

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE  
5 December 2017**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rachel Powell  
Portfolio Holder for Libraries**

**SUBJECT: Welsh Public Library Standards report for 2016/17**

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**REPORT FOR: Information**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to receive and give consideration to the Annual Report from the Welsh Government on the Library Service, for the year 2016-17, as required under the Welsh Public Library Standards (5<sup>th</sup> Framework).
- 1.2 The Welsh Government has a supervisory and monitoring role in relation to the 22 Library Authorities in Wales.
- 1.3 Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) were first developed in 2002. The period 2016-17 is covered by a fifth performance framework, "Libraries making a difference". Under this framework, the Authority's performance was measured against a revised set of 18 Core entitlements and 16 key Performance Indicators, which includes impact and outcome measures, in order to reveal the wide range of benefits that result from public library use, such as improvements to people's literacy skills, digital skills and health and wellbeing.
- 1.4 The Standards are intended to help define the responsibilities of library authorities in providing a "comprehensive and efficient" service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The performance framework aims to:
  - enable the Minister for Culture and Sport to fulfil the statutory requirements of the 1964 Act in respect of superintending the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service by local authorities;
  - provide a robust assessment of the performance of library services;
  - have clear links to the Welsh Government's agenda, to ensure credibility across local government in Wales;
  - incorporate outcome measures to show the benefits of using libraries;

- act as a driver for improvements to library services and local communities
- 1.5 For the year 2016-17, Powys Library Service met 17 of the 18 core entitlements, and partially achieved the 18<sup>th</sup>. (The same as for 2015/16, the only outstanding item being internet access on mobile libraries). The framework has 16 quality indicators, of which 7 have targets; for those with targets, Powys met 5 in full, 1 in part, and failed to meet one.
- 1.6 There has been a steady improvement over the 3 year course of the 5<sup>th</sup> framework; in 2014-15, the service met 3 of the quality indicators with targets in full, 3 in part, and failed one. In 2015-16, the service met 4 in full, 2 in part and 1 failed. The standard not achieved throughout the framework relates to expenditure on up-to-date reading materials. The report expresses concern over this indicator, and over levels of staffing, which have been reduced in order to meet financial targets.
- 1.7 The key performance indicators of library visits per thousand population (actual and virtual) continue to be well above the Welsh median, proving increased benefit to Powys citizens. The full report is attached at Appendix A.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the outcomes in the Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report from Welsh Government on Powys Library Service 2016-17 are duly noted and considered in forward planning, so that the library service strives to maintain performance at this level as it moves forward into the 6<sup>th</sup> framework, and seeks to address as far as possible the areas which do not currently meet Welsh Government's standard.

## **3. Options Considered / Available**

- 3.1 The Authority is obliged to comply with the reporting requirements of the Welsh Public Library Standards, and to pay due regard to concerns raised in the Welsh Government's Annual Report 2016-17 in forward planning of service delivery.

## **4. Preferred Choice and Reasons**

- 4.1 To note the contents of the Welsh Public Library Standards report in order to inform forward planning of the Library Service and aid compliance with the Welsh Public Library Standards going forward into the next framework period.

## **5. Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 Is an impact assessment required? No

## **6. Corporate Improvement Plan**

- 6.1 The library service continues to offer support to communities through provision of access to learning, digital and citizenship opportunities in a safe trusted environment, where residents can get help from trained, friendly and knowledgeable library staff.
- 6.2 Through providing a free service at the point of delivery, the library service contributes to the poverty agenda and an equality of access, and boosts mental health and overall wellbeing through social interaction, resources and support.
- 6.3 Community partnerships which have enabled a sustainable future for branch libraries have ensured that these beneficial outcomes are not lost in any areas, and that the authority continues to perform satisfactorily under the Welsh Public Library Standards framework.

## **7. Local Member(s)**

- 7.1

## **8. Other Front Line Services**

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? Yes

- 8.1 Customer Services:  
The Library Service provides front-line support for many services within the authority, with 46,000 enquires and transactions taken during 2016 -2017. They are an invaluable resource for many Customers accessing council services through telephony and web-site as well as verifying and scanning documents to support applications and taking payments.

## **9. Communications**

Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes  
No proactive communication action required.

**10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)**

10.1 The Professional Lead-Legal notes the compliance obligations that the Library Service has to follow and has no comment to make concerning this report

10.2 Finance - the contents of the Welsh Public Library Standards report are noted and need to be reflected in order to inform forward planning of the Library Service and aid compliance with the Welsh Public Library Standards going forward into the next framework period.

10.3 Corporate Property (if appropriate)

10.4 HR (if appropriate)

10.5 ICT (if appropriate)

**11. Scrutiny**

Has this report been scrutinised? Yes – see appendix.

**12. Statutory Officers**

12.1 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by finance.

12.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.

**13. Members’ Interests**

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>That the outcomes in the Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report from Welsh Government on Powys Library Service 2016-17 are duly noted and considered in forward planning.</b>	<b>In order that Powys Library Service continues to provide a quality service to residents, maintains and improves its performance under the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards, and seeks to address as far as possible those areas which do not currently meet Welsh Government’s standard.</b>

<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>	
<b>Within Policy:</b>	<b>Y / N</b>
<b>Within Budget:</b>	<b>Y</b>

<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	<b>Kay Thomas</b>
<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>	<b>With immediate effect</b>

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**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**

**“Libraries making a difference”; the 5<sup>th</sup> quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-2017 (included at Appendix B)**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: Powys Library Service; annual report from Welsh Government 2016-17**