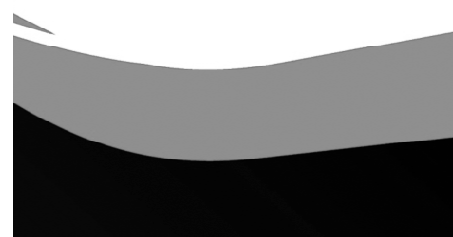


North Tyneside Council
Cultural Services
DRAFT
Library Strategy 2016-2021



Date: October 2015



1. Introduction

Visiting a library is the most popular activity in the UK. It is more popular than attending a football match, the cinema, a theme park or even attending Accident and Emergency. There were 282 million visits to UK libraries in 2013/14.

The importance of libraries as community hubs has long been recognised. They offer a safe, non-judgmental, trusted space that is open to all, with expert staff to support and advise customers. Not only do libraries offer a wide range of digital and print resources, including books, information, e-books, online resources, free access to PCs and Wi-Fi, but they are also a gateway to an extensive programme of community and cultural events and exhibitions.

2. Our Achievements

We have made major improvements to our libraries over the last ten years. Since 2004 the Council has invested over £20 million in new library provision, including the development of three state of the art Customer First Centres.

In 2011 a five year strategy was produced for libraries in North Tyneside which highlighted ten priorities. During that five year period we have modernised the service; created vibrant public spaces that are flexible and welcoming; and provided opportunities for people to meet and participate in the social and cultural life of their community.

In the past five years, there were over 6.5 million visits to libraries in North Tyneside and more than 4 million items were loaned to customers. We gave out more than 27,000 free book packs to under 5s, over 10,500 children took part in the national Summer Reading Challenge, almost 9,000 children were given the opportunity to meet an author and more than 300,000 people attended our events programmes.

However, our libraries are not only buildings. We work with a wide range of partners to offer services that encourage independence and wellbeing, enabling people to do more for themselves, while supporting more vulnerable residents. We offer something for all age groups, from birth onwards and are relevant to many different life stages: support for parents and babies, help for school children and students, enabling job-seekers to find work and encouraging older people to remain independent.

Much of the work we do is concerned with prevention and wellbeing within communities through our outreach teams, working with troubled families, providing resources to housebound residents, engaging with schools and offering opportunities for residents to access cultural events and community activities.

3. National Context

The library does more than simply loan books. It underpins every community. It is not just a place for self-improvement but the supplier of an infrastructure for life and learning, from babies to old age, offering support, help, education, and encouraging a love of reading. Whether you wish to apply for a job, or seek housing benefit, or understand your pension rights or the health solutions available to you, or learn to read, the library can assist. (Sieghart,2014¹)

In 2014, the government commissioned William Sieghart to review the public library service in England. The *Independent Library Report for England*¹ recognises the role of libraries in underpinning every community, providing “an infrastructure for life and learning”, and offering “support, help, education and encouraging a love of reading”. The review notes that the future of libraries as community hubs is essential for the wellbeing of the nation and libraries could and should play a major role in rectifying literacy standards and creating digital literacy².

A Leadership for Libraries task force was created in 2015 as a result of the review. The initial priorities of the task force are digital enablement, libraries adding value, best practice and workforce development.

Arts Council England (ACE), the national development agency for arts, museums and libraries in England, commissioned a major research project in 2012/13 called *Envisioning the Library of the future*. In their response to the research ACE stated that the purpose and principles of the public library are as follows:

Public libraries should be trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all. In them people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture. There is a clear, compelling and continuing need for a publicly funded library service.

ACE identified three essential ingredients that define a public library:

- *A safe, creative community space that is enjoyable and easy to use, in both physical and virtual form.*
- *An excellent range of quality books, digital resources and other content*
- *Well-trained, friendly people to help users to find what they want either independently or with support*³

The *North East of England's Case for Culture*⁴ is a regional framework for investment in cultural activity for the next 15 years, led by the North East Culture Partnership in consultation with the cultural sector in the region. Its five aspirations are:

- Participation and reach
- Children and young people
- Talent and progression

¹ Sieghart, W. et al., *Independent Library Report for England*, DCMS (2014).

² Ibid

³ Davey, A., *The library of the future*, ACE (2013)

⁴ *The North East of England's Case for Culture* Culture North East (2015)

- Economic value
- Creating a vibrant and distinctive region with an excellent quality of life

Libraries are recognised as key focal points for the development of literacy, a love of literature and as centres to enhance learning. In the context of the wider aspirations to engage more of the region's population in cultural activity these are essential starting points.

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), the professional association for leaders of public libraries, has set out its vision for the future of public libraries in England with five 'Universal Offers' describing services that all libraries should provide. These are:

- Reading offer
- Digital offer
- Information offer
- Health offer
- Learning offer

The Universal Offers are underpinned by the Children's Promise, developed by the Association of Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) and the Six Steps pledge to support visually impaired people.

North Tyneside's libraries contribute to all strands of the Council's *Creating a Brighter Future* programme by providing a range of resources, activities and initiatives to support all four themes:

- Ready for school
- Ready for work and life
- Cared for, safeguarded and healthy
- A great place to live, work and visit

4. Priorities

There have been major improvements to library provision in North Tyneside over the past five years. Our achievements and our aspirations for the development of the service over the next five years are set out below.

4.1 Books for a better start in life

In 2013 a quarter of all children in the UK left primary school without the ability to read well. For poorer children, this proportion was higher, at 2 in 5 children. Performance is worst for white British boys on a low income, with 45% not able to read well by age 11. Boys are twice as likely to struggle to read as girls. This greatly increases their risk of being on low pay or unemployed in the future. Research also shows the importance of early language skills, as by age 3 there

is already a gap between the reading skills of children from the more affluent and poorest families⁵.

There has been much research to demonstrate the impact of book sharing and the development of literacy and language on children's attainment at school. Being read to regularly as a child has a strong link to escaping poverty⁶.

A Department for Education (DFE) review of reading for pleasure among primary and secondary school children identified benefits including reading and writing ability, comprehension and grammar, better vocabulary, greater self confidence in reading, general knowledge, better understanding of other cultures and increased community participation. The important factors in promoting reading for pleasure were access to books and guidance and encouragement from parents and teachers⁷.

Save the Children recently launched the *Read On, Get on* campaign to get all children reading well at age 11 by 2025. The campaign is focused on celebrating the enjoyment of reading, supporting strong early language skills, support for primary schools, and support for parents.

Libraries support the development of children's literacy skills and encourage a love of reading from an early age. Research carried out by the Association of Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) sets out a national framework for 'children's library journeys', which identifies key times for library interventions, encompassing pre-natal, pre-school, transitions between schools and out of school engagement⁸.

The vision of the Children's Promise is that:

- Every child and young person visiting a public library is inspired by an exciting accessible environment which makes reading for pleasure irresistible.
- They have the opportunity to engage with imaginative digital opportunities through public libraries, building their skills, knowledge and creativity.
- They will find a range of inclusive and diverse fiction and non-fiction books and other information resources to support growing confidence in literacy and formal and informal learning.
- They are able to take part in a wide range of literacy and cultural experiences including reading and book-based activities.
- They are actively involved in decisions about service developments and are offered opportunities to volunteer.
- They are supported through library services and activities to improve their health and wellbeing

⁵ *Read On, Get On*, Save the Children (2014)

⁶ BOP Consulting, *Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment*, The Reading Agency (2015)

⁷ Department for education (2012)

⁸ Crossley, L. *Children's library journeys*, ASCEL (2015)

4.1.1 Books for a better start in life – what we do now

Our programme of services for children and young people includes:

- Working with health visitors to deliver Bookstart, a national early intervention literacy programme that offers a gift of a free book to inspire a love of reading from birth
- Focused early years activities such as Bounce and Rhyme and Toddler Tales
- Support and delivery of 10 Chatterbooks reading groups for young people
- Delivery of the Summer Reading Challenge and a full programme of summer activities
- A programme of literacy and cultural experiences, including reading promotions, author visits, film clubs, arts and crafts
- Participation in the Northern Children's Book Festival, the biggest children's book festival in Europe, enabling children to meet and interact with authors
- A wide range of books and resources for all ages in a variety of formats, including dual language and dyslexia-friendly
- Free access to computers, wifi and online resources
- Outreach work e.g. trouble families
- A dedicated Schools Library Service providing a range of resources, advice and Continued Professional Development opportunities for schools

