

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Lead Member / Officer:** Lead Member for Customers and Libraries/  
Head of Communications, Customers and Marketing

**Report Author:** Principal Librarian

**Title:** Library Service Standards and Performance

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report highlights the Library Service's performance against National Standards.

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

To provide Members with information about the new Framework of Library Standards (2017-2020), highlighting Denbighshire's most recent performance where applicable.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee notes and comments on the requirements of the 6<sup>th</sup> performance framework of Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in the future.

**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 Framework 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 6<sup>th</sup> Framework will become effective from April 2017 to March 2020.
- 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 current performance framework (Framework 5) covers the period 2014-2017, and consists of 18 Core Entitlements and 7 Quality Indicators with specific targets.
- 4.4 Throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework (2014-17), Denbighshire has met 17 of the 18 Core Entitlements, the only outstanding entitlement being a publicly available declaration of the Library Service's strategy and vision for the future. With the service having undergone a number of restructures, as well as having reported to 3 different Heads of Service during this period, it has not been possible to define a coherent strategy

nor a vision for the future until now. However, this particular entitlement will be addressed in 2017/18 in line with the development of the Service Business Plan for Customers Communication and Marketing.

- 4.5 Of the 16 Quality indicators in the current Framework, 7 have been given set targets by MALD. All other indicators are comparative with performance across all other Welsh authorities. The 7 with set targets are:

1	Support for individual user development (to access ICT infrastructure, digital content, information, and reader development activities)
2	Location of service points
3	Expenditure on books and resources for public use.
4	Provision of appropriate reading material (% of the bookfund spent on the Welsh Language and on resources for children)
5	Provision of public access computers and wifi
6	Staffing levels and qualifications
7	Opening hours

Most of these feature in the new framework for 2017-2020, and more details are listed in Appendix A.

- 4.6 Of the 7 Quality Indicators with set targets, MALD assesses annually whether these have been met, partially met, or not met:

<b>DCC quality indicators (out of 7)</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Partially met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
2014/15	3	4	0
2015/16	3	3	1
2016/17 (DCC estimate)	4	2	1

- 4.7 The only target not met in 2015/16 concerned the expenditure on books and resources for public use.
- 4.8 In 2016/17 we estimate that 4 of the 7 targets will be met, the additional indicator to the 3 met in 15/16 being the provision of public wifi at all libraries. (Only 6 of the 8 libraries provided this facility in 15/16). However, we will not meet the indicator on expenditure on books (no.3) but will continue to partially meet the staffing indicator (no.6) and the provision of appropriate reading materials (no.4). Denbighshire invests more in the support of children's reading (one of our priority areas) than the target set by MALD, and, as such, we are considered not to be meeting the required expenditure level on children's books. Denbighshire has challenged this

interpretation on a number of occasions, and the definition and interpretation has changed for the new framework.

- 4.9 The new framework for 2017-2020, (entitled Connected and ambitious libraries), comes into effect in April 2017. It is based largely on the fifth framework, and continues to provide opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and to make the best use of the resources available to them. The revised set of 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators is set out in Appendix A, with explanatory comments, and, where available, performance data, on Denbighshire's current position.
- 4.10 A welcome inclusion in the new framework is an indicator (Quality Indicator 4) which acknowledges the role libraries play in supporting health and well-being. Further details can be found in Appendix A.

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

The Library Service is a statutory responsibility of the Authority, and its service delivery contributes to a number of corporate priorities such as the fostering community resilience, service modernisation, digital inclusion, literacy, lifelong learning and community engagement. The Library Service's Annual Report to MALD includes a statement on how the service is contributing to the wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals, and this is included in Appendix B.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The transformation of libraries into community hubs will enable a range of other council services and partners to reach out to local communities through the existing network of premises and facilities. There are no financial proposals involved with this information report.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1 A Well-Being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken, but the whole of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Library Standards is set up to demonstrate that libraries have a clear contribution to make to the seven goals of Well-being of Future Generations Act.

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

Performance Scrutiny in December 2015 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2014/15. There have been no further consultations regarding this particular report.

## **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**

Section 7.4.2 (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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