INFORMATION ITEM
EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
7TH NOVEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: **CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL LIBRARY STANDARDS ASSESSMENT 2016-2017**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER**

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To inform the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee of the progress made by the County Borough Library Service in seeking to meet the 5th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards, Core Entitlements, and Qualitative Indicators, during 2016-17. This is the 3rd and final year of this Framework which operated up to March 31st 2017 and included a number of assessment areas with a focus on outcome and qualitative measures in addition to more traditional standards of attainment.

1.2   A guide to the features contained in the 2014-2017 Welsh Government Public Library Standards Framework is included for Scrutiny Member awareness as **Appendix 1**.

1.3   Education for Life Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse this report.

2.   SUMMARY

2.1   Caerphilly County Borough was assessed as meeting 18 of the 18 Welsh Government Core Entitlements for Public Library Service provision. The Borough Library Service was deemed as meeting 5 of the 7 Quality Indicators for Wales in full and 2 in part with none failed in totality and was described by the Assessors and Reference Panel as having "consolidated services and maintained its performance…with some notable improvements". A copy of the formal Welsh Government assessment is included with this report as **Appendix 2**.

2.2   The 5th Welsh Government Public Library Standards Framework 2014-2017 included a range of core entitlements, quality indicators, qualitative data in addition to traditional input and output information, and a number of case study submissions at customer and Authority level.

Four strategic themes form the core of the Assessment regime, namely:

• Customers and Communities
• Access for all
• Learning for life
• Leadership and development

The Welsh Government Standards Reference Group in assessing Caerphilly County Borough Library Service's submission for 2016-2017 identified the following areas of particular strength in the Authority's performance for the year under review:

- Customer satisfaction is high, with all indicators above the median for Wales.

- Attendance at training sessions is above the median for Wales, and both this and informal training have increased in each year of the framework.

- The number of both members and active borrowers per capita remain high, and the service is to be commended on its increase in book and electronic issues, and improvement in the speed of supply of requests.

- Targets for acquisitions per capita, replenishment rate, materials for children and materials in the Welsh language have all been met.

2.3   The Welsh Government Public Libraries Standards Reference Group noted a number of other areas of performance that were below the average for Wales and that require further attention by the Borough Council in continuing to deliver a strong performing service in the future, these included:

- ICT provision appears to be under-utilised – based on the calculation formula of this standard it appears the Borough Library Service under-performs in ICT usage. The level of utilisation, at 21%, though appearing low, is due to the high number of Internet Terminals available that contribute to the levels of continuous occupancy recorded which needs to be considered in assessing this performance.

- Five service points do not provide Wi-Fi access.

- Staff turnover has reduced the numbers of professional staff, which no longer meets the target.

2.4   Overall the assessment of the County Borough Council's Public Library Service for 2016-2017 is favourable with acknowledgement that the service has maintained performance in the final year of the framework, with some notable improvements. However it must be noted that during 2016-2017 the service attained all 18 Welsh Government Core Entitlements - an improvement on the 2015-2016 return where the Borough Library Service met only 17 of the 18 Entitlements.

2.5   Considering the four areas in the framework (*Customers and communities; Access for all; Learning for life;* and *Leadership and development*) in comparison to the rest of Wales, Caerphilly generally performs well in the areas of *Customers and communities* and *Learning for life*, with a more mixed performance in other areas.

3.   LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1   Public Libraries contribute to a number of the Council's core priorities and the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

4.0   THE REPORT

4.1   The Welsh Government assessment of Caerphilly County Borough Council's performance against the 5th Standards Framework for Public Libraries in Wales during 2016-2017, concluded that:

"Caerphilly has consolidated services and maintained its performance in the final year of the framework, with some notable improvements in issues and supply of requests. However, budget reductions are already leading to declining usage in some aspect."

4.2   Caerphilly County Borough Library Service is assessed as meeting 18 of the 18 core (see **Appendix 2**).

4.3   There are 7 quality indicators that have target measures associated to them of which Caerphilly County Borough Library Service is deemed to achieve 5 in full and 2 in part which relate to Wi-Fi provision and Staff per capita.

