



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH JULY 2014

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY 2014-2017

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee of the future strategic priorities for the Authority's Library Service between 2014 and 2017, building on the foundations of the 2009-2014 Five Year Development Plan.
- 1.2 To place the proposed three year Strategy for the Library Service within the wider context of the Welsh Government's 5th Quality Framework of Public Library Standards, 2014-2017, and the County Borough's Medium Term Financial Plan commitments over the equivalent time period.
- 1.3 To seek the views of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee Members prior to this reports presentation to Cabinet for its approval.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to outline to Education for Life Scrutiny Committee Members the County Borough Library Service's Strategic Plan for the next three years 2014-2017.
- 2.2 The proposed new Library Strategy must be considered in the context of a new Welsh Government Quality Standards Framework, 2014-2017 and with particular regard to the Council Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements in respect of 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- 2.3 The 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service Strategy builds on the 2009-2014 Five Year Development Plan and considerable investment made by the Authority in its network of Library facilities and services during the last six year period.
- 2.4 The Library Service Strategy will focus on managing the anticipated organisational changes required as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and upon delivering in two key areas of activity namely:
 - **'Reading Together'** – Establishing best practice in promoting reading to individuals, families, and communities of place and interest, and improving core literacy skills to aid wider learning objectives.
 - **'Digital e-Services'** – Supporting residents to become digitally skilled and enabled to seek work online, access benefits electronically and to become more confident using the Internet for all their information needs.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The work of Caerphilly County Borough Library Service contributes to a number of the Council's key strategic priority areas and plans including 'Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017', in particular with respect to:
- **Prosperous Caerphilly** – supporting local people to improve their employment opportunities and compete for work.
 - **Learning Caerphilly** – providing access to a range of resource, facilities, and services that underpin basic skill development, qualification attainment, and access to materials that support improved educational achievement among residents of all ages.
 - **Healthier Caerphilly** – supporting older residents to live in their own homes and communities independently through the work of the Housebound Library Service.
- 3.2 Caerphilly County Borough Library Service supports the Authority in addressing Strategic Equality Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
- 3.3 The 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service Strategy will support the Authority to work toward meeting the Welsh Government's 5th Quality Framework of Public Library Standards and the priority areas of 'Libraries Inspire: The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16'.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Review Of 2009-14 Five Year Development Plan

- 4.1.1 Please see **Appendix 1** which provides an overview of the key achievements and areas for further development identified in the 2009-2014 Five Year Development Plan.
- 4.1.2 The 2009-2014 Five Year Development Plan has supported the delivery of the following key achievements by the Library Service within Caerphilly County Borough:
- Refurbishment and enhancement of Pengam, Deri, Rhymney, Blackwood, Aberbargoed, and Bedwas Library.
 - Introduction of new Library facilities at Bargoed, Risca, Abercarn, Newbridge, and Caerphilly.
 - Investment of £13 million in building improvement works through Council, private sector, and Welsh Government monies.
 - Development of co-located and jointly delivered service offers at a number of the sites noted above working proactively with the Council's Customer Services team, third sector bodies, and local community groups to offer residents a mix of additional services under one roof.
 - Provision of new and improved spaces in Library buildings for children, young people, adults and learners including the adoption of free Wireless computing where achievable.
 - Introduction of new 'Library Link' Housebound Library Service vehicles.
- 4.1.3 The 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service Strategy, see **Appendix 3**, is based on the retention and future development of the County Borough Council's successful tiering model for Public Library development that is considered best practice in Wales and has been adapted for use in other part of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- 4.1.4 Following significant building and service presentation improvements between 2009 and 2014 the main focuses of the 2014 to 2017 Library Strategy will be the prioritisation on:
- Improving levels of use among residents.
 - Improved marketing of facilities.
 - Establishing coherent reading and digital enablement plans for the County Borough that fit within the Authority's Single Integrated Plan commitments and Medium Term Financial Planning constraints.

4.2 Welsh Government 5th Public Library Standards Quality Framework – Implications And Considerations For Caerphilly County Borough

4.2.1 The 5th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards comprises 18 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators (see **Appendix 2**). Library Service performance against both entitlements and indicators will be mapped to a range of outcome and impact measures in a departure from earlier Frameworks that focused largely on a set of Standards and Performance Indicators to assess Council attainment.

