



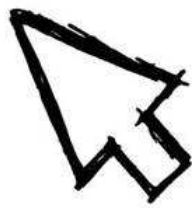
# Library Strategy

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2016-2019



Books &  
Information



Computers



AudioBooks



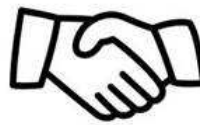
eBooks



Skills



Activities



Meeting  
People



Wellbeing

## Foreword

Rotherham's Libraries provide a wide variety of services to adults and children who live, learn, work in or visit Rotherham and we know that the service is valued by those who use it. This document sets out our future plans for the development of the Library Service. It builds on and replaces the Council's successful Library Strategy 2011 - 2015.

Our vision for Rotherham Libraries is that:

- ❖ Our libraries are well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- ❖ The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham communities;
- ❖ We will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential;
- ❖ Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our libraries will be recognised neighbourhood hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology;
- ❖ Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by supporting Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

Our challenge is to deliver good and improving library services across the borough during a period of financial stringency. The Council is committed to providing library services across the borough, but the need for budget reductions means that the service will have to do things differently and will need to continue to adapt to new technologies and ways of working when responding to the needs and aspirations of our customers.

This strategy recommends that the Council reaffirms its commitment to providing library facilities in the heart of our communities.

However, we recognise that in order for us to deliver services whilst facing significantly reduced budgets we will need to use our buildings more effectively and will require continued help from volunteers, community members and our partners to achieve success. Delivery of some aspects of the strategy will therefore be dependent on the public's ongoing commitment to the Library Service.



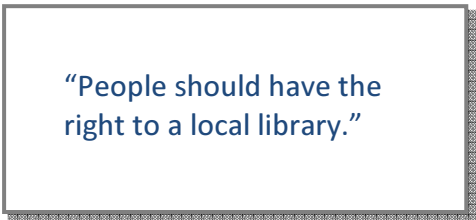
I would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this Strategy, particularly those who responded to the public consultation during the summer of 2016. Their comments are included throughout this document. I believe this is an ambitious, yet realistic, strategy and core service offer when set in the context of ongoing pressures on public finances.

**Councillor Yasseen, Cabinet Member**

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

Rotherham’s Library Service provides libraries in the heart of communities across the borough. It offers a wide range of books, e-books and other materials for loan, provides free access to computers and to the internet and also provides a range of activities and events. These activities include helping people to use computers for the first time, helping people to get a job, introducing children to stories and picture books, providing opportunities for children and adults to mix with others and helping families to learn new skills.



“People should have the right to a local library.”

The net cost of Rotherham’s Library Service was £3,259,184 in 2014/15 and it employed 71.7 full time equivalent staff at the end of March 2015.

### 2.2 The Local Authority Statutory Duty

Rotherham Libraries deliver a statutory service, as directed by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This Act states that the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide a free, comprehensive and efficient library service for all who wish to use it. The Act requires the Council to provide facilities for borrowing books and other material and states that Local Authorities must encourage adults and children to make full use of the service.

The Secretary of State has the power to intervene if he believes that the Local Authority is not providing a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ service.

Whilst the core library service is free under the Act, the Local Government and Housing Act 1980 and Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations 1991 give Library Authorities the power to make charges for the provision of some library services.

### 2.3 Rotherham’s local demographic profile

The needs of those people who live, work and study in Rotherham have been considered when developing the Library Strategy 2016 - 2019 and underpin the principles we will follow.

The Library Service will provide a universal offer to all residents, but will ensure that this offer is flexible to meet the needs of specific Rotherham communities and Rotherham people.

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire, covering an area of 118 square miles. Rotherham is made up of a mix of urban areas, suburbs and rural villages, interspersed with large areas of open countryside. About 70% of the borough is rural with about half of the land used for agriculture. Our libraries will be located across the borough, so that people can obtain the service easily close to their own communities. When people cannot visit one of our static sites we will assist and enable them to access the service in a variety of other ways, including providing services online or in partnership with others.



There is a strong community spirit in Rotherham, with people working together to do their best for families and communities. The Library Service offer provides opportunities for people to mix together in an informal environment and to participate in activities and events which celebrate different neighbourhoods and different communities. Our libraries will act as neighbourhood hubs, bringing communities together and providing a focal point for local service provision.

12% of Rotherham’s population lives in rural areas. About half of the Borough’s population lives in and around the main urban area of Rotherham and the remainder live in a number of smaller towns - Wath, Swinton, Dinnington and Maltby and in many surrounding villages. All libraries work with partners and other Council services to enable local people to access a range of services close to where they live.

In 2014 Rotherham’s population was estimated to be 260,100. The borough comprises a diverse mix of people, cultures and communities and has an ageing population.

Over the next 30 years there will be an additional 20,000 residents over the age of 65, and a relative decline in the younger population. There are approximately 56,100 children and young people living within the borough currently, of whom 16,000 are aged 0 – 4.

The Library Service will provide access to reading in all its many forms, for children, adults and families, delivered in engaging and innovative ways. Our libraries will be welcoming spaces for all and will offer activities which will help to combat social isolation and support the elderly to live well in their local communities.

