



## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 19TH FEBRUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LIBRARY SERVICES ANNUAL  
WELSH GOVERNMENT STANDARDS ASSESSMENT 2017-18**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE  
SERVICES**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the progress made by the County Borough Library Service in seeking to meet the 6th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards, Core Entitlements, and Qualitative Indicators, during 2017-18. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Welsh Government Framework entitled 'Connected and Ambitious Libraries' 2017-2020. The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework comprises 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators, 10 of which have targets assigned to them that focus both on quantitative and qualitative measures. The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework also contains evidence of the impact that Libraries make on customers through four case studies and how the respective Library Service contributes to local and national priorities.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider this report. A summary of this information will also be included in the Local Authority's Annual Performance Monitoring Report which will be presented to full Council.
- 1.3 A guide to the features contained in the 2017-2020 Welsh Government Public Library Standards Framework is included for Member awareness as **Appendix 1**.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh Government Public Library Standards Framework 2017-2020 included a range of 12 core entitlements, 16 quality indicators, 10 of which have targets assigned to them, qualitative data in addition to traditional input and output information, and a number of case study submissions at customer and Authority level.

The 2017-2020 Standard's Framework highlight's the role that Public Libraries play in addressing Welsh Government priority areas including Wellbeing of Future Generations Act themes :

- Prosperity
- Resilience
- Equality
- Cohesive Communities
- Culture
- Health and wellbeing

- 2.2 Caerphilly County Borough was assessed as meeting 10 of the 12 Welsh Government Core Entitlements for Public Library Service provision in full and 2 in part. The Borough Library Service was deemed as meeting 8 of the 10 Quality Indicators for Wales that have assigned targets in full and 2 in part with no indicators failed in their totality, and was described by the Reference Panel as having “*maintained its performance*” and “*investing strongly in key areas including resources for children and young people, and in Welsh language provision*”. A copy of the formal Welsh Government assessment is included with this report as **Appendix 2**.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government Standards Reference Group in assessing Caerphilly County Borough Library Service’s submission for 2017-18 identified the following areas of particular strength in the Authority’s performance for the year under review:
- An adult user survey was completed in May 2017, showing continuing high levels of satisfaction, with 99% of those surveyed rating the Library ‘good’ or ‘very good’ overall
  - The service continues to meet the targets for acquisitions per capita, materials in the Welsh language, and supply of requests, with a strong commitment to its investment in stock for children and young adults.
  - Increases in library membership and children’s loans are now the highest per capita in Wales
- 2.4 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 maintaining its capability to deliver a strong performing service in the future, these included:
- Whilst levels of ICT provision/access are high, Caerphilly offers the greatest proportion of Internet terminals for use by residents in Wales, the take up and actual use of Borough Digital Services in this format continue to decline in relative terms due in part to the wealth of choice local residents presently have.
  - Whilst all static service points provide a good range of support for skills development and health and well-being, the impact indicator outcomes for these resources are less positive. Evidence for these measures of satisfaction is collated from quarterly spot surveys of customers attending Library sites at the time of the monitoring. The collected data is then extrapolated for a full year impact and satisfaction scores.
  - WiFi provision is not currently available at 6 of the County Borough’s 18 static sites. This disadvantages the Council’s performance against one Core Entitlement and one Quality Indicator, both of which are judged as partial compliances due to the lack of comprehensive WiFi access. As noted elsewhere in this report full WiFi coverage across all 18 borough Library locations will be in place by March 2019.
  - The assessors recognise in a number of their comments on Caerphilly County Borough Library’s performances that present and anticipated fiscal pressures linked to the Local Authority’s Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to hinder staff numbers, including professional levels of cover, to deliver important areas of work. It is however important to note that in 2016-17 only 2 of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales were deemed to fully meet the staffing component of the Standards Framework for Public Libraries. The assessor’s note that the number of events and activities in Borough Libraries increased in 2017-18 however due to single staffing and other linked factors the number of residents participating in these opportunities reduced. The Borough Library Service has sought to mitigate against the impact of reduced site staffing through the extensive investment undertaken in self-service kiosks that are intended to release Library personnel time and support customers to loan or return their own items of stock without the requirement to wait for employee intervention or assistance.

- 2.5 Overall the assessment of the County Borough Council's Public Library Service for 2017-2018 is that of a provision that has been maintained against a challenging back drop of continuing financial pressures linked to the Local Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan and anticipated further impacts to come in subsequent years of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework period. The County Borough's strong investment and commitment to resources for children and young people and access to materials in Welsh receive positive assessment from the Standards Panel.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Public Libraries contribute to a number of the Council's core priorities including key themes of the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:

- 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. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Welsh Government assessment of Caerphilly County Borough Council's performance against the 6<sup>th</sup> Standards Framework for Public Libraries in Wales during 2017-18, concluded that:

*"Caerphilly has generally maintained its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, investing strongly in key areas including resources for children and young people, and in Welsh language provision. Customer satisfaction is generally high, and where performances have declined the service offers a good analysis of the underlying issues, with staff capacity a limiting factor in a number of areas."*