4.2.2 The 5th Quality Framework of Public Library Standards assists the Welsh Government and the Minister for Culture and Sport in assessing whether each local Council in Wales are complying with their statutory duties under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

4.2.3 The 5th Quality Framework recognises that “*Library Services contribute to a range of Welsh Government outcomes such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, poverty, health and well being*” (p.6). The new Framework is themed around four core service aspects namely:

- Customers and communities
- Access for all
- Learning for life
- Leadership and development

4.2.4 The type of indicators proposed as part of this Framework will include:

- **Input indicators** – what the library service provides, number of books and materials purchased for example.
- **Output indicators** – focusing on levels of use of the Library Service and its resources.
- **Outcome and impact indicators** – assessing the direct and indirect effect of the Library Service on individuals and the communities it serves.

4.2.5 The areas of the 5th Quality Standards Framework, 2014-2017, that may present the greatest challenges for the Authority in their retention, or future attainment, in light of possible Medium Term Financial Plan pressures are highlighted in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Welsh Public Library Standard Quality Indicators (WPLSQI)

Standards Area	Minimum Level of Attainment	Impact for Caerphilly CBC (a meet or r fail to meet)
WPLSQI 5 Location of Service Points	75% of households are within 2.5 miles (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static service point.	a Caerphilly Library Service achieves 100% of households within 2.5 miles of a static service point. Any significant future reduction in the number of static service points would impact on this indicator.
WPLSQI 8 Up-to-date reading material	Either a minimum of 243 items acquired per 1,000 resident population or £2,180 per 1,000 resident population spent annually on resources.	r To meet either element of the indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43,502 items would require purchase per annum, or • £390,268 spend on books and other materials per year would be a minimum required <p>The 2014-2015 Library Service Resource Budget has been reduced by £50,000 to £365,000, below the level required to attain WPLSQI 8.</p>

<p>WPLSQI 9 Appropriate reading materials</p>	<p>The percentage budget spent on resources for children should reflect the percentage of children in the resident population, within a 2 +/- percentage range.</p> <p>£750 per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population should be spent on the purchase of Welsh language materials.</p>	<p>a Under 16's currently represent 19.4% of the County Borough's total population. On this basis and with a total resource budget of £365,000 for 2014-15 the following spend range for junior materials can be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £63,510 and £78,110 per annum. <p>a The Library Service presently meets the Welsh language material indicator and should do so in the future.</p>
<p>WPLSQ10 Online Access</p>	<p>Authorities should provide an aggregate of 9 devices providing public access to the Internet and networked digital content per 10,000 residents.</p> <p>All static service points should provide WiFi access for users to bring their own laptop or mobile devices</p>	<p>a The minimum number of public access terminals and/or internet connected devices required to meet this quality indicator is 161. The Borough Library Service currently provides residents with access to 250 Internet enabled terminals across its 18 sites.</p> <p>Though this could decline in future years if the number of Library sites were to reduce it is anticipated that the indicator can continue to be met or exceeded.</p> <p>r The Library Service provides free wireless Internet access to 12 of its 18 sites at present. The cost of extending such provision to all 18 current locations would be an additional £25,000.</p>
<p>WPLSQI13 Staffing levels and qualifications</p>	<p>Total staffing establishment levels for the Library Service should be 3.6 (full time equivalents) or higher per 10,000 resident population.</p> <p>The number of staff (full time equivalents) holding recognised qualifications in librarianship per 10,000 resident population should not fall below 0.65.</p>	<p>a 64.4 Full time equivalent (FTE) posts within the Library Service to meet minimum quality indicator level. Present staffing levels are at 67.5 FTE.</p> <p>a 11.6 Full time equivalent (FTE) posts within the Library Service to meet minimum quality indicator level. The Library Service has 12.5 FTE in post at present.</p> <p>The impact of any service review linked to the Council's MTFP, in particular where the number of facilities may be reduced, could impact on the Authority's ability to meet this quality indicator for total staffing and/or personnel holding recognised qualifications – dependent on what changes are required.</p>
<p>WPLSQI16 Opening hours</p>	<p>Aggregate opening hours across all service points managed by the Council will not be less than 120 hours per annum per 1,000 resident population.</p>	<p>a 21,483 hours per annum to meet this quality indicator. Caerphilly Library Service achieved 29,234 or 165.6 hours per 1,000 residents in 2013-2014.</p>

		The impact of any service review linked to the Council's MTFP, in particular where the number of facilities may be reduced, could impact on the Authority's ability to meet this quality indicator for aggregate opening hours per 1,000 resident population in the future.
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*Population for 2014-2015 of 179,022

4.3 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service – Key Strategic Themes

