Transforming Libraries Strategy

2017 - 2027

wolverhampton.gov.uk

Contents

Executive Summary

Our vision is:

Modern, vibrant and sustainable libraries for the City of Wolverhampton

The ambition of this strategy is to improve library services for people who live, work, and study in the City of Wolverhampton. It sets out how we will deliver local and national priorities in the context of changing demands and customer needs.

In the City of Wolverhampton we value our libraries, demonstrated by the 12% increase in visits to our libraries in 2016/17. Libraries provide a unique 'cradle to grave' service to the public, and are highly valued by communities – even those who do not use them. This is why our strategy maintains the current number of libraries in the city and enhances the offer and services delivered, bringing our libraries into the 21st century.

Against the backdrop of a wider public sector financial challenge, we also need to ensure that our libraries provide a network of support that is sustainable and provides value for money to taxpayers.

Background and Context

Libraries are a statutory service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, which means local councils in England have a duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for local people.

In May 2016 the Library Service undertook a Peer Challenge. This provided feedback on the service and our plans and approach to developing it in the future.

Demand for libraries is changing, and we need to promote their use whilst demonstrating value for money. Exploring new ways of working to maximise our resources and maintain a quality service is important. We also need to ensure that we future proof library services to that they are equipped to meet the future needs of citizens, including maximising opportunities in relation to digital technologies.

What local people have told us about libraries in the City of Wolverhampton

In October 2016, the Council undertook an engagement exercise with communities, discussing the case for change and seeking feedback and views on what a modern, vibrant and sustainable library service should look like. Over 500 people participated in the engagement phase through externally facilitated workshops, an online survey, email and social media.

The key themes from the engagement exercise were:

- Besides offering educational value, libraries were seen to serve an important role as a social hub.

- Adopting a multi-use facility approach. The largest proportion of respondents believed that library services could be optimised and utilised more effectively through co-location and multi-use spaces.

- The majority of respondents felt that library services could improve if integrated into other organisations, in particular community, health and social organisations.

- When asked what would make people use a library more, the most cited theme was more convenient opening hours, a wider number of services and better computing facilities.

- Most participants reported that libraries of the future need a building because they are the hub of the community and motivate people to get out of their houses, relax, and enhance social interaction.

The full report on the findings from the engagement exercise can be found at **wolverhampton.gov.uk/mylibraryservice**

In February - May 2017 the Council undertook a formal consultation exercise on a draft libraries strategy. Over 830 people participated in the consultation through an online survey or attendance at a consultation event.

The key findings from the consultation, that have been used to inform this final strategy were:

- The majority of respondents (76.2%) agreed with the proposed vision statement of 'a modern vibrant and sustainable library service for the City of Wolverhampton'.

- The six proposed Strategic Aims were approved by more than four-fifths of respondents, with the most support for 'promoting learning and improving skills' and 'supporting reading and literacy'.

- When asked about the proposed ways of delivering the strategy, more than half of respondents were in agreement with all aspects.

- There was support for promoting the use of new digital technologies, in particular extending the use of tablets and touch screens, 3D printers and hiring e-readers.

- Opening hours – many respondents reported that they would wish to see libraries open for longer. This strategy proposes this is done through co-location of libraries with other services and working with the community.

- 81.3% of respondents agreed with the idea to "hold and promote events and activities". Respondents were invited to suggest different "events and activities" suitable for libraries, the most commonly-suggested being cultural & arts events, History, Reading Group, Learning another language, and Children and family events.

The full report on the findings from the consultation can be found at **wolverhampton.gov.uk/mylibraryservice**

Key facts and figures about our libraries (2016-17)

758,208
Total visits
(680,288 in 2015/16)

+
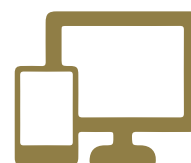
102,833
Visits to the website
(47,379 in 2015/16)

Resulting in...
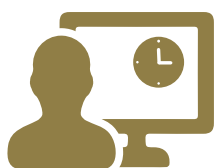
120,895
Hours of PC use
(120,610 in 2015/16)

24,317
Active borrowers with loans
(27,677 in 2015/16)

507,771
Items borrowed across our 16 library locations
(561,250 in 2015/16)

Supported by...