- 4.2 Caerphilly County Borough Library Service is assessed as meeting 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full and 2 in part. Those partially met relate to lack of WiFi access at 6 of its 18 static sites and delays in publishing the Library Services Strategic Action Plan on the Council's website.
- 4.3 In year funding has been identified during 2018-19 to pay for the implementation of free WiFi access to all remaining Library sites at a cost of approximately £10,000 and the Local Authority's Library Strategy is in the process of being placed on the Council website. These two actions will ensure that in 2018-19's Annual Standards assessment that the Local Authority should achieve full Core Entitlement status.
- 4.4 Caerphilly County Borough Library Service is deemed to meet 8 of the 10 Quality Indicators that have targets in full with the other two met in part. Quality Indicator 11 relates to Online Access where only partial compliance with WiFi provision has merited a 'met in part' assessment. Quality Indicator 13 addresses 'Staffing Levels and Qualifications' where both total staff and qualified personnel per capita fail to meet the minimum ratios in place. It is however important to note that in 2016-17 only 2 of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales were deemed to fully meet the staffing component of the Standards Framework for Public Libraries.
- 4.5 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 fall below the average for Wales in 2017-2018.

#### 4.5.1 Highlighted areas of good or excellent performance when compared to other Welsh Local Authorities

Performance indicator	2017/18	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17
<b>QI 1 Making a difference</b>						
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	99%	2/7	90%	98%	100%	98%
<b>QI 2 Customer satisfaction</b>						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	94%	3/7	88%	91%	98%	94%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	3/7	93%	99%	100%	99%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	99%	1/7	93%	97%	99%	98%
<b>QI 5 User training</b>						
5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	98%	4/ 17	75%	98%	100%	
<b>QI 8 Library use</b>						
a) visits per capita	4,291	7/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	4,431
c) active borrowers per capita	220	2/22	100	154	229	227
<b>QI 11 Online access</b>						
b) Computers per capita^	14	1/22	5	9	14	14
<b>QI 16 Opening hours#</b>						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	1/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	1/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	0.00%

<sup>^</sup>per 10,000 resident population

<sup>#</sup> Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

#### Making a difference

Caerphilly County Borough Library Service has historically scored positively across a range of measures of customer satisfaction. The 2017-18 Annual Standards assessment report highlights the level of user satisfaction with local Libraries being safe, enjoyable and inclusive spaces with 99% of respondents to the Adult Public Library Service study rating the Authority as 'very good' or 'good' placing it among the upper quartile for Wales as a whole.

#### Customer satisfaction

As noted above 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. Scores of 94%, 99%, and 99% for Choice of books, Customer care, and Overall rating with Library place the Local Authority in the respective upper quartiles for Wales and highlight the range of excellent services that residents are able to benefit from.

#### Library Usage

Caerphilly County Borough Libraries has maintained its upper quartile performance for total visits per thousand resident's population and is the second best performing Local Authority for 'active' borrowers in Wales. Though both local and national levels of visits to Libraries per year have declined in each of the last 3 years Caerphilly remains competitive when compared to similar geographic areas of Wales.

#### Online Access

Caerphilly County Borough Library Service offers the most comprehensive number of Public Access Terminals for customer use in Wales. Whilst this ensures local residents can easily access excellent computer facilities free of charge in their communities the level of performance achieved is markedly lower than many comparable Local Authority's in Wales and remains an area targeted improvement during 2018-19.

## Opening Hours

Though Wales suffered some severe weather events during 2017-18 the Borough Library Service was able to open to the public with no unexpected or unplanned closures reported. This is testament to the professionalism and dedication of the employees and their respective managers.

### 4.5.2 Highlighted areas of below average performance

Performance indicator	2017/18	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17
QI 1 Making a difference						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	24%	7/7	24%	83%	94%	24%
c) health and well-being	33%	7/7	33%	65%	95%	26%
QI 5 User training						
c) informal training per capita	69	21/22	15	199	473	118
QI 8 Library use						
b) virtual visits per capita	473	17/22	243	866	2,211	450
QI 11 Online access						
c) % of available time used by the public	20%	19/22	14%	27%	67%	21%

#### Making a difference (Skills, Health and Well-being)

The Borough Library Services sustained or marginally improved its performance with regard to assisting customers to develop new skills or improving their health and well-being awareness however both outcomes reported remain the lowest in Wales and are areas that require further investigation and improvement during 2018-19. As noted in section 2.4 of this report the qualitative satisfaction data collected was undertaken as part of localised quarterly studies across Library sites.

#### User training

Caerphilly Library Service has seen its level of informal training per capita reduce from 118 per thousand resident population in 2016-17 to 69 in 2017-18. Caerphilly ranks second lowest within Wales. The first full year effect of single staffing at a number of the Borough's smaller Library sites is largely to blame for this performance outcome for informal training numbers as staff have less time to support customers to develop computer skills or participate in other informal learning activities. It is important to note that the performance data included in the Library Service return does not relate to the additional work undertaken by the Borough's European funded employability support teams who are operating on the Council's Library sites.

