

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 10 December 2015

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Customers and Communities / Head of Customers and Education Support

**Report Author:** Principal Librarian/Customer Service Business Partner

**Title:** Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2014/15, and progress to date in developing libraries into community hubs

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## 1. What is the report about?

The report outlines the Library Service's performance against Welsh Government's Framework of Public Library Standards 2014-17, and considers this in the context of Denbighshire's new Face to Face Customer Service Delivery Framework.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report was requested by committee at its meeting on 15 January 2015.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

That the committee considers Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's 2014/15 performance and Denbighshire's response, particularly in the context of the new Customer Service Delivery Framework.

## 4. Report details

- 4.1 Library authorities in Wales have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to deliver a 'comprehensive and efficient' service to its residents. The Frameworks of Welsh Public Library Standards enables MALD (Museums Archives and Libraries Division of Welsh Government, previously CyMAL) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties. The Fifth Framework was launched by the Minister for Culture and Sport at Prestatyn on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2014
- 4.2 Library Services submit an Annual Report each July, noting performance against 18 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators for the previous financial year, following which MALD responds with a formal assessment in September/October.
- 4.3 The **18 Core Entitlements** (full list in Appendix A) outlines what local residents can expect from their Library Service. 17 of the 18 Core Entitlements were met in full in 14/15. As the service was subject to a restructure during 14/15 the "Online and print access entitlement to the Service's Strategy and Vision" was not met on this occasion: this will be available by March 2016.

4.4 The Standards Framework also consists of **16 Quality Indicators** of which only 7 have been given a specific target by Welsh Government. Denbighshire met 3 of the 7, and partially met the remaining 4:

No.	Quality Indicator	Denbighshire's performance
3	Support for individual development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic support in the use of ICT</li> <li>- Training to improve literacy, numeracy and digital skills</li> <li>- Access to local and national e-government resources</li> <li>- Reader development programmes for adults and children</li> </ul>	Fully met.  All staff provide support to users across the required areas of service.
5	Access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 75% of households to be within 2.5 miles of a static library</li> </ul>	Fully Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 88% within 2.5 miles</li> </ul>
8	Access to up-to-date reading material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Min. £2,140 spend per 1,000 pop.</li> <li>- 11% of lending stock replenished</li> </ul>	Partially met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £1,836 spend per 1,000 pop.</li> <li>- 12.6% of stock replenished</li> </ul> The target will not be met in 15/16
9	Appropriate spend on reading materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for Welsh speakers to be minimum 4% of overall bookfund</li> <li>- for children to be within 2% of the authority's child population. (DCC's child population is 18%)</li> </ul>	Partially met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7.6% spent on Welsh language reading materials</li> </ul> With DCC's child population at 18%, target expenditure on children's books was set by Welsh Gov at 16%-20% of the bookfund. Having spent <b>above</b> this amount to support children's reading and literacy skills (a priority area for the service), DCC was considered to have <b>failed</b> to meet its target. This prohibitive approach has now been raised with the Deputy Minister and with MALD. The service will <b>not</b> be reducing its support for children's reading to tick a box.
10	Free online access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum 9 PCs per 10,000 pop.</li> <li>- Free Wifi at all libraries</li> </ul>	Partially met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 Pcs per 10,000 pop.</li> </ul> Wifi at 6 of 8 locations and to be installed at Rhuddlan & St.Asaph by 3/16.
13	Staffing levels and qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3.6 FTE per 10,000 pop.</li> <li>- Min. 0.65 qualified staff per 10,000</li> </ul>	Partially met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3.3FTE per 10,000 pop.</li> </ul>

	pop.	- 0.68 qualified staff  Following the merger/restructure of Library Services and Customer Services, we will reconsider how to report this indicator in the future.
16	Opening hours  - Min. 120 aggregate hrs per 1,000 pop.	Fully met.  - 149 aggregate opening hrs  New opening hours introduced on Nov 16 <sup>th</sup> 2015 provides 139 aggregate opening hrs per 1,000 pop.

- 4.5 The remaining Quality Indicators have no set targets, but are a combination of comparative indicators (where comparisons can be made against other authorities and against the authorities' own performance over time) and an analysis of separate adult and children's customer surveys, to be conducted once every three years.
- 4.6 The list of comparative Quality Indicators can be seen on pages 3 & 4 of MALD's full Annual Assessment Report (Appendix B). The table shows Denbighshire's performance and ranking compared to the lowest, median and highest performance levels across Wales. Following the transfer from CML to CES, and the focus on modernising and restructuring the Library Service, there was insufficient capacity to respond to some of the data and self-assessments required by MALD when completing the return. As a result, Denbighshire's performance against some of the comparative indicators are incomplete for 2014-15, but will be remedied in the 2015-16 return. The tri-annual adult customer survey will be conducted in 15/16 and the children's in 16/17.
- 4.7 Of the comparative indicators submitted, Denbighshire:
- is one of the highest for attendances at events, and for supply times in response to customer requests
  - Is in the median for library visits, cost per visits and expenditure per capita
  - Is one of the lowest for visits to library service web pages and customer take up of ICT services
- Full details can be seen in Appendix B.
- 4.9 Denbighshire's Digital Transformation Programme includes the delivery of a modern digital face to face customer service framework, and resourcing structure across multiple locations. In November, the first to be completed was the Rhyl Library building at Church Street, and the town's brand new One Stop Shop was opened to the public, offering a wide range of services in one building. Customers are now able to:
- Pay for council goods and services using new modern facilities
  - Request/apply for services and find information using the new Council online computer suite
  - Hire the use of a new modern meeting room
  - And from 7<sup>th</sup> December – meet with Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates advisors for specialist advice

4.10 Existing library services will continue to be available allowing customers to borrow and return library books, make copies and print documents, attend training sessions/events, visit the Museum, and buy refreshments from the Cook Book Café. All services will continue to be supported by experienced and highly skilled Customer Service Assistants.

4.11 The model at Rhyl brings a number of council services together under one roof, and is an example of services working together for the benefit of the community. The model will be rolled out to other locations in line with the Face to Face Customer Services Framework (Appendix C). The Deputy Minister visited the new One Stop Shop in early November, and subsequently released the following Written Statement

“I am committed to our public libraries being welcoming community hubs which deliver a range of digital, literacy and cultural services, as well as providing access to other services.”

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

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?**

The Face to Face Customer Services Framework will enable a range of other council services and partners to reach out to and deliver services at local community level at no additional cost.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?**

Not applicable

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

A report on the new Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards was presented to Performance Scrutiny in January 2015.

**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.