37 FTE
Full time staff
(37 hrs per week)

+

2809.4
Volunteer hours a Year by 41 Volunteers
(1803.5 hours a year by 46 volunteers in 2015/16)

Costing

£1,940,670
2017/18 Budget

Performance by library location
2015-16 and 2016-17

Library	Hours open	Visits 2015-16	Visits 2016-17	Items borrowed 2015-16	Items borrowed 2016-17
Ashmore Park	24	37875	37937 ▲	23393	19932 ▼
Bilston	35	38525	52312 ▲	31503	28319 ▼
Blakenhall Community Hub	56	2225	3900 ▲	1284	970 ▼
Central Library	47	348026	376754 ▲	174258	155577 ▼
Collingwood	15	875	1767 ▲	2959	2144 ▼
East Park	15	10100	11875 ▲	12558	7613 ▼
Finchfield	30	21625	22712 ▲	52797	48525 ▼
Long Knowle	15	6600	8237 ▲	10960	10622 ▼
Low Hill	15	8350	15163 ▲	13336	13285 ▼
Pendeford	24	21850	23013 ▲	25829	25222 ▼
Penn	24	21925	26475 ▲	31784	27229 ▼
Spring Vale	15	15475	22425 ▲	11454	9277 ▼
Tettenhall	30	28700	29400 ▲	69281	66466 ▼
Warstones	35	41100	41563 ▲	43122	38098 ▼
Wednesfield	35	58912	66325 ▲	47477	45676 ▼
Whitmore Reans	15	18125	18350 ▲	9245	8816 ▼
Total		**680288**	**758208 ▲**	**561250**	**507771 ▼**

Services and facilities libraries delivered in Wolverhampton

Library Loans

Books including inter-library loans and reservation facilities

Other lending eg. audiobeeks and e-books

Digital

Free public computer facilities

Free public wifi in all 16 libraries

Resources and Information

Reference materials and information

Newpapers and magazines

Advice and Support

Blue badge scheme support

Support for job seekers

Health and well-being support eg. Memory Matters

A Community Space

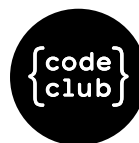A life long learning space

A safe space

Office and room hire

Quiet space to read and study

Clubs, Events and Activities

Code clubs

Local community displays, e.g. photography clubs

Author events, theatre and other art and cultural activities

Vision

Our vision is:

Modern, vibrant and sustainable libraries for the City of Wolverhampton

We will maintain 16 libraries in the City of Wolverhampton.

Outcomes

Libraries in Wolverhampton play a significant role in supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, and also the wider Vision 2030 for the city. We will measure the success of this strategy through the delivery of outcomes for local people.

The outcomes for local people which will be delivered through the City of Wolverhampton's Library Strategy 2017–2027 are:

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people

- Improved health and wellbeing for local people

- Local people's lives are enriched with improved access to culture, literature and quality information

- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Our strategic aims are:

Libraries in Wolverhampton will work to six strategic aims that form our core offer to all people who live, work and study in the City of Wolverhampton. These aims incorporate the 'National Universal Offer' framework

recommended by the Society of Chief Librarians, and were strongly supported through the consultation on our libraries strategy.

They are:
- Promoting learning and improving skills
- Supporting reading and literacy
- Widening access to quality information
- Broadening access to culture
- Increasing the use of digital services
- Promoting and enabling health and wellbeing

Delivering our vision

To deliver the vision and strategic aims there are a number of cross cutting areas we will work to deliver:

**professional
well trained staff**

**increasing
volunteering
opportunities**

**working with the
local community to
extend opening hours**

**high quality
book offer**

**access to
latest technology**

**increasing events
and activities**

**improving
physical library
spaces**

**making libraries
more sustainable**

**co-locating/providing
other services**

How we'll deliver our strategic aims

Cross cutting areas

How we will deliver it

To delivery our vision of a 'vibrant, modern, sustainable library service' there are a number of actions we will deliver on. These support more than one or all of our strategic aims.

This includes:

- Wherever possible, increase opening hours, accessibility and convenience for library users through working with other services and the community to increase co-location, use of self service facilities and use of volunteers.

- Improve the quality of physical library spaces through a programme of improvement works to libraries, starting with those that have had no recent investment.

- Ensure on-going maintenance works in all libraries are completed in a timely manner.