4.1.2 Books for a better start in life – our aspirations

- Raise literacy standards by providing opportunities for children to widen their access to reading and share reading experiences
- Provide access to good quality books and other resources in a variety of formats that meet the needs of children and young people of all ages
- Deliver the *Year 3, books for me!* Project to promote library membership for year 3 children
- Support the development of 10 Chatterbooks groups in schools as one of only 10 Schools Library Services in the country to receive DfE funding.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in cultural activities with authors, artists and illustrators
- Fully participate in delivery of national initiatives such as *Reading: the next steps*, *Read On, Get On* and the *National Reading Strategy*
- Support children and young people to achieve the Arts Award
- Offer year-round volunteering opportunities for children and young people

4.1.3 What will success look like?

Our young people will be supported to be ready for school, work and life, through improved literacy, enhanced opportunities to enjoy reading for pleasure, sharing their reading experiences and the ability to access an exciting, diverse range of cultural and learning opportunities.

4.2 Reading to improve life chances

National data from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) suggests that 69% of adults regularly read for pleasure⁹. Studies have shown that reading for pleasure promotes emotional intelligence by encouraging empathy and the ability to understand ourselves and others. It creates a sense of community, feelings of social inclusion and social interaction¹⁰.

Reading helps to improve skills at the same time as increasing enjoyment, self-confidence and motivation. In England, poor literacy is more closely linked to low pay and the risk of being unemployed than in any other developed country¹¹. As a library service we play a vital role in encouraging reading for pleasure for all ages by giving everyone in the local community access to reading materials. Our work with readers (reader development¹²) builds people's literacy levels, confidence, self-esteem and well-being.¹³

The vision of the Universal Reading Offer is that:

- Reading for pleasure enhances people's literacy, life chances and quality of life. It is vital for our prosperity
- Libraries aim to be a force for social change through reading. They bring people recreation and pleasure, learning and literacy, health and wellbeing
- Libraries will work collectively to develop their contribution to everybody's reading life
- Libraries will develop as hubs drawing communities together to bring reading alive, physically and digitally

4.2.1 Reading to improve life chances – what we do now

Our well-established programme of reader development activities includes:

- Delivery of 19 library-based reading groups and support for a further 32 community groups
- Participation in a variety of reading promotions and challenges
- A programme of successful author events, hosting bestselling authors such as Ann Cleeves and Val McDermid
- Working in partnership with other library authorities in the North East and nationally to bring 'meet the author' events to the region

⁹ *Taking Part: the national survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport*, DCMS (2014)

¹⁰ Billington 2015 cited in BOP Consulting, *Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment*, The Reading Agency (2015)

¹¹ *Read On, Get On, Save the Children* (2014)

¹² The term 'reader development' was first coined by Opening the Book, and means active intervention to:

- increase people's confidence and enjoyment of reading
- open up reading choices
- offer opportunities for people to share their reading experience
- raise the status of reading as a creative activity

Van Riel, Fowler & Downes, *The Reader-friendly Library Service*, The Society of Chief Librarians (2008), p.14.

¹³ <http://readingagency.org.uk/news/reading-facts003/> [accessed 10.11.14]

- Outreach work in the community to support literacy and promote reading for pleasure.
- Targeted reading for specific audiences and in a variety of formats, e.g. e-books, large print, audio books, LGBT, foreign languages, emerging readers

4.2.2 Reading to improve life chances – our aspirations

- Support and promote the development of literacy and reading for pleasure
- Provide access to good quality books and other resources in a variety of formats that meet the needs of our customers
- Provide opportunities for people to widen their reading experiences and share their experience of reading
- Staff who are reading advocates and promote a passion for reading
- Involve our customers in stock and reader development

4.2.3 Reading to improve life chances - what will success look like?

Residents will have improved literacy and wellbeing through access to reading for learning and pleasure. They will find it easy to find a book to read and enjoy and to access opportunities to share their reading experiences.

4.3 Creative leaders in the digital world

Over the next five years, digital technology will continue to develop and improve significantly. Smart-phones have already changed the way people communicate and access information and there has been a move away from physical media (CDs, DVDs). Demand for faster internet and streaming of media is likely to increase and video is increasingly being used to provide information. The cost of technology is likely to decrease further enabling greater access. New types of hardware such as 3D printers are already being used and new devices, such as smart watches are being developed. People are increasingly becoming 'makers', with computer and coding skills seen as more and more important¹⁴.