- 4.3.1 Please see **Appendix 3** for a detailed narrative of the 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service Strategy.
- 4.3.2 The 2014-2017 Caerphilly Library Service strategy has been developed along three levels of priority. Priority 1 areas of work will form the main focus of targeted activity with development themes at levels 2 and 3 having a lower weighting.
- 4.3.3 The overriding challenges facing the County Borough Library Service between 2014 and 2017 relate in large part to the potential impact of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and the requirement to reconfigure the present service to match the level of funding available whilst developing new approaches to back office delivery and management support arrangements wherever possible.
- 4.3.4 An assessment of the County Borough's present network of Libraries will form part of a wider review of statutory services that are delivered above the minimum levels required by the Authority and areas of provision that are deemed discretionary in nature. The review process will commence during the summer and autumn of 2014 as part of a series of special Scrutiny Meetings linked to the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements and is likely to continue into 2015-2016 ahead of any approved changes being implemented from April 1st 2016. Separate reports will be produced as part of this Member led process.
- 4.3.5 Two strategic delivery themes will form the main focus of targeted public engagement work for the Library Service between 2014 and 2017, these are:
- **'Reading together'** - Whilst the Council has made significant investment in its Library building stock and resource collections the impact of these improvements has yet to fully engage Borough residents to borrow increased numbers of books and other materials. A targeted approach to engage with children, adults, families, and learners will form a central theme to the Library Services marketing of provision, partnerships with others, and audience development activities.
 - **'Digital e-Services'** – The increasing importance of digital literacy as a core life skill cannot be understated. Caerphilly County Borough has one of the highest levels of digital exclusion among adults within Wales and the UK. The Authority's Public Library Service has a key role in providing free access to Internet facilities, and where possible training and support from trusted partner organisations, that can assist residents to gain the key IT skills needed to find employment, to access benefits and information online, and to improve their wider life chances. The Library Service will focus considerable efforts to ensure it is able to play its part in supporting the digital and e-service agenda within the Authority.
- 4.3.6 Central to the strategic themes noted in 4.3.5 will be the requirement to train and develop Library Services staff to offer appropriate customer support in each area of development. In addition considerable effort will be placed on working more effectively to better utilise the stock, technology, and resources available to increase usage levels at all local Libraries.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications to this report therefore no Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. As noted in 4.3.4 above an assessment of the Council's Library network of facilities will take place shortly and appropriate Equality Impact Assessment activity will be undertaken as part of any agreed consultation and planning arrangements attached to this work stream.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The full financial implications of the Council's 2014-2017 Medium Term Financial Plan have yet to be identified with regard to the Borough's Library Service. Proposals for savings during 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 are currently under consideration as part of the Authority's ongoing planning process.
- 6.2 The cost of implementing wireless Internet access to all 18 static Library sites, in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's 5th Quality Standards Framework are estimated at £25,000. It is important for Members to note that investment has already taken place to introduce wireless Internet access to all Libraries open 30 hours or more per week, in line with the requirements of the 4th Welsh Government Standards Framework which concluded on March 31st 2014, however the new performance scheme for 2014-2017 now requires that all static facilities offer this provision as a minimum.
- 6.3 The additional funding required to meet the Welsh Public Library Standard Quality Indicator 8 regarding the purchase of reading materials is £25,000 per annum based on the Authority's present total population figure and budget allocation for 2014-2015. Where possible in year savings will be sought that can be utilised to top up the present Library Service book fund allocation so that WPLSQI 8 can be met.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report at this stage.
- 7.2 It is envisaged over the life-time of this Library Strategy, 2014 to 2017 that changes may take place to how the local Library Services are delivered and this could impact on the staffing structure. Where changes in staffing are proposed separate reports will be prepared for consideration by Members as and when required.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong learning, Councillor Rhianon Passmore, and the Directorate's Senior Management Team has been consulted and their views included within the body of this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Education for Life Scrutiny Committee Members are asked for their views on the information contained in the report prior to the Caerphilly Library Service Strategy 2014-2017 being presented to Cabinet for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To consult and seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the strategies outlined to meet the requirements of the Welsh Government 5th Quality Framework of Public Library Standards 2014-2017.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

11.2 The 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act requires that each Local Authority “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. As the terms “comprehensive and efficient” are not defined in the Act, the Welsh Government introduced the Public Library Standards and Performance Indicator Set in 2001-02 to assist in defining minimum levels of service and to provide the Minister for Culture and Sport with adequate guidance and evidence to appropriately superintend, and promote the improvement of Public Library Services in Wales.

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Background Papers:

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee 2nd June 2009. Caerphilly County Borough Library Service – Five Year Development Plan 2009-14

Cabinet 9th June 2009. Caerphilly County Borough Library Service – Five Year Development Plan 2009-14

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Review of 2009-2014 Five Year Development Plan
Appendix 2 5th Quality Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards ‘Core Entitlements and Indicators’
Appendix 3 2014-2017 Caerphilly County Borough Library Service Strategic Action Plan