

Communities Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Library and Information Service update
Date of meeting:	7 September 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe - Executive Director Communities and Environmental Services
Strategic impact This report outlines the achievements of the Library and Information Service in 2015/16 and asks Members to discuss the outcomes and to consider elements of service delivery and development that could be built in to service planning for 2017-18	

Executive summary

This report outlines the performance of Norfolk Library and Information Service for 2015/16.

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 is the law that makes public libraries a statutory service. It requires relevant local authorities - in this case Norfolk County Council - to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service.

The Service continues to support reading, learning and information across the County. Total visits were over 10.5 million, with 3.89 million physical visits and 6.67 million virtual visits. 5 million items were borrowed.

The service was delivered through 47 buildings, 10 mobiles, and a self-financing Education Library Service. It provides services to residential settings and housebound people and is contracted by Central Government through the National Offender Management Service to deliver a service in the three prisons.

Targets set in the service plan were delivered and the service worked independently and in partnership with a wide range of public sector and community organisations to enhance provision and to reach people who can most benefit from access to reading, learning and information. This has included increased activity in supporting digital literacy.

The budget in 2015/16 was £9.317M. The service will need to be clear on priorities as capacity to deliver against all objectives continues to reduce. Engaging with customers, communities and partners to help identify future demand will be important.

Recommendations:

- 1. Consider the performance of the Library Service in the 2015/16 financial year.**
- 2. Consider elements of service delivery and development that could be built in to service planning for 2017/18.**
- 3. Agree that the service should continue to focus on supporting the development of digital literacy skills.**

1. Background

- 1.1 This report outlines the performance of the Norfolk Library and Information Service (NLIS) for 2015/16.

- 1.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 is the law that makes public libraries a statutory service. It requires relevant local authorities - in this case Norfolk County Council - to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service.
- 1.3 Libraries in Norfolk are located in the heart of communities and provide free access to reading, media, IT and information services to citizens of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. By supporting literacy in all its forms – reading, digital, health and social literacy - libraries contribute to supporting people's lives at a neighbourhood and locality level. They enable those who could become isolated by their lack of skills, geographic location or ability to pay to have access to social contact, information and learning.
- 1.4 Library staff play an important role in supporting customers to make best use of services by helping them access information, to learn digital skills and encouraging literacy for people of all ages. Staff are also skilled at supporting people who are facing challenges in their lives whether from unemployment, bereavement or other difficult life situations. Their knowledge of local contacts and other services and of opportunities along with their empathy and care for people means that there are increasing numbers of examples of how staff have guided and supported individuals resulting in positive changes to their lives.
- 1.5 Services are delivered in a variety of ways to meet the needs of customers; there are 47 libraries across the County; a Virtual Library; Mobile Libraries serving 500 rural communities; the Home Library Service providing a reading service to isolated housebound people with the help of volunteers; Prison Libraries delivered under contract to the National Offender Management Service, the self-funded Education Library Service and services to hospitals and care-homes. An army of volunteers give their valuable support and help to ensure that the service responds to community needs.
- 1.6 The service works in partnership with a wide range of public sector and community organisations to enhance service provision, to help to develop communities and to bring libraries to those who can most benefit from access to reading, learning and information.

2. NCC Priorities

- 2.1 The key target groups are:-

Children & Young People	Families	Vulnerable People	Unemployed people	Older People
Babies, Toddlers and young Children	Early help offer for families (pre-birth to five)	With mental and physical health considerations	Young people out-of-work and NEETs (not in employment, education and training)	Retired people
School age children for educational support and a safe space	Families with challenging lifestyles who are less likely to read	Experiencing poverty, deprivation and low literacy	Unemployed People in need of new skills	Older people with minimal support networks

Teenagers – school support, entertainment and a safe place	Families looking for events, experiences and entertainment who are less likely to read	Migrant individuals and families		Older people to better equip themselves with skills
Young people in further and higher education		Displaced and transient communities		Older people who are lonely
Looked after children				

