

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 31st January 2019

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

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 start of the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 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 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in November 2019.

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 the autumn. The most recent Annual Assessment Report covers 2017-18 and performance against the first year of the 6th Framework 2017-20, and consists of 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators. The report is attached as Appendix A.

4.3 Denbighshire has met 11 of the 12 Core Entitlements and partially met 1.

4.4 There are 16 Quality Indicators (QI) of which 10 have constituent targets. Of these, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full, 1 in part and is failing to achieve 1 (details in paragraph 2.2 of the assessment report).

- 4.5 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 2.48 FTE per 10,000 population when the target is 3.6) and the number of staff holding a recognised library qualification is below target (we reported 0.4 FTE when the target is 0.65). 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.
- 4.6 We did not meet QI9 on up-to-date reading materials: we acquired 146 new items (the target is 243), spending £1203 (target £2180), per 1000 population.
- 4.7 In the narrative analysis of Denbighshire's performance, the assessment report commends us on a notable expansion in the number of activities and events on offer, with attendance levels rising as a result. Reflecting the service's strategic goal of encouraging partner services to deliver their services in libraries, there was a 95% increase in the number of partner sessions resulting in 41% more attendances. The number of active borrowers has also increased 10%.
- 4.8 MALD do not publish a comparative data table across Wales, but each authority is ranked on its performance against the Quality Indicators (section 2.4 of the assessment report). In 2017-18 of the 22 Welsh authorities, Denbighshire was 2nd for the provision of informal training for users per capita, 4th for the number of active borrowers and number of Welsh books borrowed per capita, and 6th for the number of physical visits and virtual visits to libraries.
- 4.9 The Wales Data Unit is introducing a new Public Accountability Measure relating to libraries in 2018-19, based on the percentage of Welsh Public Library Standards 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**
St Asaph Library re-opened in April 2018 after its refurbishment with an improved entrance, a new internal layout with additional computers for public use, community kitchen facilities, and tourism information point, offering a flexible resource for wider community use. Denbigh Library also reopened in June 2018 after its refurbishment, funded by a £120,000 Welsh Government MALD grant, to provide an enhanced, attractive and flexible community facility; with additional investment by DCC to ensure the sustainability of the building and to improve DDA accessibility. Rhyl Library's roof was replaced in Spring 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 continues to increase, due to the efforts of managers to establish and develop partnerships, the flexibility of the facilities and spaces in modernised libraries, and the impact of the revised charging policy introduced in January 2018. The partnerships with both St Asaph City Council and Rhuddlan Town Council continue to develop with funding contributions agreed and arrangements now in place for out-of-hours access to the buildings facilitated by

trained key-holders. Library managers produce quarterly update reports on the activity and developments in each library (an example is attached as Appendix B)

- 4.12 The take-up of the Assisted Digital service by Universal Credit claimants has not had a negative impact on capacity, with relatively low demand due to the provision of co-located services within Rhyl Jobcentre. Claimants are making use of library digital access facilities to maintain their UC work journals and search for jobs. Working Denbighshire mentors meet and support their clients in the client's local library, and plans are being developed to expand the range of adult learning opportunities on offer.
- 4.13 Libraries contribute to the Council's Dementia Action Plan in several ways including the Books on Prescription Reading Well: Dementia scheme launched in October 2018 to provide clinically approved books to support people living with dementia and their carers; staff trained as Dementia Friends, co-operation with local Dementia Friendly Communities initiatives, and hosting Dementia Friends training sessions. Libraries are also contributing to the Council's Support for Carers Plan, working in partnership with NEWCIS, by developing collections of books for carers and memory bags, and reading groups for people living with dementia and their carers. New partners delivering their services in libraries include the Integrated Autism Service, Cymraeg i Blant, and Homestart.
- 4.14 3,239 children participated in the 2018 Summer Reading Challenge – a reach of 29.5% of the 4-12 year old population, the highest reach in Wales (Welsh average was 11.5%).
- 4.15 **Regional Collaboration**
Work continues on a regional approach across North Wales for delivering public libraries' health and wellbeing offer, based on the recommendations of a MALD funded feasibility study produced in March 2018.
- 4.16 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 was awarded in March 2018, giving Denbighshire's customers access to the pooled resources of a shared all-Wales service.
- 4.17 Further improvements planned in this current financial year include a new Library Strategy for Denbighshire, a programme of staff development and training, and a volunteering strategy.

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 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 report.

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

A Well-Being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken, but the 6th 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 2018 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2016-17. 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."

Contact Officer:
Principal Librarian
Tel: 01824 708207