

**Report To:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 23 February 2012

**Lead Member:** Lead Member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

**Lead Officer:** Lead Officer: Libraries, Archives & Arts

**Report Author:** Lead Officer: Libraries, Archives & Arts

**Report Title:** Library Service Standards: Annual Report 2010-11

---

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

The report concerns the Library Service's 2010/11 performance in the annual Assessment Framework for Welsh Public Library Authorities.

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

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) requested a report on the Library Service's Annual Return 2010/11 following consideration of an assessment submitted by the Director of CyMAL (Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales) which highlighted that "the authority's performance is below average when compared with others in Wales". SCVCG specifically requested that the report focussed on the 4 areas which were registered in the lowest quartile.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That Scrutiny Members:

- 3.1 consider the report and the comments relating to the Library Service's performance against the Assessment Framework; and
- 3.2 provide observations with respect to the areas registering 4<sup>th</sup> quartile performance, and determine whether any future scrutiny is required.

**4. Report details**

**CyMAL's Annual Assessment Framework for Welsh Public Libraries**

5. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the statutory duty of public library authorities to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service" and makes it a duty of the Welsh Ministers to "superintend and promote the improvement" of public library services in Wales. In accordance with these statutory requirements the Welsh Government annually assesses the Library Service's Annual Return to CyMAL, which focuses on performance against 14 Standards and a further 20 Performance Indicators.

### **Library Standards**

6. The Welsh Government's assessors confirmed that in 2010/11 Denbighshire:

- achieved 8 of the 14 Standards (2 fewer than in 2009/10)
- partly achieved 3 Standards
- failed to meet 3 Standards

The average number of Standards met by Welsh library authorities was 9, the highest number was 14, and the lowest 6. Denbighshire's performance (8 Standards) is "therefore below average when compared with others in Wales."

### **Standards Met**

7. The eight Standards met by the authority were:

- Location of Library Service points and access to them (although reference was made to the decline in performance following the removal of the mobile library service)
- Access to services for user groups with particular access requirements (e.g.: disabled access, housebound library service, accessible IT)
- Opening hours (Standard met despite the 12% reduction in library opening hours)
- ICT facilities for public use
- Amount of stock available for public use and lending
- Expenditure on Welsh Language materials and Welsh writing in English
- Expenditure on library buildings (Denbighshire's matchfunding for the CyMAL funded Rhyl refurbishment was commended)
- Implementation of all 8 Citizen Entitlements for public libraries in Wales (free access to books, ICT, online information, book requests etc)

### **Standards Partly Met**

8. Denbighshire was acknowledged to have partly met 3 of the Standards:

- Number of stock purchased during the year. (The number of children's book purchased placed Denbighshire in the top 10 and reflected the service priorities in supporting literacy development and children's reading for pleasure. However, the number of books purchased for adults did not meet the minimum standard, due to an insufficient bookfund.)
- Satisfaction of requests within 7 days, 15 days and 30 days. (Denbighshire exceeded the 7 day target by 6% and the 15 day

target by 1%, but was 0.7% short of meeting the 30 day target. CyMAL acknowledged that this was a marginal failure.)

- Satisfaction Surveys. (All authorities are expected to undertake separate adult and children's Public Library User Surveys (PLUS) within the 3 year Assessment Framework. Due to staffing capacity and funding, only an Adult PLUS Survey was undertaken in the 2008-11 Framework.)

### **Standards Not Met**

9. The 3 Standards not met were directly attributable to the capacity of the library service budget:
  - Expenditure on library stock to be at least £2,450 per 1,000 population. (Denbighshire's 10/11 expenditure was £2,131)
  - All lending stock to be replenished in 7.6 years. (This relies on the annual expenditure on stock to be sufficient for all lending volumes to be replenished within the set target. Denbighshire's replenishment rate was calculated at 8.5 years.)
  - Staffing levels to be no less than 0.40 staff per 1,000 population. (Denbighshire's staffing levels in 2010/11 was 0.37.)

### **Performance Indicators**

10. Despite referring to Denbighshire as being below the Welsh average in meeting 8 of the 14 Standards, CyMAL acknowledges that Denbighshire is performing **above** the Welsh average in 13 of the 20 indicators, and is in fact achieving top 5 performances across Wales for some of the indicators:
  - Highest performing authority for number of participants at events and activities, with 490 participants per 1,000 population. (the Welsh average is 136 participants)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> highest visited library authority in Wales in 2010/11 with 7,407 visits per 1,000 population. (the Welsh average is 5,924). Still in the top 3 despite a 12% reduction in opening hours in April 2011.
  - in 3<sup>rd</sup> position with 583 (58.3%) library members per 1,000 population. (the Welsh average is 434 – 43.4%)
  - in 5<sup>th</sup> position with 5,923 items issued per 1,000 population (the Welsh average is 4,971) despite not meeting the Standard on minimum expenditure on stock. In fact Denbighshire is in 16<sup>th</sup> position for expenditure on stock, and 5<sup>th</sup> position for stock issues, which suggests we must be buying what people want to read.