Ebooks are a development that has had a particular impact on libraries. In 2013 a third of UK homes had an e-reader. However, research has shown that three quarters of adults still prefer physical books and only 4% would solely use ebooks in the future¹⁵. The ability for libraries to lend ebooks is still limited, largely due to concerns from publishers about the impact this would have on book sales. Amazon, who make the most popular e-reader, Kindle, will not currently allow libraries outside the US to loan their titles. A recent national e-lending pilot has confirmed concerns among publishers, so the future of ebook lending remains uncertain.

There is still a need to support those who are digitally excluded. Almost 6.7 million people in the UK have never used the internet. Of these, 72% are over

¹⁴ Shared Intelligence, *Digital Leadership Skills: Horizon scanning report to the Society of Chief Librarians*, SCL (2014)

¹⁵ BOP Consulting, *Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment*, The Reading Agency (2015)

the age of 65 and over half identify as disabled. Most are unemployed or on a low income. They are in danger of becoming increasingly isolated from mainstream society¹⁶.

According to the Government Digital Inclusion Strategy,¹⁷ 21% of the population lack basic digital skills. Reasons for this include: access, skills, motivation (the benefits to them of using the internet) and trust (feeling safe online). As services become 'digital by default' there is an increasing need to support people to gain digital skills.

Libraries have a key role to play in supporting the digital needs of the community, by helping children and parents understand the technology available; enabling equal access to technology; advising parents on reputable content and online safety; offering opportunities for parents and children to learn digital skills together; and enabling children to explore technology outside the school environment¹⁸.

The vision for the Universal Digital Offer is:

- Free access to the Internet for every customer (for a minimum period of time)
- Clear and accessible online information about library services
- Staff trained to help customers access digital information
- Ability for customers to join online
- Ability to be contacted online/via email for answers to customer enquiries
- 24/7 access to services through a virtual library presence
- Ability to reserve & renew items remotely via an online catalogue

4.3.1 Creative leaders in the digital world – what we do now

- Free access to PCs, printers and scanners in every library
- Free wifi in all libraries some with dedicated laptop study space
- A range of online resources to support learning and leisure
- Downloadable audio and Ebooks services
- Online information about library services via the library catalogue and Council website, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest accounts
- Provision of ICT courses, taster sessions and advice sessions
- Coding sessions for adults and children
- RFID and self service for library services and access to PCs
- Support for self service payment kiosks for Council transactions

4.3.2 Creative leaders in the digital world – our aspirations

- Clear expression of our digital offer for customers

¹⁶ Shared Intelligence, *Digital Leadership Skills: Horizon scanning report to the Society of Chief Librarians*, SCL (2014)

¹⁷ Cabinet Office, *Government Digital Inclusion Strategy*, (2014)

¹⁸ Shared Intelligence, *Children's digital needs and libraries*, ASCEL (2014)

- Improve our internet presence
- Use of digital to support Arts Awards
- Upgrade of Wi-Fi facilities to better support customers
- 24/7 access to services through a virtual library presence

4.3.3 What will success look like?

Residents will have increased access to reading and learning opportunities through the use of digital technology. Communities will be supported to become digitally enabled so that residents can make full use of the benefits of digital resources and be fully included in modern society.

4.4 Information navigation

Public libraries provide free, equal and non-judgemental access to a wide variety of national and local information. Libraries are a first point of contact to enable people to find reliable information on essential areas of life, including health, job-seeking, benefits, business start ups and leisure. Libraries also enable the community to contribute to the democratic provision of information by offering space for community information, meetings and activities.

Library staff are trained navigators of information, able to help people find reliable, trusted information in print, online or via sign-posting to other services. Research with internet users shows that only doctors are trusted more than library staff to provide information¹⁹.

The Universal Information Offer will:

- Bring together government and non-governmental sources of information, which have been researched by information professionals in public libraries, giving a level of quality assurance to the user.
- Ensure that public library staff and volunteers are continually developing their skills to provide help to people accessing information and services.

4.4.1 Information navigation – what we do now

- Provision of a single point of access to a broad range of information in a variety of formats
- Trained staff who are able to navigate information and sign-post to other sources as needed
- Support for active citizenship by giving access to information about local democracy and local and national issues, e.g. Councillors surgeries, planning information, consultation sessions
- Access to local studies, heritage and family history resources through the Discover North Tyneside service
- Careers and job-seeking information and support, including job-clubs, careers advice sessions for young people and business start up advice sessions

¹⁹ Society of Chief Librarians, *Universal Information Offer*

- Provision of community and visitor information on local organisations, attractions and events
- Hosting of information and advice sessions in partnership with other organisations, e.g. Princes Trust, credit union, Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Provision of space for local people, businesses and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to display information, hold public meetings and information sessions

4.4.2 Information navigation – our aspirations

- Provide a wide range of information in a variety of formats that residents can trust.
- Connect citizens by providing information about local and national issues and provide space for public meetings
- Support residents to improve their lives by providing information on crucial life skills and enabling them to connect with appropriate opportunities and resources.
- Skilled, informed staff who can help customers navigate the wide range of information available in printed and electronic form.
- Support the roll out of universal credit

4.4.3 What will success look like?

Residents will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions, enabling them to improve their lives, wellbeing and participate fully as active citizens.

