

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013-2014

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG
LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 6

9th December 2013

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

**PERFORMANCE OF THE RHONDDA
CYNON TAF LIBRARY SERVICE –
WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS
ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

**Author: Wendy Edwards, Head of Community Learning
Tel No: 01443 774111**

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 2012-13.

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 Framework 4) 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 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 2012/123 is attached for Members' consideration at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The Welsh Government's response to the Annual Report 2012-13 noted that the authority achieved 8 out of the 9 Welsh Public Library Standards – an increase of 2 over the 2011-12 year. The average number of standards being met by all authorities in 2012-13 was 6, the highest number achieved was 8, the lowest 3. Rhondda Cynon Taf's performance is therefore above average when compared with others in Wales.

4. ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The feedback recognises that provision levels in terms of library service points have been maintained (WPLS 1). Performance levels in respect of services to users with special requirements (WPLS 2) have also been maintained while improvements have been made to opening hours and the delivery of scheduled service (WPLS 3). In respect of ICT (WPLS 4) it is recognised that services and facilities remain at a level that achieves all the requirements of the standard with improvements in some aspects compared to 2011-12.
- 4.2 The Library Service is noted as performing well both in respect of acquisitions (WPLS 5) and expenditure on books and materials (WPLS 6) while it is praised for its improved housekeeping that has resulted in an improvement in delivering requests to users (WPLS 7).
- 4.3 The service meets the requirements of the standard in respect of space and buildings (WPLS 9) as much of its stock have been upgraded.
- 4.4 The one standard that the service has failed to meet is WPLS 8 relating to staffing. It is noted that overall staffing levels are below the minimum target set and that this could cause operational difficulties. The levels of professionally qualified staff also falls short of the minimum target set although it is recognised that the service does provide good opportunities for staff to develop their skills and career prospects.
- 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 Pls 6, 7, and 8 relate to revenue and capital expenditure on the Library Service, all of which fall below the Welsh average. However, the fact that Rhondda Cynon Taf achieves more of the WPLS standards than the Welsh average may suggest that the service is delivered more efficiently and with less cost to the taxpayer due to the efficiencies introduced over the past three years. Also the success of the service in gaining external funding to invest in improvements to buildings would explain the lower capital expenditure required of the local authority.

5. FUTURE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 A new Framework is currently being developed for introduction in 2014. The draft version suggests that the standards may be more flexible as the Welsh Government recognises the challenges facing local authorities in the current financial climate.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The feedback praises service managers for 'careful and effective management' of resources and commends the service for the improvements made over the past two years. Clearly, the outcome of the budget consultation exercise may have an impact on the breadth and depth of the Library Service and on the number of library standards it can meet in the future.

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

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 Monday 1 July 2013

And sent to Dr Sarah Horton, Standards Adviser, CyMAL.

E-mail: sarah.horton@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

Councillor Craig Middle, Cabinet Member for Social Justice

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 2011-12, and sent to authorities for their consideration and action in September 2012 by the Welsh Government.

Members of the Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, which met on 5th December, 2012 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 2011/12. Committee members were advised of areas of good performance and informed that steps have been taken to address those standards that were not met. Members were reminded of the Assessment comment that levels of investment need to be maintained, together with management actions in areas of weakness in order to further improve.

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 resolved to note the content of the report.

Members asked whether visits to Libraries were monitored per library and whether the reduction in ICT usage in the libraries had an impact on overall visitor numbers.

One Member commented on the success of e-books and questioned whether libraries would be purchasing Kindle licenses

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

To provide Members with a copy of usage figures for libraries within Rhondda Cynon Taf

4. (a) If you indicated in your Annual Return for 2011-12 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 2012-13, 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:

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 compared to 2011-12, e.g. efficiency savings, resource reductions/increases, restructuring of staff, etc., and indicate how they have impacted on the service in 2012-13:

Efficiency savings have been used to provide a training budget by realigning budget headings.

Efficiency savings within staffing levels have been used to realign staff resources to busier libraries

Efficiency savings within budget headings have been utilised to update public access PCs, purchase extra licenses and network switches.

Efficiency savings have impacted upon the equipment budget and buildings alteration budget and at a time where the Library Service has also been unsuccessful in attracting Welsh Government refurbishment bids.

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.

	Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	Authority self-assessment
1	<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>or</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>or</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>Although maintaining the same number of service points as in the previous reporting period, relocation of Taff's Well library, from a venue at the southern boundary of the County Borough, to the Coleg Morgannwg site nearer to housing developments, has resulted in an increase within this standard.</p>

	<p>State numbers of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Static service points managed by the authority ▪ Mobile service vehicles operated by the authority ▪ Other kinds of service points/modes of delivery <i>Describe briefly in Authority self-assessment column</i> 	<p>2011-12</p> <p>...27.....</p> <p>...4.....</p> <p>Housebound service Schools Library Service to primary schools</p>	<p>2012-13</p> <p>...27.....</p> <p>...4.....</p> <p>Housebound service Schools Library Service to primary schools</p>	<p>The number of service points has remained at the previous level with no mergers or closures during 2012-13.</p> <p>Mobile library provision has remained constant at 4 vehicles though the Bookbus service was identified as an efficiency saving for the forthcoming financial year 2013-14</p> <p>Housebound service continues to be provided throughout the Local Authority.</p> <p>A 3 year SLA has been established with the Taff's Well community Hub to allow the provision of some ICT access within the local community, and we also give the trustees access to surplus library stock. The Hub then signposts to the new library service at Coleg Morgannwg and markets the facility within the Taff's Well village.</p> <p>We have modernised the Schools Library Service now operating through an SLA agreement with local primary schools via the School Effectiveness Grant. The take up in 2012-13 was significant and greatly improved upon previous years when the service was offered free of charge. The income generated is fed back into the Library Service's budget.</p>
Framework 4 Standard		Actual Performance as at March 31 2013		Authority self-assessment
2	<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 & Family service Workplace visits Deposit collections to sheltered housing establishments SLA with Taff's Well community hub We have extended on line provision (see self evaluation in Standard 4)</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 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.</p>	

			<p>During 2012-13 we also introduced large letter keyboards at each library and held “drop in” advice sessions with Cardiff Vales & Valleys (part of RNIB)</p> <p>We have also worked with the Local Authority’s Disability Officers network to ensure Library provision is disseminated throughout the Authority.</p>
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<p>3</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: 206.8.....</p> <p>No. of hours n/a.....</p> <p>No of service points</p> <p>...0.07..... %</p> <p>1.4..... %</p>	<p>Taff's Well library relocated to Nantgarw college campus site and now opens 40 hours per week, an increase of 10 hours per week since relocation. We have not had to reduce opening hours within libraries to comply with efficiency measures, yet.</p> <p>Emergency electrical work and staff cover problems comprise 0.07%.</p> <p>1.3% -damage to mobile vehicles 0.1% - due to staff sickness</p>
<p>Framework 4 Standard</p>	<p>Actual Performance as at March 31 2013</p>	<p>Authority self-assessment</p>	

		<p>Insert ✓ or ✗ against each</p>	
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	Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	Authority self-assessment
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>(a) For use by adults – 124 items per annum</p> <p>(b) For users under 16 – 61 items per annum</p>	<p>Actual performance in year</p> <p>No. of items: ...188.95.....</p> <p>No. of items: ...79.87.....</p>	<p>Maintenance of the book fund together with sustained reinvestment of income into the bookfund budget has now begun to reap rewards. Performance during 2012-13 has seen a significant improvement within the acquisitions of new collection items and correlates with the increased performance re: PI 5.</p>
6	<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>£ ..1960.04.....</p> <p>Actual expenditure</p> <p>£...323.22.....</p>	<p>We continue to feed income into the bookfund, and recent DVD promotion work undertaken has had significant impact upon enhancing funds received from income. The Local Authority recognises the importance of the book fund, maintaining the current level of bookfund during 2012-13.</p> <p>Achieving the median target figures has enabled the Service to meet and exceed the acquisitions target within Standard 5</p>

	Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	Authority self-assessment
6	<p>(ii) Library authorities shall ensure that they spend</p> <p>Either</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>Or</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 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>Note: reserve stocks should not be included in the calculation of performances against part (iv) (a) and (b) this Standard</p>	<p>Actual expenditure</p> <p>£.....n/a.....</p> <p>State %</p> <p>..... 4.2%.....</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>6.59...years</p>	<p>We continue to ensure compliance with this Standard, and work closely with colleagues within the Authority's Welsh Language unit re: promotional work around Welsh Language stock.</p> <p>Improved and rigorous stock editing to remove surplus stock and investment of additional income resources has had a positive impact. Also, the program of merging/removing smaller libraries and creating larger premises has again impacted upon performance -less multiple copies of older stock and larger purchases of new replacement copies to supplement new titles e.g. Nantgarw Community Library replacing a small Taff's Well library venue.</p>

