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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015**

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG  
LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item No.7**

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

**REPORT OF:  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND  
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**PERFORMANCE OF THE RHONDDA  
CYNON TAF LIBRARY SERVICE –  
WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS  
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the performance of the Council's Library Service against Welsh Public Library Standards as demonstrated in the Annual Report 2013-14.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth, any matters contained in the report.
- 2.4 Consider whether they wish to make any recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Welsh Government has developed a range of indicators (Welsh Public Library Standards) against which the performance of library authorities in Wales can be measured. Progress against the standards is reviewed by the Welsh Government on an annual basis in order to ensure that Welsh public library authorities are endeavouring to carry out their statutory responsibilities in the delivery of the core library service. The year under review is the third, and final, year under the Welsh Government's Fourth Library Framework that has been operational between April 2011 and March 2014. The Report submitted

to the Welsh Government by Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service is at Appendix 1.

- 3.2 The Welsh Government analysis feedback to Rhondda Cynon Taf Libraries WPLS report 2013/14 is attached for Members' consideration at Appendix 2. For the purpose of comparison, the performance of other Welsh councils is included at Appendix 3.
- 3.3 The Welsh Government's response to the Annual Report 2013-14 noted that the authority **achieved 8 out of the 9 Welsh Public Library Standards** – the same number of standards as the previous year. The average number of standards being met by all authorities in 2013-14 was 6.5, the highest number achieved was 9, the lowest 4. Rhondda Cynon Taf's performance is therefore above average when compared with others in Wales.

#### **4. ANALYSIS**

- 4.1 The feedback indicates that while the number of standards achieved has remained consistent with last year's performance, there have been reductions in the levels of performance against those standards.
- 4.2 WPLS 1 (service points), 2 (services for users with special requirements), 3 (opening hours and delivery of scheduled services) and 4 (IT services and facilities) continue to be met.
- 4.2 The assessors noted a 'steep decline' in annual acquisitions (WPLS 5) and annual acquisitions on books and materials (WPLS 6) which they regarded as of concern although the standards continue to be met. (Following the cabinet decision on the 8<sup>th</sup> January to close 14 libraries expenditure on stock at the branches which were earmarked for closure was greatly reduced. This decision has also had an impact upon acquisition levels for both adult and under 16 stock). WPLS 7 (delivery of requests to users) was met after the target was rounded up. WPLS 9 (space and buildings) was met.
- 4.3 The service failed to meet both elements of WPLS 8 (staffing) – the overall staffing levels are below the minimum target set and the level of professionally qualified staff also falls short of the minimum target set.
- 4.5 In respect of Performance Indicators the service performs well in respect of the Welsh average in 2 key areas – visitor numbers (PI 1) and expenditure on stock (PI 5).
- 4.6 Currently performance is below the Welsh average in % take-up of public access PCs (PI 3) but this is likely to be due to the increased number of PCs available in our libraries compared to many other authorities.
- 4.7 Annual issues (PI 4) also falls below the Welsh average.

- 4.8 PIs 6, 7, and 8 relate to revenue and capital expenditure on the Library Service, all of which fall below the Welsh average and are outside of the control of the service itself.

## **5. FUTURE PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 The Annual Return for 2013/14 was measured against the 4<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards. The new 5<sup>th</sup> Framework was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and, in future, the Library Service's performance will be measured against this new Framework. The new framework uses a variety of quality performance models as a basis to create a unique framework for Wales. It differs in structure from the 4 previous Frameworks in that it incorporates input and output measures as well as qualitative and impact element. The Assessors' Report indicates that, in their opinion, the Library Service will, in future, fail to meet many of the standards of the new Framework.
- 5.2 The impact of the closure of 13 libraries on the performance of the service in 2014/15 is not yet fully apparent and is being closely monitored by the Library Service. The Service is working closely with CyMAL officers to assess this impact. Therefore it is suggested that some of the comments made by the Assessors on potential future performance are premature, especially as they were not privy to information regarding the actions undertaken by the service to mitigate potential adverse effects at the time when their report was written.
- 5.3 It is certain that the Library Service will continue to fail to meet Performance Indicators that are based on financial expenditure and numbers of staff employed. However, this is an issue that will affect a large number of Library Services across Wales from 2015 onwards.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Despite reducing expenditure in 2013/14 the Library Service continued to meet 8 of the 9 Welsh Public Library Standards.
- 6.2 The major reduction in funding to the service in 2014/15 will probably have an adverse impact on the number of standards that can be achieved as indicated in the outline business case and during the consultation process. However as this major change coincides with the introduction of new standards it is difficult to predict to what extent achievement of standards will be affected in the future.

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## Welsh Government

### CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

#### Maintaining a Valued Service

#### The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards April 2011 – March 2014

#### Annual Return Pro Forma (2013-14)

All library authorities are required to complete this pro forma and are asked to follow the instructions provided carefully as the requirements in terms of reporting differ between sections.

All library authorities are requested to provide commentary against each and every Standard (WPLS) and against *each and every* Performance Indicator (WPLPI) in the 'Authority self-assessment' column provided, but only when data is included in the Actual Performance column. Failure to provide commentary could result in the pro forma being returned to library authorities for completion.

