

Appendix 2 – case study and additional narrative questions

Good impact case studies are expected to include evidence that the library service has made a positive difference to an individual (or group of individuals). This would normally go beyond a description of services provided and their use, to show the outcome, and may include testimony from the customers concerned.

Authority: VALE OF GLAMORGAN

1. The impact which the library has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. Describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individual or group concerned. Up to four case studies may be provided (indicative length: 500 words each).

a) Computer use

The library should not be underestimated as a valuable point of social contact for the local community. Many regular users incorporate a daily visit to the library for a range of reasons : from reading newspapers and borrowing items to revising for exams, checking e-mails and working on family history projects and applying for jobs.

The provision of free internet access and online resources in libraries has greatly enhanced and benefited the lives and wellbeing of many library members. The following examples from one library demonstrates the ways in which library internet facilities and library staff have improved digital skills and literacy.

The subject of the first case study is a man in his late 40s who lost his job and found himself unemployed for the first time in many years. He decided he needed to improve his language and digital literacy skills for confidence and to improve his job prospects. He started by enrolling on an Open University online English literature course. He did not have access to a computer at home, and had very basic IT skills, but was able to use library computers and seek the help of the library staff. Beginning with very basic knowledge he relied on staff support and patience to get him through many stages of learning until he was able to operate independently. Staff help ranged from learning to log on and basic navigation skills, through; securing student finance online; accessing, inputting and editing the course modules; accessing the on-line teaching; saving materials on to USB stick; printing out material; saving work on to course forms, and then submitting them for assessment. He continues to follow the course and uses the library on a regularly, he says himself “about twice a week,” although it can be more often. He is happy to admit that the library facilities helped him to improve his IT skills greatly, and also states that “I would never have improved my IT skills without the help and assistance of the library staff.” As well as the practical and economic benefits of using facilities on library visits, as with so many others, these visits give this man a positive routine during his week, the chance to meet others following a similar self-learning route, reliable support from staff, and a neutral venue where any home-life issues and distractions can be set aside.

In the second case, a widower of some years uses the library on a very regular basis to pursue his writing interests. The man has no close family ties since his son emigrated to Australia and he admits that “visiting the library is essential to my daily routine,” and that “there are days when coming to the library is one of my few points of social interaction, and very much part of my routine.” He added that although he could afford to go online at home he “would miss the contact with the staff and other library users.” His hobby of writing and publishing online has been very much assisted by the library. The library is within walking distance and is almost like a second home. He uses the library for his research, both online and through books, many of which he reserves from elsewhere in Wales. This sense of connectedness and belonging to his library has proved invaluable for his own sense of wellbeing.