3. The year in numbers

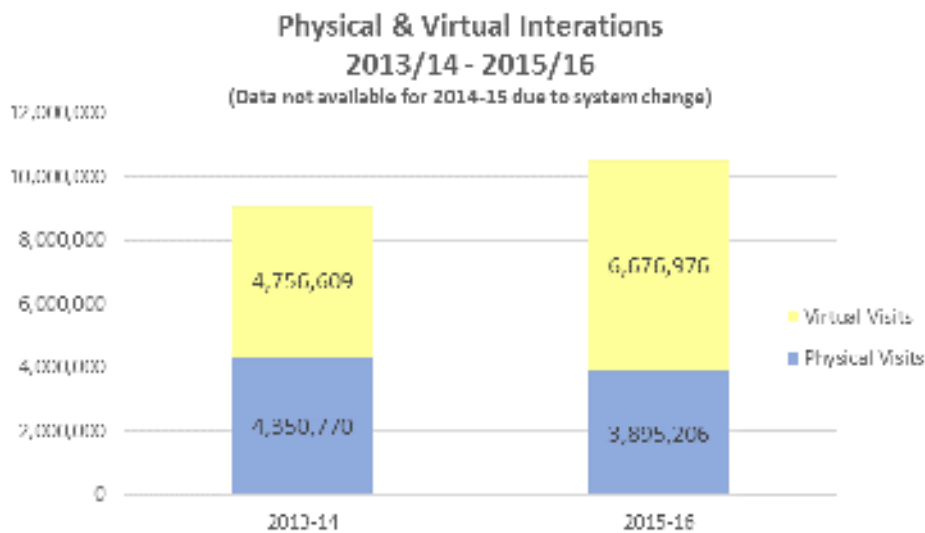
3.1 Visits

Physical visits	3.89million
Virtual visits	6.67million
Items borrowed	5.0million
Log-ins to public library computers	740,000
Volunteers	654 individuals 21,650 volunteer hours
Active users as % of population	22.4%
Visits to library webpages	2,892,000
Norfolk population that has borrowed an item in the last year	15.4%

3.2 Customers have continued to increase their use of the service via self service functions. Virtual interactions including downloading e-media, communicating through social media and using the service online have continued to increase in the past year. For example there were 2.89 million accesses to web pages while 106,000 e books and 23,000 e audio were downloaded from personal computers.

3.3 Communication with our customers and promoting the service through social media has become increasingly important. Last year we communicated 41,000 times on Twitter for example. The measure of success of communicating via social media is called a Klout Score – influence based on ability to drive action on social media.

Comparisons with Statistical Neighbours shows NLIS at 61 (60 in July 2015), North Yorkshire 53(+1), The Hive Worcestershire 52, Staffordshire 54(+2), Suffolk 52(+1), Cambridgeshire 50.



4. Achievements

4.1 There were many actions and promotions that helped contribute outcomes. Below are a small sample:-

4.1.1 Norfolk's **Great Big Read**, to help customers choose through recommendation, borrow an extra item and get into the reading and borrowing habit. The promotion – Shakespeare Re Written was themed to tie in with the 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare.

4.1.2 With funding from Arts Council England we delivered **Norfolk Digifest** in February 2016. 106 events were held in libraries to encourage local people to get the most from the free Wi-Fi available in every library.

"Prior to the course I had no idea of how to even switch on a Tablet, so it has increased my confidence hugely"

"Downloading & listening to audiobooks is fantastic, I just set it to play and relax with my eyes closed."

4.1.3 We helped just under 13,000 children and young people to maintain and develop their reading skills through the summer with the **Summer Reading Challenge** – for less than £1.20 per child for the materials. Public Health contributed £5,000 towards the cost of pre-school materials and publicity.

146 young people volunteered to help the service with the challenge.

'I very much enjoyed the challenge as I got to create a piece of artwork inspired by the books I've read. I read thicker books this time which I found more interesting and discovered a new author.' Girl 14

"It was great because it helped me to improve my reading – and I don't read very much. I am looking forward to my medal" Boy 11

For the 4th year running a mobile library was used during the summer to reach children who may not visit libraries and to reach families who do not read. 26 visits were made in 2015 (in 2014 21 visits were made). Library staff worked with partners including UEA student ambassadors at visits to Queen's Hill in Bowthorpe - they provided puzzles, colouring and games as well as invaluable

adult interaction and encouragement especially for children where parents were less engaged in the reading challenge.

The estimated number of visitors for 2015 was 686 (In 2014 visitor numbers are estimated at 474)

"It's good to see people working together to do something like this for the community in one big thing" Queen's Hill Tuesdays

- 4.1.4 The NLIS **volunteer programme** has been going for 4 years now and last year 654 volunteers of all ages contributed 21,650 hours to 46 out of 47 libraries offering their time to support reading and learning, digital literacy, job seekers, and to help reduce social isolation. The estimated monetary value of hours contributed was £152,510.40, the equivalent of 11.10 fte

Volunteers enable the service to develop and keep relevant and over the past year a number of new roles have been created to reflect how the service is changing and responding to new challenges. New volunteer roles developed in 2015 include, Reading Champions, Colouring Group coordinators, oral history volunteers, coding club volunteers, and roles to support reminiscence and older people.

