

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH FAMILIES AND CULTURE

ENVISIONING THE LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an overview of recently published research commissioned by Arts Council England (ACE) - *Envisioning the library of the future*.
2. To highlight the report's alignment with the Council's current Libraries Strategy.

Information and Advice

3. The research was undertaken in 2012, with ACE issuing its response to the research in May 2013. The ACE response concludes that:
 - there is a clear, compelling and continued need for a publicly funded library service
 - public libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all. In them people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture.
4. The response also identifies three essential ingredients that define the public library as:
 - a safe, creative community space that is enjoyable and easy to use, in both physical and virtual form
 - a facility with an excellent range of quality books, digital resources and other content
 - a facility with well-trained, friendly people to help users find what they want either independently or with support.
5. In considering the wider role and outcomes that public libraries are involved in, the report identifies the following as key:
 - developing people's basic skills and encouraging literacy and learning
 - supporting business and economic growth by supporting information and skills development
 - helping people understand their place in the world and the heritage of the communities where they live
 - encouraging people to explore their own culture and that of others around us
 - improving health and well-being by helping people make sense of what is happening to them and how they can shape their lives

- building a healthy democracy by providing free access to reliable information through which people form opinions.
6. The report also identifies some key future trends, including:-
- the library will be a physical and virtual place
 - the library will not stand alone but will collaborate
 - the library will shift from a service provided to a community to one in which local people are more active and involved in its design and delivery.
7. The ongoing importance of high quality leadership, professional skills and experience in effective library management are also highlighted.
8. In addition, the report identifies the four key priorities for a 21st century public library service as being to:-
- place the library as the hub of the 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 in libraries.
9. Through the report, ACE defines its role in relation to the public library service as one of support and development, reiterating the statutory duty of local authorities under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. The oversight of the statutory duty remains with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with the Local Government Association (LGA) Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and British Library (BL) all identified as having a future role in the future development of the service.
10. The Nottinghamshire County Council 'Strategy for Nottinghamshire's Libraries' was approved by full Council in December 2011 and is substantively in line with the outcomes of the research and the priorities established by the ACE report.
11. The Council's strategy has 10 key pledges and 10 actions which can be linked to the four priorities identified in the report. **Table 1** overleaf provides more information:

Table 1

<p>Envisioning the library of the future Arts Council England</p>	<p>A Strategy for Nottinghamshire’s Libraries Nottinghamshire County Council</p>
<p>Priority 1: Place the library as the hub of the community</p> <p>The Challenge: use of a library’s space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re think the way library spaces are used to encourage shared activity while continuing to welcome those who want to explore on their own • integrate the library’s physical and virtual spaces • sustain enough spaces offered by libraries to meet the needs of their communities. 	<p><u>Service Aim:</u> to be at the heart of Nottinghamshire communities and community life.</p> <p>Key Pledges</p> <p>We will invest to put libraries at the heart of their communities by maximising the use of library services and our buildings as a key face to face service of the County Council</p> <p>We will provide services where people live, through an extensive network of libraries and specialist mobile libraries.</p> <p>We will ensure that libraries contribute to positive social, economic and educational outcomes for individuals, communities, local business and culture in Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>We will continue to develop new audiences for our libraries by exploiting the use of customer insight data and by adopting a targeted approach to our cultural programmes.</p> <p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in, developing and remodelling Nottinghamshire libraries. • Locating library services in the best location for local communities and library users • Continuing to develop the ‘core’ libraries offer to provide inspiration to read, create knowledge through access to information, learning and the Nottinghamshire story, enhance community life and stimulate cultural activity.

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<p>Priority 2: Make the most of digital technology and creative media</p> <p>The Challenge: using technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality and consistency of the virtual library experience • Develop an open ICT infrastructure that encourages innovation and better service • Enable libraries to lend the full range of e-books, including remotely. 	<p>Key Pledges</p> <p>We will be dynamic, innovative and share best practice.</p> <p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in, developing and remodelling Nottinghamshire libraries • Maximising the use of new technology such as e-books and self service.
<p>Priority 3: Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable</p> <p>The Challenge: cutting costs, finding new sources of funds and new ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a positive environment for communities and individuals to become actively involved in the design and delivery of their library services • Encourage the development of the new approaches to governing and managing libraries that make it more likely that they will survive and succeed • Equip libraries to be commissioned to deliver other public services, and to commission other organisations to deliver library services. 	<p>Key Pledges</p> <p>We will increase community involvement in the shaping and delivery of libraries provision.</p> <p>We will respond directly to local needs in developing libraries and ensure our libraries meet community need. We will ensure that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • libraries are open at convenient times • a wide range of library books and information sources are available across the network • we consult with customers and communities in making changes to service provision. <p>We will continue to explore new operating models to provide the best possible libraries service for Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing resources and access to services in partnership with local communities and customers • Developing 'community partnership libraries' (CPLs) • Developing mobile and community based library services to those who cannot visit static library sites.

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<p>Priority 4 : Deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries</p> <p>The Challenge: developing the skills of those who work in libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure those responsible for libraries have the right range of skills and experience to lead their services successfully • Encourage those working in libraries to offer creative and innovative ways to use library spaces, books and other resources • Ensure that library staff have the skills to develop and respond to digital development and to support digital users 	<p>Key Pledges</p> <p>We will continue to develop new audiences for our libraries by exploiting the use of customer insight data and by adopting a targeted approach to our cultural programmes</p> <p>We will be dynamic, innovative and share best practice.</p> <p>We will provide excellent customer service every time, and maintain our high satisfaction levels.</p> <p>We will ensure that libraries contribute to positive social, economic and educational outcomes for individuals, communities, local business and culture in Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>Key Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing resources and access to services in partnership with local communities and customers • The further development of planned cultural, heritage and learning programmes • Maintaining and further developing work with children and young people • Supporting staff development and empowerment.

12. In the light of Table 1 above, the key aspects of the report that will require further work and consideration in the Nottinghamshire context in particular are:-
- **co location and modernisation of library buildings to be at the heart of the community**
 - **the use of digital content and methods of online service provision**

- **innovative governance models and greater involvement of communities to make the service resilient and sustainable against further reductions in public expenditure**

13. These issues will be the subject of future reports to the Culture Committee.

Other Options Considered

14. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

17. The current Libraries Strategy can be delivered within the financial resources available to the Service.

Equalities Implications

18. Due regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That the content of the report, in particular the relevance and links between the report and the Strategy for Nottinghamshire's Libraries, be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

19. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 17/06/13)

20. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

The library of the future. A response to *Envisioning the library of the future* - Davey, A. Arts Council England, May 2013

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/The_library_of_the_future_May_2013.pdf

Envisioning the library of the future research documents - Arts Council England.

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/library-of-the-future/>

A Strategy for Nottinghamshire's Libraries - Nottinghamshire County Council, December 2011

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=167840>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0254