- Maintain excellent customer service standards, ensuring libraries respond to customer feedback to ensure libraries meet the needs of local communities.

- Ensure there are professional well trained staff that can support individuals and communities to improve their life chances. This is to include the development of a workforce development plan for libraries.

- Improve the promotion of volunteering opportunities and the co-ordination of volunteers across the library network, working with external partners as necessary.

- Increase income generation and commercialisation in the service to improve sustainability of the service, including a review of room hire options across libraries and promote these, working in partnership with community associations where libraries are co-located.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people

- Improved health and wellbeing for local people

- Local people's lives are enriched with improved access to culture, literature and quality information

- Increased civic and community participation through:
  - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
  - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- Number of hours library services are accessible per week

- Visit numbers

- Book issues

- PC usage

- Use of self service machines

- Number of volunteers

- Number of volunteer hours

- Income generated

Promoting learning and improving skills

How we will deliver it

Everyone in our city should have the same opportunity to learn and achieve their ambitions in life, in their communities and at work. Libraries play an important role in promoting opportunities for learning, from informal to more formal learning opportunities and improving people's skills. This strategic aim was supported most strongly by local people in the consultation on our libraries strategy, and reflects the importance of this issue as identified through initiatives such as the Wolverhampton Skills and Employment Commission (2015). Libraries in the city need to play their part in ensuring the city's residents can develop the skills needed to compete successfully got local job opportunities.

We will do this through:

- Providing a free, safe and welcoming space for all people to learn and share knowledge in libraries.
- Providing access to quality materials such as books, digital equipment and other resources to promote learning and improve skills.
- Offering informal learning sessions that will help people to explore further opportunities for learning and/or creativity
- Signposting people to learning, skills and employment opportunities using initiatives such as Wolves@Work.
- Working in partnership with other learning providers to develop joint services to meet the needs of the city.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people
- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- Visits to libraries
- Book issues
- PC usage
- Access to Wolves@Work via library PCs
- Number of volunteers
- Number of volunteer hours

Strategic aim
Supporting reading and literacy

How we will deliver it

Reading and literacy are fundamentally important life skills. Research suggests that adults and children who read are healthier, happier and more confident than those who do not.

We will do this through:

- Providing free access to quality reading materials that meet the needs of all our communities, that is well rotated across the network of libraries.
- Commissioning a new stock services contract with other Black Country libraries to maximise value for money.
- Implementing a new Library Management System to widen access to stock in other Black Country authorities and improve customer experience.
- Supporting reading and poetry groups in our libraries.
- Hosting events and activities that promote and support reading, such as the Summer Reading Challenge and author events.
- Meeting the national 'Children's Promise' to provide the highest quality experience for our children and young people in Wolverhampton libraries.
- Reviewing the Education Library Service delivery model to ensure that library resources are focussed on improving literacy.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people
- Improved levels of literacy in the city
- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- Book issues
- Visit numbers
- Number of reading and poetry groups supported
- Attendance at reading and poetry groups
- Number of events and activities
- Participation levels in events and activities.

Widening access to quality information

How we will deliver it

Libraries provide access to researched information, giving users of libraries a level of assurance in the information that they are receiving.

We will do this through:

- Providing a variety of impartial resources to aid businesses, self development and self help
- Having well trained staff and volunteers who can offer quality advice and guidance were appropriate
- Working with partners to widen access to quality information and advice, such as continuing to hold Citizens Advice Bureau surgeries and Blue Badge Check and Send services.
- Developing advocates within the library service to ensure we meet the national 'six steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people'.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Local people's lives are enriched with improved access to culture, literature and quality information
- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people
- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- PC usage
- Book issues

Broadening access to culture

How we will deliver it

Libraries are an important part of the cultural infrastructure of our city. By working with other cultural organisations, artists and community groups libraries can also provide a welcoming space for new and existing audiences to engage more widely in arts and cultural activities – whether that be more traditional aspects of art, such as literature, or new and different art forms.

We will do this through:

- Working in partnership with other cultural organisations, artists and community groups to develop and deliver initiatives that widen access to arts and culture in the city.

- Adopting the national Society for Chief Librarians' recommendations for providing a cultural offer when they are announced (due 2017).