People volunteer in libraries for all kinds of reasons, but some people volunteer to get experience in a particular area of work and volunteering with NLIS has paid dividends for many people who have succeeded in pursuing their career goals or gaining employment as a result of their volunteer time with the service.

- 4.1.5 The service launched the Norfolk Library and Information Service **Get Digital** programme, aimed at encouraging Norfolk citizens to get on line. Many aspects of our society and economy are now accessed digitally and being digitally excluded reinforces social exclusion and poverty. Those people likely to be digitally excluded are older and disabled people, those who live in social housing, those on lower incomes, unemployed people– these also are the key audiences for libraries in the County.

The Library Get Digital learning offer is aimed at those people who need support to get online. It is a modular programme where learners can learn at their own pace in their local library with the training delivered by both library and Norfolk Community Learning Services staff supported by volunteers. People can learn on a variety of devices including tablets and smartphones. Over the past year we have shown over 350 older people how to use tablets in libraries across the county – a 9 hour fun and interactive course. The oldest person we have helped get digital was almost 100 years old.

Funding to help deliver the programme for the current year has been obtained from the Forum Trust, and the service proposes to explore funding streams to be able to continue to deliver this important element of its work.

"Everything about learning more on how to use iPad/tablets gives me more confidence in what to do and enjoy"

- 4.1.6 **Joined the British Library BIPC network**

Following our very successful work in supporting business start-ups, the Business Library at the Norfolk and Norwich Library has been chosen to pilot a Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) dedicated to supporting local

entrepreneurs to start, run and grow their own businesses. While based in Norwich, the Centre supports businesses from across the County. The centre is part of a network of eight others across the UK based on the successful British Library Business and IP Centre in London. Over the past three years Business and IP Centres have been created in city libraries in Birmingham, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Exeter, Hull and Northampton.

“Just spent an evening being inspired by successful entrepreneurs and saving a trip to London!”

4.1.7 **Healthy libraries project**

We started a joint project involving Norfolk Library and Information Service and Norfolk Public Health. Our project is developing all 47 libraries as health and well-being hubs using the strengths of both services to promote healthier living in Norfolk.

Libraries already do a lot to make a difference to Health Outcomes including helping to deliver the national Universal Health Offer for libraries. Healthy Libraries builds on existing library assets:

- A network of local hubs offering non-clinical community space
- Community outreach supporting vulnerable people
- Expert staff with local knowledge
- Assisted on-line access
- Health and care information services
- Referral and signposting
- Public health promotion activity
- National reading programmes
- Social and recreational reading opportunities
- Volunteering and community engagement activities
- Books on Prescription schemes

“It made healthy eating fun and attractive to my children”

“I got a pair of good sturdy slippers which will help me around the house”

“This has given me more confidence in helping in emergencies”

4.1.8 **Shared reading**

Shared reading is a bibliotherapy which is about reading creatively; using books, stories and poems to make people feel better, in themselves, about themselves and about others.

In 2015 over 400 people participated in the NLIS shared reading programme and we worked with a number of partners and their clients across the county including MIND, the Stroke Association, Headway, community psychiatric nurses, Adult Social Care, and the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind.

‘My role as a carer for my husband with Alzheimer’s means that I sometimes go for days without talking to someone other than my husband, and he is no longer capable of sustained conversation. The shared reading group is my ‘me time’ and gives me the opportunity to talk to other people’

4.1.9 **Customer survey**

A recent sample survey of adult customers resulted in 1493 responses, around 1% of active library users. 59% of those who completed the survey were over the age of 55, and 72% were female.

39% of respondents visit a Norfolk library every week while 47% visit every

month.

95% of respondents borrow books while 40% visit to use computers of Wi-Fi 97% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the friendliness of staff and 95% with the skill of staff. This compares with 84% satisfied with the choice of books and 61% satisfied with the public computers.

78% said they were satisfied with the opening hours, and there was a demand for Saturday and Sunday opening.

For the first time the service asked customers what the benefits are of using the library. The following percentages are for those who agreed or strongly agreed:

89% - reading more

83% learning more

83% getting the information they need

72% feeling happier

57% making positive connections with other people

51% feeling less isolated

38% feeling more confident

5. Looking ahead

5.1 Friends Groups

In 2015/16 a number of Friends Groups were established and are working alongside NLIS to raise funds and to develop activities and services at a local level, notably in Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Wells and the Music Library.

Friends Groups are a vital part of keeping libraries at the heart of communities, in developing the library's role as a community hub and ensuring that libraries are relevant and accessible to the whole community. The support of the local County Councillor is invaluable in establishing the role for the groups.

The Service is aiming to establish a group for each library.