**Completed *Annual Returns* should be submitted as an electronic document by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (Draft by Wed 21<sup>st</sup> May)**

Please send to:

Elizabeth Bennett, CyMAL, [elizabeth.bennett@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.bennett@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Any questions please contact: Alyson Tyler, Libraries Development Programme Manager ([alyson.tyler@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alyson.tyler@wales.gsi.gov.uk))

**Name of authority: Rhondda – Cynon - Taf**

**Please tick as appropriate**

**This Annual Return has been approved by the authority prior to its submission to CyMAL**

Yes  No

*If Yes, state whether approval was granted by*

Full Council

Cabinet/Executive

Portfolio Member

Other (state title) .....

*If No, state when approval is expected and when the definitive Annual Return submission will be forwarded to CyMAL*

Approval expected .....

Definitive submission to CyMAL by .....

**Please indicate briefly below:**

**1. The authority's scrutiny procedures applied to the assessment of library service performances undertaken by the Welsh Government for the year 2012-13, and sent to authorities for their consideration and action in September 2013 by the Welsh Government.**

Members of the Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, which met on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 were presented with a report on the findings of the annual review undertaken by the Welsh Government on the performance of the Library Service in Rhondda Cynon Taf against Welsh Public Library Standards in 2012/13. The Committee were advised that the Authority achieved 8 out of the 9 Welsh Public Library standards, an increase of 2 over the 2011-12 year. Members of the Committee were provided with detailed analysis of each of the standards with the officer advising that the standard that the service failed to meet related to staffing, indicating that staffing levels were below the minimum target set. The Head of Community Learning continued by referring to the Medium Term Service Plan consultation exercise, which may have an impact on the breadth and depth of the Library service and on the number of library standards the Authority can meet in the future.

Full minutes of the meeting can be found at:

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/educationlifelonglearningscrutinycommittee/2013/12/09/minutes/minutes-091213.pdf>

**2. What decisions were made by the authority as a result of scrutiny procedures that sought to improve library service performances in relation to the Welsh Public Library Standards and Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators?**

Members of the Committee commended the service and its staff for the excellent service provided.

Members also commented on the Welsh Government's recognition of the challenges facing local authorities in the current economic climate and the positive changes that are to be made to the new framework standards, allowing it to become more flexible.

One Member took the opportunity to reiterate the Minister's statement in relation to 'soft options' in respect of the current economic climate and budget allocations.

One member requested information on whether there were sufficient safeguards in place on public access computers to prevent young people from accessing online forums that had been linked with the suicides of several young people across the country.



### 3. What action was agreed as a consequence of those decisions?

Information was provided on the filtering systems used on the Library Service's public access computers that were designed to protect young people.

Following discussions the Committee resolved to note the contents of the report.

### 4. (a) If you indicated in your Annual Return for 2012-13 that your authority was undertaking a formal review of its library service, please indicate whether the review has now been completed:

YES  NO  N/A

### 4. (b) If your authority commenced a formal review of its library service during 2013-14, please indicate whether that review has now been completed:

YES  NO  N/A

**If you answered YES to either (a) or (b), briefly outline the main recommendations of the review, noting whether these recommendations have been accepted by the authority and at what level (e.g. Full Council, Cabinet, Executive, etc.). Please also indicate what actions have been taken / are planned in order to implement those recommendations:**

The main recommendations of the review were to reduce to 12 Branch Libraries creating savings of £800,000. Four Branch libraries in each of the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas were to be retained This recommendation was approved by Cabinet on the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/cabinet/2014/01/08/decisionnotices/medium-term-service-planning---service-change-proposals---phase-1.pdf>

Following these recommendations libraries at Beddau, Cilfynydd, Cwmbach, Maerdy, Nantgarw, Penrhiwceiber, Penygraig, Rhydyfelin, Ton Pentre, Tonyrefail, Treherbert, Tylorstown, Ynyshir and Ynysybwl closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2014. Rhydyfelin Library then reopened on the 16<sup>th</sup> June, after early engagement in the judicial review process.

**If you answered NO to either (a) or (b), please indicate when the review is due to be completed:**

**5. Please indicate whether there have been any changes made to the resources available to the library service during 2013-14 compared to 2012-13, e.g. efficiency savings, resource reductions/increases, restructuring of staff, etc., and indicate how they have impacted on the service in 2013-14 (do NOT include any commentary relating to 2014-15 and subsequent years) in this section:**

The Library Service budget was reduced by £60,000, the required savings were met in 2 ways:

The post of Area Librarian (North) was removed from the staffing structure on the retirement of the incumbent and the duties combined with those of the Area Librarian (South) post;

The Bookbus service was decommissioned as it was not cost effective with the Bookbus Librarian/Driver post being removed from the staffing structure (this post was vacant at the time). The Bookbus library assistant's post was re-allocated to the School Library Service to provide more capacity where required.

The Library Service's earmarked reserve was used to fund the removal of the School Library Service from Mountain Ash Library to Ty Elai. This move has ensured that the SLS is now located with the Mobile Service, and the Stock Supplies department was relocated there in early 2014, thereby creating one location for most of the Service's backroom and delivery functions.

## The Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) 2011-14

### Notes on completion:

*Annual data or information* is required for WPLS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

Authorities should follow the guidance provided by the pro-forma against each Standard, and returns should be as required – further information and guidance is available within the published Framework document, and authorities should have due regard to this.

Authorities may be asked to resubmit *Annual Returns* if the data or information do not comply with the requirements.