“[Libraries] are a vital resource for any community, a safe welcoming space for people to access information, to encourage reading and knowledge amongst young and old alike. Also they are a vital resource in this digital age for anyone who needs help with accessing services via the internet.”

In 2015, Rotherham was ranked 52nd most deprived out of 326 English Districts and a third of the population live in deprived areas. The key drivers of deprivation are health and disability, education, training and skills and employment. The Library Service will continue to work with partners to help reduce deprivation levels across the borough.

Libraries will provide opportunities for people to improve their literacy skills, provide access to skills based training which is linked to improving employment, provide access to ICT and access to advice and support from partner services. Our libraries will also provide opportunities for apprenticeships and for people to volunteer.

Rotherham’s Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is relatively small, but has been growing and becoming increasingly diverse. 8.1% of the population belonged to ethnic groups other than White British in the 2011 census. The majority of Rotherham’s BME residents were born abroad (55%) and are far more likely to have limited English language skills.

Within Rotherham, BME communities are particularly concentrated in Eastwood, Ferham, Masborough, Wellgate and Broom Valley, which are mainly deprived areas close to the town centre. These were the early settlement areas for the Kashmiri and Pakistani community and recently for the Roma community. Since 2001, there has been some migration of the Pakistani and Kashmiri community to the more suburban areas of Broom and Moorgate.

The Library Service will provide materials in other languages and will provide support for those people who need help to improve their language skills, or to find out more about their local community.

The 2011 census identified that 21.9% of Rotherham’s population had a limiting long term illness. This is higher than the national average of 17.6%. 895 people in Rotherham are on the blind register and 1290 people are on the partially sighted register. The majority of blind and partially sighted people are over 65 years old. There are 265 people living in Rotherham who are on the deaf register and 1,005 people on the hard of hearing register.

Rotherham Libraries will offer a wide range of stock for loan, including large print, spoken word and easy read material and the service will provide information and support to enable people to live well for longer.

Rotherham has an above average number of people providing unpaid care, with 31,001 people identified as carers in the 2011 census. Rotherham Libraries will work with our partners to provide information, activities and support to carers.

There are approximately 46,310 people in Rotherham who do not have access to the internet. This estimate is based on ONS data for South Yorkshire, which indicates that 82% of the population in South Yorkshire has access to the internet.

Our libraries will support these people by providing free access to computers, free public Wi-Fi and activities and support for people to improve their digital skills or access services online.

#### ***2.4 Local context and local policies***

The Library Strategy is aligned to the outcomes from the ‘Views of Rotherham’ community workshops, held in 2015. It supports delivery of Rotherham’s Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan, which focuses on our key priorities:

- ❖ Every child making the best start in life;
- ❖ Every adult secure, responsible and empowered;
- ❖ A strong community in a clean, safe environment;
- ❖ Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future; and
- ❖ Running a modern, efficient Council.

Rotherham Libraries work closely with partners and community groups and this enables us to deliver improved and additional services. There are wide ranging examples of such work - including close working with adult learning groups; working in partnership with teachers; working with Rotherham United Football Club to deliver sports activities; working with Public Health England to deliver health and wellbeing activities; working with the advice sector to provide guidance and support for Rotherham residents and working closely with other local authority services to enhance service delivery for Rotherham’s adults, children and young people.

Rotherham’s Library Service encourages the use of volunteers and young volunteers and recognises the added value that volunteers bring by offering their time, skills,

“Volunteering was the perfect opportunity for me as it built my confidence and gave me the experience I needed to start off my career. It helped me to apply for jobs as it made me confident in applying and I was able to seek support from the library with applications and was given a glowing reference. I was also introduced to other trained teachers in ESOL that had been teaching for many years so this gave me the opportunities to meet experienced people in the field I wished to start my career in. Through the support I have received I have been able to secure a full time job.”

experience and commitment. Our Volunteer Guide provides direction to our volunteers and staff members, enabling them to effectively undertake their duties.

Rotherham’s Stock procedures guide the way the local authority buys library books and other library materials. Most of our stock is bought via a North West and Yorkshire book buying consortium comprising 35 authorities. This ensures we are able to buy new material at the best price and we achieve significant discounts on stock purchases. The service buys stock throughout the year, in a wide range of media, and regularly reviews usage so that we can be sure that we are meeting the needs of our service users. In 2015/16, Rotherham Libraries held 270,326 items of stock for public use. The current annual budget available for stock purchases is £277,664. This budget is reviewed annually.

## **2.5 Key Stakeholders**

Rotherham citizens, businesses, councillors, partners of the Library Service, our staff members and our volunteers are key stakeholders in this strategy. The strategy has been developed following feedback from service users, non-users, council staff and our partners.



Research has also been carried out to determine the likely future trends in service provision. This includes both the use of social media and developments in technologies which provide us with opportunities to develop services to new audiences.

## **2.6 National context**

Other than the statutory duty, there are no longer national standards for library provision. As a result, library services across the country are delivered in different ways and services are shaped by local policy, customer need and available resources.

Since the publication of Rotherham’s previous Library Strategy in 2011, a number of

national initiatives are guiding and informing national provision of library services.

“Libraries need to have a USP, a brand, a new concept.”

