

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Economic and Community Regeneration Cabinet Board**

9 December 2016

### **Report of the Head of Transformation – A Thomas**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2015 -16**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve the Annual Report to the Welsh Government in respect of the authorities library services performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards framework 5 and to note the feedback comments and recommendations in the Annual Assessment Report 2015-16.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. This is the second year of framework 5 of the Welsh Public Library Standards, which consist of 18 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators, 7 of which have set targets.

Neath Port Talbot met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and failed to meet 1, which relates to the provision of a Library Service Strategy.

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Neath Port Talbot achieved 2 in full, 3 in part and failed to achieve 2.

This is a slight decline in performance compared to the previous year and can be attributed to budget reductions which have impacted on stock purchases, staffing levels and opening hours.

## **Background**

3. Public libraries are a statutory service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. In Wales, all local authorities are required to report annually to the Welsh Government via the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division on their performance against the current framework of the Welsh Public Library Standards, which the Welsh Government use as an interpretation of local authorities complying with their statutory function in providing a comprehensive and efficient library service as required under the 1964 Act.
4. This is the second year of the fifth framework of the Standards which covers the period 2014 - 2017. The framework consists of 18 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators, 7 of which have set targets upon which the authorities' performance is evaluated.

## **Financial Impact**

5. Following reductions in the library services budget of nearly £600,000 or 30% of the total budget, in order to fully comply with the Welsh Public Library Standards, Neath Port Talbot would need to increase expenditure in the following areas:
  - Book stock - an additional £100,000
  - Staffing - an additional 13 full time members of staff would be required at an estimated cost of £210,000.
  - Public Access Computers - an additional 38 public access computers are required at a cost of £19,000.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

6. None required.

### **Workforce Impacts**

7. There are no workforce implications.

### **Legal Impacts**

8. The Annual Report ensures that the authority complies with its statutory duty to provide a public library service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

### **Risk Management**

9. Due to reductions in the library services budgets, performance against the current framework 5 of the Welsh Public Library Standards is unlikely to improve before 2017 -18. This will mean that Neath Port Talbot would be failing to meet its statutory responsibility in a number of areas as highlighted by the Standards report.

### **Consultation**

10. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

11. Members are asked to approve the Annual Report to Welsh Government and note the feedback comments included in the Assessment letter for 2015 -16.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

12. To enable the authority to comply with its statutory duty of providing a library service in Neath Port Talbot.

### **Implementation of Decision**

13. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

14. Appendix 1 - Neath Port Talbot - Annual Return 31st March 2016
15. Appendix 2 - Annual Assessment Report 2015 - 16

## **Officer Contact**

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