



Brighton & Hove City Council
**Libraries
Strategy
2022-25**

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Foreword

It's with great pride and pleasure that I introduce Brighton & Hove's Library Strategy at such a challenging time.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had profound impacts on our communities and the services that support them, and I am immensely proud of the work that Library Services have done to support local people during this difficult time.

Even when lockdown restrictions prevented libraries from fully opening their doors, they were able to offer digital services online and for most of the pandemic provided Home Delivery Services to those isolated at home.

As the city starts to recover from the pandemic, libraries will be in the forefront of supporting this recovery, by providing help to children and parent carers catching up with learning and child development; by supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC); by supporting people struggling with isolation, anxiety, or other health issues by providing social contact in a safe environment; and by providing reading material and a range of other resources to support and encourage adult learning.

There are 5 essential requirements for a successful library service in Brighton & Hove – attractive, welcoming spaces; support from trained and dedicated professional staff and volunteers; quality book stock; accessible IT; and a programme of activities and events for existing and new customers.

Our Brighton & Hove libraries are more than a collection of books – they are a vibrant and accessible community asset that contain the resources and tools to support individuals and communities to thrive and prosper. Library staff have developed many active partnerships with other organisations and together they have achieved successful funding bids to enable projects to extend the range and quality of the library offer.

Jubilee Library remains nationally successful as it is the fourth most popular library in the country, with 936,633 visits per year pre-Covid. While current numbers are still below this level, they are recovering a little faster than average across the county.

Brighton & Hove Libraries are no strangers to innovation and, by successfully establishing 'Libraries Extra' offer, residents can access most of their local libraries 7 days a week. The extensive consultation carried out by the library service has revealed the high value that people in the city place on their local libraries and provided important feedback to enable Brighton & Hove Libraries to develop and improve their services going forward.

This strategy consolidates and builds on all the changes that have gone before. It sets out our ambitions for the next three years with the aim of ensuring that our library service continues to be at the heart of our communities, to support the delivery of corporate priorities, and to remain fit for the future.



Councillor Steph Powell,
Co-chair of the Tourism, Equalities,
Communities & Culture committee

1 Introduction

Brighton & Hove Library Services have been highly successful over recent decades, including the continuing popularity of the award-winning Jubilee Library which is the fourth most visited public library in the country. This strategy provides a framework for the future of the service, so that libraries can continue to meet the needs of local people and support the aims and priorities of the council and the city.

The strategy has been informed by extensive consultation with the public, partner organisations, council members and library staff from March to July 2021. It sets the vision and priorities for Brighton & Hove Library Services for 2022-2025, aligning with the corporate plan, and provide the framework for more detailed service planning in this period.

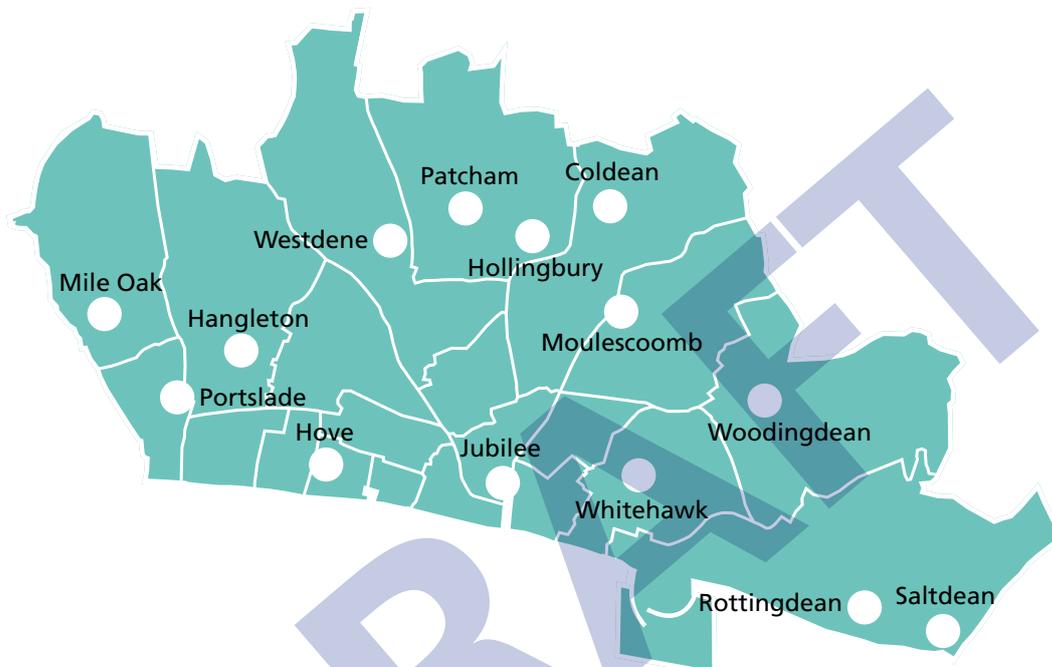
The strategy will guide the city's libraries to achieve key outcomes for local people, helping them achieve their full potential through reading, learning, culture, digital access, and support to health and wellbeing, and local business development.





2 About Brighton & Hove Libraries - celebrating success!

14 public libraries in the city. Jubilee Library, Hove Library, and 12 community library locations



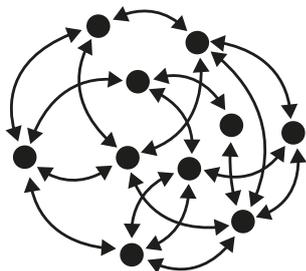
Jubilee Library

award winning hub of the library network and fourth most popular library in the country, with 936,633 visits p.a. (average* 374,211). Delivers around 50% of the total library services for the city.



Community Hubs

bringing community services together through 9 libraries co-located with GP surgery, housing office, social services, children's centres, community centres, museum and art gallery, and a lido, with plans for a new community hub bringing leisure, health, youth services and a community centre together in Moulsecoomb



224 partner organisations

working locally with libraries, covering equalities, LGBTQ+, older people, carers, disabilities or mental health issues, English as an additional language, homeless community, Black and minority ethnic groups, asylum seekers, poverty, health, community and voluntary sector, arts and culture, education, and learning.



