

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 14 September 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director –  
Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Employment, Learning and Skills, and  
Community

**SUBJECT:** Library Strategy 2023-2028

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members with a report on the Council’s draft Library Strategy for 2023-2028 and to update members on the good work which has taken place in 2022/23.

This matter was discussed in detail at the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board (ELS & C PPB), on 19th June 2023. Members requested additional references to online resources and employment. PPB Members agreed to submit the report to the Executive Board.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Library Strategy be adopted.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The current Library Strategy expires in 2023. The new Library Strategy attached to the report has been produced in house by the libraries team and all the library staff have been given the opportunity to comment and input. It provides useful information for the customer on what the library service offers and sets objectives for the next 5 years, to improve the service and ensure it moves forward and widens the customer base. The Strategy will be published on websites and will be available within the libraries.
- 3.2 Copies of the draft Library Strategy will be available at the meeting for members to consider. Once members have considered the draft strategy, the aim would be to take it to Executive Board for adoption.
- 3.3 Below are figures for the Library Services for 22/23. Going forward we will be able to present these figures as a comparison from one year to another, to show any increases for the services.

<b>Widnes &amp; Ditton</b>	Total attendance figures
Rhyme time – Widnes & Ditton	2047
Saturday Stories	813
Lego Club – Widnes & Ditton	1311
Science Club - Widnes	177
Class visits – Widnes & Ditton	1818
Warm welcome winter coffee mornings (Stay Warm, Stay Well)	124
Public PC's usage- Widnes & Ditton	9,099
<b>Halton Lea &amp; Runcorn</b>	Total attendance figures
Rhyme time – Halton lea & Runcorn	3, 611
Saturday Stories	1,097
Lego Club - Halton lea & Runcorn	1257
Halton Home Education monthly meet up	271
Class visits - Halton lea & Runcorn	2,191
Public Pc's usage- Halton lea & Runcorn	17,193
Warm welcome winter coffee mornings (Stay Warm, Stay Well)	202
<b>New Service offers launched and one off feature events :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brilliant Builds!</li> <li>• A Good Yarn</li> <li>• Scrabble Club</li> <li>• You Can Do I.T!</li> <li>• Family History monthly helpdesk</li> <li>• Additional Lego Clubs</li> <li>• Home Ed monthly meet up</li> <li>• Monthly Coding Clubs in partnership with Mako Create and Daresbury Tech</li> <li>• Plus 1000 visitors to MakeFest at Widnes Library in March</li> <li>• Over 2,500 people attended our one off and school holiday events across sites.</li> </ul>

<b>Social media</b>	Total site visits
Facebook views	198,037
Twitter site views	125,666
Library website	50,328
<b>Outreach Services</b>	
Home Library Service	109 customers 10,152 books delivered
Deposit Collections in 6 sites	840 books supplied
Reading Groups	5 internal groups / 5 external / 900 books supplied
Memory Box Delivery	Supplied monthly to 12 care homes 144 memory boxes delivered
Adult Outreach events	302 people reached at 24 events
<b>Library User Statistics</b>	
Active borrowers (KOHA)	15,585
Active borrowers (BORROWBOX)	9,070
Active users (PRESSREADER)	24,562
Book issues (all 4 sites)	203,595
Ebook issues (BORROWBOX)	15,571
Eaudiobook issues (BORROWBOX)	21,163
Articles read (PRESSREADER)	1,313,385
People visiting HBC Libraries (All 4 sites)	320,600

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Library Service is a statutory service and supports the Council's priorities.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The current programme provides ample opportunity for children and

young people to engage with the library offer, in person and online. Rhyme Time, science and Lego clubs, along with school visits and much more. The staff try and make the library inviting to all ages and have designated areas for children and young people.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The library provides a valuable learning opportunity for customers of all ages, the loan of up to 20 free books, online magazines and newspapers, computers and a warm friendly welcoming environment. The Work Club which ran pre-Covid, has moved online and is now targeted at particular housing estates. However, the IT Club and library staff will help customers to get online to complete job applications and assist with the scanning and printing of documents, which customers need for job applications.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The varied library offer is across all four libraries and online, providing flexibility to customers. The libraries act as a social gathering place and can help reduce loneliness. Stay Warm Stay Well was a national campaign which we participated in and one that we will look to roll out during winter 2023, as this was a valuable service during the energy crisis. We also promote bring a picnic, so customers can come into the libraries and stay for longer. The libraries have quiet spaces for work or reading and free Wi-Fi and PC access. Reading Well is a National campaign which promotes a list of books on topical health issues such as anxiety, depression etc, which users can borrow as self-help guides. There is a Reading Well list for adults and one aimed at teenagers.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Halton Lea Library opening times now reflect Shopping City opening times, which means it is now safer for staff and customers to visit the library.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Old Town Library is part of the key flagship project within the Reconnecting Runcorn programme, promoting a cultural hub offer.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The risks are associated with the failure to deliver the objectives over the next 5 years. We have been ambitious, yet realistic at designing the objectives and feel confident we can deliver them as set out.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Libraries are open and fully accessible. New Changing Places facilities are being installed as part of the Brindley extension and at Halton Lea Library.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications as part of this report.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’