

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	3 September 2018
Title:	Library Service Strategy to 2020 – Progress to date and setting up a Task and Finish Group
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Culture and Communities Select Committee:
- i) endorse progress made on the Library Strategy 2020 since it was published in April 2016.
 - ii) set up a Task and Finish Group to develop a new Strategy to 2025, with the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In April 2016, following an extensive public consultation exercise, Hampshire County Council's Library Service published its Strategy to 2020 ('the Strategy'): <https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/aboutus/visionandstrategy>
- 2.2 The Strategy mapped out a transformation programme which sought to ensure the future provision of a comprehensive, relevant, high quality and affordable Library Service. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of progress to date against the Strategy and to consider next steps.
- 2.3 This report also seeks approval to commence Member engagement through a Task and Finish Group to begin to inform and shape a new Library Strategy to 2025.
- 2.4 Hampshire County Council is facing a most challenging period of prolonged national austerity measures, which has seen a huge reduction in its Central Government funding in recent years. This has affected budgets for all services including the Library Service, and will continue to do so moving forward.

3. Contextual information

- 3.1 Hampshire's Library Service is currently delivered through a network of:
- 48 Libraries (including 3 Discovery Centres)
 - 4 community run libraries

- Digital Library Service – including ebooks and other eResources
 - Home Library Service
 - School Library Service
- 3.2 The annual revenue budget for the Library Service in 2018/19 is £10.99 million and the Service generates a further £2.9 million of income. Approximately 467 staff (303 full time equivalents) work in the Library Service alongside over 46,000 hours of support a year from volunteers who help deliver services.
- 3.3 Under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964¹, each upper tier or unitary Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide a '*comprehensive and efficient*' Library Service for local people; although it does not define what is meant by 'comprehensive and efficient', leaving it open to local interpretation. In addition, the County Council must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Localism Act 2011.
- 3.4 The current Strategy was published in April 2016, setting out a direction of travel for the Library Service to 2020. The Strategy is aligned to the National Ambition for the future of Libraries across England and Wales², its aspiration being to ensure the Library Service is run efficiently and is well positioned to meet the changing demands placed on it.

4. Progress against the Key Strategy Proposals

- 4.1 The Strategy committed the Library Service to a number of key changes (summarised on page 4 of the Strategy):
- 4.1.1 *Place libraries into four different tiers to provide a standardised approach to service*
- This has been completed. Libraries have been placed in four Tiers, with Tier 1 being the largest busiest libraries, Tier 3 the smallest libraries and Tier 4 libraries managed by the community with support from the County Council.
- 4.1.2 *Invest £500,000 every year for four years from the £2 million Development Fund to make our libraries modern and vibrant, making the best use of new technology and digital systems*
- A comprehensive programme of library refurbishments has been completed in the first two years in Fleet, Fareham and Totton, with major refurbishments planned during 2018/19 in Andover and Gosport (Gosport being funded through alternative sources). These libraries now provide modern vibrant community spaces, for example, including the introduction of a café in Fareham library. The third year of investment (2018/19) will see a broader package of smaller refurbishment/ improvement schemes across a further 14 libraries.
- In addition, an ambitious scheme to refresh all existing self-service technology and extend this to all libraries will be complete by December 2018. This technology enables customers to issue and return books and other resources and frees up staff for other duties.
- 4.1.3 *Review the future viability of static libraries, using an agreed set of criteria*
- A comprehensive Asset Strategy is currently being developed with colleagues in Property Services which will inform future decisions about library buildings.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021>

4.1.4 Increase the use of trained volunteers to support the work of paid Library staff

A Volunteer Strategy has been developed and a full suite of guidance and support is now available for the recruitment and deployment of volunteers across the service, including an induction and training package. This has all lead to an increase in volunteer hours from 40,670 in 2016/17 to 46,356 in 2017/18.

4.1.5 Develop our library staff in line with our transformation priorities

A significant programme of investment in leadership and change management skills has been successfully delivered for all Library Managers. This approach has helped to develop leadership capacity and to drive a comprehensive and far reaching change management programme linked directly to cultural shift. Meanwhile the Service has been proactive in supporting a range of Internships, Apprenticeships and Traineeships in all areas of the business.

A skills audit for frontline staff has been completed and the outcomes used to inform targeted training to support gaps in skills, knowledge and behaviours. In the autumn of 2017 a wide scale staff consultation was launched which led to frontline staff being transitioned onto a new Role Profile, with amended Terms and Conditions, to create a modern, flexible workforce reflecting the skills needed from Library staff in the future.

