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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Foreword by the Lead Member for Culture and Community Engagement

We have to make some difficult decisions over the next few months, decisions that will impact on the services that we run and offer. But one thing that will not be lost is the importance that our libraries have in our communities. They allow teenagers extra space to study for their GCSEs and A-Levels, our elderly community a place to learn new skills such as IT, or just give people a quiet space to read. This is why in Havering, unlike many other places across the country, we don't want to shut any of our libraries. Once they are closed they will be lost forever.

Our proposals outline what we are calling, 'partnership' libraries, and mean that we will protect all 10 of our library buildings. They will remain libraries, to have the same amount of books and the same amount of computers that we all enjoy right now. However, to sustain this, in light of the considerable savings we must make, we need to make some changes. So to keep our libraries as they are, we will need to make reductions in the opening hours and ask members of the community to help support our libraries through volunteering. And we will support all of our volunteers with training and resources. Our commitment to libraries is outlined in the following document and I look forward to receiving views and ideas throughout this consultation on this strategy.

Councillor Melvin Wallace

1.2 A changing Context:

Havering has a strong and highly successful library service. It offers value for money, is popular with residents and engages effectively with the community and a large number of volunteers. Over the last few years it has built a virtual presence and has a large following through its popular website and Twitter accounts.

The existing library strategy is now being refreshed in the light of the Council's financial position. Like many councils, Havering is facing significant budget reductions. The budget will need to reduce by £60m over the next four years. This comes on top of a reduction of £40m in the Council's budget between 2010 and 2014. The £60m saving represents approximately one third of the Council's controllable expenditure. Under these circumstances the Council needs to review all of its expenditure and to prioritise and review the way it delivers its services and the level at which those services are delivered.

The libraries service is a statutory service in that councils have a legal duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964; but there is no definition as to what this means in practice. What is clear, though, is a reduction in existing services does not necessarily mean that a council is no longer providing a comprehensive and efficient service, as the outcome of various challenges to service reductions across the country has shown.

The scale of the budget reductions that are required in Havering makes it inevitable that the Library Service's budget will reduce, but this does not mean that the services enjoyed by users will inevitably reduce, albeit opening hours will reduce under the proposals and retaining services beyond a "core offer" will require the Library service staff to be supported by trained volunteers. There are examples across the country where councils have used alternative delivery methods to reduce the impact of budget reductions and ensure that a comprehensive and efficient library service continues to be provided. This is the challenge for Havering Council: how can significant savings be achieved and the impact on the service offered to users be reduced as little as possible.

Chapter 2 of this Strategy (section 2.4) sets out how this challenge can be addressed, by proposing a new delivery model for the Library Service in Havering.

Chapter 3 sets out and reinforces the Council's understanding of the intrinsic value of libraries and in particular their contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community. Despite the changes set out in Chapter 2, the Council will continue to operate its library service the context of an understanding of the unique importance of the libraries in the life of our community.

1.3 About the Library Strategy

The new Library Strategy 2015-17 has the same purpose, objectives and principles as the previous Library Strategy 2013-15.

Reflecting the current Culture Strategy, our Library Strategy for 2015-17 remains driven by the very simple **ambition**:

"To transform lives through participation in, and enjoyment of, reading and a wide range of library services"

The **purpose** of the Library Strategy is to:

'Provide focus and added value to the efforts of everyone involved in the planning and provision of library services, linked to a very clear view of what will be achieved by 2017'.

The **Objectives and Principles** of our strategy are also based on those of the Culture Strategy:

OBJECTIVE 1: Health and Wellbeing Support a high standard of mental, physical and emotional health for all by increasing engagement with the Library Service and develop initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce social isolation and increase wellbeing.	**OBJECTIVE 2: Learning and Development** Support learning outcomes and personal development for all ages through our innovative Library Service, delivering informal learning opportunities, developing literacy and enhancing our digital offer.	**OBJECTIVE 3: Towns and Communities** Enriching our local towns and communities by increasing engagement in libraries, as focal points for our communities. Reinforcing the role of libraries as community hubs for learning, social activity and enjoyment.