Digital Support

1,628 hours of one-to-one support provided by Libraries Connect volunteers, in 599 sessions with 717 attendees. Libraries are founding member of Digital Brighton & Hove who provide digital support, equipment, and internet access



420,000 items of stock

318,980 books; 34,535 audio/visual; 19,873 e-resources; and 46,000 rare books



715 library opening hours per week

52% staffed, 48% Libraries Extra unstaffed



1,461,199

visits in person to libraries p.a.
incl. 38,356 during Libraries Extra



1,508,114

web visits



978,221

total loans, incl. 103,665 e-loans



105,098

hours of public use of computers



55,213

people engaged in events and activities



22 residential units

receiving Equal Access Services (EAS) delivery of library items



110 clients

receiving Home Delivery Service (HDS)

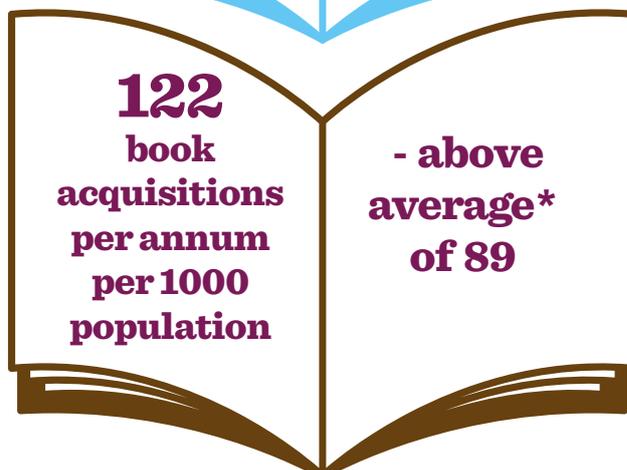
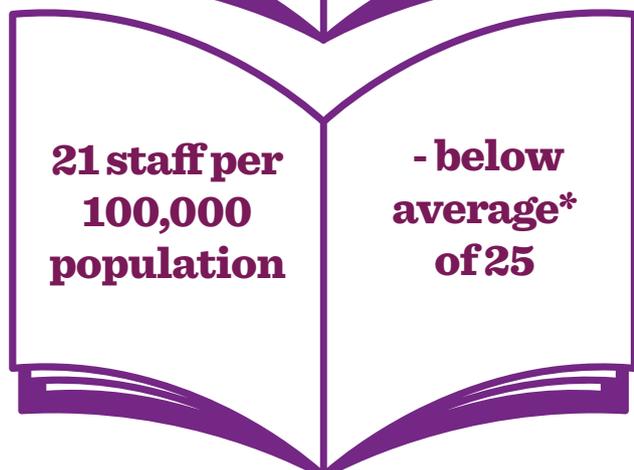
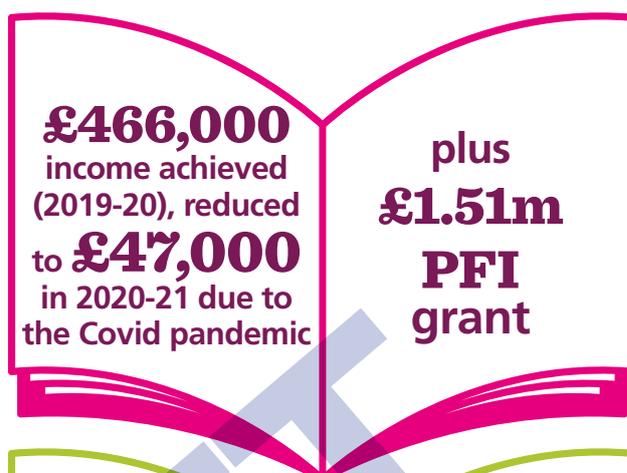


9,503 hours

gifted by 204 volunteers

All figures above from 2019-20 as last year of pre-Covid data

Resources and performance data



*Of comparator authorities in CIPFA returns 2019-20

The Jubilee Library was built using a Private Funding Initiative (PFI) contract which attracts £1.505 million government grant. This grant effectively subsidises library services across the city. The PFI contract covers the running and maintenance of Jubilee Library plus the bibliographic services and procurement of all library stock across the city's network of libraries. The council pays back a proportion of the capital used to build Jubilee Library each year out of the library service revenue budget and the contract ends in 2029.

Opportunities and challenges

Jubilee Library PFI (Private Finance Initiative)

Like many other services, libraries face some difficult challenges and some opportunities:

- **Covid-19 pandemic.** Library buildings closed during the lock downs, but libraries increased the digital offer; in-library services were restricted for safety reasons, but home delivery services were increased to reach more people isolated at home. Recovery from the pandemic remains challenging, with footfall in September 2021 at only 45% of the September 2019 figure, and income still 40% below normal. This strategy sets out not only how libraries will recover, but also how libraries can support the city's recovery.
- **Budget challenges.** Libraries have made £903k savings in the past six years which represents nearly 41% of the current net budget excluding the PFI expenditure and government grant (28% of the net budget with PFI expenditure and grant included). At the same time, Libraries have significantly improved efficiencies, doubling library opening hours, introducing Libraries Extra and greater collaboration with partner organisations and volunteers.
- **Having made significant efficiencies,** including reductions to the PFI budget and reductions in staff at all levels, any further savings will result in reduced services and reduced accessibility of libraries across the city. Delivering the Library Strategy depends on a steady state budget, so any proposals for savings will have to include identification of which libraries services will cease.
- **Increasing income** is a potential for the future, but this can only happen after pre-Covid levels of income have been achieved. It will take time to attract back room hire clients and retail sales to pre-Covid levels before additional income can be achieved.
- **Information technology** continues to change at a pace, requiring upgrades to remain safe and operational. It also creates opportunities to introduce new digital services that bring benefits to library users and deliver efficiencies.
- **Staff and volunteers** need to develop new skills in response to technology changes and increasing numbers of library users experiencing disadvantages of various kinds, who need our support.
- Libraries are developing as local community hubs, which requires collaborating with other service providers, integrating technologies, changing ways of working, making services more accessible, and increasing the reach into local communities.
- There are some **significant health and social care needs** facing the city, and libraries can help support people through the development of more targeted services.
- **Volunteering** in Libraries provides varied and supported opportunities to help others in their community.
- **Accessibility.** Some library locations in the city are no longer as accessible as they were, so need to be changed to ensure libraries remain fully accessible to all.

3 Feedback, consultation and engagement

Brighton & Hove Library Services has consulted with the public and key stakeholders to find out their views on Library Services and library stock in general, as well as their experience of using libraries in Brighton & Hove, both before and during the Covid pandemic. The methods used were:

- Public surveys – three versions targeted at people 0-12 years, 13-19 years, and adults 20 years and above
- Focus groups to gather more qualitative feedback from specific groups, and to reach those less likely to complete an online survey
- Survey of partner organisations
- Staff survey and workshops
- Councillors’ survey and workshops

The results of all the consultation and engagement were overwhelmingly positive, giving good indications of what is working well, and with detailed suggestions on how to improve and develop library services.

Customer service standards and ease of use

All the surveys gave great results for the two corporate performance measures, and good results from similar questions to partner organisations and staff.

	Services were very or fairly easy to use	Standards of customer service were very or fairly good
Adult survey	92%	93%
13-19 years survey	100%	96%
0-12 years survey	98%	98%
Partner organisations described their experience of working with library services as very or fairly good		86%
Staff were asked how proud they are of the customer experience in libraries, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being extremely proud and 5 being not proud		1 (extremely proud) 35% 2 43% 3 22%

General summary of feedback

Most people (66%) use more than one library and 50% visit at least once every three weeks, and most people (77%) walk to the library.

The traditional services of borrowing, reading in the library, and finding information, remain the most important services for many users. The most important stock remains printed fiction and non-fiction, followed by online information.

The library is an important provider of space to study, read, and meet people, in a safe and welcoming environment, with helpful staff, is evidenced by the survey results. The top three most important things to respondents are opening hours, the library as a safe place to visit and seating areas. When asked what they would most like to see changed, longer opening hours was the most suggested change, with many mentioning that they want to see more staffed hours.

Eleven focus groups were commissioned to provide some qualitative information on library services. 131 people took part in groups that were targeted at people who experienced barriers to participation in the general consultation and libraries themselves. There was an overwhelmingly positive view of libraries in general with people viewing them as places of sanctuary, where trusted information could be accessed. The welcoming nature of staff was considered a key component of this trust. All groups were impressed by the array of library services, and many felt poorly informed about these. There was a range of detailed suggestions that could be implemented to make libraries more accessible and become more valuable community resources for those more likely to experience barriers in using them.

Areas for improvement and development

There were common areas for improvement that emerged from the public surveys (all age groups), focus groups, partner survey, and staff survey. They asked for:

- Better, more effective promotion of library services, to targeted groups and partners who often do not know what libraries have to offer, with less reliance on social media.
- Better, more accessible signage, and guides on how to use the library, especially how to use the various technology like self-service kiosks, printers, and computers. The website was criticized for being too wordy and difficult to find what you need.
- Improvements in seating/study space, and to keep up to date with IT and digital resources.
- More events and activities, for all age groups, and many people indicated their willingness to pay a small fee to attend in appropriate circumstances.
- More and better stock for all age groups, and improvements in some specific areas, such as books in languages other than English, and bilingual books.

4 Local context

Libraries support corporate and city-wide priorities

A city working for all

Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) in Jubilee Library is part of a national network of 16 libraries across the country offering a range of support services to business. Working in collaboration with local business support organisations and intellectual property specialists the centre has become a hub for events, workshops, peer to peer activities and networking opportunities aimed at helping business to grow and build resilience.

A growing and learning city

Libraries support learning and development at all ages. Libraries provide Bookstart services to early years settings, together with neighbourhood-based access to books, digital resources, and activities to support child development, parents, and carers. Class visits, Summer Reading Challenge, events, and activities support school age children. Libraries support adult learning through resources, space to study, and helping establish a new learning hub.

A healthy and caring city

Libraries provide Reading Well Books on Prescription services, which focus on providing information and self-management support through books chosen and prescribed by health professionals, covering 5 areas of: mental health; dementia; long-term conditions; young people; and children. Libraries work with social prescribing providers to extend range of resources on offer and promote healthy lifestyles. Libraries Home Delivery Services provide books and social contact to people restricted to their own homes, and Libraries regularly deliver books to people living in residential units.

A stronger city:

Libraries are important to local people as safe and welcoming community spaces in their local neighbourhoods. During a lot of the pandemic, libraries were some of the few community spaces open to local people for access to books, social (distanced) contact, and free internet access. Library services were awarded 'Libraries of Sanctuary' status in 2020 and continue to provide support to refugees and asylum seekers in the city.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis

There are some significant health and social care needs in the city that have been identified in the [Joint Strategic Needs Analysis March 2021](#). Library services contribute to addressing some of these issues:

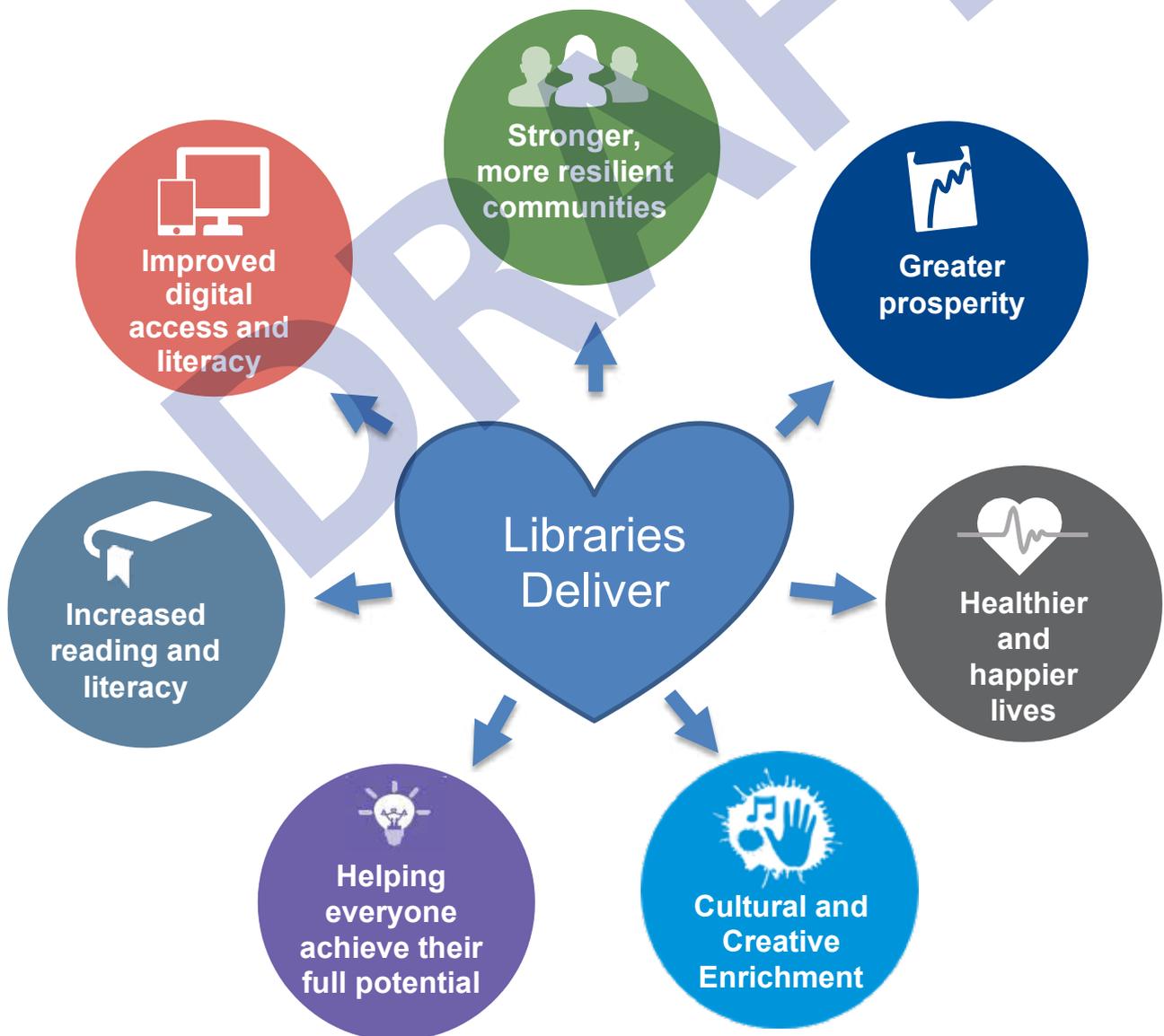
Issue	Libraries offer
Homelessness and rough sleeping	Information on support; free access to library resources, computers and the internet, and a safe place to be during the day
Unemployment, healthy workplaces, and sustainable business	Resources to help with job applications, CV writing, and internet access (computers and free wifi) to enable job and benefit applications. The BIPC (Business and IP Centre) in Jubilee Library supports entrepreneurs, inventors, and small businesses across Sussex, through expert advice and access to a wealth of free information - business databases, market research reports, company data and information on intellectual property.
Social isolation and loneliness	Sited in neighbourhood locations, libraries provide a safe and welcome place to interact with other people, providing events, activities, and support groups. Volunteers with the Home Delivery Service take books to and have a chat with people mainly restricted to their homes. Libraries free wifi and computers enable people to connect to friends and family, and Libraries Connect volunteers help people learn how to use these resources.
Healthy lifestyles / prevention	Libraries help promote healthy lifestyles through trusted information and events on key issues such as smoking, drinking, drug misuse, cancer screening, immunisations, sexual health, domestic and sexual violence. Jubilee Library has installed a vending machine dispensing free STI/HIV testing kits, has hosted quit smoking support sessions, Living Library events on domestic abuse, and is handing out LFT covid testing packs.
Emotional wellbeing and mental health	Reading Well Books on Prescription services target key areas of concern for the city, with the focus on mental health, especially for children and young people, dementia, and other long-term conditions. Reading for pleasure has been proven to have a beneficial effect on people suffering from stress.

5 National context

Public libraries are a statutory service under the **Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964**. The Act requires library authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient service' for people who live, work or study within the authority area. In addition, councils are required to 'encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service and provide advice as to its use'.

In 2016, the national Libraries Taskforce published '**Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021**'

in which it sets out the strategic vision and commitment to public libraries in England. The Libraries Taskforce recognises that local libraries provide a unique 'cradle-to-grave service', offering significant reach into local communities and a cost-effective way of ensuring that people are connected to local services. The Libraries Taskforce identifies seven outcomes that library services should contribute to at a local level:



Universal Library Offers

Public libraries across the country have worked together through **Libraries Connected** to develop a set of six Universal Library Offers to cover the areas of service which public libraries stakeholders see as essential to a 21st century library service. Libraries Connected is a member organisation made up of every library service in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and is partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for libraries.



Children's Promise

That every child and young person in libraries is inspired to read for pleasure, has access to a diverse range of materials, can engage in a variety of digital activities and can take part in activities that improve their well-being.



Culture and Creativity

To enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.



Health and wellbeing

To promote healthy living, provide self-management support and effective signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities. To offer a range of creative and social activities which engage and connect individuals and communities, combat loneliness and improve wellbeing.



Information and digital

To provide quality information and digital support. To help children and adults to engage and feel safe online. To ensure resources and opportunities are accessible, and to embrace creative and innovative technology.



Reading

To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering, and promoting creative reading activities in libraries. To encourage individuals of all ages to read for pleasure and purpose to increase their understanding of the world, stretch their imaginations and think differently.



Six steps promise

That the almost 2 million blind and partially sighted people in the UK can visit a fully accessible library service, that has a local collection of accessible reading materials and information in physical or digital forms.

6 Purpose and vision for Brighton & Hove Libraries

The vision and purpose for library services in Brighton & Hove have been developed by the senior team in the service. They reflect the breadth of what libraries do, and the role libraries play in helping people improve their lives.

Our purpose: 'Public libraries connect our communities to culture, reading, learning, and each other.'

What we do: 'We provide impartial and inclusive access to library resources and services to inspire learning, development, discovery, creativity, and enjoyment, in welcoming, safe, supportive, and accessible places.'

Our vision for the future: 'We aspire to strengthen communities, promote inclusion, and inspire people to improve their lives, making libraries a cornerstone for our community's economic, social, and cultural wellbeing.'

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7 Strategic aims for library and information services

The aims and outcomes have been informed by the national Library Taskforce proposals, the main messages coming out of the

consultation process, and the discussion about key issues and priorities that took place in the councillor's workshops.

Aim 1: Reading, learning and creativity through libraries

To support and develop literacy skills, reading, creativity and innovation to help children and adults in the city realise their potential.

At the centre of our library services is the commitment to reading, literacy, creativity and learning for people of all ages and abilities:

Objectives/How

- Implement the new Stock Policy, building the collection of books, e-Books, and other materials to meet community needs
- Offer opportunities for all ages and needs that spark curiosity, nurture learning and develop creative and critical thinking
- Develop constructive activities for children and young people
- Provide space for study, work, and creativity
- Promote enjoyment of reading for all

Outcome: Increasing reading and literacy

Libraries give everyone free access to books and literature regardless of age, disability, wealth, or education, and hold activities and events in partnership with others to encourage improved and wider reading and literacy skills. Research suggests that both children and adults who read for pleasure are healthier, happier, and more confident than those who don't. Adult education in literacy has been shown to **reduce depression levels**.

