



# Doncaster Council

## Report

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**Date: 22 May 2018**

**To the Chair and Members of the  
CABINET**

### **PUBLIC LIBRARIES STRATEGY 2018-21**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
Councillor Nigel Ball	All	Yes

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The library service in Doncaster provides front-line services accessible to all its residents, with a primary purpose to support and enhance residents' health and wellbeing, productivity and economic activity, learning and skills, and social and civic interaction.
2. Our vision is for a library service which up to and by 2021:
  - Provides excellent services, demonstrated through a range of performance indicators, which meet local needs;
  - Demonstrates less of a financial cost to the Council;
  - Can work as an alternative service model if appropriate which encourages inward investment into the service and enables it to work more commercially; and
  - Contributes to the fulfilment of some of the Local Strategic Partnership's objectives.
3. Local Authorities are held accountable for the comprehensive and efficient provision of libraries within their boundaries, as outlined by the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. However, the last ten years have seen substantial changes as to how libraries are commissioned and delivered around the country. The drivers for these changes have included financial austerity, localism and community empowerment, the quick pace of technological change, and local

needs. There are a range of leadership and advocacy organisations supporting the development of public libraries which Doncaster Libraries will work with to achieve excellence in performance and value for money for local residents.

4. The DCMS Libraries Taskforce 7 Outcomes are defined as being critical to the individuals and communities in their areas:
  1. Cultural and creative enrichment
  2. Increased reading and literacy
  3. Improved digital access and literacy
  4. Helping everyone achieve their full potential
  5. Healthier and happier lives
  6. Greater prosperity
  7. Stronger, more resilient communities
5. The Public Libraries Strategy 2018-21 states the priorities for the service over the next 4 years, with an action plan which brings together the 7 outcomes, a local need assessment, and the main objectives required to fulfil each outcome. As well as the national agencies, Doncaster Libraries will also work with various local and regional partners and local communities to achieve the ambitions of this plan. There is no additional financial requirement for the delivery of this strategy; instead the focus is on service transformation and new ways of working to achieve savings and efficiencies for the Council, whilst at the same time ensuring sustainability and growth in the service.

## **EXEMPT REPORT**

6. N/A

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. To approve the Public Libraries Strategy 2018-21 and its associated action plan.

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

8. In approving this strategy, Doncaster Council will be ensuring that the library service by 2021 and beyond will be financially resilient, and able to thrive, whilst delivering on value for money and performance excellence to its customers. Residents will have the security of knowing that these local community assets will be modern, responsive to need, accessible, and able to provide services which deliver in support of residents learning, information, reading, knowledge and cultural needs.

## **BACKGROUND**

9. Doncaster Libraries is a statutory service co-delivered between Council staff and community groups. 21 of the 25 libraries in the network are community managed. The controllable revenue budget is £2.1m and the workforce consists of 89 staff posts and 470 volunteers. Using customer insight and performance information, Doncaster Libraries is generally well performing when benchmarked with peers,

with some areas for improvement, and is well valued generally by the public in Doncaster as a trusted and enabling resource.

10. The library service does not currently have an up to date strategy since the previous version lapsed but has been using service planning in the interim. It is timely to reconsider the direction and provisions of the service at a key time in its journey, with the ongoing work towards a new Central Library and Museum, and when potentially considering new alternative service delivery models, service re-design, and greater commercialisation in future.

11. The vision is that by 2021 the library service:

1. Contributes to the fulfillment of a range of the local strategic partnership's objectives, with every library venue an asset to the community, which can be commissioned as a resource to support residents' economic, learning, and wellbeing needs,
2. Can work as an alternative service model if appropriate which increases inward investment into the service and enables it to work more commercially (the right model for the service will be the one which enables the most investment to come in),
3. Provides excellent service delivery, demonstrated through a range of performance indicators.

12. Therefore, Doncaster Libraries is required to further transform over the next 4-5 years, for a number of reasons;

- To meet the needs and demands of a diverse and changing population;
- Because of the fast pace of technological change; public expectations regarding the use of technology, and technological advances, will have moved on again by 2021. If there is an increasing emphasis on digital and creative technologies and skills, libraries must be ready for this and fit for purpose, to provide access to opportunity and meet modern skills and information needs;
- Because of the ongoing challenging financial environment;
- To ensure that it provides the highest performance levels possible for its customers, whilst also delivering value for money, in an environment where traditional usage of libraries is declining nationally, whilst seeing growth in new areas of service delivery;
- The delivery of the new build library and museum, and its financial modelling;
- Maintaining and building on the service's strong community assets, and good track record in consultation and engagement with the public.

13. To achieve this transformation, the strategy will show the journey of the service to get to this point, the needs of residents which the service is best placed to respond to, and the actions required over the next 4 years to ensure that the service is successful in achieving its financial targets, in achieving value for money, and in delivering excellent services.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

14. To demonstrate the requirements of the Service going forward in different ways, whether through the Service Plan, individual ODRs and separate reports to Cabinet and / or Leadership. Or,
15. To provide a cohesive and concise Strategy, which will lead to greater and wider partnership understanding, which can be used as an advocacy tool with the public, stakeholders and funders, and which reduces the number of separate reports which may have been otherwise required.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

16. The recommended option is the preferred option as it provides a single point of reference for the outcomes and objectives the service is expected to deliver on, and single point then of agreement on future direction so that the service can begin to implement. The strategy aims to be clear for every reader, and every resident of Doncaster, so that there is a shared purpose and momentum behind what the service, through co-production and integrated working, seeks to achieve.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

17.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p><b>Doncaster Working:</b> Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better access to good fulfilling work</li><li>• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish</li><li>• Inward Investment</li></ul>	<p>A high performing and well developed library service will support local residents needs by providing access to free internet and digital hardware, targeted support for residents seeking work, and dedicated spaces and resources for independent, micro and small businesses, at the start-up stage specifically, to see their business grow in a freely available and accessible location.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Living:</b> Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster</li><li>• More people can live in a good</li></ul>	<p>Libraries are well recognised and well valued community assets. Through the integrated partnership working proposed by this strategy, libraries will develop opportunities for the enhancement of health and wellbeing in the borough, of social cohesion and civic pride.</p>

	<p>quality, affordable home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport</li> <li>• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean</li> <li>• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage</li> </ul>	<p>As culture and knowledge hubs, the library venues can provide a shop window across the borough to our great cultural and tourism assets, raising audience awareness and encouraging participation.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Learning:</b> Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school</li> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better</li> <li>• Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work</li> </ul>	<p>Libraries are positioned to support the Doncaster Curriculum, and through this strategy will show how young readers in the borough go on to greater educational attainment, and therefore better life outcomes, in keeping with national research to this effect. The Library Service will target its resources on children and young people where need is greatest, to help ensure that all our children and young people have access to books and reading materials, and are encouraged to develop an enjoyment in reading which will support them throughout their academic stages and future careers.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Caring:</b> Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust</li> <li>• Older people can live well and independently in their own homes</li> </ul>	<p>The library service is well placed to support the needs of residents across the borough who may need early support with their health and care needs, and which may then reduce access to costlier front door services. This can be in the form of IAG, community support, community groups working to address social isolation, and social prescribing (e.g. arts on prescription in libraries). An alternative service delivery model would prioritise enable community access and engagement which helps to make residents feel better, feel included and social, which leads in turn to better health</p>

		and wellbeing outcomes. Service transformation will align the service planning where appropriate with Adults Transformation priorities and the Public Health Strategy.
	<b>Connected Council:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, efficient and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Modern, accessible customer interactions</li> <li>• Operating within our resources and delivering value for money</li> <li>• A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents</li> <li>• Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths</li> <li>• Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</li> </ul>	The approach taken by this strategy will lead to a more efficient, responsive, flexible and focused service, performing better, and delivering more effectively on people's needs in ways which are integrated with other service needs. The enhanced community involvement, through service co-design and co-production, and possible alternative service delivery modelling, will contribute to stronger, healthier communities. This will be achieved working with partners from Team Doncaster and more widely, to ensure the greatest efficiencies, greatest access to service, and best quality of service possible.

## RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

18. Risks include;

- None of the alternative service delivery models presented to decision makers are viable and / or acceptable;
- The commercialisation and investment plan does not succeed in generating revenue and capital income streams which would otherwise help offset savings targets, presenting a financial pressure to the service;
- Integrated partnership working does not take place to full effect, leading to less efficiencies and less opportunities for improved performance;
- Slippage in the new build project leads to increased costs, impacting on the ongoing revenue modelling of the service;
- Technology by 2021 will have moved on again, with an increasing emphasis on digital and creative technologies, which libraries must be ready for, to provide access to opportunity and meet modern skills and information needs;

- Lack of growth in other areas, not directly controlled by the service, which lead to less than expected visitor numbers and therefore also less spend across the culture and tourism portfolios, including at the new central library;
- Pressures and capacity issues within the service leading to delays in timescales and delivery, in turn leading to less confidence and buy-in to the service;
- Staff under-engagement with an alternative service delivery model if appropriate, whether through lack of engagement and consultation, leading to lengthened process and costs;
- Insufficient change required in the structure of the service, in terms of posts and roles, to enable the alternative service delivery model to work to best effect, and as efficiently and quickly as possible;
- Financial pressures due to overspend in other areas of the Council, leading to increased pressure on service costs in future years, on top of the forecast and modelling to save £500k by 2020 through the new build library, and any additional assurances of savings proposed through an alternative service delivery model;
- Ensuring appropriate and effectively embedded community involvement and participation, co-productivity, and growth in the volunteer base so that it is a representative as possible of a local community the library serves.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: HMP Date: 10.4.18]**

19. Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides that it shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use of it. The strategy sets out how the Council plans to continue to meet its statutory duty.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: HJW Date: 11.04.18]**

20. There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report. The strategy sets out the way forward with regard to potential future delivery models, the ability to attract additional external funding, re-structuring to ensure the resource for the service is fit for purpose and the key objectives over the medium term. Finance input will be required as these elements develop and support will be provided to deliver these through the duration of delivery of the strategy.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: KW Date: 10.04.18]**

21. At this moment in time there are no apparent HR implications. Any staffing implications and/or significant developments will need to be discussed with Human Resources at the earliest opportunity.

#### **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PW Date: 05.04.2018]**

22. There are no direct technology implications at this time. However, any requirements for new, enhanced or replacement technology to support the delivery of the Public Libraries Strategy and/or new alternative service delivery models, service re-design and greater commercialisation would need to be considered by the ICT Governance Board (IGB).

## **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: CEH Date: 11.04.18]**

23. The proposed Library Strategy acknowledges the role that libraries can play in the health and wellbeing of Doncaster residents. Libraries can play a part in supporting the wider determinants of health such as education, employment, healthy places, social capacity and community connectedness. The strategy identifies priority areas that will help address possible areas of inequality in access to the services libraries provide and proposes a specific objective to address health and wellbeing. It is recommended that future changes to the delivery model continually assess the impact on resident's wider health and wellbeing.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: NS Date: 29.03.18]**

24. The Service will continuously review, update and implement its Due Regard Statement, taking into account residents and service users protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. Mindfulness in reflecting on and responding to protected characteristics will be demonstrated by the Portfolio Holder at the time of decision-making, supported by officers. Officers in the Service will continue to be supported to access up to date training and awareness regarding equalities and diversity in service design and implementation. This will also apply to any considerations going forward in terms of procurement of supplies, the recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers, and the future shaping of services in ways which reflect residents' needs to best effect within the national and local funding and policy context, and in keeping with corporate policy. Staff, volunteers and the public will be consulted with in ways which are fair, reasonable and meaningful, where any significant changes in service provision are being considered. Any future change to service delivery and provision will require reference to the needs assessment, which will be updated to include ward level data where possible, and also appropriate due regard, as demonstrated by the accompanying Due Regard Statement at Appendix 4.

## **CONSULTATION**

25. Further consultation with residents, elected members, and stakeholders, will take place ongoing through the timespan of the strategy, and the strategy will be updated and respond to the outcomes of any consultative activities. Consultation may be broad and ongoing, for example, on the subject of what residents want and need from their library service, to fixed term and focused, on an alternative service delivery model, for example, or on marketing and branding. Consultation will be in line with corporate policy and registered with the Council accordingly; a degree of consultation has taken place to date with elected members and community managed library representatives – fuller consultation with the workforce, elected members, and service users will take place in response to this strategy, the needs assessment and to maintain due regard throughout.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 - Public Libraries Strategy 2018-21  
Appendix 2 - Needs Assessment  
Appendix 3 - New Build Vision and Benefits Analysis  
Appendix 4 - Due Regard Statement

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