

# DRAFT

## DENBIGHSHIRE LIBRARY STRATEGY

### 2019-2022



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# DENBIGHSHIRE LIBRARY STRATEGY

## 2019-2022

This strategy outlines our vision for the public library service in Denbighshire and what it aims to achieve in the next three years. It will also demonstrate how our libraries contribute to local and national strategic goals and plans.

### What is our vision of libraries?

We believe that libraries are the beating hearts of the communities they serve – trusted, neutral places where everyone is welcome regardless of their age, background, or financial circumstances.

We believe that reading is vital to everyone’s wellbeing, learning, and prosperity, and that libraries give everyone access to the reading and literacy skills and resources they need to fulfil their needs.

We believe that everyone is entitled to access information and knowledge in all its forms – printed, digital and human – and that libraries’ role is to help people access the information and skills they need to engage fully in modern life.

As a service, we aim to develop, deliver and promote the best customer experience by being brave, creative and committed to excellence.

*“A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.”*

*Caitlin Moran*

## Libraries in Denbighshire

Libraries in Denbighshire deliver the statutory public library service and the One Stop Shop face-to-face customer service for the Council from eight libraries located in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen. A Home Library Service provides a tailored service to people who are unable to access their local library due to infirmity, disability or caring responsibilities. Libraries also provide a 24/7 digital service for downloading books, accessing information and ordering physical books; and provide facilities for people to access a range of support and advice services in their local community.

Libraries are managed within the Communities and Customers Service of the Council.

## Key statistics 2018-19

- 401,234 physical visits to libraries (Wales ranking 8<sup>th</sup>)
- 125,454 virtual visits to website (Wales ranking 6<sup>th</sup>)
- 356,050 items borrowed (including digital downloads)
- 53,691 computer uses
- 51,192 people came to 4,414 activities
- 41,225 people were helped with using ICT and getting online (Wales ranking 1<sup>st</sup>)
- 19.2% of the population are active members (highest % in North Wales, Wales ranking 5<sup>th</sup>)
- 29.5% of 4-12 yr olds took part in 2018 Summer Reading Challenge (Wales ranking 1<sup>st</sup>, Welsh average 11.5%)

## Cost of service

- The total cost of providing the Library service in 2018-19 was £1,549,135, of which £197,792 was the cost of running the eight library buildings.
- The Library service costs £16.27 per year for every adult and child living in Denbighshire
- The service employs 35 FTE staff
- The cost per library visit was £2.94
- A 2013 study in Wales, commissioned by ALMA-UK (Archives Libraries Museums Alliance), calculated an average library user's spend in local shops/cafes etc to be £8.07. Based on this figure, Denbighshire Library Service makes a contribution to the local high street economy which is nearly three times its cost.
- A total of £1,018,531 capital investment has been made over last 3 years (of which £120,000 from MALD grant) on modernisation and refurbishment of the libraries in Denbigh, St Asaph, Rhuddlan and Rhyl.



## Engaging with our customers

We engage with our customers on a daily basis as they visit our libraries and talk to staff, and via social media. We welcome comments on our service and suggestions for improvement. We conduct a customer survey of adults and children at least once every three years (as required by the Welsh Public Library Standards). Our Volunteering Strategy will give people an opportunity to engage more intensively with the service by sharing their time and skills to support their local library.



401,234 visits to local libraries



35,235 people came to an event



328,075 books were borrowed



Public computers were used 53,691 times



96% said the customer care is very good or good



19.2% of people in Denbighshire are active library members

## Strategic context

Libraries contribute towards key local, regional and national policies and plans including:

- **Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022**
- **Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan 2018-2023**
- **The 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**
- **Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20**

### Welsh Public Library Standards

The Welsh Government's Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 comprises 12 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators to monitor how well library services realise benefits for local people. The framework identifies the clear contribution libraries make to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act through the delivery of the following outcomes and impacts for residents:

- People will be able to increase their knowledge/skills having used the library
- People will be able to take part in reading and other cultural events organised by the library service
- People will feel part of a community using the library service
- People will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the digital world using the library service
- Personal health and well-being is enhanced by using the library
- People can participate more fully in local affairs via the facilities in the library

In 2018-19, Denbighshire met all of the 12 core entitlements. Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire achieved 8 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 1.

## Our key strategic areas

### People's lives are enriched and informed by reading

We will support this by

- Promoting Reading for pleasure and its impact on wellbeing and attainment
- Promoting Reading for information, learning and wellbeing
- Selecting, managing and providing access to books and information in a range of physical and digital formats
- Providing a range of activities to encourage and support reading (reading groups, events, displays, engagement activities)
- Providing tailored reading services to specific audiences such as
  - children and young people (Bookstart, Summer Reading Challenge, working with schools, holiday activities)
  - people living with health conditions or disabilities (Reading Well schemes, alternative physical and digital formats, Home Library Service)

#### Contributes to

##### **Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan**

*The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience*

*Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online and through good transport links*

*A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so*

##### **Conwy & Denbighshire PSB Well-being Plan**

*People – supporting good mental well-being for all ages*

*Community – supporting community empowerment*

##### **Well-being of Future Generations Act**

*A prosperous Wales*

*A healthier Wales*

*A more equal Wales*

*A Wales of cohesive communities*

*A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*

*“The audiobooks you’ve brought to me are absolutely wonderful. The Home Library Service has opened up a whole new world for me and I am so grateful”*  
*Customer living with sight loss*

*“Provides good range of services with exceptional, helpful and cheerful staff.”*

## People can access the resources and information they need to live well

We will support this by

- Delivering tailored services to support physical and mental health
  - Reading Well schemes to provide information about dementia and mental health
  - Bookstart Rhymetimes programme to support mothers' mental health and the social and language development of babies and toddlers
- Tackling loneliness and supporting resilience via
  - A physical presence in communities
  - Digital access to complement the physical – accessibility outside opening hours
  - Social opportunities to get together
  - Home Library Service to vulnerable people
  - Reading groups
  - Specific schemes (Reading Friends, reading groups)

### Contributes to

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#### **Well-being of Future Generations Act**

*A healthier Wales*

*A more equal Wales*

*A Wales of cohesive communities*

*“The library couldn't be bettered. Staff excellent here. You always help. Never regretted a day since the 1960's when I joined. All you need to know can be found there.”*

*“Could not cope without the access to books – I read a lot – and it helps my mental health.”*

## People can access digital services and have the skills and confidence to do so

*We will support this by*

- Providing online access – free internet access, use of PCs, scanners, printing facilities
- Offering support and help as needed
- Providing learning opportunities to develop skills, confidence and safety, in partnership with learning providers
- Supporting channel shift by supporting people to use digital channels to access services
- Working in partnership with Working Denbighshire to ensure individuals are supported into employability
- Developing opportunities for digital creativity

### Contributes to

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**Conwy and Denbighshire PSB Well-being Plan**  
*Community – supporting community empowerment*

#### **Well-being of Future Generations Act**

*A prosperous Wales*

*A healthier Wales*

*A more equal Wales*

*A Wales of cohesive communities*

*“The environment is welcoming and attractive and it is an excellent place to meet up and learn new things or relieve loneliness.”*

*“I just want to say what a fantastic place this library is. I moved to the area a year ago and found sanctuary in the library – being able to order books in for free, get helpful advice, use the one stop shop and feel that I've got friendly faces to see in the week. We nearly moved out of the town but I wanted to stay for the library.”*



## People can access information and services locally

We will support this by:

- Providing a One Stop Shop service for all Council services, dealing with customers' enquiries, receiving payments, and providing information
- Being the access point in each community to local and national information to support individuals and communities' employment, health, wellbeing, and learning
- Supporting individuals to use digital channels for job-seeking, accessing welfare benefits and other government services
- Providing a range of up to date, relevant and accessible information sources, including books, magazines, and online sources
- Enabling partner organisations to deliver their services from libraries by providing facilities, space, awareness and support
- Exploring opportunities to provide new services as demand and opportunities arise

### Contributes to

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*“This is an excellent library because the staff are wonderful. Nothing is too much trouble. It is a jewel in the town and a real meeting place.”*

## People can participate in a vibrant local culture

We will support this by

- Providing access to a wealth of Welsh language books and resources
- Managing collections of local history materials and providing access to family history resources
- Delivering a programme of events and activities such as book launches, author visits, talks and lectures
- Enabling local organisations to use library facilities to support and promote their activities

### Contributes to

#### **Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan**

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*“I love bringing my daughter to the Bookstart sessions. As a non-Welsh speaker I feel it’s important for my daughter to gain a Welsh education and these sessions are the perfect beginning for babies. It’s definitely inspired and encouraged me to place her in a Welsh language school in the future and potentially begin to learn Welsh myself. These sessions have started my daughter’s interest in books.”*