Local case study

Brighton & Hove Libraries worked with professional animators Press Play Films to deliver the workshops aimed at local families. In the session, children created their own Claymation characters and then planned and filmed a short animation using animation cameras. There were 18 workshops and 145 children attended together with 70 adults. The workshops took place at Jubilee, Hangleton, and Whitehawk libraries. Children from over 20 schools took part.

'This is my dream come true' - 7 years old

'My son absolutely loved the animation workshop last Sunday! Thank you for organising'

Outcome: Helping everyone achieve their full potential

Libraries raise people's aspirations and promote lifelong learning, supplementing formal education. Libraries offer free resources for learning, including online resources and quiet spaces for study that people may not have at home.

Local case study

Summer Reading Challenge runs every year in all Brighton & Hove Libraries, and national research, in which some local schools have participated, have found that children who participate are more likely to maintain or improve their reading performance over the holidays. 992 children took part in the Summer or Winter Reading challenge in 2020, despite Covid-19 restrictions. The previous year saw 2,544 children participate.



Olive at animation workshop



Storytime with Debs

Aim 2: Libraries as community hubs

Putting libraries at the heart of local communities:

Objectives / How

- Delivering council and community services
- Providing digital services and inclusion
- Enabling cultural and creative opportunities
- Encouraging inclusive community interaction and understanding

Outcome: Stronger more resilient communities

Libraries are open to everyone and are trusted by local people to provide reliable information and support on a wide range of issues;

and can help other services reach out into communities. Libraries bring people together in welcoming community hubs which host local events and provide a shared sense of place.

Outcome: Improved digital access and literacy

Public libraries provide a trusted network of accessible locations with free Wi-Fi, computers, and other technology. A 2014 BT report estimated the value of digital inclusion to a new user at around £1,064 a year. Digital literacy gives people access to services more easily, to learn and interact with others, and improve employability.

Local case study

Libraries Connect sessions delivered by library volunteers provide free access to a series of one-to-one support sessions for people who need help with digital. In 2019-20 1,628 hours of Libraries Connect volunteer support was provided to 717 people in 599 sessions.

A staff quote: "I was helping an older gentleman on a PC, and he wanted to make sure he was printing his boarding passes for a flight abroad correctly, so I checked it was all fine, and printed them out for him. He was very grateful, and said I'd been very friendly and patient, and he got a bit emotional and told me that the reason he's travelling is to see a friend who is terminally ill, who he wants to see one more time, and he was so nervous about making sure he had the boarding pass information all in order and was so grateful for my help. I was so pleased I had managed to put his mind at ease and wished him a safe journey."

Outcome: Cultural and creative enrichment

Libraries are well-placed to extend cultural engagement and are becoming established as focal points for community cultural life, hosting and running activities and events in partnership with amateur and professional groups. Libraries also point people to wider cultural activities and encourage individuals to explore different cultural experiences and to create things themselves.



Local case study

The Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove meet weekly at Jubilee Library in Brighton, providing a platform for women from diverse cultures and backgrounds to meet, share experience and knowledge and support one another. At the library they sew, make crafts, get information, support, and make friends. They also practice their English through conversation and translate for each other if there is a communications barrier.

Isra has been in Brighton & Hove for 2 ½ years. She arrived in the city with her husband and two children but didn't know anyone else. For the first year she stayed at home, she was very isolated.

"I was lonely, bored with no friends, no one to talk to. My husband heard about the international women's group meeting at the library and his wife met me and took me to the library. The other women ask me - where are you from? I was so happy. I thought no one is interested in me or my country and we talked. I enjoy the group. Then I heard about volunteering at the library. It's so wonderful it helps me to continue with my life."

Isra has become an important advocate for libraries, visiting other groups to promote what we do and encouraging people from the refugee and asylum seekers community to come in.

"I talk to other women about the library and say they must come, it is our sanctuary, it is a beautiful place with space for children. Now I bring my daughter and son to do their homework and for the books."



Network of International Women

Aim 3: Community wealth-building through libraries:

Develop library services to support business enterprise, improve skill levels and help more people into work:

Objectives / How

- Deliver support to local small or new businesses and through the Business and IP Centre
- Provide trainee and apprenticeship opportunities
- Work with schools and colleges to support children learning

Outcome: Greater prosperity

Libraries can contribute to the improved prosperity of an area by supporting businesses to start up and grow by providing information and working with economic development organisations to signpost businesses to sources of support and advice. Libraries also help individuals into work, supporting back to work programmes, and job clubs, and enabling free digital access and skills development.

Outcome: Improved digital access and literacy

Public libraries provide a trusted network of accessible locations with free Wi-Fi, computers, and other technology. A 2014 BT report estimated the value of digital inclusion to a new user at around £1,064 a year. Digital literacy gives people access to services more easily, to learn and interact with others, and improve employability.

Local case study

Jubilee Library has become one of the latest local Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC) supported by the British Library. The Reset. Restart programme provided support, advice and the confidence and push to grow their business. This was the case for Keira Simpson, owner and founder of **Daisy Days Virtual Assistant**. She provides PA and administration support to small businesses, helping them to save time so they can focus on their core business operations. It was through one of the small businesses that she was assisting at the time, that she discovered the BIPC. "My client wanted me to research the BIPC and to find out what support and services they could offer to help with the set-up of her Community Interest Company (CIC). This is why I love what I do, I get an insight to so many networks, and I get to experience the fabulous support and services that they offer."

Keira began by attending **BIPC Sussex's** free Reset. Restart webinar – Tools for the Job. This gave her an insight into what digital platforms and software was available to grow her business. Like Oliver, it also provided an opportunity for her to connect with other start-ups and share her knowledge and tips, building her confidence in her business. "I gained an insight to other platforms and gained confidence in how I can support my business. The people that I have had the pleasure in talking to from the BIPC, whether that be from the webinars they offer or via email with a question that has arisen, have been so helpful and supportive. They also offer ideas and information - like speaking to a representative from the centre for advice on your business, to other topics which will steer you in the right direction."

