

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Lead Member / Officer:** Lead Member for Developing Community Infrastructure/  
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 detail the Council's performance at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17 and the progress made in developing libraries as community hubs.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee considers and comments on the performance against the 5<sup>th</sup> framework of Welsh Public Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in December 2018 on performance against the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework 2017-20.

**4. Report details**

**4.1 Welsh Public Library Standards**

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) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties.

4.2 Library Services submit an Annual Report each July, noting performance for the previous financial year, following which MALD responds with a formal assessment in September. The most recent Annual Assessment Report covers 2016-17 and performance against full 5<sup>th</sup> Framework 2014-2017, and consists of 18 Core Entitlements and 7 Quality Indicators with specific targets. The report is attached as Appendix A.

4.4 Throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework (2014-17), Denbighshire has met 17 of the 18 Core Entitlements. The one partially met was in reference to providing public access to the service's strategy, policies and vision.

- 4.5 Of the 16 Quality indicators (QI) 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:

QI 3	Support for individual user development (to access ICT infrastructure, digital content, information, and reader development activities)
QI 5	Location of service points
QI 8	Expenditure on books and resources for public use.
QI 9	Provision of appropriate reading material (% of the bookfund spent on the Welsh Language and on resources for children)
QI 10	Provision of public access computers and wifi
QI 13	Staffing levels and qualifications
QI 16	Opening hours

- 4.6 Of these, 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	4	1	1

Due to a change of Library Management System during the year, data was not available for any of the North Wales authorities to report on QI 9 which assesses the % of the material budget spent on children's and Welsh stock. This will have been addressed in time for us to report on 2017-18.

- 4.7 Performance improved in 2016/17 as we met an additional target with the provision of public Wi-Fi at all libraries (only 6 of the 8 libraries provided this facility in 15/16). We partially met QI13 on staffing levels and qualifications, but did not achieve this fully as the staff per capita level is below the target. We reported 1.99 FTE per 10,000 population (the target is 3.6). Frontline and managerial staff working in our libraries and one stop shops deliver a wide range of additional customer services which are not included within the requirements of the Welsh Public Library Standards. We report 50% of the total staffing levels and expenditure on staffing under the Library Standards. We did not meet QI8 on up-to-date reading materials: we acquired 155 new items (the target is 243), spending £1436 (target £2180), per 1000 population with a replenishment rate of 7.3% (target 11%).
- 4.8 In the narrative analysis of Denbighshire's performance, the assessment report commends us on our improvement in increasing the level of visits to libraries (a 5% increase and the fourth highest per capita in Wales), a tripling of the virtual visits, and in the increase in of active borrowers (up 15%).
- 4.9 A new 6<sup>th</sup> framework, *Connected and ambitious libraries: the sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020*, came into effect in April 2017 and Denbighshire will submit its first annual report against these standards in the summer of 2018. The new framework continues to provide opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and to make the best use of the resources available to them. A welcome inclusion in the new framework is an indicator (QI 4) which

acknowledges the role libraries play in supporting health and well-being. The Wales Data Unit is also introducing a new Public Accountability Measure relating to libraries in 2018-19, based on the percentage of Welsh Public Library Standard targeted Quality Indicators achieved. This we believe to be a more meaningful measure to those used in past years in relation to libraries.

#### 4.10 **Update on developments / Community Hubs**

The refurbishment works at St Asaph Library are due for completion at the end of March 2018. An improved entrance, a new internal layout with additional computers for public use, community kitchen facilities, and tourism information point, will offer a flexible resource for wider community use. Denbigh Library's refurbishment, funded by a £120,000 Welsh Government MALD grant, starts in March 2018 to provide an enhanced attractive and flexible community facility. Work to replace the roof at Rhyl Library also starts in March 2018. Corporate Wi-Fi and printing is available at all libraries and Council staff are increasingly using libraries to meet clients and to hot-desk.

4.11 Delivery of community services within libraries is increasing. The charging policy has been revised to offer free use of library spaces for activities which provide a direct customer service (see Appendix B). The Library Service is working closely with Community Support Services in refining the Talking Points initiative, and preparations are being made for the roll-out of Universal Credit, when libraries will provide digital assistance to claimants. Citizens Advice Denbighshire sessions at several libraries are seeing high levels of use, and the Strategic Employment teams, based at Rhyl Library, are using libraries across the county to engage with their clients. Cymraeg i Blant now delivers a weekly session at Rhuddlan Library to encourage families to bring up their children bilingually.

4.12 The Libraries' management team restructure was completed in October with the appointment of a new full-time Principal Librarian, and a small team of Customer Services Managers reporting to her. The transfer of the Income Management team to Finance and Assets was completed in December, and the staffing structure at Rhyl Library was revised as a result. Across the county, 64% of the staff are bilingual.

#### 4.13 **Regional Collaboration**

Following the implementation of the shared all-Wales Library Management System in 2016, a shared North Wales Bibliographic Services Unit was established in August 2017, with subsequent improvements in service efficiency and sustainability, and financial savings.

4.14 To further explore opportunities for regional collaboration, MALD provided funding to the Heads of Library Services North Wales (HOLIS) to commission a feasibility study into a regional approach across North Wales for delivering public libraries' health and wellbeing offer. The report will be available by the end of March 2018.

4.15 Denbighshire's customers continue to benefit from a national collaborative approach to the procurement of library books and digital services. New all-Wales contracts for the procurement of adult and children's book stock for 2017-20 were awarded in April 2017 enabling Denbighshire to ensure the best value from its materials budget. A new contract for the supply of e-books and e-audiobooks will also be awarded in

March 2018, giving Denbighshire's customers access to the pooled resources of a shared all-Wales service.

**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 a number of corporate priorities such as fostering community resilience, service modernisation, digital inclusion, literacy, lifelong learning and community engagement.

**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?**

A Well-Being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken, but 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 March 2017 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2015/16. 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 stipulates that scrutiny may "review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas."

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