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Local people's lives are enriched with improved access to culture, literature and quality information

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people

- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- Number of events and activities
- Participation levels in events and activities.

Increasing the use of digital services

How we will deliver it

Access to digital services, and improving skills in relation to using new and emerging forms of technology are an important part of a 21st century library service.

In the consultation on our strategy, there was some concern about ceasing older forms of technology such as CDs and DVDs, particularly for older groups. However there was strong support for promoting the use of new technologies, and so we will ensure the needs of communities who wish to use older technologies continue to be met alongside developing new forms of technology.

We will do this through:

- Supporting people to access new and emerging digital technology.
- Maintaining provision of free wifi in all libraries and providing PCs and other digital technology in our libraries.
- Continuing to deliver code clubs for children and young people.
- Developing opportunities for all ages to learn code and other important digital skills.
- Installing new forms of technology and support people to use these – for example, develop funding bids to secure a 'digital fab lab' in Wolverhampton Libraries.
- Maintaining provision of CDs and DVDs in the short term to meet community needs alongside investment in new forms of technology.
- Procuring a new e-books contract to improve the offer and support people to access these.

- Considering a scheme to borrow e-readers and other technology.
- Improving the use of social media and email marketing by the library service, set out in a clear communications and marketing plan.
- Improving the library web page and catalogue, including a calendar of events and activities.
- Providing reading software on all public PCs.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Improved skills, learning and life chances for local people
- Increased civic and community participation through:
    - *Visiting and engaging in activities in libraries*
    - *Volunteering*

Outputs

- Number of events and activities in relation to digital e.g. code clubs
- Participation levels in events and activities e.g. code clubs
- PC usage
- Wifi usage
- E-book usage
- Social media usage figures *(likes, follows and email marketing links)*

Strategic aim

Promoting and enabling health & wellbeing

How we will deliver it

Libraries in our city are a safe, non-stigmatised space that can help support better health and wellbeing outcomes for local people.

We will do this through:

- Providing accredited health information in libraries.
- Signposting people to organisations and activities that could help them improve their health and wellbeing.
- Providing events, activities and meeting spaces to help reduce social isolation.
- Providing volunteering opportunities that keep people active and engaged.
- Reviewing the Home Library Service delivery model to ensure the needs of service users continue to be met and that the service provides value for money.
- Working in partnership with health professionals to provide services that promote health and wellbeing in libraries, which may include clinical space.

How we will monitor success

Outcomes

- Improved health and wellbeing for local people
- Local people's lives are enriched with improved access to culture, literature and quality information

Outputs

- Number of activities and events for promoting health and wellbeing
- Participation in activities and events for promoting health and wellbeing
- Number of volunteers in libraries
- Number of hours volunteers in libraries

Monitoring delivery of this strategy

The outcomes and outputs identified in this strategy will form part of the performance management framework for libraries.

These will be monitored regularly by the library service, and an annual report will be published to share more widely the performance against delivering the strategy.

Appendix 1 - Action Plan

This action plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis, and formally reviewed on an annual basis.

Strategic aim
Cross cutting areas

Action	*Responsible Officer(s)*	*Timescale (to be completed by)*
Work with the community associations to extend advertised opening hours at Ashmore Park and Long Knowle libraries, to formalise longer self-serve opening hours in libraries when the community hub is open.	Chief Librarian	September 2017
Work in partnership with Low Hill Community Association to consider how self-serve opening hours can be extended through working in partnership.	Chief Librarian	December 2017
Review contract for Collingwood library following transfer of Broadway Gardens residential care home to Midland Heart.	Chief Librarian	April 2018
Commission a feasibility study on the location of Bilston Library and Craft Gallery.	Head of Service, City Economy	September 2017
Develop a central events and activities calendar for all libraries throughout the year, increasing the number of events and attendance at these each year.	Chief Librarian / Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Develop a communications and marketing plan for libraries including improved use of social media platforms.	Chief Librarian with Communications Officer	September 2017
Review and improve monitoring systems to improve customer feedback in relation to events and activities.	Chief Librarian / Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017
Improve the library web page and catalogue, including a calendar of events and activities.	Chief Librarian Senior Librarian - ICT	October 2017 - onwards
Develop a programme for regularly obtaining customer feedback and engagement	Chief Librarian / Principal Libraries Managers	September 2017 - onwards