11. However, 4 of the top performance indicators relate to expenditure levels, which seems to conflict with the assessment of the overall Standards which highlighted insufficient investment in staff and in stock. (see paragraph 9 above)

- 4<sup>th</sup> highest on net expenditure, at £18,544 per 1,000 population (Welsh average is £16,601).
  - **Denbighshire: £18,544 \***
  - Welsh highest: £22,251
  - Welsh average: £16,601

This, however, includes Support Service Costs of £184,800, which is 11.5% of overall net expenditure, and also in 2010/11 includes 3 years of Single Status back pay. It also reflects Denbighshire’s investment in delivering shared/multi services from its library premises (5 One Stop Shops, 1 Museum, 4 Art Galleries, 1 Countryside Services office, 1 Tourist Information Centre) with all the energy, caretaking, cleaning, National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and related costs paid for from the Library Service budget and therefore reported to CyMAL as library expenditure. It has been agreed (with DCC Finance and with CyMAL) that the figures reported in the Annual Return for 2011/12 will not include expenditure incurred for the delivery of other DCC services, and work will be undertaken to establish the true costs.)

Denbighshire’s other top performing indicators included:

- 5<sup>th</sup> highest for expenditure on staff training and development
- 3<sup>rd</sup> highest for library service expenditure as a percentage of overall local authority expenditure (this correlates with the shared services issue noted above)
- 4<sup>th</sup> highest for capital expenditure on library service buildings (this was mostly for the refurbishment of Rhyl Library, of which approx 82% of the funding - £300,000 - was grant awarded by CyMAL itself.

12. Four of the 20 indicators were considered to be in the lowest quartile, as indicated in the following table:

Indicator	DCC	Position	Welsh Average	Comment
% of users who think that the choice of books available is very good, good or adequate.	96%	=15	95.4%	At 96%, Denbighshire's performance is <b>above</b> the Welsh average of 95.4%. With all authorities receiving such high results, a joint 15 <sup>th</sup> position is rather meaningless.  Of more relevance is the fact that

				Denbighshire was placed 5 <sup>th</sup> for the number of books issued per 1,000 pop, and 8 <sup>th</sup> for the amount of stock out on loan on stock census day.
% of library service expenditure spent on books	11.5%	16	13.1%	Total expenditure on books and other items in 2010/11 came to <b>£206,201</b> . Budget profiling gives priority to premises & staffing costs first and foremost, to ensure enough staff to deliver services within current opening hours. However, despite not meeting the Standard on expenditure, Denbighshire was in 5 <sup>th</sup> position for the numbers of books issued from its libraries.
% of users satisfied that the library building offers an attractive environment	91.5%	14	90.2%	At 91.5%, Denbighshire is still above the Welsh average, although in 14 <sup>th</sup> position.  The survey was undertaken in 2009, the 2 lowest scoring libraries being Prestatyn (71.5%) and Rhyl (83.5), since when Rhyl has been completely refurbished. The highest scoring libraries were Ruthin (95%) and Llangollen (96.5%).
% of adults who think that the computer facilities are very good, good or adequate.	85%	21	95.1%	All public access computers have been replaced since the 2009 Survey. The next survey will be undertaken in 2012.

#### Fourth Assessment Framework 2011-2014

13. A Fourth Assessment Framework for library authorities, covering the period 2011-2014, has been issued. This comprises 9 Standards and 8 Performance Indicators which provides a tool to support the management and efficient delivery of services, and to ensure that the public can continue to benefit from the provision of:

- Suitable and appropriate access to public library service points
- Suitable and appropriate range of materials for public use
- Access to adequate levels of staffing and a skilled workforce
- Adequate capital investment in buildings, ICT and management systems.

14. Denbighshire's Annual Return for 2011/12 will be submitted to CyMAL in July 2012.

**15. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Library Service contributes to the health and wellbeing of local communities by providing access to books and information, and partnership activities for all ages. It also contributes to Denbighshire's Literacy Strategy, as acknowledged in the Self Assessment report.

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

There are no cost implications.

**17. What consultations have been carried out?**

CyMAL's assessment has been discussed with Lead Member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing and at the Leisure, Libraries and Community Development (LLCD) Lead Officer's Group and Library Service Management Team.

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

Performance against the new Assessment Framework for 2011-14 will be reported annually to CyMAL in July 2012, 2013 and 2014. Failure to meet some of the standards and indicators will result in a reputational risk to the authority and potentially a reduction in usage of the service.

**19. Power to make the Decision**

Article 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution.