

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside
Date:	15 June 2017
Title:	National Libraries Taskforce: New Vision for Library Services in England
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 In December 2016, the national Libraries Taskforce published **Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021**. This report summarises the new national vision for libraries, as set out in the Libraries Deliver document, and shows how Hampshire's Library Service is already delivering or working to deliver much of the vision already.

2. Background

2.1 Libraries in England received 224.6 million visits in 2014/15, more than visits to Premier League football games, the cinema and the top 10 UK tourist attractions combined. However, over the last 20 or so years, visits to libraries have been declining, as have the number of book issues and, up and down the country libraries have been closing (67 in 2015/16) as a result of pressures on local authority budgets.

2.2 In response to these ongoing challenges the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Local Government Association set up a Libraries Taskforce in 2015. Its role is to work in partnership with central and local government to help local authorities improve, revitalise and adapt their local library services. In December 2016 the Taskforce published [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021](#) which sets out a vision for the future of libraries.

3. Libraries Deliver document

3.1 This is an ambitious document which describes how library services in England can help transform people, communities and society as a whole over the next five years. It is also quite a complicated document with a vision, outcomes, common design principles and a detailed Action Plan.

3.2 The Taskforce's vision is quite long but, to summarise, it wants:-

- everyone to be able to choose to use libraries, if they want to, because they can see the benefits and understand what libraries have to offer
- communities to have a library service that helps different groups come together and for local services to be made available in libraries via community hubs
- public services and other partners to understand what libraries offer them and how, by working together, they can all achieve more
- library services to develop an evidence base to help make strategic decisions

3.3 The Libraries Deliver document goes on to set out in detail how libraries can achieve this vision by focusing on seven outcomes. Libraries need to:-

1. Establish themselves as focal points for community cultural life by hosting and running a wide range of cultural and creative activities
2. Provide an expanding reading programme to increase reading and literacy
3. Provide digital training and support to help more people use online services confidently and safely
4. Strengthen partnerships with formal learning organisations to complement each other's work to help everyone achieve their full potential
5. Extend joint working and sharing of resources with health providers, offering non-clinical spaces in community hubs for health and wellbeing groups to help people lead healthier lives
6. Provide support to businesses and help people into work, contributing to economic growth and greater prosperity
7. Become recognised community hubs to help local government and its partners deliver their strategic objectives and contribute to stronger and more resilient communities

3.4 In order to achieve these outcomes the Libraries Deliver document emphasises the importance of:-

- strong local leadership
- decision making based on evidence and local need
- library services signing up to the Society of Chief Libraries Universal Offer¹ which underpins the seven outcomes
- considering different models for local service delivery
- exploring different financial options to achieve a more financially resilient library service
- developing the library workforce

3.5 The final part of the Libraries Ambition document sets out an Action Plan, detailing what the Taskforce, central and local government and library

¹ The Universal Offer covers key areas of a 21st Century Library Service namely; Information, Learning, Digital, Reading, Health and Culture.

services need to do over the next five years.

- 3.6 There are a number of case studies highlighted throughout the Libraries Deliver document, most of which are from different library services. Hampshire's Library Service is one of these (page 34), highlighting how a large public consultation exercise informed the Library Service's Strategy which was published in April 2016.

4. Comparison of Libraries Deliver document with Hampshire's Library Strategy to 2020

- 4.1 Hampshire's Library Strategy to 2020 was approved by the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside on 18 April 2016.²

- 4.2 The Strategy has five strategic aims, based on the Society of Chief Libraries Universal Offer (3.4 on previous page), to deliver a modern, comprehensive and efficient library service. The strategic aims are:-

1. Support and encourage reading and literacy (links to Libraries Ambition Outcome, 3.3 on previous page)
2. Improve digital services and inclusion (links to Libraries Ambition Outcome 3)
3. Contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities (links to Libraries Ambition Outcome 5)
4. Provide access to trusted sources of information (links to Libraries Ambition Outcome 7)
5. Facilitate and provide learning (links to Libraries Ambition Outcome 4)

- 4.3 The Hampshire Library Strategy also develops a comprehensive set of data (called a Library Needs Assessment) covering the performance of libraries and the needs of their local communities, which helped inform the Strategy (p 22-25). This will be updated annually and supports the Libraries Deliver document statement about the importance of decision making based on evidence and local need (3.4 on previous page).

- 4.4 The Strategy includes the development of community hubs, which are libraries working in partnership with other council services, community and voluntary sector organisations and central government. Hampshire's biggest libraries, such as Waterlooville and Fareham, and its three Discovery Centres (Basingstoke, Gosport and Winchester) are, in effect, already working as community hubs and, by the end of 2017, Gosport Discovery Centre is going to be officially re-opened as a Community Hub (Libraries Ambition Outcome 7).

- 4.5 All of Hampshire's libraries run a programme of events and activities ranging from Baby Rhymetime to Author Talks and Chess clubs. Not surprisingly, the larger libraries organise a much greater range of activities than the smaller ones (Libraries Ambition Outcome 1).

² [2016-04-18 EMCR Library Service Transformation - Approval of Strategy to 2020](#)

- 4.6 Hampshire's Library Strategy identifies ways of diversifying income streams, to help its future financial sustainability and also highlights the need to develop staff to ensure they are equipped with the skills, knowledge and expertise to meet evolving customer needs (3.4 on previous page). In addition the Strategy identifies the need to research the viability of alternative operating models for the Library Service (3.4 on previous page).

5. Summary

- 5.1 Whilst Hampshire's Library Strategy to 2020 was published eight months before the Library Taskforce's Libraries Deliver document, it is remarkably similar to the Libraries Deliver document and its outcomes. This can only stand Hampshire's Library Service in good stead as it uses the Strategy to inform its planning for the next four years and to bid for funding from other sources.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside endorses the Libraries Taskforce's **Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021** and recognises its good fit with Hampshire's Library Strategy to 2020.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Maximising well-being:	yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes

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.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

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.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

There is no impact on equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

There is no impact on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? No impact.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? No impact.