Keira Simpson, owner and founder of Daisy Days Virtual Assistant



Business & IP Centre in Jubilee Library



Aim 4: Libraries supporting health and wellbeing

Use libraries' trusted brand to deliver services that ensure residents are healthier, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible

- Develop targeted services to reach those most in need
- Provide home delivery services to those restricted at home or in residential units
- Link services to council priority issues, working collaboratively with other service providers priorities and needs as identified above

Outcomes: Healthier and happier lives

Libraries contribute to the health and wellbeing and social care of local communities by:

i) Supporting people with dementia and mental health issues:

Libraries deliver the national Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme which is part of the national health offer for libraries. The scheme consists of a list of books that is curated and endorsed by health professionals

and provides support for those suffering from common mental health conditions (anxiety, depression, phobias, and some eating disorders) and dementia. Using the lists, GPs and health professionals can recommend reading materials to patients, which encourages self-management, and can help reduce the need for costly interventions. In the case of dementia, the scheme also provides practical support for carers.

ii) Contributing to the preventative health agenda:

Libraries provide access to health and social care information and signpost customers to online information and specialist agencies. Libraries play an important role in boosting health literacy, a person's knowledge and understanding about how to find and use information so they can act to support and improve their own health and wellbeing. Libraries offer stimulating community events and activities to help combat loneliness and social isolation, and host public health services such as stop-smoking sessions, health walks and access to health checks.



Local case study

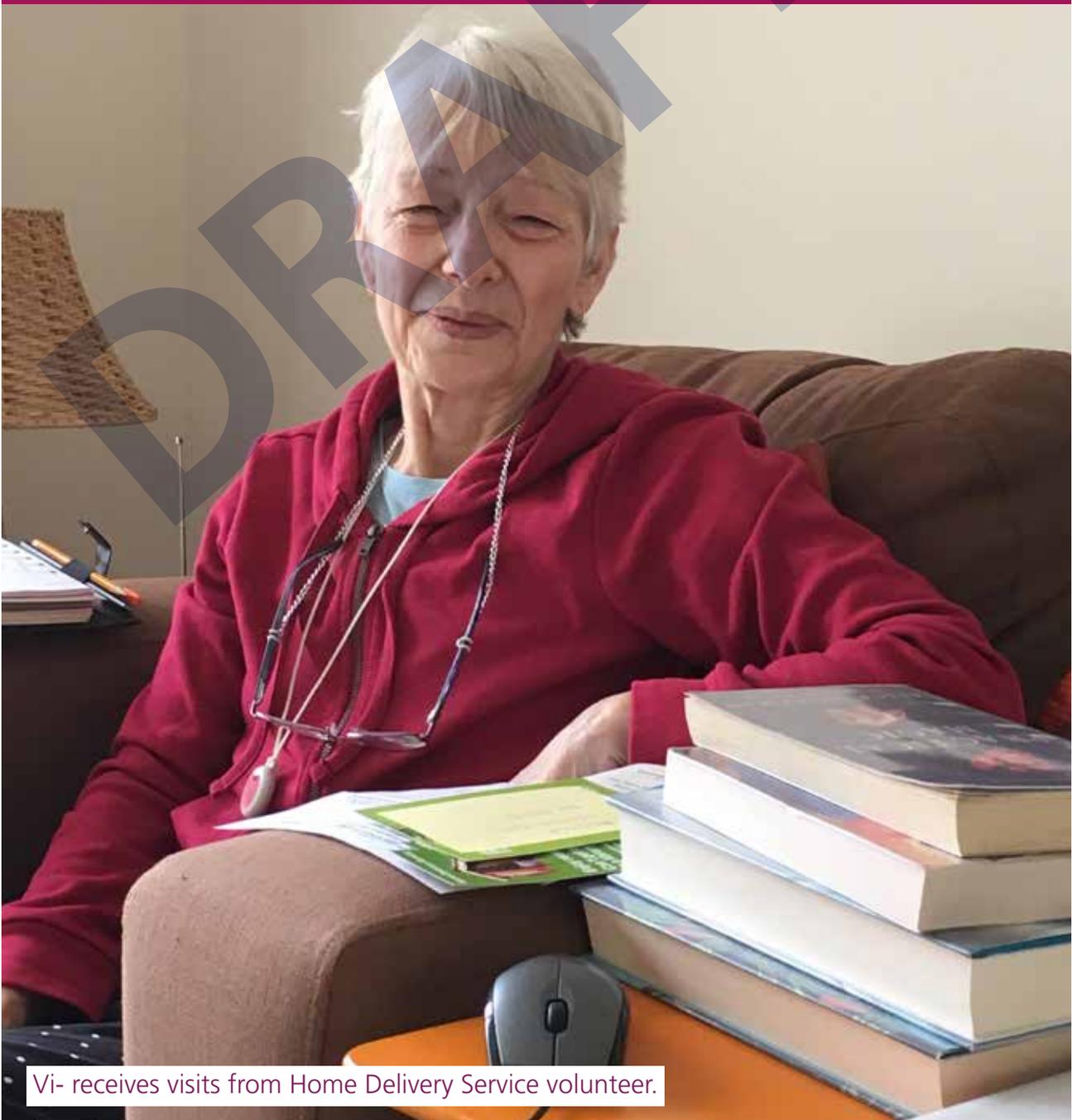
Brighton & Hove Libraries is working with the Robin Hood Health Foundation, Hera and the Hangleton & Knoll Project on **Prescribe to Thrive** an initiative to promote Social Prescribing in West Hove and Portslade. Art and writing taster sessions which have been prescribed, or to which residents have referred themselves, are taking place in Hangleton and Portslade Libraries. **Reading Well** book collections have been lent to Brighton Health and Wellbeing Centre and Preston Park Recovery Centre to support people in managing a range of mental health conditions.

Local case study

During the pandemic, library staff kept in regular telephone contact with 72 Home Delivery Service (HDS) clients who were shielding and/or isolated to check that on their wellbeing and to reduce isolation. As well as providing a friendly voice and an empathetic conversation, staff were able to signpost clients to other sources of support and/or contact other providers on their behalf to ensure that they had everything they needed to enable them to get through the pandemic.

“When the libraries closed in March it was a big blow to me so when I was offered the chance of having books delivered, I jumped at it! I have been introduced to many authors I would not normally have looked at. I want to say a big ‘THANK YOU’ to all the people who have delivered the books plus the library staff themselves. They have been amazing. ‘(J. in Hangleton)

Receiving books during this Covid period has kept me sane. I am in constant pain and don't sleep well. The books take my mind off it.” (CN)



Vi- receives visits from Home Delivery Service volunteer.

Aim 5: Sustainable and innovative libraries

Build on the range of delivery models already used within the service to secure a sustainable future for public libraries in the city.