PRINCIPLE 1: Community Empowerment Promote more active engagement in service delivery, from consultation, to volunteering, to devolving services to the local community.	**PRINCIPLE 2: Work in Partnership** Continue to work with our partners, internal and external, and regionally across borough boundaries, to achieve shared objectives.
PRINCIPLE 3: Inclusion & Cohesion Be smarter about collecting information on our customers and communities. Target new audiences and broaden access to our services, breaking down barriers to engagement where these exist, facilitating social progress and improved quality of life.	**PRINCIPLE 4: Good Value Services** Continue to develop innovative, modern and efficient methods of service delivery, including through volunteers, thereby maintaining the high quality of our services against a backdrop of reduced budgets, and ensuring that activities are evaluated effectively to retain a focus on outcomes for local people.

CHAPTER 2: Where are we now and how can we respond to the challenges?

2.1 What services do we currently provide?

The Library Service is currently responsible for the management and development of:

- 10 library buildings – with each branch having an extensive physical book stock, free PC access for customers and free Wi-Fi access, and each running events and activities which are tailored to the local community.
- 1 Virtual Library – providing 24/7 access to a wide range of on-line materials including dictionaries, art and music resources, driving and citizenship tests, encyclopaedias, study and homework help, family and local history resources, legal and business resources, online courses, foreign language courses, newspapers and magazine access, and access to e-books and audio books.
- Reader Development Team – developing and promoting library services to children, young people and adults, managing safeguarding across the service, and working with the branches to deliver our event programme.
- Housebound Service – for people who are housebound either for a temporary period of time (i.e. coming out of hospital) or as an on-going service for people who meet the criteria.
- Links to schools on literacy work.
- Local Studies and Family History Centre – providing access to local and family history collections, holding exhibitions and talks to the local community, and providing support for research.
- Stock Team – managing the stock using a range of IT support systems, in order to provide the right stock at the right price at the right place. We also share a Stock Manager with London Borough of Enfield.

In addition, we are:

- Well underway in our programme of building refurbishments, with nine buildings already completed, and a new library in Harold Hill shortly to go into construction.
- Involved in partnerships with several visiting services, i.e. Age Concern, Arthritis Care, CAB, JobNet, Community Police events, local sports groups and support groups.
- Providing support to the Havering Museum.
- Running a very well supported volunteer programme.

2.2 Achievements since the last strategy

Just a few of our achievements in Libraries since our last strategy (2013-15) include:

- Work about to start to construct the new Harold Hill library
- The new library in Rainham opened (July 2014)
- The Library Service was shortlisted in the Local Government Chronicle awards for its Volunteers programme;
- Expanded our volunteering opportunities;
- Assisted in expanding the London Libraries Consortium to 17 members
- Delivered a series of events associated with the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Delivered a series of events associated with the commemoration of the centenary of WW1
- Produced a Literacy Strategy
- Digitised the Local Studies and Family History collections
- Achieved the Customer Service Excellence award

2.3 SWOT analysis

In preparing this new strategy we have prepared a SWOT analysis of our current position and the potential implications of reducing budgets over the next four years.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Location and condition of our buildings - Providing an inclusive service - We have 24/7 access to a large range of services including reference, training and educational support - Support of our Council and recognition of the intrinsic importance of and community value of our libraries - Strong leadership from Members and officers of the Council - Well trained and committed workforce - High customer satisfaction with our services - Delivering an extensive, popular and well attended event programme - Strong community engagement and volunteer support - Strong partnerships with internal services and external organisations using our buildings - An innovative and forward thinking service	- Some of the income targets for room letting are challenging - Committed staff may feel demotivated by service changes - Anxiety from the community about the changes
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Use of new technologies to attract new borrowers and expand our reach in the community - Our trained staff will improve the customer experience - How libraries respond to the 'Digital Age' - Opportunities to generate new income through new charging arrangements, donations, philanthropy etc - Ability to build on our strong volunteering base - Ability to develop our good quality library buildings into community hubs - Opportunity to work more closely communities around branch libraries in each local area - Benefit of experience of learning from co-operative library services delivered elsewhere	- Requirements to make budget savings in an increasingly difficult economic climate - Maintaining the relevance of libraries to the local community, including through new technologies - Maintaining the current range of services, including events, in the context of the proposed reduced opening hours - Reduced ability to generate income as a result of the proposed reduced opening hours - Impact of the proposals on staff, which will impact on the service provided - Future of the housebound service pending a change in delivery model - Future of the local studies and family history service pending a change in delivery model

2.4 Responding to a changing Context – developing a "Partnership" Library Service

Significant reductions to the Library Service budget are required as the Council faces up to the challenge of finding savings. This means that the library service will be working in an entirely new context in the next three years. In considering how to face the future the Council has considered changes made in other parts of the country and the latest advice from the Arts Council.

The Arts Council, in their report: "Community Libraries: Learning from Experience: Summary Briefing for Local Authorities" (January 2013), have identified two main types of "community libraries" that have emerged across the country in the last few years:

1. "Independent community libraries", where there is no public sector involvement;

2. "Co-produced Libraries", where there is both public sector and community involvement.

Havering Council propose to adopt the "co-produced libraries" model, believing it important that a core team of professional library staff are retained to provide a bed rock for the service. Their experience and skills are considered vital to underpinning the library service offer and to help motivate, train and develop the increased number of volunteers who will be required to help run the service. In fact there are three types of "co-produced library" sub models identified in the Arts Council report: Havering Council proposes to adopt the "community supported" sub model, where the service is Council led and funded, with professional staff employed, but with significant support from volunteers.

In Havering we propose to call the Library Service the "Partnership Library Service", so that the vital role that is to be played by both volunteers and council employed staff is recognised.

Havering Council believes the current significant involvement of volunteers, the quality of that involvement and their commitment provides strong evidence that the "Partnership Library Service" model can work. The input of volunteers, however, cannot be assumed and the Council will have to work hard to both retain the existing volunteers and encourage involvement from new volunteers. To ensure the new delivery model is a success and to ensure that this Strategy is achieved, the Council estimate that the number of volunteers will need to increase by up to 100% in the next two years. A separate Volunteer Strategy for the Library Service will be written to ensure that this target is reached. The role of the partners will be set out in this Strategy.

The Volunteer Strategy will set out how the Council intends to:

1. Learn from and apply best practice from around the country;
2. Retain the existing volunteers working with the Library Service;
3. Work with the voluntary and community sector to encourage new volunteers to join the service;

4. Market and communicate the volunteering opportunities that will become available;
5. Train and develop the volunteers so that they are able to help manage the library buildings;
6. How the volunteers will be motivated to continue with their volunteering over an extended period of time;
7. How the deployment of volunteers will be organised and managed across the service.

The new delivery model proposes that the current library building managers are retained to provide leadership and management expertise in each library building (as they currently do) and that they are supported by a small team of staff, to ensure that there are always at least two Library staff on duty at any one time, during the "core opening hours" (the core opening hours are highlighted below). It is proposed that a small central team of peripatetic staff are also employed to provide cover for annual leave, sickness etc. It is further proposed that trained volunteers work alongside paid staff during the "core opening hours" and, where they are willing to do so, they work by themselves to extend the opening hours beyond the core offer.

The day to day management of the volunteers working in libraries will be the responsibility of the relevant Library manager, but the overall responsibility for co-ordinating and developing the volunteer programme will be led by a retained post in the Reader Development team

Havering Council has decided to avoid building closures and prioritise the continued opening of the existing 10 library buildings, for the following reasons:

- The importance of retaining libraries buildings in the town centres and communities in which they are based;
- The importance of ensuring that the current accessibility of the libraries is maintained, particularly for disabled people, for those people who have mobility problems and for those people who do not have access to a car;
- Avoiding building closures (which could result in the disposal of those buildings) means that future investment in those services remains possible, assuming greater levels of funding become available at some point in the future. Closing library buildings means that they will almost certainly be lost forever.

If all of the buildings are to be retained, which is proposed, the only realistic way of making significant budget savings is to reduce the opening hours, which in turn means reducing the number of staff employed by the Library service and reducing the number of staff on duty at any one time. At first glance this sounds as if the service to users will significantly reduce, but this need not be the case: in fact, it is the Council's intention to retain as much of the existing service as possible through a new delivery model (or business model) for the Library Service. Increasing the number and involvement of volunteers, working alongside professional staff, is at the heart of the new delivery model.

2.5 What will happen to each of our Libraries?

The new delivery model proposes five of our libraries, Romford, Hornchurch, Upminster, Harold Hill and Rainham opening at least 6 days and 50 hours a week. These have been chosen to provide a good geographical spread across the borough, so that wherever people live, there will be a library open within a reasonable distance each day (Monday – Saturday).