4.4   Detailed below are areas of the assessment Framework that deserve specific mention either in respect of the good performance achieved by the Borough Library Service or where activity levels or other metrics fall below the average for Wales in 2016-2017.

4.4.1   Highlighted below are areas of good or excellent performance when compared to other Welsh Local Authorities.

Performance Indicator	Caerphilly	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	94%	3/20	74%	90%	98%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	4/20	90%	99%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall	98%	5/20	92%	97%	100%
d) child rating out of ten	9.3	6/19	8.6	9.1	10.0
QI 6 Library use					
a) visits per capita	4,431	7	2,453	4,033	6,751
c) active borrowers per capita	227	2	77	153	235
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	339	4	62	214	496
QI 12 Supply of requests					
a) % available within 7 days	81%	2	48%	70%	82%
QI 16 Opening hours					
a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.48%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	1	0.00%	0.13%	8.33%

4.4.2   **Customer satisfaction**
Caerphilly County Borough Council's Public Library Service remains popular among the Authority's resident population and judged by users of all ages as offering excellent customer care. This sustained performance that has been noteworthy for a number of years and reflects both the quality of the Council's Library facilities and the resources, skills and care of its staffing complement.

4.4.3 **Library Usage**
Libraries reach and support the whole community regardless of age, gender and socioeconomic status or educational attainment. 80% of the residents in the borough hold a library card which is reflected in the positive ranking received by Caerphilly County Borough Public Library Service for active borrowers per capita. The number of residents attending events in Libraries has also improved on 2015-2016 activity levels and visits per capita are now ranked 7th for Wales.

4.4.4 **Satisfying customer requests for resources and specific materials effectively and in a timely fashion**
The Borough Library Service has a well-developed book and non-book delivery service and is a participant in the South Wales book courier offer 'Books4U' which provides customers with access to 12 Local Authority Library collections and 3 Academic establishments. Performance with regards to reservations for specific titles reflects the quality of overall offer currently available, however as book fund reductions begin to impact linked to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) requirements performance in this area of assessment will become at best more challenging to sustain and at worst will see significant reductions in achievement.

4.4.5 **Access**
Caerphilly County Borough Library Service has ensured that the level of emergency non-opening of its 18 static library sites and its Housebound Delivery Service has not been a significant concern during 2016-17. Caerphilly is ranked the best performing Authority in Wales for this measure despite the Borough's facilities move to single staffing as part of tapered reductions in opening times since October 2015, linked to the Council's MTFP obligations.

4.5   Highlighted areas of below average performance

Performance Indicator	Caerphilly	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) new skills	24%	17/19	23%	71%	93%
c) health and well-being	26%	20/20	26%	56%	94%
QI 4 User training					
c) informal training per capita	118	14/20	1	156	712
QI 6 Library use					
b) virtual visits per capita	450	19/21	341	922	2,299
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public					
a) equipment	21%	19/21	16%	32%	69%

4.5.1 **Making a difference (Skills and well-being)**
The two qualitative measures included in this area were new to the 5th Standards Framework and each Authority has subsequently developed their own methods of capturing and reporting customer comments on skill development and use of health and well-being resources in their Libraries.

Caerphilly's performance against these indicators though appearing low within the authorities to return responses for 2016-2017 should be considered against this context and that the reporting submitted has been based on the results of a large survey sample as part of the annual CIPFA plus returns. Moving into the 6th Standards Framework, more detailed and targeted questionnaire activity is planned for 2017-2018.

4.5.2 **User training**
Caerphilly County Borough Library Service is slightly below the median for attendance per capita at informal user training activities although it should be noted that there has been an improvement on the ranking on the previous year whereby Caerphilly was deemed the lowest in Wales. As noted above this area was also a new indicator of performance included in the Welsh Government Standards Framework portfolio. Caerphilly Library Service works closely with partners, including Communities 2.0, Learn Direct, Get Caerphilly Online, and the Borough Adult Education Service to increase formal training provision. It is acknowledged that a review of the recording of informal activity needs to take place moving forward to ensure no under estimating of activity is taking place.

It is also important to note that since the move to single staff Library premises at smaller sites in October 2015, mediated informal training support for customers has become more challenging and activity levels in this area have shown an impact as a result.

