

## ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
<b>Report Subject</b>	Welsh Public Library Standards : Review of Performance 2016/17
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer Organisational Change
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 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). This report provides a review against performance in 2015/16 including the assessment from Welsh Government at Appendix A.

In summary Flintshire as previously predicted last year has improved in 2016/17 against the quality indicators with targets, now achieving 5 out of the 7, an increase from achieving 2 out of 7 in 2015/16. The Library Service is currently operating a model that as a Council we believe meets community needs. Recognition of this is shown within 99% of adults rating the service good or very good (second highest score in Wales) and children rating the service 10 out of 10 (the highest score in Wales). However if further reductions are made due to continued austerity requirements from the United Kingdom government then the service will not be able to meet community needs and performance against these standards will significantly deteriorate. The resilience of the service as at risk and this is demonstrated as, while the service is able to achieve good performance with its current budget against core entitlements and the quality indicators with targets, performance across the remaining areas of the framework is mixed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	For Scrutiny to comment on progress of delivery against Welsh Public Library Standards.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION – PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE STANDARDS</b>
1.01	In 2017 the library service reported on performance for the third 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	<p>Introduced at a time of budgetary constraint, the current WPLS 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• customers and communities;</li><li>• access for all;</li><li>• learning for life; and</li><li>• leadership and development.</li></ul> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with customers and potential users</li><li>• Provide opportunities for individual and community development (1,2 &amp; 3)</li><li>• Are delivered from buildings and facilities which are welcoming, inclusive and fit for purpose (4,5,6 &amp;7)</li><li>• Provide a range of resources and services to meet people's needs (8,9,10,11,12 &amp; 13)</li><li>• Are professionally managed with adequate resources (14, 15, 16, 17 &amp; 18)</li></ul> <p>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.</p>
1.02	<p>When reporting to Committee in January 2017 against previous performance the conclusions detailed in this report stated.</p> <p>(1) 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</p>

	<p>service points will offer Wi-Fi.</p> <p>(2) Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets Flintshire achieved:</p> <p>2 in full</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of service points and up to date reading material</li> </ul> <p>4 in part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Appropriate reading material – we fail to meet the indicator on this by spending more than specified on children’s material</li> <li>• Online access - to be met in full this year with Wi-Fi available at all branches</li> <li>• Staffing levels and qualifications – fail to meet staff per capita and professional staff per capita</li> </ul> <p>Did not meet 1</p> <p>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.</p>
1.03	<p>The Annual Assessment Executive Summary for 2016/17 (see Appendix A) states</p> <p>“Flintshire met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially met 1 Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Flintshire achieved 5 in full, 1 in part and could not provide data on one. This is an improvement on last year when only 2 were achieved in full. The completion of the programme to consolidate resources in to 7 hub libraries has seen some improvements this year with the targets relating to individual development, online access and opening hours now being fully achieved. The service has done well to maintain performance in general during the last few years of change.’</p>
1.04	<p>The improvement in performance against the quality indicators with targets since last year is with the three additional indicators being met as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QI 3 – Individual Development</li> <li>• QI10 – On line access</li> <li>• QI16 – Opening Hours per capita</li> </ul>
1.05	<p>While the main focus for our library service has been maintaining performance against core entitlements and improving performance against quality indicators with targets the report also considers relative performance against other Local Authorities across the four core service areas of the framework. Flintshire’s performance is varied with key areas highlighted below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance is relatively good on customer satisfaction, expenditure on materials, supply of requests within 7 days, and opening hours.</li> <li>• Areas of focus for the service identified through the return include</li> </ul>

	<p>physical and virtual visits and professional staffing levels.</p> <p>Work to co-locate services in Holywell should make a difference in visitor numbers and recent changes to the staffing structure are intended to improve professional staffing levels.</p>
1.06	<p>The assessors report concludes that</p> <p>‘The completion of the programme to consolidate resources in to 7 hub libraries has seen some improvements this year with the targets relating to individual development, online access and opening hours now being fully achieved. The service has done well to maintain performance in general during the last few years of change. The continuing decline in staffing levels is disappointing but the data does correspond to a time when there were vacancies, and so it is hoped that this will improve over the next year. Stability and ongoing investment in the service will help embed recent improvements for the future.’</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>No implications.</p>
2.02	<p>Human Resource Implications</p> <p>No implications.</p>

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

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	<p>Key Risks and Mitigation</p> <p>(1) Performance against standards reduces – current plans within existing budgets show that performance can be maintained, 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.</p>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix A – Annual Assessment of Performance Against Welsh Public Library Standards.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None  <b>Contact Officers:</b> Ian Bancroft / Kate Leonard <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704511 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ian.bancroft@flintshire.gov.uk">ian.bancroft@flintshire.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:kate.leonard@aura.wales">kate.leonard@aura.wales</a>

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