4.5 Learning throughout life

Libraries and community centres occupy a unique place within communities for informal learning, providing equitable access to information, learning resources and space for study which supports the learning process. They are open and accessible to all and support people as learners throughout all stages of their lives.

Libraries offer a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities, including taught courses, taster sessions, group activities and self-directed learning. They also offer people the opportunity to become creators of learning. Many people find formal learning environments intimidating and the library is a safe, neutral space in which they can learn.

There is an opportunity for libraries and community centres to increase their involvement in community learning through offering learning spaces and working with partners to deliver learning projects. Physical spaces for local people to meet, discuss and work together will become more valuable in the digital world and libraries and community centres are uniquely placed to deliver this.

The vision for the Universal Learning Offer is that:

“Libraries are there for you throughout your learning journey because, uniquely, they are open and accessible to all”

They therefore offer:

- access to free resources that support learning in a range of formats which are appropriate for each learner;
- study/learning spaces for children, young people and adults;
- signposting to a range of free and low-cost learning opportunities available within communities;
- opportunities for exploration and creation, especially for children and young people; and
- places where communities and individuals can develop and share their own learning activities

4.5.1 Learning throughout life – what we do now

Examples of our current adult learning offer include:

- A range of courses provided by the Adult Learning Alliance (ALA), including Maths and English, ICT, leisure courses, job-search skills and First Aid.
- Informal learning opportunities such as job clubs, family history coaching and leisure courses such as dance.
- Support of job seekers and new businesses.
- Access to online learning and research
 - Universal Skills
 - Driving theory test
 - Life in the UK citizenship test
 - Access to Research
- Taster sessions offered in partnership with Age UK North Tyneside
- Signposting to adult learning providers
- Support of learning through our book stock and People’s Network computers
- Digital champions helping our customers to use IT
- Libraries as cultural venues for dance, arts and drama.
- Provision of exhibition spaces for artists
- Range of community-developed groups like Knit and Natter
- Local history groups where people can learn about local and family history and contribute to resources
- Work placements and apprenticeships

4.5.2 Learning throughout life – our aspirations

- Support customers to access online learning opportunities such as Massive Open Online Courses
- Work closely with Skills for Life providers, the Adult Learning Alliance and voluntary and community organisations to make available appropriate resources and activities to support people to improve their skills and access community learning opportunities

- Work with partner organisations to provide taster sessions at certain times of the year, e.g. Adult Learners' Week in June
- Support customers interested in discovering their family history
- Investigate ways for parents and children to learn together creatively
- Explore ways to offer learning spaces for peer-to-peer learning
- Improve the way we advertise the learning opportunities we offer
- Continue to provide free study materials and access to quality online resources

4.5.3 What will success look like?

Residents will have greater access to community learning opportunities, including study spaces and a range of free resources to enable them to be ready for school, work and life. They will be engaged in the learning process and able to participate in the creation and delivery of learning opportunities.

4.6 Literacy for a longer life

Research commissioned by Arts Council England (ACE) studied the impact of public libraries on health and wellbeing, measured through economic value indicators²⁰. This found that on average, library users would be willing to pay an additional £19.51 per year in Council Tax and non-users would be willing to pay an additional £10.31. Regular library users are 1.4% more likely to report good general health, representing potential cost savings to the NHS (based on reductions in GP visits) of £1.32 per person per year (£27.5 million across England).

Research has found that reading has a positive impact on health and well-being: it can reduce stress levels, help prevent the onset of dementia by 35% and social activities based on reading, such as reading groups and author events, combat isolation and bring people together.²¹

Health and well-being are high on the public library agenda. In 2010, the Museums and Libraries Association (MLA) published a report²² which recognised that libraries can deliver the cost-saving benefits of early intervention and of preventative services with clear health and well-being patient outcomes. The report acknowledged that libraries offer “neutral, non-stigmatised, non-clinical community space, in a setting that differentiates it from hospital services, delivers the prevention agenda particularly effectively, and has implications for the audiences reached.”