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Framework 4 Standard		Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	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"> • have a designated volunteer coordinator from the permanent staffing establishment • provide a written role description for each volunteer • meet the legal requirements for each volunteer in relation to the role being undertaken • provide induction training for volunteers • provide continuing training for volunteers • provide appropriate supervision for volunteers • 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 	<p>State figure: ...0.35.....</p> <p>State % ...22.2.. %</p> <p>State qualification of post holder MSc (Public Management) and professionally qualified status.....</p> <p>Insert ✓ or X against each</p> <p>All n/a</p>	<p><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 2013, and the length of time they have been vacant.</i></p> <p>A number of posts within the service are filled through secondments (3.5 posts currently) and this will aid us with providing continuing professional development opportunities: Library Assistant Schools Library Service vacant until March 2013, now filled. Library assistant, Nantgarw seconded into since September 2012 Library Assistant, Tonyrefail, seconded into since February 2012 1 FTE (2x18,5hour posts) at Treorchy - vacant since October 2012 and March 2013 and are currently covered using casual staff.</p> <p>We currently have a non professional member of staff acting as Branch Librarian at one of the 3 large Area Libraries. Again this is seen as a continuing professional development exercise with length of experience substituting for a professional degree.</p> <p>There are currently no volunteer staff employed within the Service.</p> <p>The Taff's Well hub is a volunteer led community project that operates within an SLA agreement, though is not part of the Library Service.</p>

	Framework 4 Standard	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	Authority self-assessment
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: 20px;">a) the authority's own resources</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b) from external sources</p> <p>State sources of any external capital investment in the Authority self-assessment column</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"> ▪ 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 ▪ a disability audit on one occasion in the five-year period from March 2009 to April 2014 <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>£ 114,928.25.....</p> <p>£ 385,000.00.....</p> <p>£146.91.....</p> <p>Insert ✓ or ✗ Date of survey:2009.....</p> <p>Date of audit: ...2009.....</p> <p>28..3.. m²</p> <p>£15,943.86...</p>	<p>Heads of the Valleys Regeneration funding to complement the regeneration of Aberdare Town Centre during 2012. A previously rejected Library service bid to CyMAL was re-submitted as part of a larger RCT Regeneration unit bid to secure the funding. The external funding provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Cleaning and restoration of the Portland stone building. ●New roof to the whole site ●New double glazed tinted windows throughout the building ●Newly enclosed security area around the fire exit (used during closure time to discourage anti social behaviour) ●New gates to the front of the library ●New back-lit external signage ●New lighting throughout all public areas ●New ceilings throughout all public areas and the staff workroom ●Removal of an internal wall to create a larger reception area within the library. ●Redecoration to the foyer and children's library ●Sound diffusers within the children's library. <p>£20,000 Library Service revenue funding was also fed into the Regeneration project to supplement shortfall</p> <p>(ii) Various electrical repair work New boilers at Aberdare and Treorchy Libraries Roof repairs at Pontyclun Library and to the lower level roofing at Aberdare Library (prior to regeneration work overall</p> <p>Demolition costs re: old Taff's Well library building</p>

	<p><i>State nature of expenditure in the Authority self-assessment column.</i></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 2011-12	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	Authority self-assessment
1*	The number of people using the library service per 1,000 resident population	No. per 1,000 population: 5939.....	No. per 1,000 population: ...5965..... Physical (1,135,184) Virtual (263,076)	<p>Please report separately here on how these figures break down in terms of the total number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical visits ▪ Virtual visits (website / librarywales.org ONLY) ▪ Attendance at events / activities <p>Please also report on usage of social media Hosted events – 25,481 attendees School visits – 8330 attendees Learning activities – 11,280 attendees</p> <p>We have established Facebook within our e-teens... 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.</p> <p>We have also harvested emails from library users and now 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>.....%</p> <p>..... %</p> <p>..... %</p>	<p>94.75</p> <p>89%</p> <p>99.4%</p>	<p>In September 2012 the CIPFA PLUS survey was undertaken within 10 selected libraries across RCT (adult survey at 10 sites, children's survey at a different 10 sites)</p> <p>A copy of the evaluation report has been forwarded to the Authority's Head of Community Learning for use as an advocacy tool.</p> <p>User satisfaction information from the report has also been included within efficiency savings proposals.</p>