4.5.3 **Library virtual usage and utilisation of public Internet terminals**
Caerphilly County Borough Library Service provides residents with access to 250 Public Internet Terminals across its 18 static sites, this is among the highest number for any Welsh Authority. The level of utilisation, at 21%, though appearing low, is due to the high number of Internet Terminals available that contribute to the levels of continuous occupancy recorded which needs to be considered in assessing this performance.

Promotion of e-digital services and computer usage are strategic priorities for the Borough Library Service over the 2017-2020 period as noted in the service's current service Improvement plan. It should be noted that only virtual visits to the CCBC Library website are included in the analytical data returned which is not the only library service online presence. Use of the Libraries Online website which includes access to the library catalogue system and e-resources through a direct URL link is unable to be reported on in a suitable format for the return at present. This is being reviewed for future reporting against the 6th Framework.

4.6   Impact Studies and Contribution to Borough Council strategic priority themes

Four case studies on the impact and value of the Borough Library Service were submitted and assessed by the Welsh Government Reference Group panel. The case studies were as follows:

- A 14-year old student who was encouraged to mount an exhibition of his photographs at the library; this was well received and is now touring the authority, with a resulting boost to the student's self-confidence.

- A young lady with physical and mental health problems who found peace and a feeling of safety at the library.

- Shared reading sessions at adult residential homes which contribute to participants' quality of life.

- A user whose life has been changed with a new home, job and girlfriend in Mexico, after using the library to improve his IT skills and gain a teaching qualification.

4.7   A statement on the contribution the Borough Library Service makes to a number of Welsh Government strategies, notably in the areas of Poverty, National Literacy Programme, Early Years provision, Community Learning, and Library delivery, was also submitted as part of the service Standards return for 2016-2017. Please see **Appendix 3** for the impact case studies and strategic statement.

5.0 WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Section 3 - Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that Libraries Deliver and report against:

	Sustainable Development Principle (WGFA 2016)	Libraries Deliver
	Long term **Planning** to achieve targets and aspirations	Free Internet Access Free Wi-Fi Access Sustainable PC provision
	Integrate how we work and deliver	Integrated systems Authentication for self-service Resource discovery platforms
	Involving staff and residents in service developments and current delivery challenges	Development of training / Support materials for staff and customers. Greater use of regular feedback via Social Media. Online evaluations and staff consultation.
	Collaborate with partners and others to provide the best community focused services	Working with groups and organisations that promote the same digital values to support residents.
	Prevent waste of materials and better utilise the skills of our present workforce	Use of online training tools, less printed paper. A responsive workforce and development strategy.

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the issues covered by this report are for information purposes only, seeking to update Members with regard to the Authority's performance in respect of Welsh Government Public Library Standards; therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The cost to implement free Wi-Fi access at the remaining 5 sites, Quality Indicator 10b, that have no provision at present is approximately £25k.

8.0 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications linked to this report.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members note the information received from the County Borough Library Service with regard to its performance for 2016-2017 in working towards achieving the 5th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards, 2014-2017.

10.2 Members should also note the Welsh Government's Public Library Standard Reference Group assessment of this performance See **Appendix 2**. The Authority's attainment of 18 Core Entitlements and 5 Quality Indicators in full, 2 partial that have target levels of attainment.

10.3 That the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee endorses the Welsh Government Public Library Standards Annual Report 2016-2017 and forward to Cabinet for approval.

11.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To inform Education for Life Scrutiny Members of the progress achieved by the County Borough Library Service in meeting the requirements of the 5th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards, 2014-2017.

12.0 STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

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Consultees: Directorate Senior Management Team
              Councillor Philippa Marsden, Cabinet Member, Education & Achievement
              Councillor Wynne David, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
              Councillor Gaynor Oliver, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
              Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive
              Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151
              Christina Harrhy, Corporate Director, Communities
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              Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer.
              Ros Roberts – Corporate Performance Manager, Performance Management
              Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
              Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities and Welsh Language

Appendices:

APPENDIX 1:   HOW GOOD IS YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE? A SUMMARY GUIDE TO THE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN WALES

APPENDIX 2:   WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS 2014-17 CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016-17

APPENDIX 3   WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS – CASE STUDIES 2016-17