The remaining five libraries (Elm Park, South Hornchurch, Collier Row, Harold Wood and Gidea Park) will open at least 24 hours a week. Even for the libraries with reduced opening hours, these would include evening periods and Saturday opening. As set out above, these hours would be the "core opening hours" (i.e. the minimum opening hours); but the intention would be to increase those opening hours, with the help of trained volunteers. It would also be the intention to further engage with the community to see what use they would like to make of the buildings.

It is intended that the "Partnership Library Service" model will be extended to include the delivery of the Local Studies and Family History Service, the Housebound Service and the work of the Reader Development team with volunteers and local communities increasingly leading the development of these services with the support of professional staff.

The proposed new delivery model for the Library Service retains the existing book stock and computer budgets, so library users should have access to the same range of book stock and computer services as they do now; plus users will also be able to access the same level of service through the London Library Consortium (LLC). The Council's leading role within the LCC will need to be reviewed in the light of reduced management resources.

The new delivery model envisages the Library Service developing new ways to generate income through new membership arrangements, philanthropy, donations and sponsorship, using the experience of Library authorities, such as Northamptonshire, as a base to work from. A change of emphasis in the Culture and Leisure Marketing team will result in one post spending a significant amount of time on income generation in the Library service.

The Library Service will experience significant change in the next two years as it moves to a different delivery model. This transformation will have a significant impact on staff, as well as the services that can be provided to the public, during a period of transition. The Action Plan for the next three years, included as Chapter 4 of this strategy, therefore focuses on trying to retain as much of the current service offer as possible; albeit the service will take advantage of new opportunities to develop and transform where resources allow…..and the service can look forward to both the development of services at the new Rainham and Harold Hill Libraries in the next two years.

The new model in retaining all library buildings, allows the continuation and development of the use of these buildings by the community, for the activities to promote the health and wellbeing of the local community.

2.6 Demographic Changes

Havering's Culture Strategy summarises the demographic changes facing the borough over the next few years, to which the Library Service, like all Council services and partners, need to respond.

- **An ageing population**

The 2011 census calculated the average age for residents in Havering as 40 – the highest average age in London and above the England average. 17.9% of residents were over 65 and 2.6% were over 85. The percentage of older people is due to increase significantly over the next few years. In 2011 there were 1,937 people over 90, by the end of this strategy (2015) there will be 2,496, and by 2021 there will be 3,297 (a 70% increase).

- **Increasing children and young people**

The 2011 census found 5.8% of Havering's population were under 5s – the lowest in London (though set to increase by 15% in 2015 and by 23% in 2021). The 5-9 bracket is currently about average for London, but is set to increase significantly over the next few years (from 13,307 in 2011 to 15,157 in 2015 and 18,424 in 2021 – a 38% increase).

An estimated 19% of children are thought to live in poverty in Havering, 27% live in lone-parent families, and approximately 400 families have been categorised as having multiple complex needs, with a further 2,000 families categorised as 'barely coping'.

- **Ethnicity**

The population of Havering is the least ethnically diverse in London, but it is becoming more diverse. The number of overseas nationals registering to work who live in Havering has increased by 41.5% over the last five years, with Nigerian, Polish and Indian nationals as the predominant groups. The highest ethnic diversity in Havering is amongst young people, with 23% of school pupils in 2011 coming from non-white ethnic backgrounds, primarily Black African descent. Some estimates predict the current percentage of BME residents could grow 21% by 2016 and 40% by 2021[i].

- **Disability**

Approximately 17.5% of working age residents in Havering are disabled[ii], and approximately 49% of Havering residents aged 65 or older have a limiting long term illness[iii]. Of these 65+ residents with a limiting long term illness, 7,742 also live alone[iv]. The JSNA states that this number of disabled people in Havering may increase by 7% over the next ten years, while the number of adults with learning disabilities may increase by the same amount.

2.7 How does the Partnership Model measure up to our community's needs?

How does the new partnership model deliver against the needs of our communities, our demographics and the SWOT analysis of current library services?