#### Library virtual usage and utilisation of public Internet terminals

The level of virtual visits by customers to the Council's website and Library pages has improved in real terms when the outcome data for 2016-17 is compared to that of 2017-18 however performance remains an area for further challenge as the Borough remains in the lower quartile for Wales.

Use of computer facilities in Borough Libraries remains a significant concern as performance has declined further in 2017-18 to 20% occupancy compared to 21% in the previous year and the average for Wales of 67%. A review of the number of public Internet Terminals is required and wider adoption of WiFi access to the remaining 6 Libraries that are currently unable to offer this service.

#### 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 Panel. The case studies were as follows:

- **Scrabble Club** – the impact of the library Scrabble Club, which has fostered lasting friendships among the group, and for the mostly retired participants, keeps them active and engaged, with the library providing a safe space to meet.
- **Family Support** – a disabled child with complex needs has been a regular library visitor with her family; the library has supported her learning and communication within a welcoming community environment, where her mother is also able to meet friends.
- **Supporting Employability** – how the library’s IT facilities and the support provided by staff have enabled one user to complete an online qualification and gain employment.
- **Coding Club** – the impact of the child and adult Coding Club offer; participants have improved their skills, gained in confidence and made new friends. They have also been encouraged to visit the Library more often and borrow more books as a result.







A statement on the contribution the Borough Library Service makes to a number of Welsh Government strategies and the Local Authority’s priority areas was submitted as part of the Borough Libraries Annual Return for 2017-18. The reference panel identified the information submitted as being appropriate and thorough:

*“There is a clear focus on improving education outcomes, enabling employment, supporting healthy lifestyles, and improving well-being.”*

Please see **Appendix 3(b)** for the impact case studies and strategic statement in full.

### 5. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionally planned and managed Library Service targeted at supporting the residents and communities of Caerphilly County Borough</li> <li>• Free Book lending service with wide range of titles and mature depth of resources</li> <li>• Free Internet Access</li> <li>• Free Wi-Fi Access</li> <li>• Sustainable PC provision</li> </ul>
	Integrate how we work and deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated and well managed Library offer open to all</li> <li>• Work closely with a wide range of partners, stakeholders, and complementary service areas including Customer Services and Leisure</li> <li>• Integrated 'Smart' joint Library and Leisure access card</li> <li>• Joined up Web-Library Catalogue and suite of e-resources</li> </ul>
	Involving staff and residents in service developments and current delivery challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of training / Support materials for staff and customers.</li> <li>• Annual programme of public consultation via Adult and Child Public Library User Surveys</li> <li>• Greater use of regular feedback via Social Media.</li> <li>• Online evaluations and staff consultation</li> </ul>
	Collaborate with partners and others to provide the best community focused services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with groups and organisations that promote the same value to support residents.</li> <li>• Collaborate in the direct delivery of services to residents, with Customer Services Team and a number of other Council Departments</li> <li>• Collaborate with other Local Authorities in Wales and UK as a whole to offer the very best services to customers from inter-lending to joint procurement of resources at maximum discount</li> </ul>
	Prevent waste of materials and better utilise the skills of our present workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of online training tools, less printed paper or travel costs and time to course venues</li> <li>• A responsive workforce and development strategy</li> <li>• Share training costs and events with local Council partners to assist in maximising the benefit per head</li> <li>• Free book lending and request service that re-circulates and uses stock economically to meet customer needs at the minimum cost or waste</li> </ul>

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required at this time 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. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Approval has been granted for the implementation of WiFi provision at the remaining Borough Libraries who currently are unable to provide it to customers at an estimated fee of £10,000. Costs will be managed from within the Library Service budget. This improvement will enable the Borough Library Service to fully meet one additional Core Entitlement and a further Quality Indicator taking the Local Authority's performance to 11 Core Entitlement from 12 and 9 Quality Indicators from the 10 that have targets assigned.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications linked to this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider this report. A summary of this information will also be included in the Local Authority's Annual Performance Monitoring Report which will be presented to full Council.
- 10.2 Members are asked to note the Welsh Government's Public Library Standard Reference Group Report of this performance, see **Appendix 2**. The Authority's attainment of 10 Core Entitlements in full and 2 in part, and 8 Quality Indicators in full, 2 partially that have targets assigned.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 To inform Members of the progress achieved by the County Borough Library Service in meeting the requirements of the 6th Framework of Welsh Government Public Library Standards, 2017-2020.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

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Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)  
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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 2017-2020 Caerphilly County Borough Council Annual Assessment Report 2017-18
- Appendix 3(A): The 6th Quality Framework For Welsh Public Libraries April 2017 To March 2020: Annual Return Pro-Forma: Year Ending 31 March 2018
- Appendix 3(B): Welsh Public Library Standards – Case Studies And Strategic Statement 2017-18