## To achieve these outcomes we will:

- ❖ **Ensure our library buildings remain welcoming, attractive, fit for purpose, sustainable, in good locations, and open at appropriate times**
  - Seek opportunities for funding to refurbish, modernise and keep sustainable library buildings which have not been refurbished in the last 10 years
  - Refresh facilities as technology develops and changes to meet customer needs
  - Continue to explore further options for co-location and relocation of services
- ❖ **Build partnerships and working collaboratively**
  - Build on the current successful partnerships with St Asaph City Council and Rhuddlan Town Council to develop and sustain library services in local communities
  - Continue to collaborate regionally and nationally, seeking opportunities to ensure value for money and benefits to customers
  - Work in partnership with other sectors to deliver services to the local community
  - Explore new ways to engage with our customers and stakeholders
- ❖ **Manage our collections**
  - Purchase new books and resources regularly, making the most of the funding available
  - Review and edit the collections to keep them attractive, relevant and useful
  - Collaborate with other authorities to enable customers' access to the widest range of stock
  - Train our staff to support customers' reading needs
- ❖ **Ensure our digital offer is attractive, up to date, and accessible, providing relevant resources**
  - Maintain an attractive and informative website presence to serve as a virtual shop window to our range of services and offer
  - Be part of the collaborative all-Wales Digital Library offer to ensure better value for money and greater range of choice for customers
  - Develop our use of social media as a marketing, information and communication channel
- ❖ **Employ a skilled and trained workforce**
  - Enable staff to train and develop skills and knowledge to deliver a modern library service
  - Enable staff to pursue formal qualifications and professional registration
  - Ensure an appropriate level of bilingual staff at each library
  - Create a staffing structure which provides potential career pathways
- ❖ **Support volunteers**
  - Deliver a strategy which offers opportunities to volunteer in our libraries to enhance our service, to develop skills and confidence, to improve wellbeing and to contribute to the community
- ❖ **Encourage use and reduce barriers**
  - Seek opportunities to reduce any real or perceived barriers which prevent people from accessing and using their local library
  - Seek new channels and ways to raise awareness of the library offer
  - Exploit the potential for partners to advocate for our services
  - Explore potential for outreach services, taking the library into the community
- ❖ **Generate income**
  - With continuing budget pressures we will seek opportunities to raise income through a range of approaches such as sales of items, reviewing charges, room hire, running charged for events, applying for funding and seeking further partnerships with town and community councils

## Our action plan

Each year, we will plan new activities to help us achieve our strategic aims and contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan. The plans for the current year are included as Appendix 1.

## How will we report on our performance and progress?

We are required to submit an Annual report on our performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards to the Welsh Governments' Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD). MALD return an annual assessment report to the Council and this report is published on the MALD website and the Council's website. This assessment report is presented to the Council's Performance Scrutiny Committee annually.

Libraries' performance against the 7 Quality Indicators within the Welsh Public Library Standards is also monitored within the Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) performance measuring framework for local authorities.

The Customers Communication and Marketing Service's annual Service Business Plan sets out how the service will contribute towards delivering the Council's Corporate Plan. It includes many indicators, measures and activities relating to Libraries and One Stop Shops. These are reported on quarterly and monitored by the Head of Service and the Cabinet Lead Member.

Library and Customer Services managers compile quarterly reports on the activity in their library and these are shared with key partners and published online.

*Libraries are about reading, literacies, information, learning, skills, discovery, opportunity, culture, history, identity, community access. Libraries have books and many kinds of printed stuff, ICT, meeting and creative spaces, solitary spaces, learning and community activities, librarians, trained staff and local people. Libraries are for people and what people use them for. They are not 'more than' anything: they are infinite.*

*John Dolan*

## Appendix 1

# Denbighshire County Council

## Customers, Communications and Marketing

### Service Business Plan 2019-20 (Libraries Activities)

**Outcome 1: Customers, Communication and Marketing services are efficient and well managed**

- Implement communication and marketing plans for Libraries and One Stop Shops
- Review stock management policy and develop stock training plan
- Generate and implement ideas for income generation

**Outcome 2: Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online and through good transport links**

- Deliver a programme of community focussed activity at Denbigh Library following its refurbishment in 2018
- Address funding streams for Bookstart for the next three years, to ensure its sustainability
- Host a regular structured programme of digital training opportunities at each of our eight libraries, working with partners
- Plan programme of promotional campaigns tying in with national themed days/weeks

**Outcome 3: The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience**

- Review Housebound Library Service offer with key partners
- Develop the health and wellbeing offer in libraries
- Work with Community Navigators to promote DEWIS by encouraging local groups to input their information in libraries
- Facilitate new social opportunities for people to come together in libraries
- Deliver a plan to engage elected members in the work of libraries and One Stop Shops

**Outcome 4: The environment is attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity**

- Instigate a programme of reading and literature based activities for children and adults to increase knowledge and awareness of the natural environment

**Outcome 5: A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so**

- Plan a programme of engagement with early years setting/providers
- Develop a programme of regular class visits and engagement with schools