The SWOT analysis establishes our major strengths as the current popularity of the service, its strong partnership culture and existing volunteer support, strong core staff values, diverse range of community support and wellbeing activities and its inclusive nature in that it provides safe and inclusive spaces for a range of different ages.

These strengths provide the opportunities to build on the current strong partnership and values of the Library Service.

Demographics show our population is ageing and therefore it is important to ensure locally accessible and not always digital resources for this group (though many older people are very computer literate).

Overall the population is growing and becoming more diverse, hence again, the need to ensure a ranges of facilities throughout the borough where a wide range of family and community groups can interact and gain access to learning, enjoyment and social interaction.

Given the threats of budget reductions, this strategy retains and develops the best of our Library Service in that it:

- Retains all buildings to be developed both as libraries and community hubs;
- Provides core library resources open 6 days a week, to cover the key geographical areas of the borough;
- Provide a minimum 3 day / professional services in all other libraries with the potential for additional opening hours if the community wish to partner with the Council;
- Retains professional staff to resource in each library to assist in the recruitment and development of volunteers;
- Builds on the existing strong partnership with volunteers and the local community;
- Allows extension of library building for additional uses if the local community want to take advantage of these excellent spaces;
- Retains access to the full range of excellent book stock and resources through the Council's inter-borough book stock arrangements.

CHAPTER 3: The Value of Libraries in Havering – why it is important to have thriving library services

3.1 The intrinsic and instrumental value of Libraries

The **intrinsic benefits** of reading are both obvious and unique to every reader. Some people read for the mental challenge and purpose of personal development; to learn new skills, develop their knowledge, and discover information. Some read for the entertainment value; for the drama and suspense of a good story, or for the pleasures of escaping reality and becoming immersed in another world. Some read for the personal enrichment it gives them; for relaxing the mind, inspiring their imagination and creativity, even finding spiritual enrichment or expanding their worldview.

The **instrumental benefits** of reading logically follow from these intrinsic benefits. For example, reading improves health and wellbeing through reducing stress, lowering blood pressure and improving mood. Research shows that reading can reduce stress levels by 67% (University of Sussex), and social activities based on reading (e.g. reading groups and author events) help to combat isolation by bringing people together.

Some research even suggests that reading may reduce the onset of dementia, with one piece of research suggesting reducing the likelihood by 35% (New Eng. Jnl Medicine) although this is not conclusive. It is particularly interesting however given the ageing population and predictions that levels of dementia could rise by 61% by 2026 (Kings Fund).

However, libraries are more than a book lending service. Our vision for public libraries in the 21st century sees them providing access to information, learning and cultural content in shared and trusted spaces; inspiring and empowering people to lead active lives, enriched through cultural experience. As such, public libraries have a much greater intrinsic and instrumental benefit than reading alone. For example:

- Increased social interaction - Libraries offer excellent spaces for people to come together to attend groups, activities or talks. As well as improving personal emotional health, such activities aid social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Bridging the digital divide - the provision of PC access in our libraries ensures that people who do not have access to equipment / internet at home are not disadvantaged
- Improving literacy and pleasure in reading
- Improving knowledge, skills and qualifications
- Increased community involvement
- Increased self confidence and self esteem for individuals

- Improving health and wellbeing
- Widening access to cultural opportunities
- Providing information and promoting the borough
- Access to historical resources through the Local Studies and Family History Centre.
- Providing access to government benefits through the Peoples Network computers, ensuring people on low incomes with no access technology are not disadvantaged, though we are now proposing a 50p per hour charge for this service
- Providing a trusted first point of contact and access to information about Council services
- Helping to promote financial inclusion through the provision of information and IT support
- Supporting business development and helping to boost the economy in Havering.

3.2 The value of Libraries to residents

- Our library buildings are important as local hubs, for local people to find out information, learn new skills or read for pleasure. The effective access to library services for local communities is of paramount importance, and the 11th 'virtual library' will continue to deliver to an even wider audience.
- Library buildings remain a key asset for the local community; they provide a welcoming space for local groups, schools, community organisations and individuals. Providing book stock will remain a key component of the service during the life of this strategy and this needs to be provided in buildings that are comfortable and welcoming. Our buildings need to provide access to people with disabilities and the service will need to provide well trained staff and volunteers to support customers who may not be IT literate, or be able to afford computer access at home. There is also a need for study space for people undertaking research and doing homework / course related studies across the borough. We will continue to run a reduced events programme from our buildings, however with increasing pressure on budgets we will look at opportunities for co-location with other services to ensure we are able to maintain our current service. We will balance the opening hours of our libraries to reflect these important and different needs of our community.
- Although we already receive very high levels of satisfaction from our residents, we are always looking to improve on our services and actively seek feedback from users and non-users. One way we do this is through our Annual Market Research Survey.

