

# **Darlington Library Plan**

## **2017-21**

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Context**

- 1.1.1 In seeking to deliver the vision, sustainability is essential. In the context of severe financial pressures on council budgets, and significant changes to the way that local authorities provide local services, it is no longer possible to make further savings without reorganising and redesigning the service.
- 1.1.2 The Plan is based on a thorough review and needs analysis to provide insight into and evidence of the need for library services in Darlington. The needs analysis includes qualitative as well as quantitative research to help identify local people's views of libraries and how they should develop.

## **1.2 Statutory Duty**

- 1.2.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires Local Authorities to deliver a public library service. The main obligation is to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' service for all persons in the area who want to make use of it, to promote this service, and to lend books and other written materials free of charge.
- 1.2.2 The clearest guidance to define 'comprehensive and efficient' comes from a 2009 Wirral Inquiry Report 2 by Sue Charteris, which identified the need for a library strategy based on an analysis and assessment of local needs. More recent judicial reviews have also highlighted the need to take particular account of equalities implications of any proposed service changes. The requirement to demonstrate Best Value and adhere to procurement rules have also appeared in some judicial reviews.
- 1.2.3 The lessons learnt from the Charteris report and the subsequent judicial reviews into other library authorities' proposals for change have been taken into account during the review. The needs analysis has been very thorough and extensive, taking particular account of equalities related information. The proposals for change have had full Equalities Impact Assessments and have been subject to extensive public consultation.

## **1.3 Seighart Review: The Independent Library Report for England**

- 1.3.1 The Independent Library Report for England, commissioned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, led by William Sieghart, and published in December 2014 is the latest and most relevant of government reports on Public Libraries.
- 1.3.2 The Seighart report found that 'not enough decision makers at national or local level appear sufficiently aware of the remarkable and vital value that a good library service can offer modern communities of every size and character'. It identified libraries as a 'golden thread throughout our lives', and found that: 'Despite the growth in digital technologies, there is still a clear

need and demand within communities for modern, safe, non-judgemental, flexible spaces, where citizens of all ages can mine the knowledge of the world for free, supported by the help and knowledge of the library workforce. This is particularly true for the most vulnerable in society who need support and guidance and to children and young people who benefit from engagement with libraries outside of the formal classroom environment.

- 1.3.3 The report envisaged re-invigoration of the library network with an increase and improvement in digital technology in a comfortable retail-standard environment. Such services would make vibrant and attractive community hubs, which would support individuals and communities to become more enterprising, more literate, and in consequence, more prosperous.
- 1.3.4 Libraries major role in rectifying literacy standards was recognised, working in partnership with schools and colleges. Support for digital literacy and fluency were also seen as core library roles.
- 1.3.5 Sieghart also identified the opportunity for other government departments to use libraries as a resource to help deliver their services and so deliver better value for money.

#### **1.4 Envisioning the Library of the Future – Arts Council England**

- 1.4.1 Arts Council England (ACE) is the development agency for libraries in England and has responsibility for supporting and developing public libraries. In 2012 ACE commissioned research: Envisioning the Library of the Future, which was carried out by IPSOS Mori and Shared Intelligence. The research revealed that:
  - There is a clear, compelling and continuing need for a publicly funded library service.
  - This was heard this from people at every stage of the research. It didn't matter whether they use libraries or not, people are vocal and passionate about their value.
  - Public libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all. In them people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture.
- 1.4.2 The Art Council's response to the research identified three priorities for a 21st century public library service:
  - Place the library as the hub of a community
  - Make the most of digital technology and creative media
  - Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable

- Deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries

## **1.5 Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England (Library Task Force December 2016)**

1.5.1 The Library Task Force was asked by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop a vision for the future of public libraries in England. Their ambitions for public libraries in England are for everyone to:

- Choose to use libraries because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so.
- Understand what library services offer and how they can make the most of what is available to them.
- Be introduced to new ideas and opportunities then give confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life.
- Receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world.

1.5.2 The report also talks about how library services contribute to seven outcomes that are critical to the individuals and communities in their area.

- Cultural and creative enrichment
- Increasing reading and literacy
- Improved digital access and literacy
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential
- Healthier and happier lives
- Greater prosperity
- Stronger and more resilient communities

1.5.3 The report also suggests that Councils develop library services using seven common principles so they:

- Meet legal requirements
- Are shaped by local needs
- Focus on public benefit and deliver a high quality user experience
- Make decisions informed by evidence, building on success
- Support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers
- Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise
- Use public funds effectively and efficiently

## **2. Libraries Service Review and Needs Analysis – Key Messages from Research with Library Users and Non-Users**

### **2.1 Public Library Needs**

- 2.1.1 The Arts Council research identifies what the public wants from libraries, and the messages were broadly consistent regardless of methodology of research, or whether those consulted were library users or non-users. The underlying motivations for using libraries are wide ranging. Love of reading, a need to study or learn, or support their children learning are important factors. Social contact is also a motivating factor for some as is the desire to spend time alone in a safe environment.
- 2.1.2 Books are still the main single reason why people use libraries and they are seen as the core offer. The library as a community space is also important to some user groups such as older people who may feel isolated, families with young children, students and unemployed people.
- 2.1.3 People are not simply users or non-users, as it is common for people to dip in and out of using libraries throughout their lives. Common trigger points for starting to use libraries (again) include taking up study, entering unemployment, having children, or retiring.
- 2.1.4 The public see the core purpose of libraries as being about reading, learning, and finding information. People value good customer experience, including a good choice of books; friendly knowledgeable staff and a pleasant library environment.
- 2.1.5 Public libraries are widely valued, even by people who don't currently use them. Most people see public libraries as an important community service: The research suggests that public libraries are valued because: they are trusted; they are one of the few public services that people often think of as 'theirs'; they are widely perceived to be important for groups who are otherwise not powerful, such as children, older people and people on low incomes. Further, libraries are a social leveller, with an ability to bring people together.

### **2.2. Key Local Messages**

- 2.2.1 Over the past 12 months a significant amount of consultation has taken place as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and more recently to help design the new library service.

### **2.3 Library User Survey**

**In Feb-April 2016 the Library Consultation Survey was completed by 3,265 people.**

- 2.3.1 86% of those people surveyed use a library at least once a month, with 43% using a library at least once a week.
- 2.3.2 There is a lower frequency of usage in the younger population, especially 11-16 year olds. People living in rural wards tend to use the library less frequently.
- 2.3.3 The most popular service, at 88.5%, is borrowing books, followed by finding information using hard copy reference resources (46.5%), visiting the Art Gallery (33%), computer and internet facilities (25%), and borrowing music CDs and DVDs (13.5%).
- 2.3.4 Borrowing books, finding information, and local and family history services are more popular with older residents than younger ones. Computer, internet and study facilities are used more by younger members.

## **2.4 Unrecorded Users**

- 2.4.1 Many visitors to the library remain unrecorded as they are not borrowing or returning items or using a public computer. The majority of these visitors are using the Reference library, to read newspapers/magazines, browsing or studying.  
Data collected over a specific two week period showed almost 400 visitors a week spent time in the reference library, with peak times between 11.00 and 3.00.

## **2.5 Most Valued Services**

- 2.5.1 The Computer and internet facilities are used more by a younger age group.
- 2.5.2 Respondents rated borrowing books (88.5%) as their most valuable service, followed by finding information using hard copy reference resources (41%), Centre for Local Studies (28%), Children's Sessions and Events (22%), Internet Facilities (20%), computer and internet facilities (20%), Art Gallery (19.5%), Reading Newspapers/Magazines (16.5%), music CDs and DVDs (10%).

## **2.6 Reasons for Non-Use**

- 2.6.1 The most common reasons for lack of usage are Buying own books (36%) and using on-line Resources (36%), lack of time (23%).
- 2.6.2 The younger population, especially 11-16 year olds, tend not to use the library. 11-16 year olds report that this is due to accessing on-line resources, lack of time and buying their own books, CDs and DVDs.

## **2.6 Encouraging Use**

- 2.6.1 For 89% of respondents this question was not applicable. 7% of respondents said nothing could be done to encourage them do use the library.

- 2.6.2 Of the 4% who said they could be encouraged to use the library, the most popular suggestions of how to get them to use the library were better books, more convenient opening times and the library to have a café.
- 2.6.2 Again the majority of users responding to this question with either yes or no (meaning they don't currently use the library service) were younger residents.

## 2.7 Conclusion

It is clear that the service and its facilities need to be more robust and clearly embedded in local need.

More needs to be done to attract the 11-16 years age group.

A more accessible service would help those with a disability.

The service has very poor data on the ethnicity and disability status of our customers. Better information could be used to inform decision making.

## 2.8 Library Proposals/Consultation

**In Oct-Nov 2016, as part of the consultation on the new Central Library proposals, 369 individuals completed the Library Service Consultation Survey.**

- 2.8.1 89% of respondents reported using the library service.
- 2.8.2 Crown Street Library was the most popular branch, with 94% of respondents who were library users reporting using it, followed by Cockerton library (32%), the now-ceased Mobile Library (4%) and the Housebound/Residential Services (1%).
- 2.8.3 The most popular services reported were:
- Borrowing Books (Adults') (82%)
  - Visiting the art gallery at Crown Street (51%)
  - Using the Centre for Local Studies (41%)
  - Using computers (36%)
  - Doing homework/coursework/research (28%)
  - Borrowing Books (Children's) (27%)
  - Using IT Services (photocopying etc.) (24%)
  - Reading papers (23%)
  - Meeting people (22%)
  - Reservations / requests (21%)
  - Attending courses / groups (15%)
  - Borrowing other (Audio books etc.) (14%)
  - Getting advice about Council services (12%)

- Free Wi-Fi (9%)
- Meeting Room Hire (5%)
- School events (3%)
- Housebound and Residential Services (2%)

2.8.4 The proportion of those surveyed who reported being aged 24 or under was very small, at just 2.6%, compared to the general Darlington population where this age group are estimated to make up almost 30% of residents. This reinforces the above analysis that younger people currently are much less likely to use the library service.

2.8.5 Younger people, however, were much more positive on average about the proposals. When asked whether a proposal would have a positive, negative or no impact on them, 60% of responses by 18-24 years olds and 24% of responses by under 18s indicated there would be a positive impact, compared to an average for all age groups of 8%.

2.8.6 Males were also underrepresented relative to the wider Darlington population, with just 38% of library using respondents reporting to be male against an average for the borough of 49%.

2.8.7 In terms of disability and ethnicity, the proportion of library user respondents to the survey reporting either having a disability or being from a minority ethnic background was slightly higher than the figures for the general population, suggesting that the library service does a good job currently of encouraging these groups to use the service and being accessible.

## **2.9 Library Focus Groups Proposals/Consultation**

**In Oct-Nov 2016, as part of the consultation on the new Central Library proposals, 206 individuals participated in 17 focus groups.**

2.9.1 11 focus groups were held with young people: some with students at local schools and colleges and others with young users of Council services. A further 3 were held with the parents of young children.

2.9.2 Feedback from these groups about the proposed designs, service standards and visions were, on average, much more positive than those held with adults, with a breakdown of comments recorded as follows:

- Adults groups: 78% negative / 22% positive.
- Parents groups: 37% negative / 63% positive.
- Young people groups: 21% negative / 79% positive.



### 3. Library Service - Review of Needs Assessment

#### 3.1 Key Messages on Performance

**Comparisons with 15 comparable English Unitary Authorities (listed in Appendix A), All English Unitary Authorities and All English Local Authorities**

Service Area	Darlington Rank out of...		
	CIPFA's 15 Comparator English Unitary Authorities	All English Unitary Authorities	All English Local Authorities
Number of Libraries per 1,000 population	14 <sup>th</sup> out of 14	46 <sup>th</sup> out of 48	127 <sup>th</sup> out of 135
Number of Active Borrowers per 1,000 population	7 <sup>th</sup> out of 13	29 <sup>th</sup> out of 46	75 <sup>th</sup> out of 131
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population.	12 <sup>th</sup> lowest of 13	31 <sup>st</sup> out of 45	88 <sup>th</sup> out of 128
Employee costs per 1,000 population	14 <sup>th</sup> lowest of 14	42 <sup>nd</sup> out of 47	112 <sup>th</sup> out of 133
Premises costs per 1,000 population	12 <sup>th</sup> lowest of 14	25 <sup>th</sup> out of 47	80 <sup>th</sup> out of 130
Transport costs per 1,000 population	8 <sup>th</sup> out of 14	20 <sup>th</sup> out of 46	51 <sup>st</sup> out of 129
Total Materials cost per 1,000 population (book budget)	5 <sup>th</sup> out of 13	16 <sup>th</sup> out of 45	51 <sup>st</sup> out of 129
Computing costs per 1,000 population	8 <sup>th</sup> out of 12	23 <sup>rd</sup> out of 40	79 <sup>th</sup> out of 121
Average cost per book purchased	3 <sup>rd</sup> out of 14	5 <sup>th</sup> out of 43	17 <sup>th</sup> out of 123
Total Book Issues per 1,000 population	2 <sup>nd</sup> out of 14	24 <sup>th</sup> out of 48	55 <sup>th</sup> out of 134
Physical Visits for Library Purposes per 1,000 population	14 <sup>th</sup> out of 14	46 <sup>th</sup> out of 48	125 <sup>th</sup> out of 134
Website visits per 1,000 population	8 <sup>th</sup> out of 12	36 <sup>th</sup> out of 40	111 <sup>st</sup> out of 123
Volunteer hours worked	14 <sup>th</sup> out of 14	46 <sup>th</sup> out of 46	127 <sup>th</sup> out of 127

#### Interpretation

- 3.1.1 Darlington has the smallest population of the 15 local authorities in its comparator group.
- 3.1.2 The number of Active Borrowers per 1,000 population is a key indicator of how well the library service engages with the public.
- 3.1.3 In respect of the number of Active Borrowers, Darlington is in the middle of its comparator group of Unitary Authorities and also All English Local Authorities, which demonstrates that the service engages well with the population compared to a significant number of other authorities.  
(An active borrower is defined as having borrowed one item or more in the course of the preceding year).
- 3.1.4 Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population is a key cost indicator. Darlington is at the lower end of its comparator group and Unitary Authorities, and in the bottom third for All English Local Authorities, therefore demonstrating that Darlington is providing a low cost service.  
(The Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population demonstrates the cost

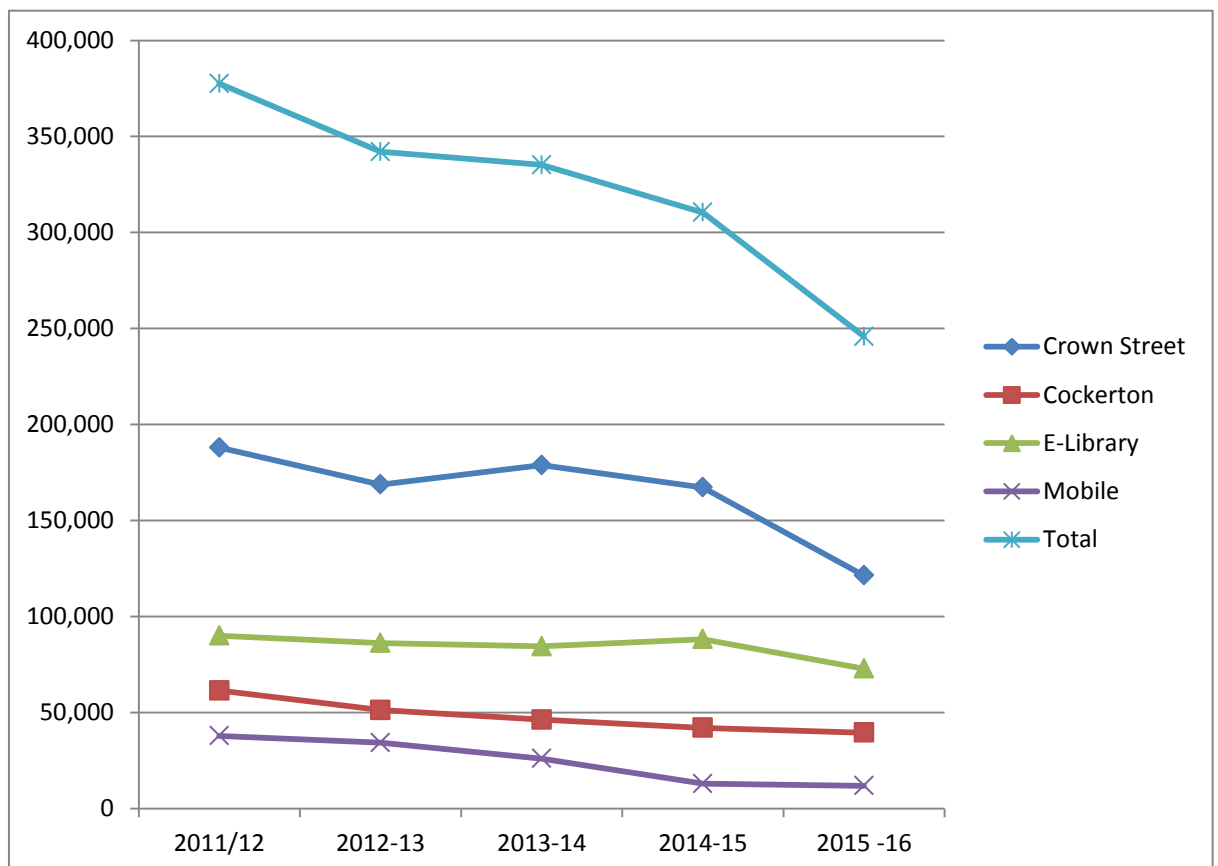
to the Authority of providing a comprehensive library service to its residents when measured against similar Local Authorities).

3.1.5 Total Book Issues per 1,000 population measures a core library activity, providing an indicator for both workload and the demand placed on the library book stock and the demand placed on the library books available for loan. The comparator group shows Darlington Library Service performs well, it is second highest for Unitary Authorities with performance in the middle, and All English Local Authorities in the top third.

3.1.6 For Physical Visits to the library per 1,000 population, the library service performs poorly; bottom of the comparator group and close to the bottom for both Unitary Authorities and All English Local Authorities.

3.1.7 Whilst the library performs reasonably well with regard to active borrowers, overall physical visits to the library service are poor. With regard to cost indicators, generally the library is at the lower end of the comparators showing that the library service in Darlington is low cost service.

#### The number of physical visits to the Library 2012-2016



	<b>Crown Street</b>	<b>Cockerton</b>	<b>E-Library</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Total</b>
2011/12	188,025	61,500	90,100	37,900	377,525
2012-13	168,775	51,300	86,275	34,350	341,995
2013-14	178,850	46,350	84,525	26,100	335,188
2014-15	167,250	42,050	88,239	12,936	310,475
2015 -16	121,450	39,600	72,925	11,900	245,875

3.1.8 In the past five years, visits to Crown Street Library have fallen by 35%, Cockerton Library by 35%, e-library by 19% and the Mobile Library by 68%.

## **4. The Library Plan**

- 4.1 The Plan sets out how the library service will work to improve the life chances of all our residents; to ensure that the service is of the highest quality and based on evidence of need as identified in the Local Assessment of Need 2016.
- 4.2 The Library Plan will support Darlington's Sustainable Communities Strategy 'One Darlington Perfectly Placed'.
- 4.3 The Library Service supports the eight outcomes within 'One Darlington Perfectly Placed' as follows:

### **More people are enabled to live healthy and independent lives**

- The Library service promotes health and wellbeing, providing a welcoming, non-threatening and popular environment in which to support people.
- The Library supports those with dementia and mental health issues. The Books on Prescription scheme is available at both Crown Street and Cockerton libraries, with books about anxiety and depression, dementia and a separate collection for teens.
- The Library contributes to the preventative health agenda with Self-Help books, mood boosting books, large print and audio format materials.
- The Darlington Action Alliance holds monthly 'Dementia Hub' meetings at the library, offering information and support to those suffering from dementia, their relatives and Carers.
- The Library contributes to the local authority's public health responsibility for young children.
- A popular monthly Hearing Care clinic takes place in the library.
- A weekly gentle Keep Fit exercise class is held to encourage those unused to exercise or recovering from surgery. The class is fun and informal and the participants regularly meet up to socialise.
- The Centre for Local Studies lends materials to residential care homes to support 'Reminiscence therapy'
- The Library hosts a weekly 'Knit and natter' group, enabling people to make friends and preventing loneliness and isolation.

### **Our children get the best possible start in life**

- The library delivers the Bookstart programme to all children in Darlington. Bookstart is a national early intervention and cultural access programme for every child. The Bookstart Baby pack contains everything a parent or carer needs

to get started sharing stories, rhymes and songs with their baby. Bookstart Baby packs are gifted direct to parents via Health Visitors in Darlington with a clear message about how reading every day can benefit many aspects of their baby's development. The programme is co-ordinated by the Bookstart and Library Literacy Coordinator who liaises with partners in the health sector.

- Every three year old in Darlington receives a Bookstart treasure pack, delivered via the Early Years settings. All of these are offered a free library visit from the Bookstart Coordinator which includes a story and rhyme session. Parents are welcome and are encouraged to read every day with their child to promote key language development and be a positive bonding experience. Children and families are encouraged to use the library and are given details on the library offer, events and activities.
- Booktrust provides a range of schemes which are administered from Darlington Libraries. The Bookstart & Library Literacy Coordinator coordinates all offers which have included provision for SEN children and those with English as a second language. Resources are provided to use with more vulnerable families and those at risk of requiring speech and language support in the future. The Bookstart and Library Literacy Coordinator has worked with different groups to deliver the Bookstart resources. These groups include teenage parents, food banks and the women's refuge.
- Another initiative from Booktrust is Time for Books. Free book packs are provided for all reception children and the packs are personally delivered by the Bookstart and Library Literacy Co-ordinator during a class visit to their school. Library membership and book borrowing is encouraged at these visits and the core message of reading and sharing stories every day is emphasised.
- Bookstart Rhymetime sessions have been successfully held in the library for a number of years. The sessions are a key part of our engagement with children and families. Bookstart Rhymetime support neurological development, early attachment and bonding, language development, listening skills, the development of concentration skills and attention spans. Benefits for the child include an early access to books, improving knowledge and understanding, recognition of pulse and rhythm which helps with the development of reading and writing skills. Benefits for the parent/carer include; group support preventing depression and isolation, parent and child bonding, increasing self esteem, building a network of friends and support, increasing confidence and ability to talk to their child and support them in their early learning.
- Following the Government agenda for 8 year olds, all schools in Darlington were offered a library visit for their Year 3 children. There has been good uptake for this and we are now re-visiting the schools with a continual offer for all year groups. Learning to read and love of reading are critical to life chances.

- Darlington Libraries takes part in regional projects such as the Northern Children's Book Festival and the Crossing the Tees Festival to benefit and inspire school pupils.
- Every summer the Library participates in the National Summer Reading Challenge to support children's reading through the summer holidays. Regular holiday activities and a weekly story time provide regular engagement with younger members.

### **We all play a part making Darlington a safe and caring community**

- Darlington Libraries are used every day by residents as places of safety, engagement, socialisation, contemplation and study. The library creates an inclusive space and provides a sense of community cohesion. Libraries connect to different audiences with free access to WiFi and by providing access to cultural activity.
- Councillor ward surgeries are held at Cockerton library. Information regarding PACT and other community meetings is displayed in the library. The police have a regular display in the library, highlighting different issues.

### **More of us are active and involved in ensuring our own wellbeing and that of the community**

- People are living longer, healthier lives. The library supports them with access to quality books and reading materials, electronic resources, magazines and e-books. Tracing a family tree gives new interest and can be a way of making new friends and tracing lost family. The Centre for Local Studies provides displays, exhibitions and regular talks giving a sense of place and belonging, as well as an increased knowledge of history and the part played by local people.
- The Library provides access to health and social care information, leading to better informed customers for the NHS.

### **Darlington has more businesses and more jobs and we are able to make the most of the opportunities they offer**

- The library has close links to the IP Business centre in Newcastle City library. We have a good collection of business and finance management stock. There are 46 computers for public access at Crown Street Library and 10 at Cockerton library. The Library offers support to job seekers with increased free time for job searches. There is access to Online resources including the 'Access to Research' database and to Gov.UK Trained staff are available to help customers. Functional literacy, numeracy and beginner's ICT courses are held regularly in the library. Darlington Libraries is part of a regional bid to support training for media and creative industries.

**We all take responsibility for looking after our environment and keeping it clean and attractive.**

- The library has a collection of litter pickers available for loan to the local community. Local wildlife and environmental groups have regular displays and literature is available. Planning notices and documentation are held in Crown Street library and Cockerton library has hosted planning meetings for proposed local development. The library has provided information leading to the regeneration of the River Skerne, the Denes and Cockerton beck

**There is enough support available to help us to live independently as we grow older**

- The library is a signpost to partners including Age UK, CAB and the Alzheimer's Society.
- The library is a community, offering a safe, warm place to meet. For those unable to travel to the library we offer a Home Library Service where books and audio materials are delivered to the door. Collections of books and audio materials are loaned to residential care homes.

**Darlington is a place that offers a high quality of life and is designed to thrive, economically and socially.**

- The Library supports the cultural and creative offer within the town hosting reading groups, author visits, talks, music and creative craft activities. The library is working with the Civic Theatre, supporting its regeneration, providing a safe archive for the historical records and providing seamless access to collections and resources.
- The Library helps to increase participation in culture, by giving opportunities for everyone to access culture regardless of background.

#### 4. **Darlington Library Service**

4.1 The value of Darlington's Library Service to individuals and the community has been clearly demonstrated through the work carried out in the past 12 months. This also ties in with other local and national work undertaken in recent years.

4.2 Whilst the Council is under significant financial pressure and resources to the library service will be reduced, there is the opportunity to re-focus the library service and embrace new national agenda and direction of travel for library services. The library service is for everyone from cradle to grave. We are now in a position where partnerships are being developed and funding opportunities explored to enable the service to change, modernise and grow.

4.3 The vision for the new library service is:

***To provide a sustainable, accessible and inclusive library service for the people of Darlington.***

4.4 The objectives for the service are:

- Improve access to learning and library services so that local people can fully engage in education, employment and community activities.
- Create a modern, sustainable, cost-effective and innovative model for the delivery and development of the public library service, which responds to the community's need.
- Provide opportunities and pathways for people to other learning and cultural activities.
- Promote the value of learning and the enjoyment of culture.



## **5. The Future Library Service**

5.1 In order to deliver the vision and objectives of the Library Plan, the future library service will operate as follows:

### **5.2 Central Library**

5.2.1 The Central Library will be relocated from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre where the following services will operate:

- Adults Lending Library
- Children's Library
- Reference Library
- Centre for Local Studies
- Children's and Young People's Events
- Bookstart Rhyme Time Sessions
- Facilities for school visits
- Teen Zone
- ICT Facilities
- Quick Picks
- Community Engagement / Library Groups
- Meeting Room Hire
- Reading Groups
- Quiet study area
- Photocopier & Fax

### **5.3 Cockerton Library**

5.3.1 Working in partnership with Cockerton Library Cooperative, library services will continue to be delivered from Cockerton including:

- Adults Lending
- Children's Lending
- Children's Events, including Bookstart Rhyme Time Sessions
- Facilities for school visits
- ICT Facilities
- Reading Groups
- Study area
- Newspapers & magazines

### **5.4 Home Library Service**

5.4.1 The Home Library Service provides books and audio books to those who are unable to use a library due to illness, disability or frailty. The service can be permanent or temporary, for example where someone is recovering from an

illness. Customers have access to the same range of materials as those found in the central library which will be delivered direct to the individual's home. Visits are made on a three weekly basis and at a regular time by library staff who carry identification. The service is free of charge and requests to receive it can be made by individuals themselves, relatives, friends or carers. At present there are 66 customers receiving the service, 10 of whom were previously accessing the mobile library service. If the decision is taken to withdraw the mobile library completely, the library would extend the service to the residents of sheltered accommodation within the town.

## **5.5 Partnership with Teesside University**

5.5.1 Darlington Library is working in partnership with the University of Teesside to improve the offer for both organizations. The membership card of either organization will provide ID to register with the other. Darlington library will develop a collection of stock at the University's Darlington campus. The Centre for Local Studies will provide displays and exhibitions of local interest. The University will provide walk in access to some online resources, staff support, and will work with the library on author visits and literary events such as World Book Night and National Libraries Week. Working with the University will assist the library in promoting the service to young people, traditionally a 'hard to reach' group and will provide new ideas on the design, layout and delivery of a fresh and relevant library service..

