

## Powys Library Service Welsh Public Library Standards return 2016/17

### Statement about future direction:

During 2016/17, the year reported, Powys Library Service has been working towards the savings targets identified in the Powys County Council medium term financial plan 2016-19. This was an efficiency savings target of £250,000, with £100,000 to be found in 17/18 and £150,000 in 18/19. Following discussion of options with informal cabinet in Feb 2016, the service consulted with communities over the future delivery of 11 branch libraries, with a view to seeking community partnerships which would provide at least 50% of the local running costs. A major public consultation, including discussions with Town and Community Councils, schools and other community groups, was carried out in spring and early summer 2016, and the 11 different proposals which came forward were reported back to cabinet in October 2016 for approval.

Following this work, there are 5 key strands to the future direction of Powys Library Service;

1. Further development of Community Delivery partnership models: three of the community proposals for the 11 branch libraries were implemented during 16/17, with the remaining 8 to be concluded in 17/18. Negotiating and concluding agreements with town and community councils and other community groups and/or delivering co-located libraries in schools and elsewhere is a lengthy and time consuming process, and will continue to evolve.
2. Development of volunteer opportunities: Another key strand from these proposals is the introduction of some volunteer opening hours, in addition to core staffed hours, together with other volunteer opportunities which enable us to deliver more together (e.g. book groups, code club, reading aloud programmes, IT support, local research support etc). Training and developing volunteer strategies and documentation is therefore a key strategy, and supports 3 main county council and Welsh Government agenda:
  - Attainment – offering work experience and the chance to develop skills
  - Strong communities – the chance for local involvement in delivery
  - Health and wellbeing – benefits of social interaction through volunteering
3. Co-location remains a key strategy in reducing running costs, and opportunities are being developed wherever possible, with some success. There are 4 co-locations to be completed in 17/18, amongst the 11 smaller branch libraries, as well as continuing development of the Brecon Cultural Hub project and negotiations with Job Centre Plus about possible inward co-location into some of our larger libraries.
4. Digital inclusion and improved use of ICT solutions in a sparse rural area: Powys Library Service will go live with the Wales LMS in early autumn, in phase 3, and is also tendering and implementing self-service issue and discharge to support extending community opening hours. We plan to investigate self-service printing and scanning capabilities, particularly in support of Universal Credit and the move to agile working amongst county council and other partner staff.
5. Staff development: whilst we have taken advantage of natural wastage and voluntary redundancies as part of achieving budgetary targets, the introduction of new services and ways of delivering our libraries make it crucial that we invest in our staff, and ensure that they continue to be highly trained and knowledgeable about our core services.

Other options for the future of Powys Library Service will continue to be explored, including trust or mutual status and the potential for external companies to be commissioned to deliver the service.