

Library Service Plan

Customer & Community Scrutiny Panel 2 March 2022



Library Service Plan

Introduction

- Incremental changes to our library service, impact of Covid and the current financial situation means the time is right to make sure our library service is fit for the future.
- The **Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964** states that the council has to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service.
- Guidance from government (**DCMS**) and case law has determined that any changes to library service delivery must only be implemented after a fair process has been followed and this includes:
 - A robust **Needs Assessment**
 - A thorough **Equality Impact Assessment**
 - Public and stakeholder **consultation**
 - Clear, informed decisions taken by **Cabinet**

Library Service Plan

Needs Assessment

- Needs Assessment is at **Appendix C**.
- It outlines Slough's **demographics**, current library service **usage** and the **national context** to in relation to the delivery of library services.
- It includes 3 **recommendations**
 - ✓ Ensure that library services are affordable and **deliver value for money**
 - ✓ Ensure library services are accessible and **meet local needs**
 - ✓ Support and promote **good use of technology** including digitalisation of services where appropriate

Library Service Plan

Equality Impact Assessment

- An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is at **Appendix B** and has been updated with the results of the public consultation.
- It considers the **potential impact** of some changes on specific groups with protected characteristics.

Library Service Plan

Consultation

- The summary of the consultation responses is at **Appendix D**. This includes responses to the on-line consultation, consultation edition of The Citizen and the main feedback from a series of engagement events for residents (adults, children and young people) and stakeholders.
- The consultation highlighted that our new library service has to accommodate **7 areas for consideration** (key issues for the library service). We asked consultees to rank these key issues in order of importance.
- The consultation also proposed **5 possible models** for how a future library service could be delivered. We asked consultees to tell us which were their top 3 options.
- The consultation asked people **why** they use our library service, **when** do they use our library service and what would they like to see delivered by a **future** library service?

Library Service Plan

Library Service Plan

The new proposed 5-year Library Service Plan identifies 3 overarching aims of the service:

- Improved literacy and love of reading for all residents
- Affordable services available to all users
- Levelling up opportunities for all residents

Library Service Plan

Library Service Plan

The overarching aims will be delivered through these workstreams

- ❖ High quality support for adults and children to support literacy and encourage a love of reading for pleasure.
- ❖ Make sure the right library services are delivered in the right way in the right locations ensuring that the physical building spaces and events are fully accessible, supporting those with additional needs
- ❖ Encourage residents of all ages to make use of our library service to improve their wellbeing and personal development.
- ❖ Increased range and diversity of on-line resources and support for residents to use these virtual resources, making sure that no resident is excluded from accessing the on-line world.
- ❖ A range of exciting, relevant and enjoyable events hosted by library services.
- ❖ Increased opportunities for volunteering in our library service and highly professional volunteers working with all library users.
- ❖ Improved collection and use of data to make sure our decisions are based on evidence.
- ❖ Strong engagement with residents to help us shape the service and promote events, activities, and library resources.
- ❖ We provide and spend a publications budget in line with councils in our most similar group and review our building opening times to ensure value for money.

Library Service Plan

General questions for Panel members

Panel members are asked to review the consultation responses and the draft strategic service plan and consider whether the proposed service plan meets the need to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service.

1. Does the plan retain the best parts of the **alternative ways of working** we were able to introduce due to Covid?
2. Does the plan explain that some of our traditional ways of delivering a library service will be adapted and built upon? Does the plan explain how we will do this most **cost effectively**?
3. Does the plan make sure we **meet the needs of our residents** (current library users and potential new users)?

Library Service Plan

Library Taskforce

DCMS set up a Library Taskforce in 2016. The Taskforce produced "Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021".

4. Do the future strategic aims and service plan achieve the **ambitions** set out by the Library Taskforce:

(a) Set out the clear **benefits of the library service** to enable residents to choose whether to use it;

(b) Set out **what library services offer** and how residents can make the most of these services;

(c) Allow residents to be open to **new ideas and opportunities**, gain confidence and have quick and easy access to tools, skills and information to improve their quality of life;

(d) Receive trusted guidance and **build the skills needed** to thrive in a changing world.

Library Service Plan

Library Taskforce

5. Do the future strategic aims and service plan achieve the following seven **outcomes** as identified by the Libraries Taskforce:

- (a) cultural and **creative** enrichment
- (b) increased reading and **literacy**
- (c) improved **digital access** and literacy
- (d) helping everyone achieve their **full potential**
- (e) **healthier** and happier lives
- (f) greater **prosperity**
- (g) stronger, **more resilient** communities