**Please note the additional information required on this occasion in respect of WPLS 5, 6 and WPLS 7 relating to average performances over the period April 2011 to March 2014**

Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2014	Authority self-assessment
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<b>1</b>	<p>(i) Authorities whose resident population density is 20 or more persons per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 2 miles of a static library service point will be at least 95%</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>(ii) Authorities whose resident population density is between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 2.5 miles of a static library service point (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) will be at least 75%</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>(iii) Authorities whose resident population density is 1.0 persons or less per hectare shall ensure that the proportion of occupied households within 3 miles (or 15 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static library service point shall be at least 70%</p> <p>Authorities who are failing to meet the stipulated requirement in (i) (ii) or (iii) shall also report on the number of households within a quarter of a mile of each scheduled mobile stop and within 2 miles of any other kind of service outlet providing access to library materials.</p> <p><i>Library services should briefly describe the nature of that provision and the numbers of households served in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p>	<p>..... %</p> <p>97.5%</p> <p>.....%</p>		<p>The closure of one static library service point at Glyncoch has had no effect on our performance against this standard due to the close proximity of Glyncoch Library to static service points at Pontypridd and Ynysybwl.</p>
	<p><b>State numbers of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Static service points managed by the authority</li> <li>▪ Mobile service vehicles operated by the authority</li> <li>▪ Other kinds of service points/modes of delivery <i>Describe briefly in Authority self-assessment column</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>2012-13</b></p> <p>27</p> <p>4.</p> <p>Housebound</p>	<p><b>2013-14</b></p> <p>26.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>Housebound</p>	<p>In response to community comments and due to low usage Glyncoch Library was closed on Monday July 29<sup>th</sup>. The static service was replaced by a mobile service stopping at more convenient sites identified by local residents and a deposit collection was placed in the Communities 1<sup>st</sup> Centre.</p>
<b>Framework 4 Standard</b>		<b>Actual Performance as at March 31 2014</b>		<b>Authority self-assessment</b>

<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>(i) Library authorities shall provide access to the service for those not able to use conventional service points</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities will continue to provide specialised assistance, facilities and equipment for people with particular access requirements</p> <p><i>Library services should briefly describe the nature of the provision in the Authority self-assessment column</i></p>	<p>Community transport scheme                  Friends &amp; Family service                  Workplace visits                  Deposit collections to sheltered housing establishments                  SLA with Taff's Well community hub</p>	<p>In all libraries we have provided:                  Hearing loops                  Large print books                  Audio book in a variety of formats                  Dolphin enlargement software on all public access PCs                  Dolphin audio software on one public access PC per site                  Large mobility mouse available at each site                  Large key/letter keyboard available at each site                  Type talk system for hard of hearing –all staff have received instruction on its use                  An “alternative” reading group has been established for sight impaired members – using audio books in place of printed works.                  “Drop in” advice sessions with Cardiff Vales &amp; Valleys (part of RNIB) were held at some of our libraries throughout the year.                  We have also worked with the Local Authority’s Disability Officers network to ensure Library provision information is disseminated throughout the Authority.</p>
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<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>(i) Library authorities will ensure that the aggregate annual opening hours for all service points shall be no less than 120 hours per 1,000 resident population</p> <p>Library authorities having 4 or less static service points shall ensure that the aggregate annual opening hours shall be no less than 104 hours per 1,000 resident population</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities will ensure that emergency non-opening hours of static libraries will be no more than 1% of total planned opening hours in any year</p> <p>(iii) Library authorities will ensure that mobile library visits/stops missed or cancelled will be no more than 2.5% of total planned number of visits/stops in any year</p> <p><i>The extent of any disruption caused by unusually severe winter weather should be considered and allowed for in the above returns for (ii) and (iii) by removing any losses of service due to severe weather from the calculations.</i></p>	<p>No. of hours: 202.7</p> <p>No. of hours .....</p> <p>No of service points .....</p> <p>.....0.05%</p> <p>.....2.1%</p>	<p>Despite the introduction of new mobile stops at Glyncoch the closure of the static service point there has led to a reduction in this year's figure from 206.8 in 2012/13.</p> <p>Staff cover problems comprised the majority of emergency non-opening hours.</p> <p>Increase on last year due to the vandalism of 2 mobiles that led to them being off the road for a period of one week.</p>
	<p><b>Framework 4 Standard</b></p>	<p><b>Actual Performance</b> as at March 31 2014</p>	<p><b>Authority self-assessment</b></p>