A range of ‘Universal Offers’ have been developed by the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) in partnership with Arts Council England and these were launched in 2013/14. The

offers have been informed by customer research and the service that users should expect to receive relating to the key areas of health, digital, reading, information, learning and children. Rotherham’s Library Strategy takes account of our commitment to implementing the Universal Offers.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for national library policy and works closely with Arts Council England (ACE) on a range of issues and on developing the sector. Libraries are able to access grants and support from Arts Council England. These grants enable authorities to test new approaches to library service delivery, specifically by working together with arts and other cultural organisations.

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) leads and manages public libraries in the United Kingdom. The Society is made up of the heads of service of each library authority. Rotherham Libraries are represented on this body and play an active role in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

In 2012/13, Arts Council England led a programme of research and debate known as 'Envisioning the library of the future'. This programme helped to develop a long term vision for public libraries in England. The findings from this research focused on four priority areas for development, which were:

- ❖ Place the library as the hub of the community;
- ❖ Make the most of digital technology and creative media;
- ❖ Ensure libraries are resilient and sustainable;
- ❖ Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

This research has been used to guide the themes which underpin delivery of Rotherham's Library Strategy 2016 - 2019.

In 2014, central government commissioned William Sieghart to investigate how the public library system could best work in the future. Recommendations from this work have now evolved into the development of a Libraries Task Force, led by Local Government.

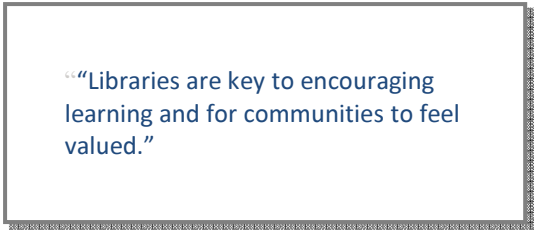
The task force is responsible for providing leadership and nationally reinvigorating public libraries. Rotherham Libraries, in conjunction with the Society of Chief Librarians, will work closely with the task group to implement its priorities, including:

- ❖ Digital enablement – including the provision of universal Wi-Fi access, e-lending, digital shared networks and quality content;
- ❖ Libraries adding value – making stronger, strategic links between libraries and other policies such as Health and Wellbeing, business and economic growth;
- ❖ Best practice – developing a toolkit which will help Local Authorities and library services through sharing and linking to existing and new best practice and building sustainable long term models for libraries;
- ❖ Workforce development – identifying the skills needed to help the library workforce deliver and take on new roles as part of wider service provision;
- ❖ Communications – promoting recognition and support for libraries.

### 3. Rotherham Libraries - Current Position

#### 3.1 Our Service Locations

There are 15 libraries located across the borough. Currently 98% of Rotherham residents are able to access a library within 2 miles of their home.



“Libraries are key to encouraging learning and for communities to feel valued.”

Our largest Library and Customer Service Centre is located at Riverside House in Rotherham’s town centre. The Library @ Riverside holds our biggest collection and range of lending material in the borough, houses heritage and arts items and has indoor and outdoor performance spaces for events and activities, including readings, music recitals, theatre and comedy. Customer Service provision is available here, together with free access to public Wi-Fi, public computers, and a wide range of skills development activities.

There are five Joint Service Centres across the borough, which provide residents with access to a wide range of public sector services, including NHS, leisure and social care facilities. A large library facility is available in four of these Joint Service Centres, located in Aston, Dinnington, Rawmarsh and Swinton. These sites offer free access to computers, public Wi-Fi, digital skills training, supported access to most council services and a community meeting space.

Rotherham has a further ten community libraries, ranging in their size and reach, depending on the make-up of each local community. These are based in Brinsworth, Greasbrough, Kimberworth, Kiveton Park, Maltby, Mowbray Gardens, Thorpe Hesley, Thurcroft, Wath and Wickersley.

These libraries also offer free access to computers, public Wi-Fi, digital skills training and community meeting spaces.

The Service also provides vehicle based services, predominantly to the elderly, and a School Loan Service, which offers resources to support schools.

Rotherham Libraries also provide a digital library service, which enables people to access us online 24/7/365. Users can join the library, download e-books and other digital resources, reserve or renew books online and engage with us through social media.

### 3.2 Our customers – current and future

“Reading is a massive part of my life, and it should be part of everyone’s.”

719,827 visits were made to our libraries in 2015/16. Visitors included people attending courses or clubs; using the library as a space to meet others; using computers to access the internet; accessing council services; using the library as a quiet space to read; do homework or complete research and those wanting to borrow books. 22,472 people borrowed a total of

535,194 books or other material from us in 2015/16 - approximately 9% of Rotherham’s residents.

Customer satisfaction levels have been regularly assessed. In 2015/16, 96.7% of customers told us that they were satisfied with the level of service we provided.

The number of visitors has reduced in some of our libraries. This is due to many factors, including relocating the Central Library away from Rotherham Town Centre, an increase in the availability of low cost e-books, many people using the internet instead of libraries to find information quickly and also significantly because of a reduction in the level of our marketing and outreach.

Usage of libraries is declining nationally. CIPFA statistics indicate that there has been a 14% decline in visits to libraries between 2010 and 2015. In Rotherham, there has been a 24% decline in visits to our libraries over the same period.

However, this is not the case everywhere, as some individual libraries, both locally and nationally, have not seen a decline in usage.

During recent consultation, people who don’t use our libraries were asked questions around why they didn’t use the service and what would encourage them to do so. This identified a lack of awareness related to the services on offer, including free Wi-Fi, e-books and IT classes and a resultant need to improve the profile of the service amongst local residents.

Over the next few years the service will work closely with local authorities, trusts, mutual and community managed sites that are successfully increasing their visitor numbers and book loans. This will enable us to review best practice and improve our ways of working. To have a sustainable future, Rotherham Libraries will continue to focus on the needs of individual local communities, widen our appeal and attract more customers.

### **3.3 The changing face of Rotherham Libraries**

In 2012/13, the Library and Information Service merged with Customer Services to create a larger and more economical service area. The merger of these services has already achieved savings of over £1.25 million from their combined budgets. The new service area is known as Rotherham Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs.

The merger between Libraries and the Council's Customer Services function means that customers can now access more services from one place. Whilst implementing the merger we have restructured our workforce and have greater staff flexibility and a reinforced focus on outcome based service delivery. Our staff members are knowledgeable, skilled, customer orientated and flexible. We have also recruited a number of excellent volunteers who support us in enhancing the services that we offer.

Since the last Strategy was published, in 2011, in full consultation with our customers, we have revised our library opening hours, changed our mobile library routes and have closed Kimberworth Park Library.

We have continued to invest in our library buildings. We have opened our flagship Library @ Riverside and a brand new library and customer services area within our Joint Service Centre at Rawmarsh. We have also modernised Kimberworth, Dinnington and Aston Libraries and have merged the Library and Customer Service Centre into one building at Swinton.

"I feel it is vital for the library service to adapt to customers changing needs and to make good use of the available new technologies and resources."

In common with most libraries nationally, Rotherham Libraries have focused on digital developments which have helped us to improve customer accessibility and modernise our service. We offer free downloadable e books, have begun to actively use social media and have introduced electronic notifications, so that we can be responsive to customer needs and increase our customer reach.

We have also included the library service in the Council's single customer account – 'Your Account', meaning that Rotherham residents have online access to a range of council services using a single user identification and password.

In addition, we have installed self-service kiosks in many of our libraries, eliminating counter queues and releasing staff onto the library floor. We have upgraded our People’s Network computer facilities so that our customers have a choice of using tablets and laptops as well as traditional computers and we have recently installed free public Wi-Fi in all our libraries as we are aware that many of our customers wish to utilise their own devices when visiting us.

We have redesigned the ground floor of Riverside House in order to deliver an improved customer experience and support additional services.

Working in partnership with others, we help many people to learn new skills or develop existing ones. Activities such as learning ICT skills, work clubs, English classes for speakers of other languages, family learning and staying healthy sessions are regularly run in our libraries.

In addition we deliver outreach sessions, enabling us to support more customers.

Our local service delivery offer has been revised in line with newly introduced national library offers, as detailed below:



### **3.4 SWOT analysis 2016**

#### **Strengths of the service**

- ❖ There is a network of libraries located in the heart of communities which have free Wi-Fi, internet access and a good range of lending stock;
- ❖ Many libraries are already co-located, creating a one stop shop for public services;
- ❖ Merger of Libraries and Customer Services creates an efficient, economical service;
- ❖ Strong partnership links exist;
- ❖ Universal offers are already embedded within the local service offer;
- ❖ Helpful and knowledgeable Library and Customer Services staff are well positioned to support customers.

#### **Weaknesses in the service**

- ❖ There is a lack of outreach and marketing activity taking place within the service as a result of reduced staffing budgets;
- ❖ Insufficient analysis of the reasons that visitor numbers are in overall decline;
- ❖ Volunteer recruitment is not embedded within the service;
- ❖ Staff training programmes need further development to ensure specialist skills are retained.

#### **Opportunities for the service**

- ❖ A review of all current buildings and locations to identify barriers to access, and potential for relocations and modernisation of buildings in order to improve service delivery and make better use of resources;
- ❖ Work with Children and Young People's Services, schools, academies, children's centres and borough wide partners to contribute to the development of a child centred borough;

- ❖ Work with colleagues in Adult Care and Housing to improve the offer for vulnerable adults and to explore the potential for co-located and co-delivered services;
- ❖ Work with colleagues in Public Health to develop opportunities to improve wellbeing and mental health;
- ❖ Improve access to library services within Rotherham Town Centre;
- ❖ Build on previous investment to develop libraries as digital hubs within Rotherham communities, enabling all Rotherham's residents to access online services;
- ❖ Make creative and innovative use of technology to deliver improved services;
- ❖ Bid for external funding in order to develop new ways of working;
- ❖ Explore alternative delivery models; including the potential to co-locate with others;
- ❖ Work with voluntary, public and private sector colleagues, including neighbouring authorities, to develop new and innovative partnership working and co-delivered or commissioned services,
- ❖ Participate in the review of neighbourhood working in order to identify further potential for libraries to develop their role as neighbourhood hubs and to contribute to social cohesion.
- ❖ Adopt a commercial approach to service delivery, identifying opportunities for working closely with local businesses

### **Threats to the service**

- ❖ Reductions in budgets may compromise the ability to provide a comprehensive service, available to all;
- ❖ Inability to recruit and retain volunteers within the service will impact on the service offer which can be provided;
- ❖ The Service has recently undergone significant change and this is expected to continue over the next few years. The Service must retain the appropriate skills and capacity to deliver this change.



## 4. Consultation

Consultation on this Strategy, vision, and core service offer, took place between the 17<sup>th</sup> March and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. Comments were invited using printed forms in all Libraries and Customer Service Centres, online via the Council's website, via a dedicated email address and in person at a range of meetings and drop in sessions. In addition, consultation took place with non-users of the service. 606 questionnaires were received from individuals, the majority being current library users.

The vast majority of respondents (85%) were in agreement with the principles outlined in the vision. 94% of respondents also agreed with the proposal to keep all current static sites open, many commenting that Libraries are essential community hubs. Those who disagreed with the proposal suggested that there should be fewer, but better resourced, libraries.

87% of respondents agreed with the core service offer, with 89% agreeing with the proposal to work with volunteers, partners and community groups to help deliver additional services and activities in libraries. 21% of those who agreed with the proposal would be willing to volunteer in some way. 59% of those who disagreed with the proposal said that volunteers should not replace paid staff.

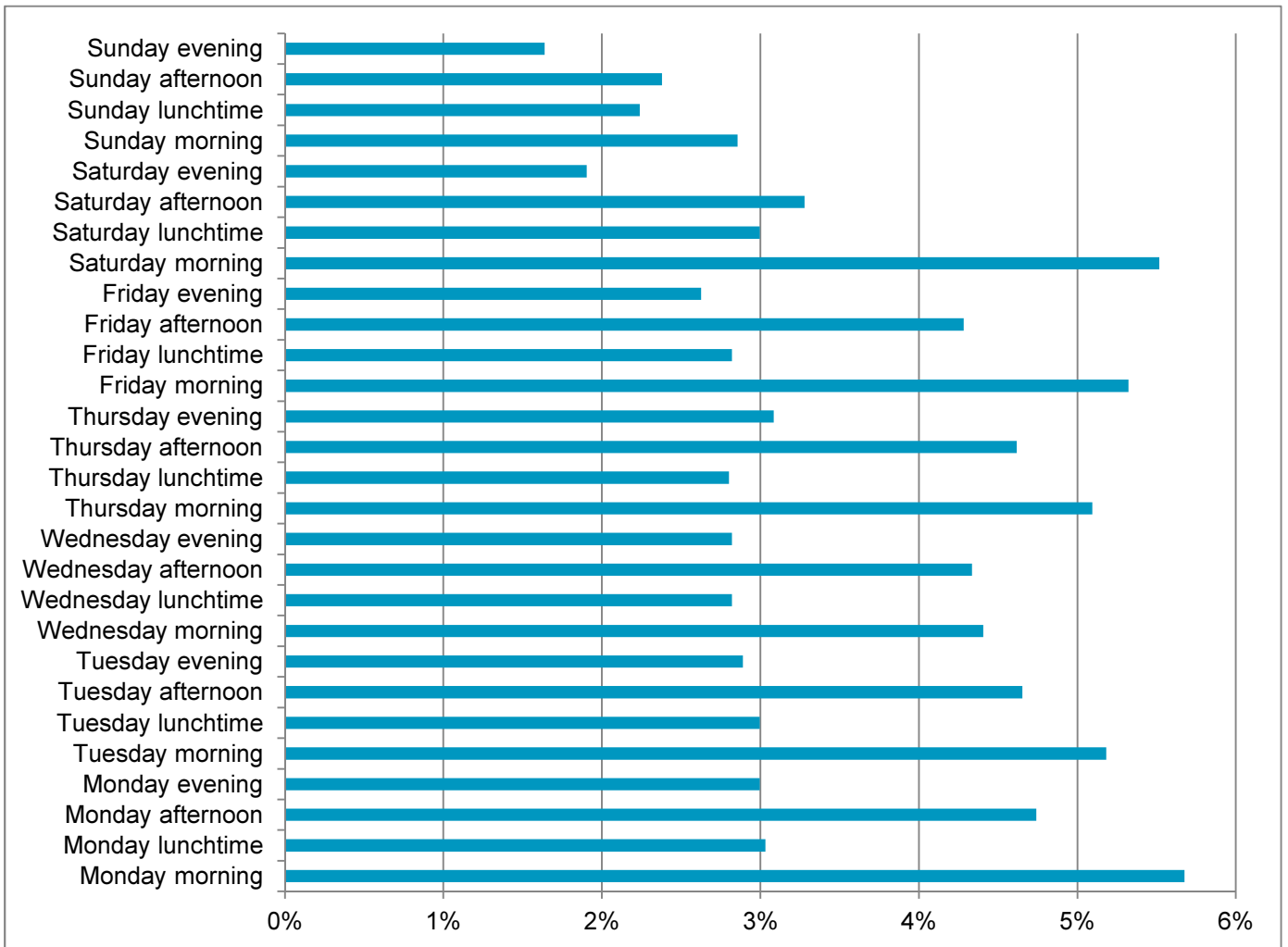
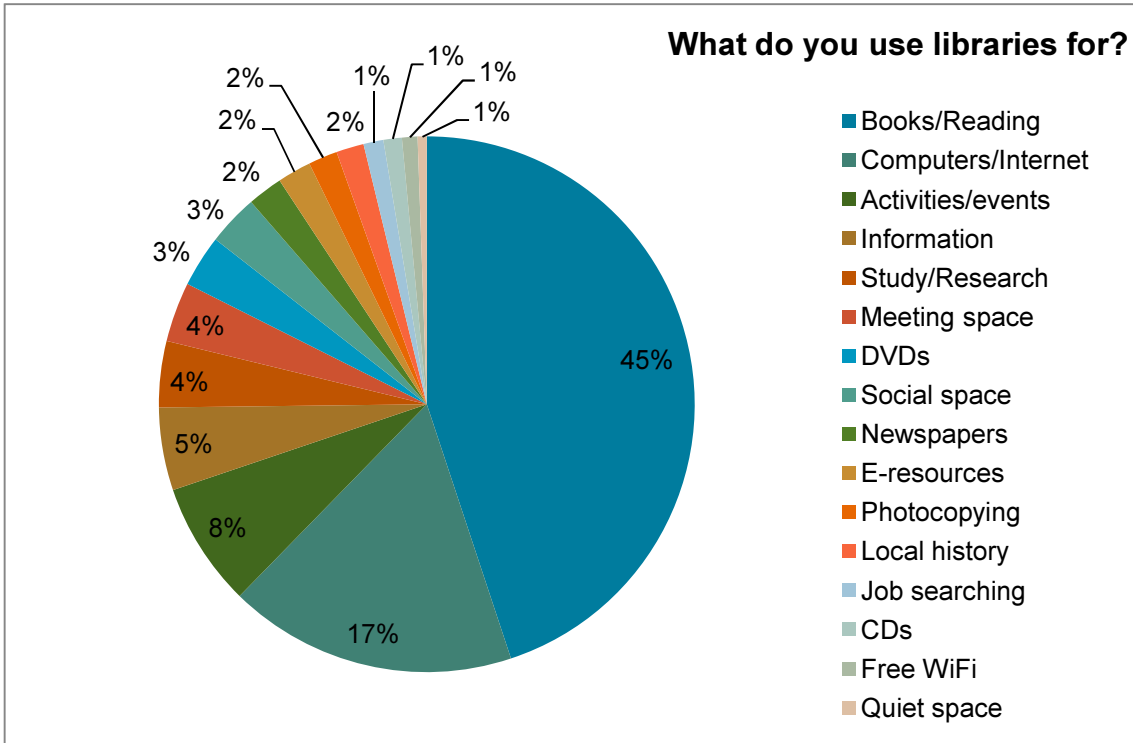
64% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to operate libraries with fewer staff during certain times of the day; the majority were worried about the impact on customer care/service quality.

82% of respondents agreed with our proposal to generate income within libraries, and made suggestions as to how money could be raised.

95% of respondents agreed with the proposal to continue with the redevelopment of libraries as modern, welcoming spaces.

Where appropriate, the Strategy and core offer have been amended in line with consultation feedback. Comments from individual have been included throughout this strategy.

Customers also told us why they use libraries and when they would prefer to use them:



## 5. Our Vision, Key Principles and Core Offer

### 5.1 Our Vision

- ❖ Rotherham Libraries will be well used, cost effective and responsive to changing customer needs, available technologies and resources;
- ❖ The services we offer and enable will reflect the needs and make up of Rotherham's communities;
- ❖ The service will inspire Rotherham's children, young people and their families to enjoy reading and to develop their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to improve their quality of life and have an opportunity to realise their full potential;
- ❖ Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, our libraries will be recognised neighbourhood hubs, offering welcoming spaces and providing access to modern digital technology.
- ❖ Our staff will help to bridge the digital divide by helping to support Rotherham communities to get online and explore all the benefits that being online brings.

"The vision seeks to maintain as much provision as possible with minimum disruption to people that access the library. I think that there are some good plans afoot that will help the library become more sustainable."

### 5.2 Our Key Principles

- ❖ Our libraries will be modern, vibrant, creative and innovative spaces where everyone is welcome;
- ❖ Rotherham Libraries will provide all members of the community with access to information and library resources from birth and will be free to join;
- ❖ We will lend our books, e-books and audio books to all members of the community for free;
- ❖ We will provide a wide range of high quality resources in a range of formats to suit the needs of the community;
- ❖ We will provide free use of the internet, free public Wi-Fi and public access computers, tablets and e readers in our library buildings;

- ❖ We will use technology to help us become more efficient and enhance our service delivery;
- ❖ We will provide online access to the library service 24/7/365;
- ❖ We will provide welcoming and easily accessible physical spaces which are located in the heart of local communities and, within the resources we have available, open at times to suit local needs;
- ❖ When people cannot visit one of our static sites we will assist and enable them to access the service in a variety of other ways, including providing services online or in partnership with others;
- ❖ We will work with other council services and our partners to enable libraries to play a key role as neighborhood hubs;
- ❖ We will work closely with external partners and build relationships with government and non-government bodies, so that we can maximise funding within the service;
- ❖ We will continue to provide face to face services to local people, prioritising areas of greatest deprivation, services to children and young people and vulnerable adults and services focused on improving health, increasing jobs and employability;
- ❖ We will have a range of skilled, professional staff members who will work in partnership with others to open up access to library resources and deliver added value activities, exciting, inspirational events and learning opportunities;
- ❖ We will provide spaces to deliver activities which support family learning, including support for employment, developing digital skills and improving the confidence and ability of children in reading, vocabulary and writing skills;
- ❖ We will adopt a commercial approach to service delivery, identifying opportunities for working closely with local businesses
- ❖ We will take steps to protect our service users from any harm when accessing Library and Customer Services.

### **5.3 Our Core Offer**

- ❖ We will provide a library service for everyone in Rotherham;
- ❖ We will provide libraries in communities across the borough, giving easy access to the majority of Rotherham residents;
- ❖ Our libraries will be well maintained and welcoming;
- ❖ The opening hours of our libraries will be based on current demand and community needs. Days and times of opening will reflect the requirements of the local community;
- ❖ We will offer a home delivery service for customers who are unable to visit one of our libraries without significant inconvenience;
- ❖ We will provide a digital library service for all to use, meaning that customers can join the library, make reservations, renew books and receive notifications online at any time of the day or night;
- ❖ We will focus resources on promotion and development of the service;

#### **Our Reading Offer**

- ❖ We will offer books and reading resources for loan which reflect local need, in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will annually spend approximately £1 per head of population on new resources and material;
- ❖ We will offer a wide range of material, including audio, e books and magazines, large print, music and material in other languages.
- ❖ We will provide a request service for books and other material.
- ❖ We will provide material to support reading groups in all our libraries.

#### **Our Health Offer**

- ❖ We will offer a range of material to support health and wellbeing

#### **Our Digital Offer**

- ❖ We will provide free access to the internet for every customer in every library;
- ❖ We will provide free Wi-Fi in every library;

- ❖ We will provide an ‘assisted digital’ offer in our Library and Customer Service Centres, so that customers who need help applying for services are supported;
- ❖ We will provide help to use computers in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will provide assistive technology for those customers who need to use it;
- ❖ We will offer photocopying, scanning and print facilities;
- ❖ We will provide a basic ICT course each month; so that we can help people improve their digital skills.

### **Our Children’s Offer**

- ❖ We will deliver a programme of activities for children in each of our libraries. At least 2 children’s reading based activities will be delivered per week in all sites; of which one will be for under 5’s;
- ❖ We will deliver summer reading activities to help maintain literacy skills;
- ❖ We will deliver Bookstart packs;
- ❖ We will use our School’s Loan Service to deliver library services to schools, which is funded via subscriptions.

### **Our Information Offer**

- ❖ We will signpost customers to material and activities which will help them find information, improve their wellbeing, find employment opportunities, increase their skills or improve their knowledge;
- ❖ We will offer access to council customer services at our Library and Customer Service Centres;
- ❖ We will provide support to access essential government online information and services in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will have at least one staff member working in each site to assist with local enquiries;
- ❖ We will provide facilities for research and study in all our libraries;
- ❖ We will provide a range of online resources to support research and help people learn new skills.

### **Our Events and Activities Offer**

- ❖ We will provide space for others to work in partnership with us, so our libraries are seen as community/neighbourhood hubs;

- ❖ We will deliver reading based activities to support the following initiatives, as a minimum:
  - Get online week
  - Summer reading challenge
  - World Book Day & Night
  - National Libraries Day
  - Literature celebrations
  - Culture at Riverside

**We will work with others to help us deliver services:**

- ❖ We will work in partnership with others (including educational facilities, volunteers, public sector and voluntary sector colleagues, grant funding) to deliver further activities and targeted services, based on the needs of communities;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide courses to support people who speak English as another language (ESOL);
- ❖ We will work with others to provide activities and support to increase adult literacy;
- ❖ We will work with others to deliver a celebration of reading for children who are in care;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide performance, music, poetry and art exhibitions;
- ❖ We will work with others to run activities which will improve social isolation;
- ❖ We will work with others to provide family learning activities in our libraries;
- ❖ We will work with others to extend our opening hours, where there is a need and customer demand to do so.
- ❖ We will provide work experience opportunities to those seeking employment or to those wishing to volunteer

“Using volunteers, partners and community groups to deliver extra services and activities is a good idea and helps to offer a wide range of services for users.”

## Appendix 1 – Action Plan 2016-18

The individual projects and actions which are required to achieve the vision are organised around the following key themes:

- ❖ Inspiring a love of reading and providing opportunities to learn skills for life;
- ❖ Developing our libraries as welcoming, easily accessible, attractive places at the heart of Rotherham's communities;
- ❖ Using modern digital solutions to improve service delivery and develop Rotherham libraries as digital hubs;
- ❖ Attracting and retaining our audiences;
- ❖ Delivering excellent services through our employees, partners and volunteers;
- ❖ Developing a range of alternative, resilient and sustainable models of service delivery.

Performance indicators include: the number of people borrowing books and other materials; the number of visits which help people learn something, develop their skills or get a job.

### ***Inspiring a love of reading and providing opportunities to learn skills for life***

- ❖ We will implement, publicise and evaluate a reading and skills based annual events programme for Libraries, working with internal and external colleagues and partners;
- ❖ We will encourage and support children and young people, their families and carers, to develop a life-long love for reading;
- ❖ We will devise and implement a new reader's group offer to create a dynamic reading community in Rotherham.

### ***Developing libraries as welcoming, easily accessible, attractive places at the heart of Rotherham's communities***

- ❖ We will undertake a property review of all static sites, to include identification of access issues, an appropriate maintenance programme and potential for relocations and additional developments;



- ❖ We will improve the offer for vulnerable adults and work with partners to explore the potential for co-delivered and co-located services;
- ❖ We will improve library provision in the town centre;
- ❖ We will explore the potential to work with community transport to enable access to libraries;
- ❖ We will explore the possibility of relocating Maltby Library into Maltby Joint Service Centre;
- ❖ We will carry out further local consultation to identify opportunities to streamline opening hours in line with local need.

***Using modern digital solutions to improve service delivery and develop Rotherham libraries as digital hubs***

- ❖ We will use digital technology to improve services and reduce costs. This will include the implementation of additional opportunities for self service;
- ❖ We will implement an Assisted Digital Offer, supporting customers who need help to access Council services online;
- ❖ We will redesign our online library service. This will include improvements to the library website, library catalogue and the development of downloadable content (eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and other e-resources) We will also trial an online reading group;
- ❖ We will develop and implement a digital activity programme, to include code clubs, ‘try before you buy’ and digital skills training sessions;
- ❖ We will maximise the potential of our public Wi-Fi provision, by providing opportunities and activities for people who wish to use their own devices. This will include the development of a collection of eBooks for Readers Groups to be accessed on their own devices or pre-loaded onto a library eBook reader;
- ❖ We will increase digital take up within digitally excluded groups (e.g. Book Link client base, Visually Impaired Readers Group);
- ❖ In partnership with Heritage Services, we will enable access to local history visual images.

***Attracting and retaining new audiences***

- ❖ We will encourage active library membership by all children;
- ❖ We will increase the number of apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities;
- ❖ We will develop services aimed at improving wellbeing and mental health, including the potential for increased involvement in social prescribing;
- ❖ We will develop an outreach programme for children, older people and those communities under-represented within our user base;
- ❖ We will develop an annual cultural programme within the Library @ Riverside, working closely with Heritage Services, the Civic Theatre, ROAR, Open Minds Theatre Company, Gallery Town, Rotherham Music Hub, the Cultural Education Partnership, City Learning Centres, RCAT ,Thomas Rotherham College and other partners;
- ❖ We will develop and implement a digital communication and marketing plan, enabling us to engage with our online community via Social Media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest);
- ❖ We will continue to develop, publicise and increase usage of Rotherham's e-book service.

***Delivering excellent services through our employees, partners and volunteers***

- ❖ We will review customer insight and satisfaction measures within libraries and implement measures to improve performance;
- ❖ We will implement a workforce development programme to ensure that staff, volunteers, apprentices and interns have relevant, up to date knowledge and skills, including customer care, safeguarding of adults and children, reader development, digital and information literacy skills, internet safety.

***Develop a range of alternative, resilient and sustainable models of service delivery***

- ❖ We will review the use of our resources across the service, ensuring that we deploy the right level of resource, at the right time, in the right place

- ❖ We will implement a revised offer for services delivered using vehicles, making more efficient use of resources to deliver a service across the borough;
- ❖ We will create a service support area by merging teams and gaining economies of scale;
- ❖ We will implement a volunteer, intern and partner recruitment programme;
- ❖ We will identify opportunities to introduce pop up libraries and deposit collections in key areas of the borough;
- ❖ We will work closely with local businesses and investigate further opportunities for income generation

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Tourism is the sponsor and strategy lead and the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager is the operational lead for delivering the Library Strategy 2016 - 2019.

Progress will be monitored by the Regeneration and Environment Directorate Management team and progress against specific actions will be reported within the Council's Corporate Plan.

### **Finances**

Successful implementation of the Action Plan will support a comprehensive and efficient library service, whilst also achieving budgetary reductions. We will regularly evaluate the cost of services and look for opportunities to reduce service costs whilst also continuing to meet customer needs.

We will also work with other partners and services to identify opportunities for us to assist them in making better use of their financial resources.

Resources will need to be allocated to deliver the plan. This includes finance, technology, people and skills. A variety of funding sources have been identified to support its delivery. These include the Council's capital programme, existing service budgets and grants. The funding implications for this Strategy have been incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Future additional investment will be required to implement additional self-service functionality and enable a greater shift towards self-service. This investment will support the realisation of longer term savings within the authority. The investments will be determined by clear business cases, which demonstrate improved service delivery and reduced costs.

## Risks

Risk	Mitigation	Responsible Officer
There are insufficient skills or resources to progress the actions at the pace required;	Robust governance, ensuring actions are implemented with necessary resources and slippage is flagged early;	Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism
Budget reductions linked to alternative service delivery models may not be implemented in a timely manner, or may be affected by need for additional investment;	Robust governance and quality control of financial projections;	Budget working group and Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager.
Reductions in service delivery could result in non-compliance with the Council's statutory duty;	Continued consultation and revisions to Assessment of Need to support any further recommended changes;	Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager
Communication is not effective;	Communication plan developed for all key stakeholders and reviewed regularly;	Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Manager