Respond to customer feedback to ensure libraries meet the needs of local communities.	Chief Librarian	July 2017 - onwards
Develop and implement a workforce development plan for library staff.	Head of Service, City Economy Chief Librarian	December 2017
Review income generation options for the library service including maximising external funding: • Room hire options working in partnership with community associations • Fundraising opportunities / Grant Funding • Business case for improved refreshment offer in libraries	Head of Service, City Economy	December 2017 ongoing
Consider an application to the Arts Council Catalyst programme to support fundraising activity.	Head of Service, City Economy	Closing date August 2017 Notification January 2018
Ensure we meet the national 'Children's Promise' in libraries.	Principal Libraries Manager	October / November 2017 - onwards

Strategic aim

Promoting learning and improving skills

Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timescale (to be completed by)
Improve the quality of physical library spaces through a programme of improvement works to libraries, starting with those that have had no recent investment to ensure there are safe, welcoming spaces for all people to learn and share knowledge in libraries.	Libraries Transformation Project Manager	July 2017 – December 2018
Improve the quality of physical library spaces by providing study areas for students	Libraries Transformation Project Manager	July 2017 – December 2018
Ensure on-going maintenance works in all libraries are completed in a timely manner to maximise access to space for all people to learn and share knowledge in libraries.	Chief Librarian with Corporate Landlord	July 2017 - onwards
Ensure effective signposting to learning, skills and employment opportunities including Wolves@Work.	Chief Librarian	September 2017 - onwards
Develop informing learning sessions as part of the events/activities calendar.	Chief Librarian	September 2017 - onwards
Continue to feed in to the developing City Learning Quarter proposals.	Head of Service, City Economy	July 2017 - onwards

Supporting reading and literacy

Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timescale (to be completed by)
Commission a new stock services contract with other Black Country libraries to maximise value for money and meet the needs of customers.	Chief Librarian	August 2017
Explore options for 'dynamic stock' systems to ensure stock is well rotated across the network of libraries in Wolverhampton	Chief Librarian	April 2018
Implement a new Library Management System including catalogue.	Chief Librarian	October 2017 - onwards
Support reading and poetry groups in libraries.	Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Hold a series of events and activities that promote and support reading, including: • Book Start Week • Summer Reading Challenge • Develop city reading book lists /challenges • Author led events	Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Ensure we meet the national 'Children's Promise' in libraries.	Principal Libraries Managers	October /November 2017 - onwards
Review the Education Library Service delivery model to ensure that library resources are focussed on improving literacy.	Head of Service, City Economy with Education	April 2018
Develop project with Registration Services to offer library membership as part of registering of a birth.	Libraries Transformation Project Manager	April 2018 - onwards

Widening access to quality information

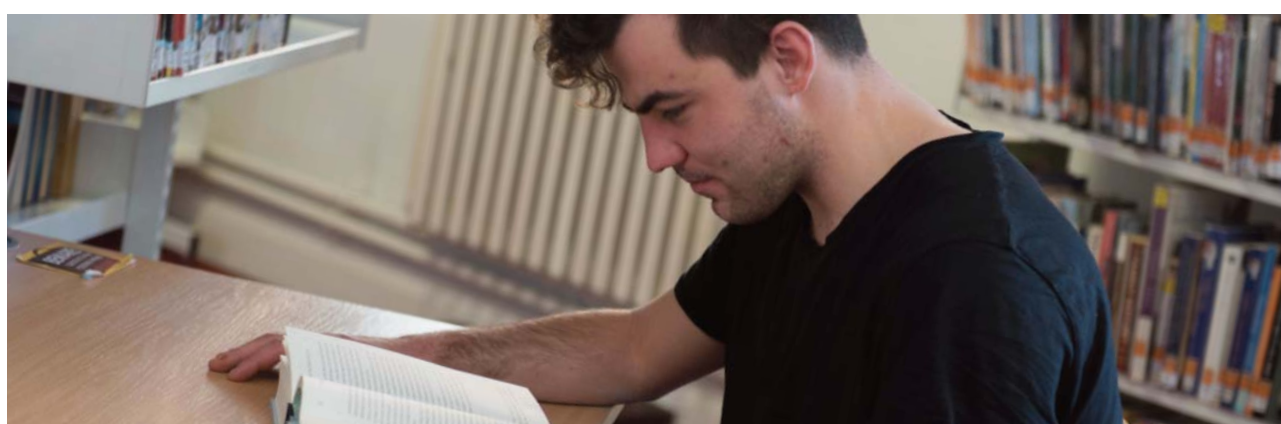| *Action*	*Responsible Officer(s)*	*Timescale (to be completed by)*
Review resources to aid businesses, self-development and self-help as part of the new stock contract.	Principal Libraries Managers	December 2017 - onwards
Develop partnerships to widen the information offer provided through libraries.	Chief Librarian	September 2017 - onwards
Ensure work with partners to widen access to information in libraries is included in the events calendar and promote these sessions.	Chief Librarian	September 2017 - onwards
Ensure we meet the national 'six steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people'	Principal Libraries Managers	December 2018

Strategic aim
Broadening access to culture

Action	*Responsible Officer(s)*	*Timescale (to be completed by)*
Increasing intergration between libraries and cultural services following the successful National Portfolio Organisation funding bid from the Arts Council England	Head of Service, City Economy with Head of Visitor Economy	March 2018
Working in partnership, develop a programme of art and cultural themed events and activities in libraries, such as the Literature Festival, and include these on the events calendar.	Principal Libraries Managers	April 2018
Work with community and local organisations to deliver local cultural activities and events, such as the local history display and event with Wednesfield History Society.	Chief Librarian, Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Lead a Grants for the arts funding bid to Arts Council for the city to secure support for the developing Literature Festival proposition.	Head of Service, City Economy	July 2017
Review actions and activity in light of the forthcoming national Society for Chief Librarian's recommendations in this area.	Head of Service, City Economy and Chief Librarian	September 2017 - onwards

Increasing the use of digital services

Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timescale (to be completed by)
Continue to deliver code clubs for children and young people.	Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Develop opportunities for all ages to learn code skills.	Principal Libraries Managers	September 2017 - onwards
Install new forms of technology and support people to use these in libraries – including digital touch screen tables	Chief Librarian	March 2018
Explore funding opportunities to develop a 'digital fab lab' in Wolverhampton Libraries as part of the 'smart city agenda'.	Head of Service, City Economy	March 2018
Procure a new e-books contract to improve the offer and support people to access	Chief Librarian Principal Libraries Managers	December 2017
Review the e-audio provision to reflect emerging technologies	Chief Librarian Principal Libraries Manager	December 2017
Consider a scheme to borrow e-readers and other technology.	Chief Librarian Senior Librarian - ICT	March 2018
Improve social media and email marketing by the library service	Chief Librarian	July 2017 - onwards
Improve the library web page and catalogue	Chief Librarian Senior Librarian - ICT	October 2017 - onwards
Implement email and text message services instead of post alerts for overdue library books and fines.	Chief Librarian Senior Librarian - ICT	October 2017 - onwards
Improve self-serve facilities to include PC booking and other council services	Chief Librarian Senior Librarian - ICT	October 2017 - onwards

Promoting and enabling health & wellbeing

Action	*Responsible Officer(s)*	*Timescale (to be completed by)*
Work with Public Health to develop and submit funding bids to the 'Engaging Library' project, led by the Carnegie UK Trust to develop engagement ideas with health and wellbeing at their heart.	Head of Service, City Economy with Public Health	October 2017 Implementation by October 2018
Review the provision of self help health resources in libraries in conjunction with Public Health.	Chief Librarian with Public Health	March 2018 - onwards
Ensure health and wellbeing themed events are included in the improved events offer across all libraries, alongside a wide range of events and activities that help to reduce social isolation.	Chief Librarian Principal Libraries Managers	July 2017 - onwards
Continue to deliver and development Memory Matters - expert advice and information signposting service	Chief Librarian	July 2017 - onwards
Improve co-ordination of volunteers across the library network to increase the number of opportunities available, working with key partners such as the VSC. Also promote library volunteering opportunities as part of the City of Wolverhampton employee volunteering scheme.	Chief Librarian	December 2017
Review the Home Library Service provision to ensure the service is appropriate to need	Head of Service - City Economy	July 2017 - onwards

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wolverhampton.gov.uk**/mylibraryservice**

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