3*	The % of time allocated for use of public access ICT facilities actually taken up by users39.8.....%	...36.74.....%	<p>General downward trend. Separation of ICT at the 3 “e-teen” libraries also impacts upon usage statistics as other users are not encouraged into the teen specialist areas.</p> <p>Public access computers are in need of upgrade – the Library Service’s budget is insufficient to upgrade all public access PCs.</p> <p>We are also engaging upon redistribution of PCs within branch libraries – reducing numbers at quieter libraries and increasing where PC usage is higher. However, the Government’s forthcoming Universal Credit is likely to impact, therefore, the programme of redistribution is now placed on hold until impact is evident.</p>
4*	The annual issues (loans) per 1,000 total resident population	<p>No. per 1,000 population:</p> <p>3,919</p>	<p>No. per 1,000 population:</p> <p>3,549.46</p>	<p>Extensive Regeneration work around the vicinity of Aberdare Library has had an impact upon usage of this large area library. Also, the Library itself has benefitted from Regeneration work and although the building remained open for business during most of the repair and upgrade work, the amount of ongoing work did impact upon use. The library also underwent 1 week’s planned closure during this time.</p> <p>Taff’s Well library also closed for 1 week during relocation to the Campus site, and it has taken time to build up a new client base within the relocated site.</p> <p>Llantrisant Leisure Centre has also undergone private investment to massively refurbish the building and whilst the library on site remained open, the numbers of people visiting the library resulted in lower than expected issues during this period. Since the Leisure Centre reopened, the library has regained its previous usage level.</p>

Performance Indicators (WPLPI)		Reported Performance 2011-12	Actual Performance as at March 31 2013	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 public17.....%	...17.3.....%	The Bookfund has been maintained in recent years. We continue to reinvest income into stock purchase resulting in an additional £11,111 spent on acquisitions this year. (£561,827K cf. with £550,716K previously)
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	...0.77.....% £119,318.5.....	0.73.....% £114,218.55...	We have no control or input here. 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	...0.31.....%	...0.35.....%	A slight increase this period. The figure represents the Authority's own capital expenditure; the HARP funding at Aberdare Library is additional external capital funds.
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	£ 14,324.4.....	£14,363.62.....	Again, this is a Corporate matter and the current economic climate is having an effect upon revenue expenditure.



Adroddiad Blynyddol Rhondda Cynon Tâf 2012-13 Rhondda Cynon Taff Annual Report 2012-13

Maintaining a Valued Service

The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards

The year under review is the second under the Welsh Government's Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards. The Framework is operational for a three-year period from April 2011 to March 2014; its focus is on the maintenance of core library services in what is recognised as a challenging period for the public sector. The benchmarks and Standards set by this Framework reflect a more limited approach than in the past as the Welsh Government's assessment for the 2011-12 year indicated, but the Government is still seeking reassurance that Welsh public library authorities are endeavouring to carry out their statutory responsibilities in the delivery of the core library service.¹

The requirements

Welsh public library authorities are 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 – in early summer each year. This is considered by a panel of assessors, including a peer review reference Group, drawn from among senior service managers in the sector, assisted by independent external expertise.

The authority's Annual Return for 2012-13, 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 2012-13.

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

The previous assessment report (for the period 2011-12) was submitted for scrutiny to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, which accepted the observations and recommendations of the report. It also resolved to undertake a more detailed analysis of the key performances, such as use, for each of the service points provided by the authority. It is now not unusual for authorities to undertake such analysis, and it has proved beneficial in disseminating good practice. The importance and impact of sustaining levels of investment in the service were also acknowledged during the scrutiny

¹ Further information on the Welsh Public Library Standards performance assessment framework is available in the Framework document, *Maintaining a Valued Service*, and its accompanying guide, *How good is your public library service*, which are available online at: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymal/libraries/wpls/wpls201114/?lang=en>

process, and even though the service has been required to achieve efficiency savings during the year under review, those savings have been re-invested in other aspects of the library service.

Evidence of service planning

Even though there is not currently any formal major review of services taking place, there is a regular process of scrutinising performance and reviewing certain aspects of the service. Service managers appear to have access to key data and analysis of performances whereby weaknesses are identified and action put in place to improve those performances. This is reflected in the achievement of more Welsh Public Library Standards during 2012-13, where action taken in the recent past has proved to be effective. It is also clear that the service is carefully managed within the resource constraints imposed upon it. The authority has achieved some success in securing additional external funding for some of its work.

The Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS)

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

- Is now achieving 8 of the 9 Welsh Public Library Standards. This is an increase of two over the 2011-12 year.