4	<p>(i) Library authorities will provide the following ICT facilities for users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) At least 7 networked public access personal or laptop computers per 10,000 resident population, providing free access to the Internet and full access to the authority's on-line catalogue of total holdings ✓</li> <li>(b) Current hardware and software at library service points, renewed or refurbished according to corporate policies ✓</li> <li>(c) Facilities that enable residents to use their own laptop computers in the libraries ✓</li> <li>(d) WiFi at all larger service points (open for 30 hours or more per week) by March 2014 ✓</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: if equipment has been purchased but installation not yet completed as it is the responsibility of another corporate department or supplier, and installation is subject to their timetable, place tick in the next column. If equipment not yet purchased place x in next column</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) Scanning and printing facilities ✓</li> <li>(f) Plug-in facilities for digital media sources and portable devices ✓</li> <li>(g) Free email access ✓</li> <li>(h) Access to free introductory or basic support in the use of ICT facilities ✓</li> <li>(i) Information literacy sessions for users (to develop use of library services and facilities) ✓</li> </ul> <p>(ii) Library authorities will provide the following ICT-based resources for users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) General and reference information services (please describe briefly in the Authority self-assessment column) ✓</li> <li>(b) Newspapers and other current information sources online ✓</li> <li>(c) Community information ✓</li> <li>(d) Local history and family history sources ✓</li> <li>(e) Local authority and other governmental information sources ✓</li> <li>(f) Access to e-learning resources and services ✓</li> </ul>		<p>The relocation of our static service point at Abercynon to a larger site nearby led to 10 additional public access computers being made available.</p> <p>We continue to work with Corporate ICT using the existing budget to upgrade the public access PCs when required.</p> <p>Using the Service's Community Learning Workers and working in partnership with C2.0, Coleg y Cymoedd and RCT Homes, we have provided digital literacy sessions at all libraries.</p> <p>Online general and reference information services include:</p> <p>Transparent Language Online Credo Reference Issues Online Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Oxford English Dictionary Safari Tech Books Online</p> <p>In addition to this we subscribe to :</p> <p>Zino Digital Magazines: Available titles increased from 50 to 250+ due to participation in the All Wales consortium. Transparent Language Online Find My Past Clipper DL – Audio book download service Theory Test Pro</p> <p>We also provide access to digital content from our local history collection via the following websites:</p> <p>Our Past Rhondda Cynon Taf Photographic Archive</p>
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	<b>Framework 4 Standard</b>	<b>Actual Performance as at March 31 2014</b>	<b>Authority self-assessment</b>
5	<p>Library authorities shall achieve the following target for annual acquisitions of new collection items (in all formats) made available for public use in each year (per 1,000 total resident population)</p> <p><b>(a) For use by adults – 124 items per annum</b></p> <p><b>(b) For users under 16 – 61 items per annum</b></p>	<p>Actual performance in year</p> <p>No. of items: 2011-12 158.24 2012-13 188.95 2013-14 139.99 Average over 3 year period 162.39</p> <p>No. of items: 2011-12 70.21 2012-13 79.87 2013-14 75.04 Average over 3 year period 75.04.</p>	<p>The acquisition figure for adults shows a significant decrease when compared with last year's figure. This decrease was expected due to a management decision to allocate more funds to junior stock in order to improve the quality of our juvenile lending stock. Our performance was expected to return to previous levels in following years but will now be affected by the decisions made following the library service review.</p> <p>Following the cabinet decision on the 8<sup>th</sup> January to close 14 libraries expenditure on stock at the branches which were earmarked for closure was greatly reduced. This decision has also had an impact upon acquisition levels for both adult and under 16 stock. The funds saved from this were reinvested into equipment for the Schools Library Service to facilitate their move to Ty Elai.</p> <p>The figure for users under 16 has decreased due to our decision to reduce expenditure on the branches earmarked for closure. A previous decision to increase expenditure on Junior stock has lessened the impact when compared with adult stock.</p>



<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>(i) (a) Library authorities shall maintain a level of expenditure on collection items for adults per 1,000 total resident population that does not fall below the lowest quartile (UK 09/10) on average throughout the period to March 2014</p> <p>Lowest quartile £1685</p> <p>Median £1925</p> <p>Top quartile £2137</p> <p>(b) Library authorities shall maintain a level of expenditure on collection items for those under 16 per 1,000 total resident population that does not fall below the lowest quartile on average throughout the period up to March 2014</p> <p>Lowest quartile £263</p> <p>Median £322</p> <p>Top quartile £426</p>	<p>Actual expenditure</p> <p>2011-12 £1938</p> <p>2012-13 £1960.....</p> <p>2013-14 £1809.....</p> <p>Average over 3 year period</p> <p>£1902.41</p> <p>Actual expenditure</p> <p>2011-12 £298.86</p> <p>2012-13 £323.22....</p> <p>2013-14 £373.51.</p> <p>Average over 3 year period</p> <p>£331.86</p>	<p>Expenditure on collection items for Adults has fallen below the median this year due to the reasons outlined in WPLS 5.</p> <p>As expected expenditure on items for those under 16 has increased this year due to the reasons outlined in WPLS 5. However there seems to be a contradiction in that the number of acquisitions for those under 16 actually fell. This contradiction is attributed to the fact that we increased our expenditure on costly items such as DVD's and audio books which provide low item numbers for high expenditure.</p>
<p><b>Framework 4 Standard</b></p>	<p><b>Actual Performance</b> as at March 31 2014</p>	<p><b>Authority self-assessment</b></p>	