Objectives / How

- Develop and promote Libraries Extra
- Make best use of volunteers
- Collaborate with other partners in service development and delivery
- Increase income generation
- Extend fundraising to support projects and activities
- Regularly upgrade library technology
- Expand digital services
- Develop the library workforce

Outcome: Efficient and effective use of resources delivering value for money

Increased income through commercial activities (retail and room hire); attracting charitable giving (donations); applying for grants and seeking opportunities to be commissioned to support the delivery of other services (increased income to provide services that meet local needs).

Effective use of new technology to enable service users to self-serve as far as possible, whilst providing digital and phone support and remote monitoring during Libraries Extra services in community libraries (reducing revenue costs).

Introducing online and card-based transaction options with the introduction of new self-service kiosks, for easier collection of libraries charges (savings through efficiencies in collecting income).

Outcome: Happier and productive people engaged (staff and volunteers)

Whole service approach to staff deployment, for maximum efficiency and greater consistency of service standards

Effective use of volunteers to enhance library activity, supporting library staff, not replacing them. (Providing added value)

Outcome: Increased effectiveness through collaborative working

Increased community use of libraries as community hubs, encouraging local groups and organisations to use the library building and resources as a community facility (increasing value of library services through greater community use, potentially reducing costs of other building and resource provision)

Increasing collaboration with other service providers to provide more strategic activity in priority service areas such as health and well-being, children and young people, equality and diversity, community cohesion and wealth-building (resource efficiencies through collaboration).

Local case study

in addition to the Home Delivery volunteers, Library Services have stock volunteers who work in libraries across the city to help with shelving stock, tidying shelves and putting together displays of books.



Local case study

Libraries are working in partnership with Hollingdean Community Association to provide a collection of books in their centre to increase access to library materials in their area.

Library services have also provided a computer and Wi-Fi access for people using the centre. A local resident volunteers to supports the collection and liaise with library staff.



Aim 6: High visibility of library services delivered to a high standard

Raise awareness of library services and their benefits to ensure wider community engagement.

We have received strong and clear feedback during public consultation and engagement that we need to do more to raise awareness of these services across the city, so that more residents understand our full library offer and choose to use and benefit from our services now and in the future.

Objectives / How

- Effective publicity for library service offers
- Marketing of targeted services to specific communities
- Clear customer service standards for libraries to provide a high-quality user experience
- Deliver consistent Universal Library Offers across the city
- Effective evidence gathering to measure impact and performance of Libraries Services

Outcome: More residents able to benefit from libraries services and resources

More people aware of the services, facilities and support that libraries can offer, and that they are mostly freely available in local libraries. This can be achieved by a more imaginative and professional approach to service promotion, and high standards of service which will encourage word-of-mouth recommendations.

Libraries can help more people with key challenges that have been identified by the council, such as homelessness, unemployment, social isolation and loneliness, and many aspects of health and wellbeing, as well as supporting learning and personal development.

Local case study:

Libraries staff worked with a marketing specialist to develop a more segmented approach to reaching different types of customers, and persona cards were created, each with details of how best to reach a customer group. These were used to pilot to use a new approach to raise awareness of Whitehawk Library during Libraries Week 2021. Instead of relying on social media, traditional marketing assets were used, such as pavement stencils, banners, and flyers, all differentiated to reach certain personas. As a direct result of these efforts, there has been an increase of after school borrowing, the return of local customers and a flurry of new members. This work will be a marketing blueprint to apply to other communities within the city.



8 Priorities for action

A clear priority is supporting the city recovering from Covid.

Covid-19 pandemic – how library services can support the city's recovery

Library services can contribute to the city's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in five ways:

- Supporting children catching up with learning and development. In particular, babies and children up to 4 years old. The National Literacy Trust has reported that the lack of language and social interaction for this age group will need two decades of sustained support to each individual through childhood to redress this, with the disadvantaged being hit harder than others. Libraries are core to this recovery being sustained, locally delivered, and driven to provide support.
- Supporting new or recovering small businesses through the Business and IP Centre, with targeted support for women and black and minority ethnic developing new enterprises.
- Supporting unemployed people through information to help with job applications, access to digital resources to apply for jobs and access benefits.
- Supporting local communities to recover by providing a safe and welcoming place for social interaction and community development.
- Supporting people affected by Covid-19 through access to trusted information, self-help resources, and recreational reading to help with social isolation.

Other Priorities:

Other priorities for action have emerged during the development of the strategy and the analysis of the results of the consultation and engagement process:

- Effective marketing and promotion to get people back into libraries and enable those who would benefit most from libraries are reached
- Accessibility of libraries services – ensuring all buildings and services are appropriately located and fully accessible
- Targeted services for those most in need
- Community use of libraries – enabling access to other services through libraries, and encouraging community groups to use their local library especially during Libraries Extra
- Effective engagement of more volunteers in appropriate activities
- Deliver core Libraries Universal Offers across the city
- Increase commercial income – retail, room hire and tenancies
- Increase project funding from fundraising – donations and grants
- Review and amend senior staffing to align with new strategy
- Amend staff recruitment to bring libraries' staffing more in line with city profile
- Staff development programme that meets the strategic needs of the service
- Effective evidence gathering to measure impact and performance of Libraries Services

The priorities identified have been placed into a framework of six aims and related objectives for the Library Services and linked these to corporate plan priorities. These have been brought together in a strategy implementation plan.

10 Implementation Plan

More detailed actions will appear in the annual Libraries Services business plans produced each year in line with council business planning process.

Aim 1: Reading, learning and creativity through libraries

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes
<p>1.1 Build the collection of books, e-Books, and other materials to meet community needs.</p>	<p>Create a stock action plan to ensure library stock is in line with new policy, including prioritising resources for those in most need</p>	<p>Stock plan in place by March 2022</p>	<p>Increased reading and literacy</p> <p>Helping everyone achieve their full potential</p>
<p>1.2 Offer opportunities for all ages and needs that spark curiosity, nurture learning and develop creative and critical thinking</p> <p>Develop constructive activities for children and young people.</p> <p>Promote enjoyment of reading for all</p>	<p>Identify priority target groups – linking to other council initiatives e.g., disadvantaged children, people with disabilities,</p> <p>Develop engagement plans for children, young people, and adults, with specific plans for targeted groups</p> <p>Deliver the Universal offers: Reading, Culture and Creativity, and Children’s Promise</p>	<p>Identified priority groups by March 2022</p> <p>Engagement plans delivered on a rolling year basis</p> <p>Universal Offers delivered 2022-25</p>	
<p>1.3 Provide resources and space for study, work, and creativity.</p>	<p>Provide stock and facilities to support lifelong and self-directed learning</p> <p>Support the new Adult Learning hub</p> <p>Work with schools, colleges, and universities to support reading and learning, especially supporting disadvantaged people</p>	<p>Establish service level agreement with Adult Learning March 2022</p> <p>Regular engagement with 80% of education providers by 2025</p>	

