

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> January 2020</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Lead Member for Housing and Communities/Head of Communities and Customers</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Principal Librarian</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Library Service Standards and Performance</b>

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

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

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

2.1. To provide information regarding the Council's performance against the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 and the progress made in developing libraries as places of individual and community well-being and resilience.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the Committee considers and comments on the performance against the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in January 2021.

## **4. Report details**

### **4.1. Welsh Public Library Standards**

4.2. 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.

- 4.3. 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 2018-19 and performance against the second year of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework 2017-20, and consists of 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators. The report is attached as Appendix A.
- 4.4. Denbighshire is now meeting all 12 Core Entitlements, an improvement on last year.
- 4.5. 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).
- 4.6. We partially met QI13 on staffing levels and qualifications but did not achieve this fully. The staff per capita level is below the target (we reported 2.39 FTE per 10,000 population, down from 2.48 in 17-18, when the target is 3.6) and the number of staff holding a recognised library qualification is below target (we reported 0.49 FTE, up from 0.4 in 17-18, 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.
- 4.7. We did not meet QI9 on up-to-date reading materials: we acquired 154 new items (the target is 243), spending £1372 (target £2180), per 1000 population.
- 4.8. In the narrative analysis of Denbighshire's performance, the assessment report commends us for continuing to build on our strengths and evidencing careful planning. Further improvement in user training sessions, the numbers helped by informal training, and attendances at events have increased.
- 4.9. 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 2018-19 of the 22 Welsh authorities, Denbighshire were

1<sup>st</sup> for the provision of informal training for users and the number of Welsh books borrowed per capita, 5<sup>th</sup> for the number of active borrowers, and 6<sup>th</sup> for the number of virtual visits to libraries and attendances at events, and 8<sup>th</sup> for physical visits.

4.10. The report notes the 12% fall in total revenue expenditure (£1,176,261 in 18-19) but that expenditure per capita remains just above the median level for Wales.

#### **4.11. Update on more recent developments**

4.12. Published in October 2019, the Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22 sets out the service's vision, key strategic areas, and its plans for delivering on these and demonstrates how it contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan and wider national strategies.

4.13. Our Volunteering Strategy was launched in the summer of 2019, and offers a range of specific volunteering opportunities for adults and young people in libraries, to enable them to develop their own skills, to gain work experience, or to give back to their local community. We work closely with Working Denbighshire to provide opportunities for their clients to gain work experience. The roles include digital volunteer, events and activities volunteer, young volunteer, stock volunteer and local history volunteer. There are currently 19 volunteers active in our libraries.

4.14. The service's activity in the area of Health and Wellbeing continues to be a particular focus and has seen significant progress during the year. The Reading Well Books on Prescription: Mental Health scheme in Wales was launched in July 2019, and the service has maximised on the opportunity to reach in to health and social care services to raise awareness of both the Reading Well schemes and the contribution libraries make to health and wellbeing and community resilience. Working in close partnership with Public Health Wales, the service has given numerous presentations to key BCUHB services and teams. The outcome of this concerted effort is that libraries are now seen as key partners in the preventative agenda.

4.15. In partnership with Conwy Libraries and Age Connect, the service has recently been awarded funding from the Healthier Wales Transformation programme for mental health for a project to embed the Reading Well for mental health scheme

into primary care practice, and to develop the skills of the Libraries workforce in providing services to people dealing with mental health issues, aligning with BCUHB's ICAN strategy of providing support within communities.

4.16. The service also secured funding from DVSC's Dementia Aware Denbighshire plan to create dementia memory packs for families and carers to borrow, working in partnership with TIDE. Denbigh Library hosted the North Wales launch of Boots pharmacies' endorsement of the Reading Well Books on Prescription Dementia scheme.

4.17. The service continues to develop its range of engagement and social opportunities to encourage community cohesion and to tackle isolation and loneliness – these range from reading groups and creative craft sessions to family history clubs, rhymetimes for families with young children and lego clubs for older children.

4.18. 2,918 children participated in the 2019 Summer Reading Challenge – a reach of 26.6% of the 4-12 year old population, the highest reach in Wales (Welsh average was 10.7%).

4.19. Staff development continues to be a priority. All staff attended a conference in September focussing on health and wellbeing, and mental health in particular. Individuals and teams have also participated in training in mental health first aid, autism awareness, and social media. 3 staff are following Library and Information Services Level 3 courses with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, and 15 have become Tourism Ambassadors. Managers have also participated in a range of development activities including the Academi Wales Springboard course, CILIP conferences, and the Principal Librarian is undertaking an ILM in Coaching.

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

5.1. 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?**

6.1. The transformation of libraries into community focal points for services enables 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?**

7.1. 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?**

8.1. Performance Scrutiny in January 2019 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2017-18. There have been no further consultations regarding this particular report.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. Not applicable

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. Not applicable

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. 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."