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>(ii) Library authorities shall ensure that they spend</p> <p><b>Either</b></p> <p>(a) a minimum average for the three-year period to March 2014 of £750 per annum per 1,000 Welsh speaker total resident population (adult and children under 16) on the purchase, marketing and promotion of Welsh-language materials</p> <p><b>Or</b></p> <p>(b) a minimum of 4% of the total library materials purchasing fund on average for the three-year period to March 2014 on the purchase, marketing and promotion of Welsh-language materials for adults and children under 16</p> <p>(iii) Library authorities will compare their acquisition performance during 2013-14 against an indicative selected list of Welsh Writing in English titles to be circulated after consultation with the Welsh Books Council. Authorities should purchase a minimum of 75% of those titles listed annually and an average of at least 3 copies of those titles</p> <p>(iv) (a) Library authorities shall ensure that the time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access for adult users is no more than 8.9 years</p> <p>(b) Library authorities shall ensure that the time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access for users under 16 is no more than 8.9 years</p> <p><b>Note: reserve stocks should not be included in the calculation of performances against part (iv) (a) and (b) this Standard</b></p>	<p>Actual expenditure</p> <p>2011-12 £.....</p> <p>2012-13 £.....</p> <p>2013-14 £.....</p> <p>Average over 3 year period £.....</p> <p>State %</p> <p>2011-12 4%</p> <p>2012-13 4.2%</p> <p>2013-14 4.7%</p> <p>Average over 3 year period 4.3%</p> <p>% of list purchased</p> <p>100%</p> <p>Average no. of copies of each title purchased</p> <p>6</p> <p>State performance</p> <p>7.3 years</p> <p>6 years</p>	<p>Percentage increase is due to an increase in expenditure on Welsh Language promotional activities.</p> <p>Continued stock editing of adult stock, particularly in light of proposed library closures, has helped us maintain our performance for adult users despite decreased expenditure.</p> <p>The increased expenditure on items for those under 16 has led to a slight improvement in this area.</p>
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<b>Framework 4 Standard</b>	<b>Actual Performance</b> as at March 31 2014	<b>Authority self-assessment</b>
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<p><b>7</b></p>	<p>Library authorities will ensure that no less than</p> <p>(a) 64% of all requests shall be supplied within 7 calendar days</p> <p>(b) 79% within 15 calendar days</p> <p>(c) 89% within 30 calendar days</p> <p>on average over the three-year period to March 2014</p> <p><i>Calendar days are to be calculated from when the request / reservation was made to the time when the borrower was informed that the material was available.</i></p> <p><i>Requests for pre-publication material should be calculated only from the date when materials are made available for purchase to the library service, i.e. exclude pre-publication requests still in the system.</i></p> <p><b>Note: Please indicate (insert ✓ or X) whether this data has been:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>calculated via the service LMS</b></li> </ul> <p><b>or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>calculated on the basis of a sample period survey</b></li> </ul>	<p>2011-12 .....69.22%                  2012-13.....70.26%                  2013-14... 72.45%                  Average over 3 year period                  70.64%</p> <p>2011-12...79.23%                  2012-13 81.81%                  2013-14 85.48%</p> <p>Average over 3 year period                  ...82.17%</p> <p>2011-12....87.94%                  2012-13 ...89.5%                  2013-14 ...88.71%                  Average over 3 year period                  ...88.71%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p>Improved housekeeping procedures have had a continuing effect on our performance against 7(a) and 7(b) with improvements in both figures. However our performance against 7(c) has fallen this year. Our decision to reduce expenditure on stock for branches earmarked for closure led to us purchasing less copies of highly requested items leading to users having to wait longer for some items. Additional copies were purchased but we did experience a dip in performance during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.</p>
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	Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2014	Authority self-assessment
8	<p>(i) Library authorities shall ensure that total staffing establishment levels shall not fall below 0.37 per 1,000 resident population</p> <p>(ii) Library authorities shall ensure that at least 23% of total staff shall be formally qualified in library and information studies / science</p> <p>(iii) Library authorities shall ensure that the designated operational manager of library services shall be the holder of recognised professional qualifications in librarianship or information science or information management</p> <p>(iv) Library authorities that use volunteer staff shall ensure that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a designated volunteer coordinator from the permanent staffing establishment</li> <li>• provide a written role description for each volunteer</li> <li>• meet the legal requirements for each volunteer in relation to the role being undertaken</li> <li>• provide induction training for volunteers</li> <li>• provide continuing training for volunteers</li> <li>• provide appropriate supervision for volunteers</li> <li>• are aiming to achieve accreditation status recognising that the organisation is meeting the standards noted in the National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers and Investing in Volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>State figure:</p> <p>0.33</p> <p>State %</p> <p>18%</p> <p>State qualification of post holder</p> <p>Bsc Econ Library and Information Studies</p> <p>Insert ✓ or ✗ against each</p>	<p><b><i>For parts (i) and (ii) of this Standard please comment here on the position relating to any library service establishment posts vacant on 31 March 2014, and the length of time they have been vacant.</i></b></p> <p>During 2013/14 the following posts were removed from the staffing structure:</p> <p>Area Librarian (North) Book Bus Driver/Librarian</p> <p>3 qualified staff left the service.</p> <p>The following posts were vacant on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 (and covered by seconded staff):</p> <p>Branch Librarian (Pontyclun) – vacant since 11/08/13 Deputy Librarian (Aberdare) – vacant since 05/08/13 Library Assistant (Nantgarw) – vacant since 03/11/11 Reference Librarian (Aberdare) – vacant since 27/10/10 Library Assistant (Tonyrefail) – vacant since 19/08/13 Branch Librarian (Treherbert) - vacant since 22/07/13 Branch Librarian (Ferndale) – vacant since 07/08/13 Library Assistant (Abercynon) – vacant since 02/09/13 Library Assistant (Church Village) – vacant 30/09/13</p> <p>Following the library service review all of the above posts have either been removed from the staffing structure or filled.</p>