The transformation agenda is underpinned by a comprehensive staff communication strategy which includes face to face briefings for all staff, regular Blog posts from the Head of Service and weekly e-Bulletins.

4.1.6 Share library buildings with partner organisations for several services to be accessed in one visit

The Library Service has always worked well with partner organisations and is enjoying increasing success in developing strategic partnerships which deliver mutual benefits. Key successes include:

- Working with Public Health – In the last two years libraries have developed closer working relationships with health providers which has led to Child Health Clinics being delivered in 3 libraries. This attracts a new audience into libraries (including those who may not have been confident to walk through the doors otherwise) and new parents can make the most of resources available (such as use of public computers to write CVs, or attendance at Rhymetime to encourage child literacy skills). New groups have sprung up following the introduction of Child Health Clinics (such as breastfeeding groups or healthy eating support).
- Citizens Advice is a natural fit with Libraries, with both organisations regarded as trusted sources of information and support. Although some libraries have hosted Citizens Advice for many years, the focus is currently on rolling this out more widely across the Hampshire's libraries and working with Citizens Advice on the co-delivery of services rather than simply co-location.
- Adults Services have also been a long term partner of Libraries, with Parkside (Aldershot & District Learning Disability) hosted in Farnborough and Learning Disability services in Winchester. The development of a Community Hub at Gosport Discovery Centre takes this concept one step further with the introduction of an Older Person's daycare unit at the heart of the Library.

The Library Service has also enjoyed new partnerships with the Police, Ministry of Justice and a range of other local groups. As well as the obvious benefits to customers, partnerships are run on a business-like footing – bringing in income

through the leasing agreements and making more efficient use of under utilised space.

4.1.7 Phase a withdrawal of poorly used library collections

The Library Service constantly reviews its offer to ensure it is investing in the resources that customers need. CD and DVD collections, which have declined in popularity, are gradually being phased out. Meanwhile investment is being made in new media such as ebooks and emagazines. New technology is enabling more informed decisions to be made about stock purchases, ensuring stock is working as hard as possible and reflects the interests and demands of library customers.

- 4.2 The 2020 Strategy also included reference to a decision made during the public consultation phase to close the Mobile Library Service (MLS). This service was formally withdrawn in June 2016, delivering a saving of c.£330,000. In response to feedback from local communities as a result of this decision, the Library Service facilitated the establishment of two book exchanges in Bransgore and Hamble at no cost to the County Council. Meanwhile the Stanmore Community Library, which was located in the Carroll Centre in Winchester in 2014, has been converted to a Book Exchange by mutual agreement.

5. Strategic Aims

- 5.1 The Library Strategy 2020 also identified five Strategic Aims which were derived from the 'National Universal Offer'. This is the framework recommended by Libraries Connected (formerly the Society of Chief Librarians) for all public library services to ensure they remain relevant and accessible³. In essence, the five offers represent the core services which customers and stakeholders see as being integral to a 21st century Library Service. Hampshire County Council's strategic aims incorporate the key principles of each offer, but has particularly focused on three; Reading, Digital and Health and Wellbeing.

5.1.1 Reading

Reading and literacy is at the very core of the Library Service's offer. All of Hampshire's libraries run a programme of events and activities ranging from Baby Rhymetime to author talks and reading groups. In addition there are a number of targeted offers:

- Parents are now able to enrol their children as library members at birth through partnership with Hampshire Registration Service. By the end of 2017/18, 1,245 babies had been signed up as members of the Library Service.
- Bookstart is a gifting programme run by the reading charity BookTrust. It provides free resources to pre-school children at key points in their development. The Library Service co-ordinates the distribution of these packs. Since the Strategy was published the cost of delivering this service has been significantly reduced.
- The Summer Reading Challenge is a national scheme run by the Reading Agency aimed at encouraging reading in children between the ages of 4 and 11. Hampshire's Library Service enjoys significant success in engaging children in this challenge, with year on year increases in children signing up and completing the challenge. In 2017, over 26,000 children participated in the challenge, the highest number across the South East region. This is largely thanks to the commitment of all Library staff and volunteers who have engaged so well with this challenge.

³ <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-offers>

- Reading Group membership has increased by 32% since the Strategy was introduced in 2016.