## **5.6 Book Deposits**

5.6.1 The library delivers a collection of books to nine residential care homes. The stock is changed on a three monthly basis. In 2015/16, 7,958 items were issued to the nine care homes. Future plans to develop the service will include liaising more closely with the Activities Leads within each home, increasing the regularity of stock exchanges and promoting the service to other residential care providers.

## 6. Library Plan Actions

6.1 This Library plan covers the period of 2017 to 2021 and the actions will be delivered in three phases.

### 6.2 **Phase One: Moving the Central Library to the Dolphin Centre and delivering a volunteer supported model for Cockerton.**

6.2.1 The key actions during this phase will include

- Providing an open plan, easily accessible space for wheelchairs and for those with mobility issues.
- Opening a second lift which will serve the Bull Wynd entrance.
- Providing a bright, welcoming yet secure space for children's events and activities.
- Staff available to 'meet and greet' and to assist the public.
- Plenty of books for all ages and tastes.
- Flexible space and shelving for multi- use purposes.
- Quiet space for study and homework.
- Express computer area with printers, scanners and tablets.
- Quick Picks express self service area.
- A library designed to aid those with autism and dementia.
- A sensory area for those with special needs.
- Room to hold displays and exhibitions.
- Quiet, self- contained area for the Centre for Local Studies.
- Storage for resources from the Centre for Local Studies.
- Easy access to a café and catering facilities.
- Toilet and baby change facilities
- Work with Cockerton Library Cooperative to deliver the volunteer supported model.
- Proactively seek external funding to put in place a transitional arts based programme focusing on the move from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre.

- Proactively seek funding to put in place a programme to further digitize the Local Studies resource.

### 6.3 **Phase Two:**

#### **Opening the new Central Library in the Dolphin Centre and supporting Cockerton Library Cooperative**

- Provide a welcoming, quality environment, open and free to all.
- Self Service machines freeing up highly trained staff to assist the public.
- Maximise the benefits of co-location and extend the Library's opening hours.
- Future-proof the Library by creating flexible spaces that can be changed and developed as required – active spaces to include use of digital technology.
- Work alongside the Move More team to support learning through dance and sport.
- Develop one membership card for library and leisure activities.
- Continue with the popular programme of children's events including the Bookstart Rhyme time sessions.
- Work with partners, including the University of Teesside and the Cockerton Business & Community forum to deliver an effective outreach service.
- Consolidate and enhance the delivery of the Home Library Service and the service to residential homes and sheltered accommodation.
- Work with the Events team with the aim of enhancing the festivals and events programme.
- Engage volunteers to support the delivery of ICT as 'digital buddies' and to assist in the digitization of the resources in the Centre for Local Studies.
- Work with existing user groups in the Dolphin Centre and integrate them into the library timetable.
- Offer the library as a facility to the Zone each Friday evening.

### 6.4 **Phase Three:**

#### **Future Developments**

- Additional collaborative working with other library authorities as well as other partner agencies in the town.
- To continue to support the Cockerton Business and Community forum in the running of Cockerton Library as a community hub.

- Take an active role in the development of the Arts in the town. Increase the effective partnership with arts and cultural groups, including the Civic Theatre and Head of Steam to place the library at the heart of the Town's cultural hub.
- Seek additional funding through Arts Council England to assist in the delivery of projects supporting the new library.
- Bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support ongoing work in the Centre for Local Studies.
- Support for Local Creative Businesses through exhibitions and events.
- To work with organisations and agencies in the local health sector. The Library has the potential to be a key partner in the dissemination of Health and Social care information as well as signposting users to online facilities and specialist agencies.
- To maintain and improve the services that people value within a streamlined library service.

**6. What will success look like?**

- Modern, vibrant new Central Library within the Dolphin Centre
- New innovative outreach programme, reaching into the community.
- Vibrant volunteer-supported model at Cockerton.
- Increased usage of Darlington Library Services by a broader cross-section of the Darlington residents.
- Both a sustainable Library Service and Dolphin Centre.