b)	<p data-bbox="225 152 427 181">Audio Book Club</p> <p data-bbox="220 219 1390 562">Last September Sight Cymru approached the Librarian at Penarth about setting up an Audio Book Club for Visually Impaired People. It was agreed that the best approach would be to establish the book club using the libraries online audiobook download service, OneClickDigital. All library members are able to borrow audiobooks from OneClickDigital for free and play them on their tablets, smartphones and PCs, but people with sight problems can find the process of selecting and playing books difficult without support. It was agreed that Audio Book Club library members would have the books downloaded to USB sticks so that they can be played on special USB players, currently Daisy Players. The library purchased a number of USB players to enable people without their own player to join. The librarian then downloads the mp3 file of the book from the online site and prepares the USB pens for the clubs members.</p> <p data-bbox="220 595 1382 1115">The club began in December 2016 and meets once a month on a regular day of the week. There are currently 6 members who attend regularly and 3 others who occasionally attend group meetings. All the members used to be avid book readers until their sight failed. They enjoy the opportunity to meet and talk about books and these discussions lead on to all manner of other topics too. The members take it in turns to choose the books from OneClickDigital so they all get a chance to recommend a book and discuss opinions on it afterwards. Many of the members also belong to a subscription talking book service which sends them books each month based on their reader preferences, so they get an ample selection of books each month. What the Audio Book Club offers that is different to a subscription library is the opportunity to choose books themselves and meet to discuss them. The club provides an important social element which the members say “they look forward too” and the meetings are also a good place to share information. There is informal sharing of information but also a number of people have visited from organisation such as Sight Cymru and Age Concern to talk about particular issues or to demonstrate new services. The group members have said they like to get their information this way, as one woman said “because its good to hear what questions other people have and what their views are”.</p>
c)	<p data-bbox="225 1202 560 1232">Barry Knit and Natter Group</p> <p data-bbox="220 1249 1382 1341">There are a couple of knitting and crochet groups that meet in Vale libraries. The first and largest is the group which meets at Barry. The following is their own account of the group and the benefits participants get from it.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1361 1331 1420">As a group we meet at Barry Library every Tuesday 9.30am to 12 noon and have done for the past 16 months.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1440 1382 1630">There are over 40 members and some weeks at least 30 turn up and others maybe 15. The members are mainly Senior Citizens and a couple of younger members have special needs and 3 are accompanied by carers. Barry Library lets us have the room for free and so the group is free to anyone who wants to join. We raise funds to buy wool for those who cannot afford to and to provide tea, coffee and biscuits. We knit, crochet but mainly natter (with most items made at home).</p> <p data-bbox="220 1650 1321 1709">Many charities benefit from the items made including Barry Hospital, Velindre Hospital, Royal British Legion, Seaman’s Mission, Shelter as well as children in Africa, Nepal and Romania.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1729 1374 1883">Many of our members live alone and the group offers friendship and an escape from 4 empty walls. Some are dealing with terminally-ill husbands and this is their respite. A small number have physical and learning difficulties and come with carers. One of these would not normally leave home alone, but for our recent afternoon tea she travelled on the bus alone, a huge step for her and her carers were delighted.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1904 1370 1962">For Worldwide Knit in Public Day we held an afternoon tea for 45 and a fantastic time was had by all.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1982 1023 2018">We also welcome new people such as anyone moving into the area.</p>

In short, without this group there would be many more lonely people.
Without the group many charities would not receive the beautiful items our ladies produce.
In short, without Barry Library and its wonderful staff this group would not exist and none of the above would take place. |

d) | |

2. Please provide a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals (indicative length: 500 - 1,000 words).

| The Library Service contributes in numerous ways to many of the Welsh Government priorities. Below we outline how libraries contribute towards the four pillars of the Taking Wales Forward programme but libraries can equally well match against the seven goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and other government programmes and initiatives.

Prosperous and secure

The library service has led the way in the provision of free ICT and free training and support for people who need access to improve their skills, learning and economic prospects. The case studies above of IT users demonstrate examples of men who are currently using the library for these reasons but these examples are just two of many examples of how the over 90,000 hours of computer login time is used at libraries. Libraries are the venue of choice for many job seekers, independent learners and the economically disadvantaged; and when they don't find their own way to libraries they are referred to libraries by Job Centre Plus and countless other agencies to gain support, training and confidence. Learning opportunities, study space, access to resources and information are all other ways in which libraries add to the overall prosperity and human resource of the communities they serve. These are priority cross cutting themes in both the Taking Wales Forward programme and the Future Generation Act.

Other ways in which libraries meet the prosperous and secure agenda include:

- Some libraries in the Vale host surgeries by the local PCSOs where people can talk about their neighbourhood concerns.
- The council library service provided volunteering opportunities for 37 individuals during the year and the community libraries in the Vale over 100 volunteers. Some of these volunteers are giving their time back to the community after retirement but many are volunteering to help them gain extra skills to progress their education and improve their job prospects.

Healthy and Active

Healthy and active lifestyles have both long term national economic benefit as well as personal and social benefits. The example of the Knit and Natter group at Barry is a prime example of a disparate group of people, in this case all women, who come together for a shared interest. They learn and improve their skills together and they give something back to the community by selling their products for charity. However the personal benefits to their wellbeing add up to far more

than the sum of the activities. It gets women out of the house, it enables them to have social time, build local connections, increase social capital and improve their sense of personal wellbeing. For some women the weekly group is a nice opportunity to have a chat, drink tea and contribute to something useful with old and new friends. For other women this is a lifeline.

Other examples of how libraries contribute to the healthy and active programme and the healthier Wales agenda include the following:

- All libraries in the Vale are working towards becoming dementia friendly.
- All libraries stock health and welfare books to provide information on conditions, treatment, healthy living, good nutrition etc.
- Libraries provide Books on Prescription for people with a range of moderate mental health issues. Prof. Neil Freude said recently that hundreds of studies show that bibliotherapy is as effective as a short duration with a therapist.
- Barry library runs LIFT and Ti Chi groups for people who want to improve their mobility.
- As well as Knit and Natter groups libraries also run a Colouring club for adults, a crochet club and numerous book groups.

Ambitious and learning

Libraries are a vital link in the development of reading skills from the youngest age, providing as they do a huge range of free reading materials and activities. Vale libraries provide a myriad of services and activities to support this priority, including Chatterbook groups, storytimes, Code Clubs, the Summer Reading Challenge and book-themed events and promotions such as Harry Potter Night. Libraries are particularly good at meeting the more equal Wales agenda of the Wellbeing Act because the vast majority of the provision, including activities and events, is provided for free. Libraries work with many other partners to target people who will particularly benefit from services. Examples in the past year included working with a grant from the South Wales Literature Development Initiative to run projects involving dementia patients in Llandough and a teenage project based around the use of graphic novels.

United and Connected

Cooperation between library services in Wales is particularly strong and once again in the past year the level of inter-lending between libraries in Wales has provided customers with free books they may not have had access to otherwise. The Books 4 You service in South Wales has been especially good in this regard and has proved to be a sustainable model which others would like to join or emulate.

Other examples of connectedness include the following:

- Volunteers working in libraries come from all age groups and backgrounds and bring a tremendous range of skills and experience, from Welsh BAC pupils who started helping out at code clubs but then stayed on, to a 90 year old volunteer at a community library.

- Vale Libraries provide access to Welsh language materials with a wide range of books in Welsh for children and adults and for Welsh Learners. These are supported by Amser Stori sessions at all libraries and a weekly Caffi Cymraeg for adults.
- Armed Forces – The Royal British Legion hold regular information sessions at Barry Library to promote the services they offer to veterans and their families.
- Third Sector organisations regularly use libraries to meet clients and promote their services to the public through information stands, display and other events. As for individuals and other groups, libraries provide welcoming spaces that help foster cohesive communities.

3. Please provide a short statement about the future direction and plans for the library service (indicative length 200 words).

During 2016/17 the library service transferred 5 libraries to 5 separate community groups that will henceforth run them as community managed libraries. The last of the libraries was transferred in February 2017 making this a very recent development for the service. Two posts are in place to support the community libraries on the ground and there is extensive support from managers and library staff to ensure the long term future and sustainability of the new services. During the next year and beyond the library services in the Vale will develop in cooperation between Council and Community run libraries with the benefit of the customer at the centre. The priority will be to build good working relationships and provide as seamless a library service to customers as possible, while recognising and embracing many opportunities for different kinds of working and services.

During the spring of 2017 the Vale began the process of migrating to the All Wales Library Management system and implementing this will be a priority during 2017/18. The Vale hosts the post of LMS for Wales Project Manager and the Library Services Manager for the Vale is the lead for the LMS for the Society of Chief Librarians. Together these factors should help the Vale ensure the system is fully developed to provide the optimum benefit for the authority and for public Libraries in Wales.

Towards the end of 2016/17 a small management restructure led to the formation of a new Cultural and Community Learning section of the Learning & Skills Directorate. This new section brings together Adult Community Learning, Libraries and Arts for the first time. During the coming years these areas of service will learn to work more closely together under a Culture and Learning Manager and there will be benefits in relation to learning and the arts in libraries as a consequence.