5.1.2 *Digital*

As new technologies emerge, needs change and library customers are increasingly encouraged to engage with all sorts of different services through digital channels. The role of Hampshire's Libraries in supporting and enabling this digital engagement becomes ever more vital. Key projects have taken place to modernise the offer including:

- In 2016 the Library Service ran a digital campaign designed to increase the number of emagazine downloads and ebook issues. This resulted in an increase in emagazine downloads of 162% a week over the seven weeks of the campaign and winning 'Digital Campaign of the year' at the 2017 UK Public Sector Communication Awards.
- Arts Council England awarded a grant of £238,000 to establish DOTS, an innovative iPad lending scheme to members of the community at risk of social and digital isolation. This scheme included both the lending of iPads and training in their use. Of the 500+ people who took part in the pilot scheme, 94% felt that the project had helped to improve their digital confidence.
- Volunteers are now offering digital support to customers. Partnerships have been established and training for those offering digital support to customers has been developed. An example of this is the work which has taken place with Vivid Homes in the north of Hampshire where volunteers provide 1:1 drop in sessions to support customers with digital skills.
- Code Clubs are now operating successfully in 11 libraries, providing coding skills delivered by volunteer tutors to children between 9 and 13.
- As part of the refurbishment of Fleet and Fareham Libraries, two new Makeries, (spaces equipped with a range of new digital technologies such as 3D printing and robotics) have been established. These pilots are designed to attract new audiences and explore the role of libraries in the 21st century.
- Hampshire Library Service has become a national leader in engaging with customers through social media, with an audience of over 230,000 on its main Facebook and Twitter accounts.

5.1.3 *Health and Wellbeing*

An ambitious Health and Wellbeing strategy has been developed, in close consultation with colleagues from both Adults and Children's Services and Public Health. This strategy recognises the key role that libraries play in supporting the health and wellbeing of communities and focuses on working with current partners to support early intervention and signposting to the public. Key successes include:

- The development of new health clinics (see 4.1.6) which as resulted in 15,000 additional visitors per year coming into libraries.
- 40 Library staff completed the 'Making Every Contact Count' training and accreditation, providing them with the skills and techniques to conduct health and well being conversations with potentially vulnerable customers.

6. Transformation to 2019

- 6.1 The Library Service continues to operate in an increasingly challenging financial environment. When the Strategy was published it was predicted that the Service

would need to make budget savings of 14% (or £1.7million) by 2020. In reality the Service will have delivered 20% (or £2.45 million) by 1st April 2019. This has been largely delivered through vacancy management (linked to streamlining the way libraries are staffed), a permanent reduction to the Development Fund budget, savings on building costs and increasing income through space hire.

7. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 7.1 The Library Service is currently two years in to the delivery of the 2020 Strategy and significant progress has been made to modernise and transform the way the Service is delivered. The majority of actions contained within the Strategy are either complete or in delivery. However, much remains to be done, and the Library Service is now looking towards the development of its Strategy beyond 2020, and towards 2025. Within this period, further significant budget reductions are anticipated and this will require the County Council to think creatively about the future and what library customers will want from the Library Service in the future.
- 7.2 It is suggested a Task and Finish Group (seven maximum) is set up by the Culture and Communities Select Committee to work with officers to develop a new Library Strategy 2025. The Group would need to be proportionately constituted and its proposed Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix 1.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

No Impact Assessment has been prepared for the setting up of this Group. However, any decisions taken following the recommendations of the Group will be undertaken subject to the usual Impact Assessments.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Not applicable.

3. Climate Change:

Not applicable.

Appendix 1

Culture and Communities Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Culture and Communities Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to work with Officers on the development of the Library Service's new Strategy to 2025.

2. Membership

The Culture and Communities Task and Finish Group shall comprise up to seven members of the Culture and Communities Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee appointed on a proportional basis.

3. Chairman

The Chairman of the Culture and Communities Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee shall be the Chairman of the Culture and Communities Task and Finish Group.

4. Objectives

- To produce a new Strategy 2025, by the end of 2019, to be considered by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage.
- To identify factors considered to be key to good performance, including library performance and library location and access.
- To ensure an excellent and sustainable Library Service in the future.

5. Scope

The focus of the work will be to determine what constitutes an 'efficient and effective' Library Service in the 21st century. Whilst nothing is 'off limits', the Group needs to be pragmatic, quickly 'chase things down' and move on.

The Group will make visits to libraries in Hampshire and outside too. If appropriate, outside organisations/experts may be asked to meet with the Group.