

# REVIEW OF SHETLAND LIBRARY

- QUALITY INDICATOR 4: INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## HOW GOOD IS OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE?



FINAL REPORT: FEBRUARY 2017

# REVIEW OF SHETLAND LIBRARY

## INTRODUCTION

This report is the Self-Evaluation and Peer Review of Shetland Library for the following quality indicator:

- **Q4 – Individual and Community Engagement**

The Self-Assessment was undertaken by members of staff within Shetland Library. All staff participated in initial workshops and then a working group was formed with the final review group being the management team for the service.

## PEER-REVIEW

The Peer Review visit took place at Shetland Library on 7-8 February 2017 and was conducted by a Convener and two other assessors. The assessors met with a variety of stakeholders including partners and elected members during the stakeholder event on the evening of 7 February. On 8 February, two of the assessors visited Brae to see facilities and meet with staff from Brae, Yell and Unst. The other assessor remained in Lerwick and met with staff and saw further facilities and services there.

## RESULTS

The Peer Review Panel was conscious throughout the visit of the unique and distinctive nature of Shetland, socially, geographically, economically and culturally and the concomitant challenges for the delivery of services. The Peer Review Panel commend Shetland Library for having very dedicated and enthusiastic staff working well as a team, for the social media presence which demonstrates real engagement with communities and for the strong sense of stakeholder participation and engagement which demonstrated real pride in the civic space as represented by the library.

## QUALITY INDICATOR 4: Individual and Community Engagement

The evidence presented in the self-evaluation demonstrates that there are some notable strengths in provision here, including:

- A strong focus of customer service and a very positive sense of the library and its role among stakeholders.
- Imaginative and creative use of social media which engages communities and individuals and offers learning for the wider library community.
- The strength of the library in supporting local culture, writing, literature, language and dialect is significant and valuable with many events and projects associated with this.

The Peer Review Panel note that there is good feedback evidence for the library, its services and particularly its wide range of events. Similarly, there is good participation in and engagement with such activities. It would be useful for further consideration to be given as to how this participation and engagement subsequently has impact on both individuals and the wider community. The outcomes of, for example, good attendance or positive feedback, are helpful and positive, but further consideration of what difference these make to individuals and communities and the impact they have would be beneficial.

The library possesses a strong sense of identity, reflecting that of the community itself, and there is evident stakeholder pride in civic realm as represented by the library. The library and the mobiles are very clearly held in esteem and affection by users. Further consideration to the wider community is important and in particular reaching those who do not make use of the library or its services. The use of in-depth community profiling tools would make a positive impact to shaping of future service delivery.

Partnerships, both formal and informal, have been created with a number of other bodies and agencies. The library must be proactive in these partnerships, maintaining and reinforcing its areas of knowledge and expertise. There is anecdotal evidence of the positive impacts of a number of schemes and initiatives, including Bookbug and instances where it has improved attainment or enhanced parenting skills and confidence. The Panel would suggest that the Brae Project be evaluated from the

library's perspective for lessons learned particularly in respect of whether it has added value to the library services and acknowledged (and used) library expertise adequately.

The Panel saw and heard evidence of good partnership working but it is important to stress that partnerships are placed within a broader strategic vision and framework, delivering clearly delineated and pre-planned outcomes of benefit to the whole community. The library is clearly delivering on many of the priorities of the Corporate Plan, the Community Plan and the draft Local Outcomes Agreement. The library needs to be ambitious in its future vision and strategy to demonstrate its role within these plans and in developing and establishing future key partnerships.

**The Peer Review Panel endorse the Self-Evaluation Report and with the rating given by the Library Service.**

**Quality Indicator 4 (Individual and Community Engagement) is LEVEL FOUR (GOOD)**

- Important strengths that have a positive impact.
- Few weaknesses that do not have a substantial adverse effect.
- Some examples of good practice
- Services seeking to raise performance further, and addressing areas of improvement.

Quality Indicator	Self-Evaluation rating (1-6)	Peer Review rating (1-6)
<b>QI 4 – Individual and Community Engagement</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel note the Improvement Action Plan for Shetland Library is respect of Quality Indicator 4 (Self Evaluation Report p9) and summarized overleaf:

#### Quality Indicator 4 – Individual and Community Engagement

- Work with SIC Capital Projects on Old Library refurbishment to ensure best practical design;
- Consult customers and stakeholders widely on library refurbishment;
- Repeat staff ‘walk about’ exercise to ensure customer welcome and inclusive atmosphere is maintained;
- Review job descriptions;
- Migrate library website to a new corporate site when available;
- Continue to improve evaluation techniques;
- Create library ‘welcome pack’;
- Improve garage and loading area for mobile libraries;
- Introduce volunteer policy and procedure.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel, while endorsing the Improvement Action Plan for Shetland Library, make the following additional **key recommendations**:

- The Panel would recommend the swift implementation of the Improvement Action Plan identifying and acting on those which are strategic (such as the library refurbishment or the website developments) and those which are operational (the remainder) in appropriate ways.
- In respect of those strategic aspects, the library should give consideration to its broad strategic priorities and imperatives as well as its vision and ambitions for the future. There is clear evidence of how the library responds to the aims of the Corporate Plan and how the library supports these but consideration of the services own vision for future innovation and enhancement would be beneficial.
- In respect of the operational aspects, the library should ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support the library in its direction of travel and vision for the future. Processes should be reviewed and revised regularly.
- The Peer Review Panel would emphasize the importance of the early consideration of a mechanism for gathering meaningful and impactful evidence in projects and partnerships which is beyond outcomes or metrics. For future self-evaluation it will be

important for the library to demonstrate its own ability to show that what it does and what difference it makes to individuals and the community.

- Benchmarking with other authorities is recommended to explore innovations and solutions.
- Partnership working must have clearly delineated pre-planned outcomes and enable the library to have responsibility for, and ownership of, the areas that it has unique experience and expertise in.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The Peer Review Panel wish to express their thanks to all members of staff at Shetland Library for preparing the self-assessment report and for their engagement on the days of the Peer Review visit. We would also thank all stakeholders who met with us.