<b>Framework 4 Standard</b>	<b>Actual Performance</b> as at March 31 2014	<b>Authority self-assessment</b>
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9	<p>Library authorities will indicate:</p> <p>(i) Capital investment in their library service points (including mobile services) from</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) the authority's own resources</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) from external sources</p> <p><i>State sources of any external capital investment in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p> <p>(ii) Their actual repair and maintenance expenditure for each year of the Framework per 1,000 resident population, including any actual central charge levied on the library service for use of buildings as service points</p> <p>(iii) That they have undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an asset/condition survey for their service points or internally reviewed such surveys on one occasion in the five year from March 2009 to April 2014. <b>Note: if service point has been refurbished during the period, a condition survey can be regarded as being part of that work</b></li> <li>▪ a disability audit on one occasion in the five-year period from March 2009 to April 2014 <b>Note: if service point has been refurbished during the period, a disability audit can be regarded as being part of that work</b></li> </ul> <p>(iv) The total aggregate public area offered by the library service points per 1,000 resident population. The indicative standard is 27 square metres</p> <p>(v) Any other capital expenditure on the library service not relating to buildings incurred during the year</p> <p><i>State nature of expenditure in (v) in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></p>	<p>£ 6679.43.</p> <p>£ nil.</p> <p>£ 159.28</p> <p>Insert ✓ or X</p> <p>Date of survey:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2009</p> <p>Date of audit:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2009</p> <p>27.2 m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>£13,628.72.</p>	<p>Various electrical repair work, roof repairs, alarm repairs, plumbing repairs etc.</p> <p>Slight decrease due to the closure of Glyncoch library.</p> <p>Costs attributed with the relocation of the Schools Library service from Mountain Ash Library to Ty Elai Council offices.</p>
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## **The Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators (WPLPI) 2011-14**

### **Notes for completion**

Data is required annually for Performance Indicators (WPLPI) 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 - all are marked with \* for the sake of clarity. Data should only be submitted for WPLPI 2 when the PLUS surveys (or their local equivalents) have been completed and when results are known.

Library authorities NEED NOT offer comments in those Performance Indicators where no data can yet be submitted (and until, for example the PLUS survey, or its equivalent has been conducted).

Authorities who do not use the PLUS survey services in their entirety are required to provide the following information in their Annual Return

- (i) When and by whom was the survey conducted?
- (ii) How and where was the survey conducted?
- (iii) How was the analysis undertaken and by whom?
- (iv) What questions were asked for each Performance Indicator?
- (v) What was the survey target sample and how was it calculated?
- (vi) What was the response rate?

**Performance data should be cited to two decimal points where appropriate**



Performance Indicators (WPLPI)		Reported Performance 2012-13	Actual Performance as at March 31 2014	Authority self-assessment
1*	The number of people using the library service per 1,000 resident population	No. per 1,000 population:  5965.	No. per 1,000 population:  6260	<p><b>Please report separately here on how these figures break down in terms of the total number of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Physical visits</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Virtual visits (website / librarywales.org ONLY)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Attendance at events / activities</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Please also report on usage of social media</b></p> <p>Physical Visits – 1,222,614 Virtual visits – 252,281 Attendance at events/activities – 57,343</p> <p>We have established Facebook within out e-Teen libraries and have a general Libraries Facebook facility monitored by a Librarian. We are awaiting Corporate decision following a business case proposal to establish other social media within Libraries. We have also sent out automatically generated emails to recall overdue items etc.</p>
2	<p>(i) The % of library users (adults and children under 16) who are satisfied or very satisfied with the library service provided. <i>The benchmark of the Framework for an acceptable level of performance in this part of the Indicator is 90%</i></p> <p>(ii) The % of adults who think that the choice of books available in the library they use is 'very good', 'good' or 'adequate'</p> <p>(iii) The % of users under 16 who think that the choice of books in the library they use is 'good' or 'OK'</p>	<p>94.75%</p> <p>89%</p> <p>99.4 %</p>	<p>.....%</p> <p>..... %</p> <p>..... %</p>	<p>No survey was carried out this year as a consultation on proposed reductions to the library service was carried out in November/December 2014. It was felt that this would influence any survey carried out by the library service.</p>

3*	The % of time allocated for use of public access ICT facilities actually taken up by users	36.74%	36.64%	Although there has been a slight reduction in use the addition of 10 extra computers at Abercynon library has to be taken into consideration. Quarterly usage figures increased during each quarter of the year and would seem to support staff comments that Universal Job search is leading to greater demand for computers.
4*	The annual issues (loans) per 1,000 total resident population	No. per 1,000 population: 3549.46.	No. per 1,000 population: 3603.02	Continued promotional work has led to a slight increase in issues. There is evidence to suggest that the increased publicity surrounding library closures has led to greater use of those libraries earmarked for closure.

Performance Indicators (WPLPI)		Reported Performance 2012-13	Actual Performance as at March 31 2014	Authority self-assessment
5*	The % of total annual authority expenditure on the library service spent annually on the purchase of books and other collection items in all formats and made available to the public	17.3%	15.42%	Although the book fund has been maintained our decision to reduce expenditure on books for libraries that had been earmarked for closure has led to an overall decrease in expenditure.
6*	The % of total authority revenue expenditure spent annually on the public library service  The actual recharge (in £s) levied on the library service for central services	0.73%  £ 114,218.5	0.70.%  £112,263.44	The current economic situation is having an effect upon revenue expenditure.
7*	The % of total authority capital allocations expended on public library facilities this year	0.35%	0.01%	The current economic situation is having an effect upon capital expenditure.
8*	The net annual revenue expenditure on public library provision per 1,000 resident population, including staffing, materials, revenue costs of buildings and any recharge levied on the library service for central services	£14,363.62	£14,043.60	The current challenging economic situation facing local authorities has impacted on the funding available for the Library Service.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## **Rhondda Cynon Taf Annual Report 2013-14**

### **Maintaining a Valued Service: The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards**

The year under review is the third, and final, year under the Welsh Government's fourth framework of Welsh Public Library Standards. The framework was operational for the three-year period from April 2011 to March 2014; its focus was on the maintenance of core library services in what was recognised as a challenging period for the public sector. Although the benchmarks and Standards set reflected a more limited approach than in previous frameworks, as indicated in the reports for the first two years of this framework, the Welsh Government was still seeking reassurance that Welsh library authorities were endeavouring to carry out their statutory responsibilities in the delivery of the core library service.

