ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 9th January 2017
Report Subject	Welsh Public Library Standards : Review of Performance 2015/16
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Organisational Change)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964[1] makes it a duty of the relevant Welsh Ministers "to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by local authorities…and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred upon them as library authorities under this Act". Under the same Act, library authorities are required to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof".

Since 2002, the Welsh Ministers have fulfilled this duty through the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS). Each set stands for a total of three years and individual frameworks have evolved to reflect the changing needs and expectations of public library users. We are currently operating within the fifth quality framework Libraries making a difference (2014-17).

Introduced at a time of budgetary constraint, this framework aims to provide opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and the flexibility to make best use of the resources available to them. Library services contribute to a range of Welsh Government outcomes such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, poverty, health and well-being. Library provision spans these outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously. The fifth framework has therefore been themed around four core service aspects:

- customers and communities;
- access for all;

- learning for life; and
- leadership and development.

Each aspect has a number of core entitlements and quality indicators associated with it. The 18 Core Entitlements outline what local residents can expect of their Library Service. They are designed to ensure that library services:
- Engage with customers and potential users
- Provide opportunities for individual and community development (1,2 & 3)
- Are delivered from buildings and facilities which are welcoming, inclusive and fit for purpose (4,5,6 &7)
- Provide a range of resources and services to meet people's needs (8,9,10,11,12 & 13)
- Are professionally managed with adequate resources (14, 15, 16, 17 & 18)

There are 23 Quality Indicators. Not all are measured by a target, and authorities are required to report on data collected from user surveys, feedback, sampling and to use performance indicators such as visitor numbers, attendance at events and level of ICT use.

This report provides a review against performance in 2015/16 including the assessment from Welsh Government at Appendix A. In summary Flintshire has done well to maintain performance during a year of major change in 2015/16 and the year 2016/17 should see an improvement in performance. Flintshire continues to be ranked first in Wales for overall customer satisfaction (99%) and second in Wales for children's rating of the service (9.5 out of 10).

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	For Scrutiny to comment on progress of delivery against Welsh Public Library Standards.
2	To continue to support the progress in developing the library service that will see an improvement in performance in 2016/17.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND INFORMATION – PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE STANDARDS
1.01	In 2016 the library service reported on performance for the second year of the fifth framework of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) covering 2014-17. The annual assessment of our performance is attached as Appendix A.
1.02	When reporting to Committee in April 2016 against previous performance the conclusions detailed in this report stated.

(1) Flintshire will not meet the following in 2015-16 |

	QI 16. Opening hours (no less than 120 per week should be provided per 1,000 resident population This will be fully met for 2016-17 as Deeside Library opened in March 2016 and the opening hours of this library ensure that we fully meet requirements for this quality indicator. (2) A slight drop in performance was seen in 2015/16 when budget savings have been made through service efficiencies. Performance will improve in 2016-17 when bigger changes to the network have been fully implemented e.g. re-location of libraries and community asset transfers. The medium term business plan for libraries took WPLS into account when proposals for efficiencies were made and current level of performance should be maintained and possibly improved. This report and annual assessment is in line with the estimates made in these conclusions.
1.03	The annual assessment states that there have been some encouraging improvements during the year as well as some disappointing results, which is to be expected during times of change. The restructuring to concentrate resources in 7 hub libraries is expected to improve performance against the standards in the final year of WPLS reporting against the current framework.
1.04	In 2015-16 Flintshire met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially met 1. This is expected to be 18 in the next return as all service points will offer Wi-Fi.
1.05	Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets Flintshire achieved: 2 in full • Location of service points and up to date reading material 4 in part • Individual development – an improvement on last year with increased training and support, but will be met in full with formal training programme at all branches being introduced this year. • Appropriate reading material – we fail to meet the indicator on this by spending more than specified on children's material • Online access - to be met in full this year with Wi-Fi available at all branches • Staffing levels and qualifications – fail to meet staff per capita and professional staff per capita Did not meet 1 Opening hours -The final year of reporting will meet this indicator as the extended library opening hours at the new library in Deeside are included.
1.06	The remaining indicators do not have targets but allow performance to be compared between authorities. This information is provided at Appendix A. Flintshire's rankings on the whole fall within the median range as detailed below:

	• Online performance improved with an increase in virtual visits and the service returned the highest result in Wales on overall customer satisfaction;
	• Areas of focus for the service identified through the return include;
	• IT usage - Flintshire scores lowest, but this low percentage of usage demonstrates an excess of available PCs. The way people use IT is changing, with many people coming in with their own devices. The service no longer plans to offer as many standalone PCs, and is focusing on improving Wi-Fi access and provision and investigate potential of wireless printing;
	• Supply of requests – a decrease in the speed of supply of requests has been reported. This is due in part to the housebound deliveries now being included within the reporting mechanism and the nature and format of their requests can take longer to deliver.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Financial Implications No implications.
2.02	Human Resource Implications No implications.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	No consultation carried out.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Key Risks and Mitigation (1) Performance against standards reduces – current plans within existing budgets show that performance will increase in 2016/17, this will be monitored carefully, and if budgets from Welsh Government reduce then consideration will need to be given to where it is acceptable to reduce performance against the standards.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Annual Assessment of Performance Against Welsh Public Library Standards

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

6.01	None. **Contact Officers:** Ian Bancroft / Kate Leonard **Telephone:** 01352 704511 **E-mail:** ian.bancroft@flintshire.gov.uk / kate.leonard@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	Welsh Public Library Standards – the annual assessment of library service performance by Welsh Government.