, level of customer care and overall satisfaction with their local library

The Library Service currently subscribes to CIPFA's Public Library User Survey (PLUS) templates and data analysis service at an annual subscription cost of £433, in addition to which the data analysis of both the Children's and the Adult's Customer Survey costs around £3,000 each. CIPFA's methodology requires the completion of approx. 2,300 questionnaires every three years, and it is proposed that the Library Service undertakes its own in-house survey in an attempt to reduce costs.

Next steps

The Library Service's Freedom and Flexibilities and Library Transformation implications will be discussed by Council in February/March 2015. This will include the new specification 'Community Hub' delivery model as highlighted in Appendix 2

5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Whilst not a Corporate Priority, the Library Service is a statutory responsibility of the Authority, and the transformation of the service contributes to the modernising agenda.

6 What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Not applicable.

7 What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

Not applicable.

8 What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

An information report was presented to Performance Scrutiny in May 2014, and consultations have taken place with the Library Management Team and with CyMAL.

9 Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not applicable.

10 What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Not applicable.

11 Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines scrutiny's powers in relation to policy objectives, performance targets and specific service areas.

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