

Hertfordshire Libraries

2022-2032

INSPIRING LIBRARIES:

My Place



Introduction

I am delighted to introduce our new 10 year strategy with ambitions that build on such strong foundations.



Cllr Terry Douris

Executive Member for Education,
Libraries & Lifelong Learning

We have one of the leading Library Services in the country with an impressive range of the highest quality stock, events and activities and a proven track record of innovation.

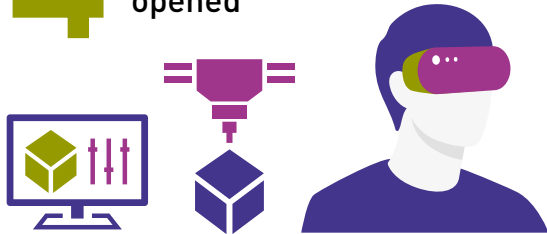
The previous Inspiring Library Strategy 2014-2024 has enabled Hertfordshire Library Service to thrive with over six million visits to Hertfordshire Library Service in 2019/20. In the past eight years we have opened six brand new library buildings and undertaken four major refurbishments along with improvements to twenty other libraries. We have also seen the exciting introduction of CreatorSpaces in four libraries with more in the planning pipeline with cutting edge technology such as 3D printing, green screen, laser printing and virtual reality experiences

along with the development of our roving CreatorSpace Out of the Box programme showcasing portable technology including robots, drones, and coding devices.

Our ambitious new 10 year strategy will build on these strong foundations and demonstrates Hertfordshire County Council's ongoing commitment to the Library Service. It positions libraries firmly at the heart of our communities, providing vital spaces for reconnection after the fragmentation and isolation of the pandemic, and supports a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire. This is a very exciting time for our Library Service and the new strategy ensures that our libraries will continue to flourish in the next decade by adapting and responding to the needs of local residents, communities and businesses.

Inspiring Libraries: Achievements 2014 – 2022

4 CreatorSpaces
opened



Giving local communities
access to **innovative technology**

2,415

additional

**OPENING
HOURS**



Through **Open+ swipe
card technology**

6 BRAND NEW
LIBRARY BUILDINGS

**4 MAJOR
REFURBISHMENTS**



**TRANSFORMED INTERIORS
AT 20 LIBRARIES**

13
COMMUNITY
LIBRARIES



Supported by **450 volunteers**
keeping services local

Over **20,000**
CHILDREN



taking part in the Summer
Reading Challenge each year

SOLAR PANELS **9**
installed at
LIBRARIES



450
READING GROUPS



Exploring great books together

Our Vision & Values

Enriching the lives of individuals and communities by fostering knowledge, creativity, imagination and understanding

We improve Residents' lives

We put our residents at the heart of all we do **by:**

- Giving everybody access to high quality library services and resources
- Providing opportunities for active participation in community life
- Proactively improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities

We work with Integrity

We say what we do, and we do what we say **by:**

- Striving for excellence in everything we do
- Being honest and transparent
- Trusting and supporting staff to make the right decisions

We act Sustainably

We consider the impact of our actions on future generations **by:**

- Embracing new ideas and opportunities to make our service more sustainable
- Investing in the sustainable use of books, technology, buildings and resources
- Providing reliable and trusted information to residents so they can make sustainable choices

We champion Equality and Fairness

We are all equal and treat everyone fairly **by:**

- Providing safe, inclusive spaces, where everyone is welcome and treated with respect
- Fostering an environment of inclusiveness, celebrating and recognising difference
- Enabling individuals to experience diverse cultural experiences, knowledge, information and heritage

My Place to:

Explore innovative technology

Discover information & learning

Connect

Experience reading, art & culture

Improve health & wellbeing

Our ambition is

- To provide a network of vibrant modern libraries that are destination venues welcoming the whole community
- To enable opportunities for making real-world, social connections with other people, services, organisations and businesses



“

Staff are friendly and helpful. The Friday Knit and Natter is invaluable. The chance to meet like-minded people to relax and chat is great for body and soul.

Hoddesdon Library customer ”

My Place to Connect

We will

- Give people opportunities to shape the services on offer and to actively participate
- Ensure our libraries are as diverse and inclusive as our communities
- Seek opportunities to reprovide libraries that are not well located or suitable for delivering a vibrant modern service
- Support small businesses in the community

Which will

- Build a strong sense of local identity and community pride
- Ensure that people feel valued and that they belong here
- Build positive networks that combat loneliness
- Contribute to local economic growth

My Place to Connect

Imagine your place...

Jon and Peter are proud new fathers of a baby boy. They love taking their baby son to the weekend Baby Rhyme Time sessions at the library so they can be with other new parents in a friendly and inclusive environment.

16 year old Caren joins a new volunteering initiative at the library for young people. She is happy that her neurodiversity enables her to bring new ideas to the library that help her local community.

A Hertfordshire business group is experiencing difficulty finding locations to meet, network and showcase products. The group establishes a partnership to use libraries across the county to develop a thriving network which regularly explores its ideas with library customers.



Our ambition is

- To continue with investment in technology to connect, support, engage and inspire people of all ages
- To ensure our technology remains current and meets the needs of our communities
- To find sustainable solutions to our technology offer



“

This is my only chance to check emails & do internet related stuff, as we are not connected at home. Without computers at the library things would be tricky. ”

Cheshunt Library customer

My Place to Explore Innovative Technology

We will

- Provide self-service access to our libraries outside core opening hours using swipe card technology
- Extend our online offer, ensuring it can be accessed any time, from anywhere on any device
- Provide digital devices for loan in addition to 1:1 and group support.
- Develop and expand our CreatorSpaces and CreatorSpace Out of the Box programmes

Which will

- Make it easier and more convenient to access our services
- Give everyone the opportunity to experience emerging technologies
- Increase digital skills and confidence so that no-one gets left behind



My Place to Explore Innovative Technology

Imagine your place...

Terrell doesn't have time to visit the library during normal opening hours because he gets home late from work. He signs up for the library's Open+ service because it means he can use his library ticket as a swipe card to enter the library outside of staffed hours and at times that suit him.

Winnie is very infirm and loves her visits from the Home Library Service Volunteer. She has just borrowed an iPad from the library and is using it to take part in a new conversation group over Zoom that has been initiated by library staff.

Sandra is preparing for her interview with a design company. She pops into the library to use the 3D printer in CreatorSpace to print off some prototypes of her design ideas to show the company during her interview.



Our ambition is

- To make our libraries local cultural destination venues on the high street
- To extend our programme of events and increase our audiences, making best use of flexible spaces and online platforms



“

Absolutely loved the book folding workshop. Went home and shared newly learnt skill with 8 year old. Turning literary works of art into visual works of art - brilliant. Thank you - great teaching! ”

Ware Library customer

My Place to Experience Reading, Art & Culture

We will

- Deliver an exciting and eclectic programme of events throughout the year which appeals to diverse audiences of all ages
- Secure external funding to continually extend and develop our programme
- Build excellent partnerships with other creative organisations to increase opportunities for everyone

Which will

- Inspire individuals to discover and explore their own creativity
- Support the creative industries in Hertfordshire
- Showcase and nurture local talent



My Place to Experience Reading, Art & Culture

Imagine your place...

Chris and Terri regularly check the library's programme of arts and theatre events so they can introduce their young children to cultural activities at a low cost.

Bibi hasn't been living in the UK for long and wants to get to know more people. She thinks that the Library Service's regular programme of lunchtime activities and events has been a great way for her to take part in the cultural life of the community.

Simone can't afford to buy her favourite magazines anymore and is delighted to discover that she can borrow them from her local library or download e-copies of her favourite titles for free via the library's online service.

A young people's theatre group are struggling to find a safe place to meet, rehearse and perform their experimental productions. They are welcomed by the library and are able to make use of the improved flexible space. They later benefit from the library service's connections with other creative partners who provide coaching and advice that leads to funding and additional publicity for their great ideas.



Our ambition is

- To use our professional skills and trusted resources to help everyone find the accurate information they need
- To be recognised sources of support for small businesses and entrepreneurs in our community
- To become a premier community venue for learning for all ages



“

The library has given me a quiet safe environment where I can take a breather and really knuckle down with my studying. Having access to the computers and printing has been exceptionally useful.

Hitchin Library customer ”

My Place to Discover Information & Learning

We will

- Provide easy access to advice, expertise and business resources
- Provide tech-enabled spaces to suit a range of learning styles for both collaborative and individual learning
- Offer a range of learning opportunities for all ages and abilities by working with partners and other learning providers

Which will

- Improve opportunities for everyone to achieve their learning ambitions
- Contribute to improving educational attainment
- Enable small businesses to flourish and the local economy to grow



My Place to Discover Information & Learning

Imagine your place...

Alice wants to start a small business and makes the library her first stop for developing her idea. The library helps her to carry out market research and guides her to information and advice for business start-ups.

Sean is learning to drive and is finding the free access to the mock theory test on the online reference library a really helpful way of practicing his new skills.

Matthew is in the market for a new oven, so he pops into his local library to get free access to the online Which? consumer reports on the best models available.

Maxine is fascinated by alternative medicine and has decided to do a free course through the Library Service's online course programme.



Our ambition is

- To be the starting point for everyone wanting to actively improve their well-being and to reduce loneliness



“

I was looking for books to help with my child's anxiety. Thanks to this library I have found out about Empathy Day and books to read for all ages. ”

Stevenage Library customer

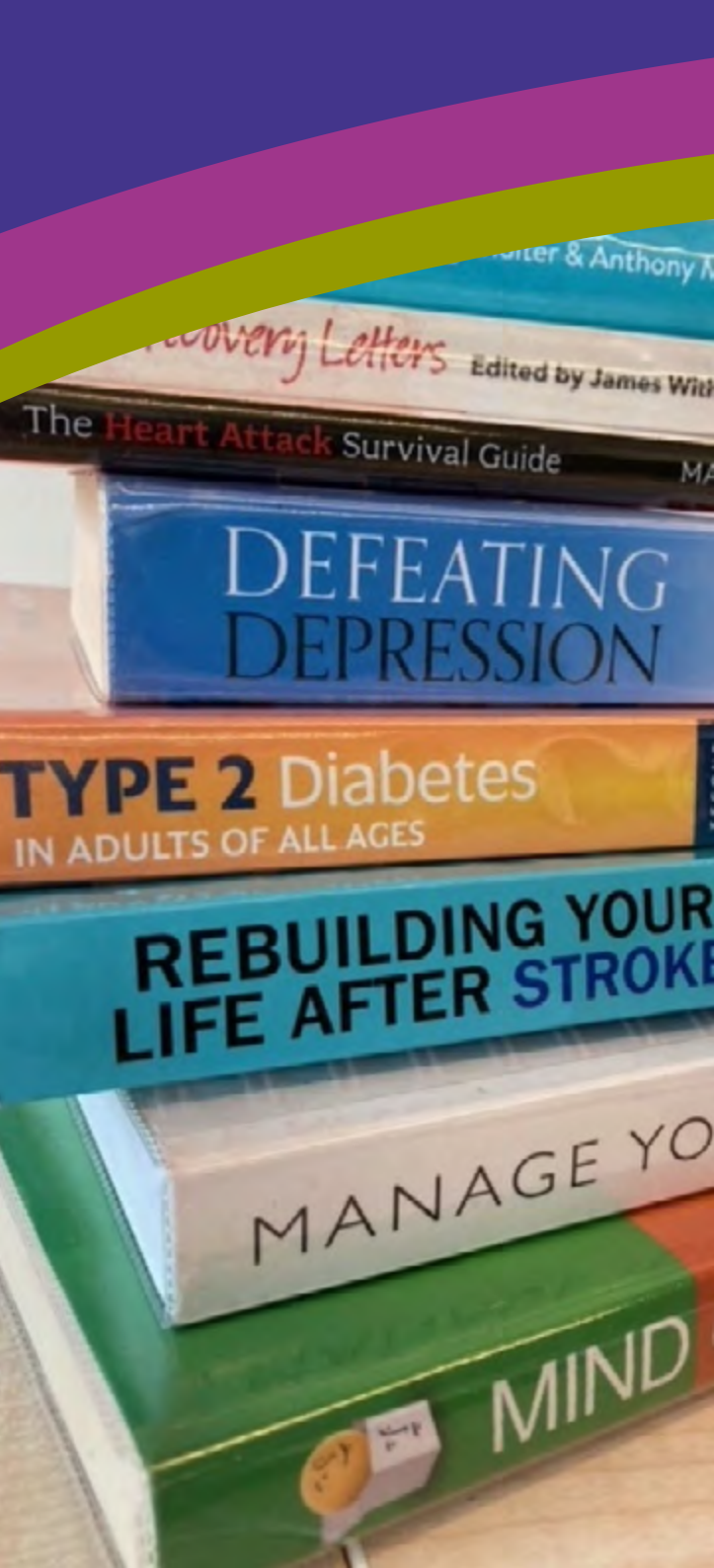
My Place to Improve Health & Wellbeing

We will

- Connect with health professionals and organisations
- Develop strong and innovative Social Prescribing partnerships that take a holistic approach to managing well-being
- Provide signposts to trusted sources of health information
- Use our unique position in the heart of communities to reach target audiences

Which will

- Prevent more expensive long-term care by enabling positive early interventions
- Help people to live better lives for longer



My Place to Improve Health & Wellbeing

Imagine your place...

Laura is worried about her frail, elderly Mum, so she pops into the library to talk to the Community Nurse at her weekly health advice session. The Community Nurse signposts Laura to services and teams that can help her Mum, putting her mind at rest.

Jack has been struggling to cope with loneliness since losing his wife a year ago. He becomes a volunteer helping people in the library and now feels part of a team that is giving back to the community.

John has lost his job, is homeless and doesn't know how to turn his life around. He finds that getting guidance from the library staff about how to make the best use of the resources in the library helps to inspire him when he's finding life particularly tough.



Investing in Our Staff

To ensure libraries are a great place to work we will:

- Recruit and retain talented and motivated staff with a rich variety of skills and experience
- Celebrate and promote diversity & inclusion to ensure our teams reflect the communities that they serve
- Encourage opportunities for staff to shape the services we offer and recognise achievements
- Enable young people to develop their careers through meaningful apprenticeship opportunities
- Encourage staff development through our comprehensive and tailored Learning & Development Programme
- Support well-being with access to a comprehensive employee assistance programme

“

Thanks in part to the services you provide, I have secured full-time work and a place of my own to rent. Your building, facilities, and staff are of excellent quality and have helped change my life this year. ”

**Borehamwood Library
customer**



“

My Dad has appreciated the “wonderful” home library service which he said is a “lifeline”. He also asked me to pass on his thanks to his volunteer. ”

Home Library Service customer

Investing in Our Volunteers

To ensure libraries are a great place to volunteer we will:

- Welcome people who enjoy actively participating in their local community
- Provide opportunities to gain valuable work experience
- Offer a range of volunteering roles to appeal to all ages from all backgrounds
- Provide training and ongoing support for all our volunteers, both face to face and online
- Recognise the valuable contribution that our dedicated volunteers make to our services

Libraries supporting

Our County of Opportunity, 2022-2025

A cleaner and greener environment

- Adapt our library buildings with renewable and sustainable energy
- Minimise the use of plastics and seek plastic free alternatives
- Hold community engagement and library activities promoting environmental awareness and sustainable life choices
- Reduce the amount of waste that is sent to landfill by recycling more
- Encourage our suppliers to use recyclable packaging materials
- Seek the most energy efficient options for our library delivery vehicles

Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

- Enable residents to access cultural experiences, knowledge, and information to help them achieve their full potential and make healthy lifestyle choices
- Provide a wide range of activities to support reading, and literacy
- Provide access to extensive resources of trusted and authoritative information
- Provide resources and opportunities to support life-long learning
- Providing opportunities to participate in community life through a range of volunteering roles
- Deliver the national Bookstart programme gifting books to babies and young children

Libraries supporting

Our County of Opportunity, 2022-2025

Sustainable growth in our county

- Provide a network of modern, welcoming, flexible buildings with tech-enabled spaces in the centre of communities
- Support job seekers with access to information and technology and a range of volunteering opportunities to build experience
- Provide apprenticeship opportunities to improve access to employment
- Contribute to regeneration through our presence on Hertfordshire's High Streets
- Provide Business Information resources that support entrepreneurs and small enterprises and places for them to connect and innovate

Excellent council services for all

- Support our skilled and talented staff to deliver a leading library service with high career development opportunities
- Provide equal access for everyone to over one million items of stock for all ages
- Promote digital inclusion by providing opportunities to explore technology and build confidence to use it
- Provide 360 public access Internet PCs plus Wi-Fi access in all libraries
- Provide convenient access to online services making it simple to browse the catalogue, reserve items, renew loans and obtain authoritative information resources
- Ensure our service reflects the communities we serve

“

This is truly the most excellent public service. It's like Christmas everyday.”

Harpenden Library customer



Delivering this strategy

This strategy sets out our ambitions for Hertfordshire Libraries for the next ten years.

The work required to achieve these ambitions will be reflected in our annual Service Plan, individual Library Plans, and the specific workplans covering all aspects of our service. We will also develop a commercial programme which will diversify our approach to generating additional income to invest in delivering these ambitions.

Performance will be measured using a range of Key Performance Indicators which measure service provision and activity both within libraries and across our online platforms, as well as qualitative feedback from customers and stakeholders. We will continue to benchmark our service within the national sector using data provided by organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Public Accountancy (CIPFA) and Libraries Connected (who represent and support library services across the UK).

We will continue to listen to customers, communities, partners and staff as we shape the delivery of this strategy. Progress will be reported annually to the Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning Cabinet Panel.

Some facts and figures about our libraries

74,139

VOLUNTEER HOURS



925,236

HOURS OF INTERNET ACCESS

Getting and keeping people online



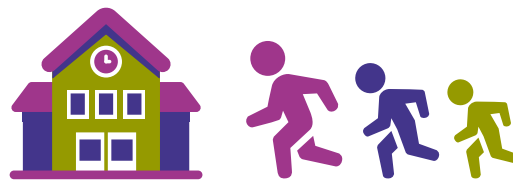
5,062,116

ITEMS BORROWED



267,004

RESERVATIONS



3,436,835

VISITS to Library buildings

1,116,452

BOOKS



7,151,503

SOCIAL MEDIA

interactions



“

My mum reads constantly and relies on you! She is 88! Your libraries are lovely places to visit and very calming and peaceful. You really are a lifeline. ”

Bovingdon Library customer

“

The library helps me to cope with life in general. ”

St Albans Library customer



“

“ I am homeless at the moment and the library is my sanctuary and I’m here reading all day, every day. I have been made to feel welcome and have not been judged, I have a new found love of books. I can’t thank you enough. ”

Hatfield Library customer

“

What a wonderful experience I had today when I took my four year old grandson to the library for the first time. Everyone was so welcoming and kind to us - My Grandson was so excited and was thrilled to be able to take books home. ”

Royston Library customer





Enriching the lives of individuals and communities by
fostering knowledge, creativity, imagination and understanding

Thanks to all colleagues, residents and organisations
who feature in this publication



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