There are clear links between literacy and good health - more important than income, education or ethnic group. The ability to obtain and understand information about your own health, as well as motivation and knowledge is known as 'health literacy'. In the UK a third of older adults have low health

²⁰ Fujiwara et al, *The health and wellbeing benefits of public libraries*, Simetrica / ACE (2015)

²¹ The Society of Chief Librarians and The Reading Agency, *Libraries' Universal Reading Offer*

²² Hicks, D., Creaser, C., Greenwood, H. et al., *Public library activity in the areas of health and well-being*, MLA (2010).

literacy. Health literacy is key to enabling people to take control of their health and help reduce health inequalities²³.

The announcement in 2013 of the Society of Chief Librarian's Universal Health Offer included a commitment to provide a range of services, including public health information and promotion, signposting and referrals, as well as creative and social reading activity.

Programmes within the Health Offer include two 'Reading Well' initiatives from The Reading Agency: Reading Well Books on Prescription and Reading Well Mood-boosting Books. The Books on Prescription scheme is endorsed by health professionals and helps people to understand and manage mild to moderate mental health conditions using self-help reading available in all of our libraries.

In January 2015 Books on Prescription for Dementia was launched, providing help and support for people with dementia, carers of people with dementia and anyone who would like to find out more about the condition or is worried about the symptoms. The Mood-boosting Books scheme is a national promotion of uplifting novels, non-fiction and poetry selected by readers.

4.6.1 Literacy for a longer life – current provision

- Provision of Reading Well collections in all libraries and mood boosting collections in all libraries
- Dementia collections in CFCs and training of staff as dementia friends
- Provision of a wide range of health information in a variety of formats
- Hosting health check sessions and community support groups for a variety of conditions
- Reader development activities programme to encourage reading for pleasure
- Offering opportunities for social interaction such as reading groups, events and activities programme, informal learning and social groups
- Supporting independence and combating isolation through Libraries at Home delivery service, mobile library, good neighbour scheme and collections in residential care homes
- Outreach work with disadvantaged families to combat social isolation

4.6.2 Literacy for a longer life – our priorities

- Continue to provide accessible library services through Libraries at Home to encourage independence and wellbeing for those customers who cannot visit a library
- Provide opportunities for adults to read for pleasure and to participate in shared reading and learning experiences to improve their sense of wellbeing
- Work with the NHS locally, and relevant charities and third sector organisations to promote the existing Reading Well schemes and any future developments

²³ Morrisroe, J., *Understanding the role of literacy in public health*, National Literacy Trust (2015)

- Work with Adult Social Care to support key legislation, such as providing information on library activities to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014
- Provide current and accessible books and health information in all appropriate formats
- Provide health open days, displays and promotions to mark key health days
- Provide drop-in sessions and health checks in partnership with the NHS and health charities
- Develop our work with local community groups to increase social wellbeing activities
- Support people with dementia through dementia book collections, staff trained as dementia friends and activities to support dementia-sufferers and their carers

4.6.3 What will success look like?

Customers will be well-supported to access health-related information and to improve their health literacy. The library service will be recognised as a key player in public health information and initiatives; the promotion of community wellbeing and independence; and prevention of loneliness, reducing the need for residents to access primary health care and social services.

5. How will we deliver?

North Tyneside has a strong network of fixed buildings from which library services are delivered. Some are dedicated library spaces; others are Customer First Centres containing library provision. The Borough also has mobile provision and a range of outreach, learning and engagement activities.

The exact mix of this provision may vary over the lifetime of the strategy, as resources allow and funding streams permit. However the core principles of the strategy will remain. The core value of delivering a “comprehensive and efficient” service must involve the engagement of children and young people; must aim to promote a love of books and reading; must engage with the changing digital landscape; must sustain libraries as centres of information and a focus for learning; and must contribute to the wider health and well being of the local population.

The numbers engaging with library provision continue to illustrate massive demand for all of these things. The footfall generated by recent investment in town centre provision demonstrates the significance of libraries to local regeneration initiatives. As community hubs their range and diversity of services is unrivalled.

Having taken library services to a new level in North Tyneside over the past five years, the current strategy will look to build upon those successes and develop a service with even greater community impact in the years to come.