

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

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Contents

Our vision	3
Libraries in Denbighshire	4
Key statistics 2018-19	4
Strategic context	5
Our key strategic areas	6
People's lives are enriched and informed by reading	6
People can access the resources and information they need to live well	7
People can access digital services and have the skills and confidence to do so	8
People can access information and services locally	9
People can participate in a vibrant local culture	10
How we will achieve these outcomes	11
How we will report on our performance and progress	13

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

This strategy outlines our vision for the public library service in Denbighshire and what it aims to achieve in the next three years. It will also demonstrate how our libraries contribute to local and national strategic goals and plans.

Our vision

We believe that libraries are the beating hearts of the communities they serve – trusted, neutral places where everyone is welcome regardless of their age, background, or financial circumstances.

We believe that reading is vital to everyone’s wellbeing, learning, and prosperity, and that libraries give everyone access to the reading and literacy skills and resources they need to fulfil their needs.

We believe that everyone is entitled to access information and knowledge in all its forms – printed, digital and human – and that libraries’ role is to help people access the information and skills they need to engage fully in modern life.

As a service, we aim to develop, deliver and promote the best customer experience by being brave, creative and committed to excellence.

Quotation

“A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.”

Caitlin Moran

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

Libraries in Denbighshire

Libraries in Denbighshire deliver the statutory public library service and the One Stop Shop face-to-face customer service for the Council from eight libraries located in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen. A Home Library Service provides a tailored service to people who are unable to access their local library due to infirmity, disability or caring responsibilities. Libraries also provide a 24/7 digital service for downloading books, accessing information and ordering physical books; and provide facilities for people to access a range of support and advice services in their local community.

Libraries are managed within the Communities and Customers Service of the Council.

Key statistics 2018-19

401,234 physical visits to libraries (Wales ranking 8th)

125,454 virtual visits to website (Wales ranking 6th)

356,050 items borrowed (including digital downloads)

53,691 computer uses

51,192 people came to 4,414 activities

41,225 people were helped with using ICT and getting online (Wales ranking 1st)

19.2% of the population are active members (highest % in North Wales, Wales ranking 5th)

29.5% of 4-12 yr olds took part in 2018 Summer Reading Challenge (Wales ranking 1st, Welsh average 11.5%)

Cost of service

The total cost of providing the Library service in 20 18-19 was £1,549,135, of which £197,792 was the cost of running the eight library buildings.

The Library service costs £16.27 per year for every adult and child living in Denbighshire

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

Strategic context

Libraries contribute towards key local, regional and national policies and plans including:

Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022

Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan 2018-2023

The 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20

Welsh Public Library Standards

The Welsh Government's Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 comprises 12 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators to monitor how well library services realise benefits for local people. The framework identifies the clear contribution libraries make to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act through the delivery of the following outcomes and impacts for residents:

People will be able to increase their knowledge/skills having used the library

People will be able to take part in reading and other cultural events organised by the library service

People will feel part of a community using the library service

People will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the digital world using the library service

Personal health and well-being is enhanced by using the library

People can participate more fully in local affairs via the facilities in the library

In 2018-19, Denbighshire met all of the 12 core entitlements. Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire achieved 8 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 1.

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

Our key strategic areas

People's lives are enriched and informed by reading

We will support this by

Promoting Reading for pleasure and its impact on wellbeing and attainment

Promoting Reading for information, learning and wellbeing

Selecting, managing and providing access to books and information in a range of physical and digital formats

Providing a range of activities to encourage and support reading (reading groups, events, displays, engagement activities)

Providing tailored reading services to specific audiences such as children and young people (Bookstart, Summer Reading Challenge, working with schools, holiday activities) and people living with health conditions or disabilities (Reading Well schemes, alternative physical and digital formats, Home Library Service)

Quotes

"The audiobooks you've brought to me are absolutely wonderful. The Home Library Service has opened up a whole new world for me and I am so grateful"

Customer living with sight loss

"Provides good range of services with exceptional, helpful and cheerful staff."

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

People can access the resources and information they need to live well

We will support this by

Delivering tailored services to support physical and mental health

Reading Well schemes to provide information about dementia and mental health

Bookstart Rhymetimes programme to support mothers' mental health and the social and language development of babies and toddlers

Tackling loneliness and supporting resilience via

A physical presence in communities

Digital access to complement the physical – accessibility outside opening hours

Social opportunities to get together

Home Library Service to vulnerable people

Reading groups

Specific schemes (Reading Friends, reading groups)

Quotes

“Could not cope without the access to books - I read a lot - and it helps my mental health.”

“The library couldn't be bettered. Staff excellent here. You always help. Never regretted a day since the 1960's when I joined. All you need to know can be found there.”

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

People can access digital services and have the skills and confidence to do so

We will support this by

Providing online access – free internet access, use of PCs, scanners, printing facilities

Offering support and help as needed

Providing learning opportunities to develop skills, confidence and safety, in partnership with learning providers

Supporting channel shift by supporting people to use digital channels to access services

Working in partnership with Working Denbighshire to ensure individuals are supported into employability

Developing opportunities for digital creativity

Quotes

“The environment is welcoming and attractive and it is an excellent place to meet up and learn new things or relieve loneliness.”

“I just want to say what a fantastic place this library is. I moved to the area a year ago and found sanctuary in the library - being able to order books in for free, get helpful advice, use the one stop shop and feel that I've got friendly faces to see in the week. We nearly moved out of the town but I wanted to stay for the library.”

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

People can access information and services locally

We will support this by:

Providing a One Stop Shop service for all Council services, dealing with customers' enquiries, receiving payments, and providing information

Being the access point in each community to local and national information to support individuals and communities' employment, health, wellbeing, and learning

Supporting individuals to use digital channels for job-seeking, accessing welfare benefits and other government services

Providing a range of up to date, relevant and accessible information sources, including books, magazines, and online sources

Enabling partner organisations to deliver their services from libraries by providing facilities, space, awareness and support

Exploring opportunities to provide new services as demand and opportunities arise

Quote

"This is an excellent library because the staff are wonderful. Nothing is too much trouble. It is a jewel in the town and a real meeting place."

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

People can participate in a vibrant local culture

We will support this by

Providing access to a wealth of Welsh language books and resources

Managing collections of local history materials and providing access to family history resources

Delivering a programme of events and activities such as book launches, author visits, talks and lectures

Enabling local organisations to use library facilities to support and promote their activities

Quote

“I love bringing my daughter to the Bookstart sessions. As a non-Welsh speaker I feel it’s important for my daughter to gain a Welsh education and these sessions are the perfect beginning for babies. It’s definitely inspired and encouraged me to place her in a Welsh language school in the future and potentially begin to learn Welsh myself. These sessions have started my daughter’s interest in books.”

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

How we will achieve these outcomes

We will:

Ensure our library buildings remain welcoming, attractive, fit for purpose, sustainable, in good locations, and open at appropriate times

Seek opportunities for funding to refurbish, modernise and keep sustainable library buildings which have not been refurbished in the last 10 years

Refresh facilities as technology develops and changes to meet customer needs

Continue to explore further options for co-location and relocation of services

Build partnerships and working collaboratively

Build on the current successful partnerships with St Asaph City Council and Rhuddlan Town Council to develop and sustain library services in local communities

Continue to collaborate regionally and nationally, seeking opportunities to ensure value for money and benefits to customers

Work in partnership with other sectors to deliver services to the local community

Explore new ways to engage with our customers and stakeholders

Manage our collections

Purchase new books and resources regularly, making the most of the funding available

Review and edit the collections to keep them attractive, relevant and useful

Collaborate with other authorities to enable customers' access to the widest range of stock

Train our staff to support customers' reading needs

Ensure our digital offer is attractive, up to date, and accessible, providing relevant resources

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

Maintain an attractive and informative website presence to serve as a virtual shop window to our range of services and offer

Be part of the collaborative all-Wales Digital Library offer to ensure better value for money and greater range of choice for customers

Develop our use of social media as a marketing, information and communication channel

Employ a skilled and trained workforce

Enable staff to train and develop skills and knowledge to deliver a modern library service

Enable staff to pursue formal qualifications and professional registration

Ensure an appropriate level of bilingual staff at each library

Create a staffing structure which provides potential career pathways

Support volunteers

Deliver a strategy which offers opportunities to volunteer in our libraries to enhance our service, to develop skills and confidence, to improve wellbeing and to contribute to the community

Encourage use and reduce barriers

Seek opportunities to reduce any real or perceived barriers which prevent people from accessing and using their local library

Seek new channels and ways to raise awareness of the library offer

Exploit the potential for partners to advocate for our services

Explore potential for outreach services, taking the library into the community

Generate income

With continuing budget pressures we will seek opportunities to raise income through a range of approaches such as sales of items, reviewing charges, room hire, running

Denbighshire Library Strategy 2019-22

charged for events, applying for funding and seeking further partnerships with town and community councils

How we will report on our performance and progress

We are required to submit an Annual report on our performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards to the Welsh Governments' Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD). MALD return an annual assessment report to the Council and this report is published on the MALD website and the Council's website. This assessment report is presented to the Council's Performance Scrutiny Committee annually.

Libraries' performance against the 7 Quality Indicators within the Welsh Public Library Standards is also monitored within the Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) performance measuring framework for local authorities.

The Customers Communication and Marketing Service's annual Service Business Plan sets out how the service will contribute towards delivering the Council's Corporate Plan. It includes many indicators, measures and activities relating to Libraries and One Stop Shops. These are reported on quarterly and monitored by the Head of Service and the Cabinet Lead Member.

Library and Customer Services managers compile quarterly reports on the activity in their library and these are shared with key partners and published online.

Our action plan

Each year, we will plan new activities to help us achieve our strategic aims and contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan.