

# BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES

LIBRARY STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

TITLE:

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	14 December 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Public Health & Communities
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

## Purpose of report

To share and seek approval for the refreshed Library Strategy covering the next three years, demonstrating the contribution libraries make to the delivery of the Barnsley 2030 priorities and outcomes.

## Council Plan priority

Barnsley's libraries primarily support the Learning Barnsley priority but also support several of the Council's priorities and outcomes as demonstrated in the Strategy:

### Healthy Barnsley

- People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible.

### Learning Barnsley

- People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills, including access to apprenticeships.
- Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.

### Growing Barnsley

- People have a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure, and culture.

### Sustaining Barnsley

- Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy, and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking.

## **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:-

1. Recommend for approval by Council the adoption of the Library Strategy 2022 – 2025.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As part of the Library Service Review 2016 –18, the Library Strategy 2019 – 2022 was developed and approved by Cabinet (Cab12.12.2018/10). The report detailed the key aims of the strategy, including the implementation of a consistent brand through the community libraries and the use of identified capital investment to create flexible spaces in community libraries and reduce the 'gap' in service provision between community libraries and the Library @ the Lightbox. The strategy also outlined a stronger focus on engagement, digital support, and promotion, which alongside the refurbishment programme and re-branding, would enable the Library Service to deliver new services and reach out to broader demographic sectors who have not previously engaged with the service.
- 1.2 The majority of the previous strategies' three-year delivery period has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the new focus on engagement and promotion has continued and some key actions, such as the consistent re-branding across all libraries, have been achieved, much of the strategy is still relevant. It is therefore felt appropriate to undertake a refresh of the Library Strategy to update it for the next three years.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The Library Strategy has been reviewed, refreshed, and aligned to the Barnsley 2030 priorities and key actions within the strategy demonstrate how Barnsley's public libraries, as community and digital hubs, can support multiple initiatives and services in the heart of our local areas.
- 2.2 Currently, there is no new national libraries strategy since 'Libraries Deliver' in 2016 to inform Barnsley's Library Strategy, but the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) recently announced its intention to commence work on a new national libraries' strategy in 2023, which would inform future work.
- 2.3 Barnsley's Library Strategy 2022 – 2025 continues to use the outcomes from 'Libraries Deliver' to illustrate our delivery through a series of refreshed case studies. Performance trends over the last five years showing the impact of the recent pandemic on the Library Service are also included.
- 2.4 Key actions for the next three years include:
  - Deliver the community libraries refurbishment programme.

- Deliver a customer satisfaction and community engagement plan - this will help us understand local needs and tailor library services to meet these.
- Create a full and varied programme of activities at all libraries.
- Develop and deliver a marketing plan to make sure everyone knows what is happening at their library and resume using services again post-pandemic, as well as attracting new users.
- Apply for [National Portfolio Organisation status](#).
- Prepare for the new [Libraries Accreditation Scheme](#).

2.5 The Library Service will also fully engage with the Strategic Property and Asset Board to understand opportunities relating to the public estate and the community libraries' refurbishment programme.

2.6 The refreshed Library Strategy 2022 – 2025 can be viewed here <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/our-strategies/barnsley-library-strategy/>

### **3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **3.1 Financial and Risk**

3.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director of Finance (S151 Officer) . There are no direct financial or risk implications associated with the revised Library Strategy, but all actions resulting from the delivery of the strategy would be considered in line with the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

#### **3.2 Legal**

3.2 Local Authorities need to meet the statutory requirements of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act and DCMS recommend that library strategies include a clear vision for the library service, outlining what the service should achieve and deliver.

Library plans form part of the statutory policy framework which must be approved by full Council

#### **3.3 Equality**

3.3.1 Full Equality Impact Assessment completed.

3.3.2 Key findings from the Equality Impact Assessment are:

- The Library Strategy is not expected to have any negative impacts but could potentially positively impact some protected characteristic groups.
- The Library Service will continue to collect and monitor equalities data for library members.
- Community engagement sessions will be held for all Library Refurbishment projects.

### 3.4 Sustainability

3.4.1 Decision-making wheel completed.

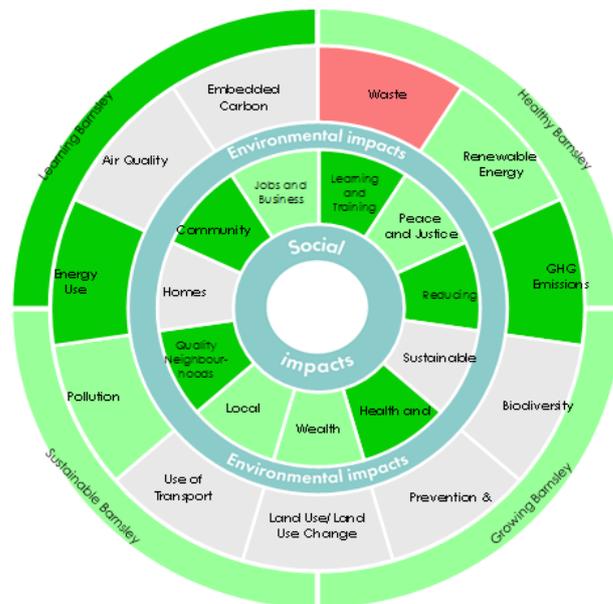
3.4.2 The Library Strategy positively contributes to all four Barnsley 2030 priorities with the strongest contribution being for Learning Barnsley.

3.4.3 The strongest positive environmental impacts which are achieved as a result of the Community Libraries Refurbishment programme are:

- Energy Use
- GHG Emissions
- Renewable Energy
- Pollution

The only negative environmental impact is potentially related to waste.

3.4.4 The Library Strategy also positively impacts most of the social impacts.



### 3.5 Employee

3.5 There are no employee implications from the refreshed Library Strategy.

### 3.6 Communications

3.1 The communications team have worked with the Library Service to deliver their new library strategy in an accessible format, highlighting their strategic plans and celebrating the amazing achievements, showing residents the benefits of using their local library. The strategy is hosted on the Barnsley Council website and allows residents to access screen readers, supported reading apps and languages.

The communications team will help promote the strategy; linking this with the marking plans and strategies that will support the Library Service achieve its plans in the next three years.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 As the Library Strategy 2022 –2025 is a light refresh of the previous strategy, no formal consultation has taken place. The original public consultation took place in 2018 regarding the statutory library offer and subsequent Library Strategy. As there are no substantial changes to the service being offered, wholesale public engagement is not a requirement.

#### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The only alternative option would be a completely new Library Strategy with full public consultation. As there are no changes to the statutory library offer and as many of the actions previously identified have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is felt unnecessary to commence a large-scale piece of work when the current strategy is largely fit-for-purpose.

#### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The previous Library Strategy has now expired and there is an expectation from DCMS that local authorities will have a current Library Strategy.
- 6.2 A current Library Strategy is usually a requirement for grant funding applications, so the lack of a current strategy would affect the service's ability to apply for external funding.

#### **7. GLOSSARY**

DCMS            Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### **8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Equalities Impact Assessment

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Details of background papers **MUST** be included]

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

## 10. REPORT SIGN OFF

<b>Financial consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date  Avanda Mitchell 19.10.2022
<b>Legal consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Legal Services officer consulted and date  <i>Jason Field</i> <i>18/10/22</i>

**Report Author:** Kathryn Green  
**Post:** Head of Libraries  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022