Aim 2: Libraries as community hubs - putting libraries at the heart of local communities

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes	Council Priorities
2.1 Delivering council and community services	Work with other service providers to enable access to council services in Libraries in appropriate ways e.g., digital access; support activities; signposting and referral	2022-23	Stronger more resilient communities	A stronger city
2.2 Providing digital services and inclusion	Provide digital inclusion support in local neighbourhoods through Libraries Connect and work with partners in Digital Brighton & Hove	Libraries Connected support in all libraries by December 2022	Improved digital access and literacy	
	Build on existing digital facilities in libraries to meet changing local needs, including plug-in / charging spaces for own devices, and devices to access new digital resources	New digital facilities in place by 2024	Cultural and creative enrichment	
2.3 Enabling cultural and creative opportunities	Encourage and work with partners to make use of libraries as venues for cultural and creative activities, targeting priority groups	2022-25		
2.4 Encouraging inclusive community interaction and understanding	Encourage community groups to use libraries for inclusive activities to bring local people together Use libraries to promote inclusivity and understanding through displays, stock, and activities	2022-25		
2.5 Providing accessible, fit for purpose modern community libraries to meet local needs	Consolidate Hollingbury Library into the Old Boat Corner Community Centre and vacate the room in Carden Hill school for school use. Improve access to Mile Oak Library for local people, to reduce the impact of increased safeguarding security at PACA school Complete refurbishment of Saltdean Library as part of the Lido development Complete development of new library as part of Moulsecoomb hub	Consolidate Hollingbury library by December 2022 End of 2022 Open Saltdean Library 2023 2024/25		

Aim 3: Libraries supporting community wealth building: developing library services to support business enterprise, improve skill levels and help more people into work

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes	Council Priorities
3.1 Deliver support to local businesses through the Business and IP Centre	<p>Provide information and signposting businesses to sources of support and advice.</p> <p>Support back to work programmes, job clubs, and enabling free digital access and skills development</p> <p>Expanding the BIPC network to the Sussex region</p>	<p>Deliver BIPC services in the city 2022-24</p> <p>Expand to East and West Sussex by 2022</p>	Greater prosperity	A city working for all
3.2 Help people into work	<p>Support the Youth Employment Hub</p> <p>Provide resources including digital access for those applying for job and developing skills</p>	2022-25		
3.3 Provide trainee and apprenticeship opportunities	<p>Offer training opportunities e.g., Kickstart, work placements</p> <p>Develop a library apprenticeship programme</p>	<p>2022-25</p> <p>Library apprenticeships by 2023</p>		

Aim 4: Libraries supporting health and well-being: use libraries' trusted brand to deliver services that ensure residents are healthier, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes	Council Priorities
4.1 Develop targeted services to reach those most in need	Identify priority target groups – linking to other council initiatives e.g., disadvantaged children, people with disabilities, Develop a specific offer to each group	Identified priority groups by March 2022	Healthier and happier lives	A healthy and caring city
4.2 Provide home delivery services to those restricted at home or in residential units	Develop home delivery data system to manage growing number of volunteers Recruit more volunteers	Implement volunteer system by December 2022		
4.3 Link services to council priority issues, working collaboratively with other service providers	Develop a targeted offer for each identified priority group (e.g., disadvantaged children, people with autism, people with dementia, etc), working with relevant service providers	Identified priority groups by March 2022 Develop specific offers 2022-25		

Aim 5: Sustainable and innovative libraries services: build on the range of existing delivery models to secure a sustainable future for public libraries in the city

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes	Council Priorities
5.1 Develop and promote Libraries Extra	Expand Libraries Extra to Hollingbury Library Promote Libraries Extra to all library users including those at Jubilee and Hove libraries	2022 2022-23	Efficient and effective use of resources delivering value for money	A modernising council
5.2 Increase income generation	Develop online retail sales Maximise income from room hire and tenancies	Online retail / room hire 2022		
5.3 Develop for new projects	Identify suitable projects for fundraising activity	Fundraising 2022-25		
Regularly upgrade library technology	Complete the self-service kiosk upgrade	2022		
	Introduce hand-held devices for floor-walking staff Expand plug-in spaces and introduce charging points for library users	2022-23 2022-23		
5.4 Expand digital services	Develop digital newspapers and magazines offer Investigate other new digital services	2022-25		
5.5 Collaborate with other partners in service development and delivery	Build on existing extensive links to partner organisations and establish more strategic partnership arrangements	2023-24	Increased effectiveness through collaborative working	Working in partnership

<p>5.6 Develop the library workforce</p>	<p>Hold regular all staff development days to improve staff engagement and consistency of service</p> <p>Review of key skills and capabilities needed, revising person specifications, and develop training programmes for each grade of staff</p> <p>Review and restructure the workforce to deliver the priorities in the Libraries Strategy 2022-25 more effectively</p>	<p>2022-25</p>	<p>Happier and productive workforce (staff and volunteers)</p>	<p>Our People Promise</p>
<p>5.6 Make best use of volunteers</p>	<p>Introduce more effective management and support of volunteers</p> <p>Recruit volunteers to support Libraries Extra</p>	<p>2022 2023</p>		

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Aim 6: High visibility of library services delivered to a high standard

Objectives	Actions linked to Libraries strategic priorities	Timescales	Outcomes	Council Priorities
6.1 Raise awareness of library services and their benefits to ensure wider community engagement	Develop more effective marketing and promotion activities to reach the people who would most benefit from library services	2022-25	More residents able to benefit from high quality libraries services and resources	Our customer promise
6.2 Deliver core Universal Library offers consistently and to a high standard	Establish the details of what customers can expect in Brighton & Hove under the Universal Library Offers and promote these.	2022-25		
6.3 Establish and deliver library customer service standards	Establish detailed customer service standards as they apply in libraries and train staff to deliver at this level	2022-25		
6.4 Effective evidence gathering to measure impact and performance of Libraries Services	Research and implement a new evidence gathering regime to capture qualitative impacts as well as quantitative data	2022-23		

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