5.2 Norfolk Festival of Stories.

A grant from Arts Council England is enabling NLIS to offer a month-long festival of stories and storytelling to be held in Norfolk's 47 libraries in Autumn 2016, exploring the spoken word tradition in Norfolk, the UK and beyond. Aimed at both children and adults, the festival will have more than 50 events which include performance and workshops led by professional storytellers. It will build capacity and skills within library staff to organise and manage arts events in libraries and ensure that libraries in rural areas are creative spaces. It will result in a handbook for other libraries in England to adapt and use.

5.3 Music Mirrors

Memory loss is a normal part of ageing, but it can also be the result of dementia or other conditions affecting our brain. Whatever the reason, one way of holding on to our personal memories is to hook them up to the music that has meant something to us.

Music Mirrors helps people at an early stage of memory loss — or even before that — to make very simple sound recordings which link their life stories told in their own words to recorded music. This is done in such a way that the words and music are easily portable to follow someone all through their journey. If they move from one care setting to another or go into hospital, the information can readily be passed to help them connect with unfamiliar carers who might have

few other clues for getting to know them.

A music mirrors programme is being developed at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library.

- People with memory loss work with trained volunteers at the earliest possible stage so that they can have the maximum input and satisfaction in making their own Music Mirror.
- Volunteers talk to them about their lives and the music that has been part of it.
- The volunteer condenses the conversation into about a dozen sentences. This needs to be short enough to be read and easily taken in by a busy care worker.
- Once the person with memory problems feels happy with the words, they are written as an e-mail, and each reference to music matched with a link to a suitable version of the music on YouTube
- This document with the links, or a hard copy, can be shared or sent wherever it is needed. It is a resource for talking, reminiscing, comfort and information and may help to hold together and reflect back to someone an identity which has become fragile with time.

5.4 **History Pin connections**

The service is working with libraries in Leeds and with Museums in Tyne and Wear on a project that will gather the everyday stories of older people to add a personal perspective to local history.

The service wants to gather the “history in people’s heads” and is working with older people to create digital life story scrapbooks which will become part of a community archive and can be shared with friends and family. These will be a wonderful record of the past through local people’s eyes.

We create these scrapbooks by recording audio interviews/conversations with people, transcribing interesting snippets, and illustrating these with people’s own photographs or photographs from our archival collections. These scrapbooks are digital and online, but can be printed.

The service has a project worker who is currently recruiting volunteers from across the county who can set up local groups or who can work one-on-one with people to record their stories through organisations like day centres and dementia cafes. A number of Time Traveller Groups are being developed across the county as part of this project

5.5 **Self Service access**

Acle Library has now completed a year of self service access, and the services is exploring ways of increasing the amount of self service access still further, opening the library in the evening and on Saturday afternoons using Self Service.

At the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, the first floor is accessible by customers from 8am to 10am via self service.

Plans to increase the number of libraries that can expand their opening hours

using self service technology are still going ahead, using the £100k that the Communities Committee agreed at its meeting in May 2016

The following libraries have been selected to introduce self service customer access in the coming months: Poringland, Attleborough, Martham, Hethersett Aylsham , Long Stratton

The service is carrying out a tender process to select a supplier of the technology to introduce Customer Access Self Service to these libraries and have recently engaged a project manager to ensure that the introduction of the technology happens in the autumn.

5.6 Library App

In the constant quest to meet customer expectations, the service has just launched a mobile phone App, which will allow customers to keep track of their library account and to manage their loans and account information, making it easier to renew their items wherever they are. This technology helps to make customer self-service more accessible and quick.

The app can be used to search for books and place holds on interesting items, and to download e-books, e-audio books and magazines. The camera on a customer's phone can be used to scan the barcode on a book, CD, DVD or other item to see if there are any available copies at a local library.

5.7 Review of Education Library Service

Schools pay to use the Education Library Service (ELS) and use and income have been reducing with cuts to school budgets as well as the conversion of schools to academies and Multi Academy Trusts.

As a result of the shortfall officers are reviewing the service to identify the benefits of ELS provision to schools and the priority requirements of school customers.

One early action has been to change the name of the service from the School Library Service to the Education Library Service to ensure that Academies and Trusts are aware that they can buy in to the service.

6. Finance

6.1 There are no financial issues arising directly as a result of this report.

7. Issues, risks and innovation

7.1 The service works hard to be responsive to customer and community needs and to deliver innovative solutions. The service will need to be clear on priorities as capacity to deliver against all objectives continues to reduce. Engaging with customers, communities and partners to help identify future demand will be important.

8. Background

8.1 [Report on Self Service Access Pilot Report - 29 June 2016](#)
[Finance Report - 11 May 2016](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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