#### **The requirements**

Under the fourth framework of library standards, Welsh public library authorities were required to submit an Annual Return - reporting on performance against the framework's 9 Welsh Public Library Standards and 8 Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators. For the 2013-14 year, the authorities were asked to submit their returns by the end of May 2014, earlier than in previous years, in order to facilitate the work of the Public Libraries Review Panel established by the then Minister for Culture and Sport. The Welsh Government is grateful for the co-operation of Welsh library authorities in this regard. The Annual Returns were considered by a panel of assessors, including a peer review reference group, drawn from senior service managers in the sector, assisted by independent external expertise.

The authority's Annual Return for 2013-14, which was submitted by the authority in accordance with the stipulated requirements, has now been considered by the assessors.

This report - issued by CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales, the division of the Welsh Government with responsibility for administering the framework - represents the considered view of the assessors on the authority's performance in 2013-14.

#### **The authority's scrutiny of performance and its response to the Welsh Government's previous assessment**

The Welsh Government's comments on the performance of the authority's library service in 2012-13 were duly scrutinised, and the satisfactory progress achieved in that year was noted. The service manager drew particular attention to issues relating to staffing, an area where the authority was falling short of the requirements.

No subsequent action appears to have been taken in relation to that matter and the

weaker performances remain.

### **Evidence of service planning**

The authority was undertaking a consultation exercise on a Medium Term Service Plan during the year under review which was anticipated to have a major impact on the nature of the Library service in future, and on the number of Standards that the authority could meet in future if all proposals were to be implemented. No specific areas were identified at that stage, but the assessors are aware of some of the actions taken by the authority subsequently, but that is not a matter that is appropriate for discussion in an assessment of performances during 2013-14. The authority's recent decisions cannot be expected to affect performances against the Standards until 2014-15 under the fifth framework (2014-17).

Service planning during 2013-14 appears to have been dominated by the need to achieve very substantial immediate and long-term expenditure reductions. Some £60,000 were removed from the budget for 2013-14, resulting in loss of staff, the cessation of the book bus service, and also led to the reconfiguration of the School Library Service.

### **The Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS)**

The authority's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards during 2013-14 has been assessed as follows. The authority:

- Is meeting 8 of the 9 Welsh Public Library Standards. This is the same as in 2012-13, but there are some significant reductions in the levels of performance within those Standards.

In WPLS 1 (service point and access to them), despite the closure of one small part-time service point during 2013-14, the requirements of the Standard were still being met. The range of facilities and services provided in WPLS 2 (services for users with special requirements) remained satisfactory. The requirements of WPLS 3 (opening hours and delivery of scheduled services) were also being met during the 2013-14 year. Provision of ICT facilities and services (WPLS 4) remains comprehensive, as was the case in recent years.

In WPLS 5 (annual acquisitions) performances have remained fairly consistent during the first two years of the Framework and the targets are met, but the assessors noted the steep decline in expenditure on adult books in the third year and the smaller decline in the number of books and materials purchased for users under 16. These are worrying trends, but the rationale and explanation was noted. All the requirements of WPLS 6 (annual expenditure on books and materials) are again met, but the assessors noted that there are again some declines in performance here, particularly in the expenditure on stock for adult readers. The assessors decided that by rounding up the performance against the third target set by WPLS 7 (delivery of user requests) on this occasion (as the figure was so close to the target), the service has again met the requirements of the Standard. But the assessors noted the impact on the quality of the service of purchasing fewer materials, particularly for those service points that had been scheduled for closure after April 2014.

The authority is also currently meeting the requirements of WPLS 9 (space and buildings), having completed its programme of surveys and audits within the stipulated period. However, having decided to close a very significant number of its service points after April

2014, it is very unlikely that the authority would continue to meet this Standard.

- Is not meeting either of the requirements of WPLS 8 (staffing). The Annual Return notes a very high number of vacancies on the library service establishment - some dating from 2011 and 2012. It is noted in the authority's commentary however, that following the service review, all the vacancies have either been filled or removed from the establishment. The assessors were not able to identify how many posts fell into which category. It is very likely that the authority would continue to fail to meet this Standard in future.

## Overall

The authority should note that the headline performances have been largely sustained overall during 2013-14 compared to the first two years of the three-year cycle, reflecting effective management of the service in the context of the Welsh Public Library Standards. The assessors, being aware of some of the authority's subsequent decisions, are now of the opinion that it is most unlikely that the authority would be able to sustain this level of performance in future or meet many of the standards in the fifth framework set for the period 2014 to 2017, especially if community libraries were not to be regarded as part of an authority's statutory library provision. The authority should await the Welsh Government's forthcoming deliberations and decision on that matter.

For the purpose of comparing performances with that of other Welsh public library authorities, the average number of Standards being met by all authorities in 2013-14 was 6.5, the highest number achieved was 9, and the lowest 4. Rhondda Cynon Tâf's performance and is therefore above average when compared with others in Wales.

## Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators (WPLPI)

The framework also asked library authorities to report against 8 Performance Indicators: many of these were comparable with figures reported under the third assessment framework (2008-11), and it was therefore possible for authorities to identify certain trends in service performances. The following table lists the authority's reported performances alongside Welsh average performances, and the authority should consider these performance and the assessors' comments as it completes its process of implementing its future intentions for the delivery of its statutory provision.

WPLPI	Authority Performance	Welsh average
1. Use (physical/virtual visits, attendance at events) of service (per 1,000 population)	6260	5635
2. User satisfaction levels		
(i) % of users who are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the library service	95%	96%
(ii) % of adults who think the choice of books is 'very good', 'good', or 'adequate'	89%	96%
(iii) % of users under 16 who think the choice of books is 'very good', 'good', or 'adequate'	99%	98%
3. % take-up of public access PCs	37%	41%
4. Annual issues (per 1,000 population)	3603	4424
5. % of total authority library expenditure spent on the purchase of library stock	15.42%	12.90%

6. % of total authority revenue expenditure spent on the public library service	0.70%	0.90%
7. The % of total authority capital allocations expended on public library facilities in this year	0.01%	0.56%
8. Net expenditure on public library provision (per 1,000 population)	£14,043	£16,341

The authority is able to report increases in two key areas - visitor numbers (WPLPI 1) and loans (WPLPI 4). The explanation offered by the authority for these increases states that publicity surrounding forthcoming library closures prompted a higher level of interest and use among residents, particularly at those libraries identified for closure, and that the authority embarked on a marketing strategy to promote library use. Use of ICT facilities has remained constant (WPLPI 3), with increased demand for employment and welfare information.

User surveys have revealed a high level of satisfaction with provision up to March 2014 (WPLPI 2), but that level could change in future in light of the revisions to service delivery, and the authority needs to monitor the impact of the revisions.

Key financial Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators all reflect declines in performance during the 2013 -14 year - the percentage of total library service budget expended on books and materials has fallen (WPLPI 5), primarily due to the reduction on expenditure on materials for those libraries scheduled for closure after April 2014, the total authority revenue expenditure on library provision also fell during the year (WPLPI 6), very few capital resources were expended on the library service (WPLPI 7), and net expenditure on library service provision also fell (WPLPI 8).

### **Concluding remarks**

Despite reducing expenditure on library services during 2013-14, the authority achieved the same number of Welsh Public Library Standards as it achieved in 2012-13, and maintaining the headline levels of achievement is commended by the assessors.

However, there is considerable evidence in the Annual Return for 2013-14 from the authority of both actual and anticipated decline within key areas of provision and performance, and the situation will undoubtedly decline further when the authority fully implements its major programme of service reduction from April 2014. The Welsh Government will work with the authority to monitor the impact of any changes on the quality of the service and to identify the best way forward.

**Appendix 3 – Performance of Welsh Councils**

Local authority	Number of standards	Visitor numbers per 1,000 population	PC usage	Annual issues per 1,000	% expenditure on stock	% total LA revenue spent on the Library Service	% total LA capital spent on the Library Service	Net expenditure on public library provision (per 1,000)
Blaenau Gwent	5	5,066	39%	2,583	3.08%	0.70%	NIL	£15,971
Bridgend	6	4,182	32%	3,518	12.7%	0.75%	2.15%	£13,844
Caerphilly	8	5,974	25%	3,606	11.23%	1.34%	5.39%	£23,188
Cardiff	7	8,696	52%	5,301	10.74%	0.86%	0.85%	£19,914
Carmarthenshire	6	6,608	44%	5,581	3.96%	1%	0.08%	£15,739
Ceredigion	7	4,374	70%	5,104	17%	0.98%	0.7%	£17,805
Conwy	6	5,227	50%	4,530	13.3%	0.93%	NIL	£16,640
Denbighshire	5	7,841	38%	5,430	13.16%	0.96%	1.95%	£16,988
Flintshire	6	5,372	27%	4,452	15.4%	0.90%	NIL	£15,493
Gwynedd	8	5,317	34.27%	5,916	13.9%	0.82%	NIL	£15,756
Isle of Anglesey	6	4,145	49%	4,500	9.95%	0.87%	NIL	£14,935
Merthyr Tydfil	8	4,135	55%	2,998	17.25%	0.67%	NIL	£14,339
Monmouthshire	7	7,269	34%	5,828	14.4%	1%	NIL	£13,499
Neath Port Talbot	7	6,902	48%	4,194	10.47%	0.54%	NIL	£18,967
Newport	9	4,432	36%	3,247	20.80%	0.68%	0.1%	£10,608
Pembrokeshire	6	4,368	34%	3,924	19.4%	0.9%	0.57%	£13,649
Powys	7	6,476	38%	5,502	11.8%	1.6%	0.15%	£15,743
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6,260</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>3,603</b>	<b>15.42%</b>	<b>0.70%</b>	<b>0.01%</b>	<b>£14,043</b>
Swansea	5	5,167	48%	5,057	13%	0.8%	0.35%	£14,568
Torfaen	4	4,178	46.8%	3,717	12.4%	0.48%	NIL	£20,679
Vale of Glamorgan	6	6,819	36%	3,949	11.7%	1.22%	NIL	£21,052
Wrexham	6	5,166	24%	4,785	12.8%	1.0%	NIL	£16,090