In WPLS 1 (service points and access to them) provision levels have been maintained, with the relocation of one service point to a shared facility resulting in better levels of performance. Levels of performance have also been sustained in WPLS 2 (services to users with special requirements). In WPLS 3 (opening hours and delivery of scheduled service) performance has improved further in a Standard that was already being achieved in 2011-12. Services were also delivered according to schedule in most instances even though damage to a mobile vehicle resulted in the loss of some visits during the year. In WPLS 4 (ICT) services and facilities remain at a level that enables the service to obtain all the requirements of the Standard, again with some improvements in some aspects compared to 2011-12.

The authority comfortably achieves the requirements of WPLS 5 (acquisitions), and also performs well in respect of WPLS 6 (expenditure on books and materials) in all aspects. Improved housekeeping procedures have raised the performance levels further in the first two targets set in WPLS 7 (delivery of requests to users), and the third target has now been met in 2012-13. Provided current performance is maintained in 2013-14, the stipulated average performance levels over the course of the Framework will also be met in full by March 2014.

In WPLS 9 (space and buildings) all the requirements are again met, and the current work on the Aberdare library project, when completed, should further enhance the portfolio of modernised and upgraded library service points being provided by the authority.

- Is not meeting the requirements of the remaining Standard, WPLS 8 (staffing). The overall staffing levels are now below the minimum target set and in some authorities having an establishment as low as this can cause operational difficulties and limitations on service development. Although professional staffing levels have improved, they are also still below the stipulated level. There is however an emphasis on providing good opportunities for staff to develop their competence and career prospects. It will be of interest to the assessors to see whether the posts reported as having been filled in this Annual Return will result in a better performance in this Standard before the end of March 2014.

The authority has improved its achievements primarily by sustaining levels of investment in the service, but there is also careful and effective management of those resources by service managers. It is difficult to judge whether the authority is capable of achieving all the Standards by March 2014 because the shortfall in performance in WPLS 8 (staffing) is significant.

For the purpose of comparing performance with that of other Welsh public library authorities, the average number of Standards being met by all authorities in 2012-13 was 6, the highest number achieved was 8, and the lowest 3. Rhondda Cynon Taf's performance is therefore above average when compared with others in Wales.

The Welsh Public Library Performance Indicators (WPLPI)

The Framework also asked library authorities to report against 8 Performance Indicators; many of these are comparable with figures reported under the third framework (2008-11), and it is therefore possible for authorities to identify certain trends in service performances.

The following table lists the authority's reported performances alongside Welsh average performances. The authority should reflect on these comparisons, and on the assessors' comments below, in its scrutiny of service performances.

WPLPI		Authority Performance	Welsh Average
1	Use (physical / virtual visits, attendance at events) of service (per 1,000 population)	5965	5754
3	% take-up of public access PCs	36.74%	40.14%
4	Annual issues (per 1,000 population)	3550	4516
5	% of total authority library expenditure spent on the purchase of library stock	17.3%	13.16%
6	% of total authority revenue expenditure spent on the public library service	0.73%	0.91%
7	% total authority capital allocations spent on public library facilities	0.35%	0.42%
8	Net expenditure on public library provision (per 1,000 population)	£14363	£16176

The value and impact of maintaining levels of investment in the library service are reflected in many of these performances. There are slight improvements in WPLPI 1 (use), with some interesting use of social networking and electronic communications. There are also improved performances in WPLPI 5 (expenditure on books and materials), WPLPI 7 (capital allocations from the authority's own capital resources for the library service) and in WPLPI 8 (overall net expenditure on libraries). In these last performances however, there is little explanation or correlation with service achievements, and the Annual Return on the next occasion should seek to offer rather more explanation of the key influences and constraints on performances.

There are also slight decreases in certain performances, such as issues (WPLPI 4) and in the use of ICT (WPLPI 3), so the action proposed that will analyse the performance of each service point in order to identify better practices, is necessary and appropriate. There are also some transient influences on performances, some of which are largely beyond the control of the authority and the library service. The short term impacts of embarking on developmental projects, such as improving buildings, do however usually deliver appreciable longer term benefits. Some of the lesser performances reported in this year are of that kind.

Performances against WPLPI 2, which requires surveys to be undertaken during the course of the Framework, will be fully considered in the final year. It is noted that the authority has completed its programme of user surveys, and that the results obtained indicate generally high levels of public satisfaction.

Concluding remarks

There is evidence of effective action to achieve a higher number of Standards in this Annual Return, and the levels of performance are being improved and supported by sustained levels of investment in the library service. It may be possible for the performance against the remaining Standard to improve, but the shortfall in performance suggests that the authority is unlikely to achieve all the Welsh Public Library Standards before March 2014. Nevertheless the improvements achieved over the first two years of the current framework must be commended.