Libraries, Learning Centres & Heritage: Transformation and Future Service Strategy Statement

Introduction

Public libraries are well established as trusted places in our communities that are free to enter, open to all and where people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture. Libraries have seen many changes over time, from shifts towards digital media, community spaces, shared partner resources, becoming customer service hubs and reductions in numbers of facilities across the country resulting from pressures in public finances.

As that pressure continues to build, in Moray we have engaged with local communities to consider what the future library and heritage service might be and how that can be designed to ensure its longer term stability and financial sustainability. We've listened to the feedback and taken account of that in setting out a Future Strategy that outlines our core essential requirements for a future library service, the strategic priorities for the service and the principles that we will use to underpin the design of the future library and heritage service.

Moray Council Vision

A Moray where people prosper, free from poverty and inequality

- ❖ Our young people grow up safe, well-educated and reach their full potential

- ❖ People lead healthy lives and have access to quality care when they need it

- ❖ Our businesses and communities prosper

- ❖ We leave a better environment for future generations

> Public libraries deliver a wide range of benefits including improving literacy, closing the attainment gap, promoting health and wellbeing, tackling social isolation, reducing inequality, and closing the digital divide. These benefits all contribute towards the vision for Moray and the future service will continue to deliver these benefits

Transformation within Libraries, Learning Centres & Heritage Team

As the Council faces ongoing financial challenges, the Libraries, Learning Centres & Heritage service has considered how the service can adapt and change to deliver differently in the future within a significantly reduced budget. The first stage in the Council's savings hierarchy is transformation and the service continues to implement the transformation priorities shown below to ensure that the service adapts to be fit for the future, some of which may enable small scale income generation opportunities.

Current Team Objectives	Transformation achievements to date/Future Plans
Develop facilities and infrastructure to align with customer service needs and that provides welcoming and inclusive spaces with digital access	Establish Information Hubs supporting more vulnerable residents to signpost their Council enquiries appropriately

Retiral of Mobile Library vehicle (Council saving of £20k) – new community/housebound model being phased into service operations

New emerging digital technology learning experiences and provision – offer familiarisation and learning sessions on new technology such as VR headsets, augmented reality equipment

STEM facility proposed developments at Elgin Library through Moray Growth Deal – STEM facilities that can be accessed for educational and community purposes supporting children, families and communities

Engage with other services/organisations to deliver services from library facilities where appropriate – community hub model/multi functional facility.

Focus investment of capital plan funding to ensure best possible standards in remaining library assets including energy efficient solutions – where these will provide a return on investment.

Working with M-connect service to link transportation to library facilities or outreach provision |
| Engage and empower communities to help deliver, develop and lead on health and wellbeing opportunities for all | NHS Near Me developments and new partnerships and opportunities being established and developed around employability, mental health, poverty and social isolation. Expanded working with partners to recognise the shared priorities across Moray and ensure that collective public sector resources link with the overarching vision for Moray and support health and wellbeing.

Reminiscence groups to support people with alzheimers and dementia. Develop similar groups to help support individuals to cope with daily aspects of their life.

Through outreach work – link with local activities, opportunities and infrastructure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness ie outreach work in same location/day/time as the mobile bank or food bank etc. |

Current Team Objectives	Transformation achievements to date/Future Plans
A connected, informed and empowered workforce	Change Management Plan completed for Lead and Senior Officers – roles and responsibilities now align with future service direction and more diverse support offering. Cumbersome paper processes being replaced with electronic practices – efficiency measures Greater empowerment and autonomy across team – wider outreach, engagement and partnership developments evolving Change Management Plan being drafted for all operational staff – standardisation of opening hours, rotas and amendments to job descriptions to reflect future service needs
Provide opportunities to develop skills for life, work, inclusion and employability for people to reach their full potential	Working with Business Gateway on potential business space provision and support across libraries. Develop opportunities with Moray Pathways, and similar organisations, to support employability of local residents
Amplify the voice of what we can offer to support local communities and the economy through inclusive communication	Improved connection/engagement through social media channels, set up regular communication channels. This will enable customer led service design which is responsive to the needs of priority service users in order to maximise service impact and make best use of limited resources. Improved marketing on service provision – income generation opportunities through accredited learning courses
Effective monitoring and evaluation systems and streamlined processes to help drive continuous improvement	New Library Management System in place (Council saving of between £25-30k annually) – implementing the full potential of this system to gain maximum benefit (identify member gaps in locality areas, enable One Card system to operate, instant communication with members)

Services delivered/available within our library facilities;
- Borrow/read books/magazines
- Access our online digital service (e-books, e-magazines)
- Use the computers, printer, photocopying or WIFI
- Undertake a range of accredited and informal ICT course/s
- Access our heritage service (family trees, archive materials)
- Attend events (storytime, lego club, digital learning session, author event, reminiscence groups)
- Seek support to deal with a Council enquiry or national government scheme (housing benefit, bus pass)
- Access the NHS Near Me Service

- Attend a community group (camera club, knitting club, intergenerational group)
- Access a support group/session (job club, help club, adult & family learning session)
- Be somewhere warm
- Use facility as a study/business space
- Use facility to hire meeting space/deliver a service

Core Essential Requirements for the Libraries, Learning Centre and Heritage Team

The following core requirements, priorities and principles have been developed from the findings from the workforce and community engagement explorations as well as alignment to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and the priorities identified within the national strategy for Scotland's public libraries *Forward*. Detail of these findings/links are reflected below:

The core expectations of a library are providing:

- **A range of quality, trusted books, digital resources and connectivity, and other information resources,**
    - (Performance data) – Increase online resources as data showing significant increase in use of e-resources

- **Safe, flexible space for learning and connection in physical and virtual form,**
    - (Staff feedback) – Investment in branches to make them fit for purpose and flexible

- **Access to digital connectivity and devices**
    - (Staff feedback) – Lending devices to reduce digital exclusion

- **Well trained, informed, friendly people to help users**
    - (Staff feedback) – More training for branch staff on systems, digital development and Council Services

Priorities for Future Service

- **Place libraries as the hub of a community for services and connectivity**
    - (Stakeholder feedback) – Integrating libraries into a community setting such as a hub or well-being centre(Stakeholder feedback) – Deliver community ICT support in community hubs with support from volunteers and third sector agencies

    - (Public survey) – Go to the community rather than expect people to come to facility ie community cafes, parent & toddler groups

- **Make the most of digital and creative media – ensure infrastructure suitable for evolving and increasing demand**

- (National strategy) – Ensure the digital and physical space are blended to create a high quality offer responsive to evolving needs.

- (Performance data) – Digital delivery stats increasing and access to external funding to support digital exclusion readily available

- **Ensure libraries are resilient and sustainable**
  - (Stakeholder feedback) – Use pre-existing data to justify reduced hours or closures (retaining the 4 branches covers 89% of overall current total visits and 79% of total issues of resources)

  - (Public survey) – Use M-connect service to take people to libraries

  - (Staff feedback) – Review operating hours and staff rotas (part of current Change Management Plan)

  - (Staff feedback) – Reviewing PC usage – low usage within certain branches
  - (Staff feedback) – Increasing income

- **Ensure connected and informed people to deliver customer service, with the right skills**
  - (National strategy) – Libraries will support people to reach their full potential and celebrate the unique skill set of staff.

Principles to Underpin Future Design

- **Conveniently located to maximise accessibility and reach**
  - (Stakeholder feedback) – Close library and deliver outreach service

  - (Stakeholder feedback) – Support relocation to local community space if possible

  - (Public Survey) – Retain libraries only in the main towns. If small branches close, provide mobile service instead

  - (Public survey) – 86% not prepared to travel longer than 30mins to access a library (only 4 settlements in Moray would not be able to access a library within 20mins with retention of 4 branches)

- **Use technology and digital solutions to extend and enhance services and address digital exclusion**
  - (Staff feedback) - Increase efficiencies through ICT – self scan books etc
  - (Corporate Plan) – Tackle poverty and inequality

- **Offer a combination of core library services and added value services**
  - (Stakeholder feedback) – Programmed community pop-up instead of book drop off service

- **Offer a range of quality books, information and e-resources**
- (Public and staff feedback) – Increased marketing on what the service offers
- **Involvement of communities and partners to deliver and co-design opportunities in libraries**
- (Public survey) – Increase in housebound service using volunteers and third sector agencies

- (Corporate Plan) – Build thriving, resilient, empowered communities

- (National strategy) – Libraries will deliver on local and national priorities through a strategic approach to collaboration and partnership

Each Library Service point should provide:
- Accessibility – physical, digital and outreach
- Quality – mapped to local needs
- Availability- times that meet the requirements of most users
- Sustainability – future value for money delivery