3.3 How Libraries contribute to Health and Wellbeing

'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (commissioned by the Foresight Project) describes the kind of behaviour people can undertake which will lead to improvements in their mental health and wellbeing. In the table below we outline how libraries provide opportunities for each of these identified behaviours and activities.

Positive behaviour and activity:	How Libraries provide opportunities for this:
1. **Connect**… With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community.	Courses and events available to encourage residents to connect with fellow residents. - Many of our customers are of an older generation who use the library as an opportunity to socialise. Libraries will continue to be available for use as community hubs. - There will also be opportunities for parents, children and whole families to bond through family activities. New media options have meant that our Facebook and Twitter pages provide spaces where people can connect and share like minded discussions about books and culture in the borough. The libraries TV Network has provided people with access to what happens at our events and has given people the confidence to connect with local groups which helps to reduce social isolation and depression.
2. **Be active**…Discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.	The Library service and library buildings provide ideal local, community hubs for the development of exercise and fitness activities. We will promote health and fitness in a range of settings, with the assistance of public health and NHS colleagues. We hold an extensive range of book stock and online magazines on a wide variety of sporting activities and Health and Wellbeing Observations contained in written form and in a variety of genres and media, sharpens our perception of the world and our ability to take notice.

3. **Take notice**… Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.	Libraries are the perfect setting to instil and cultivate curiosity, through access to a range of resources in various forms. Libraries worked in partnership with the 'Year of Living Gratefully' project and Poetry and Creative Writing Groups and will continue to encourage young people to notice arts and culture in their day to day life.
4. **Keep learning**… Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident.	Whether for pleasure or personal and professional development, libraries provide a valuable place for learning new skills and developing knowledge. Our libraries are available to hold temporary exhibitions and talks, offer a range of courses, and provide free and easy access to information. We run Reading Groups which encourage people to be able to read and analyse books in a sociable group setting. Libraries offer a wide range of online resources which include access to dictionaries, art and music, encyclopaedias, study and homework, family and local history, legal and business support. Libraries also offer online access to a range of newspapers and magazines, and have recently launched 'Universal Class' an online learning resource with hundreds of self-paced, tutor-led courses.
5. **Give**… Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, as linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.	Our library service is supported by a very strong base of volunteers. We have in excess of 380 regular volunteers who support a wide range of activities As part of this new strategy we want to build on this volunteer programme and also encourage local communities to engage fully in the use of library buildings.

Libraries can, and do, make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing agenda. The central role of libraries, reading and information sources and its contribution to health and well-being is recognised in the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, in our Culture

Strategy, and by partners in the Health Service and other relevant bodies. This provides us with excellent grounds in Havering to ensure maximum levels of health and wellbeing among residents by using the work of the public library service in the borough.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Libraries have a Health and Wellbeing corner in every branch. These include books on mood boosting, diet, exercise, medical issues, mental health issues, emotional health support, and more. We also hold leaflets from a range of services and will hold sessions in partnership with NHS and other providers to promote health and wellbeing. Libraries also often partner with other organisations to offer space for the delivery of health activities such as healthy eating advice, smoking cessation and blood pressure checks, and offer Books on Prescription (self-help books referred by their GP).

Supporting Early Years Development

The Frank Field Review in 2010 examined the nature and extent of poverty in the UK and presented recommendations for increasing the life chances of children which the report argues is the best way to tackle intergenerational disadvantage. The report proposes nine 'life chance indicators which cover things like behavioural, social and emotional development, cognitive development, home learning environment, and maternal mental health.

Libraries are and will continue to be important partners in supporting early years development. Libraries provide opportunities for play and all the benefits that come from this, i.e. cognitive, behavioural, physical and social development, stimulating enquiry and problem-solving, and developing emotional engagement between parents and children. Libraries provide opportunities for learning, particularly early communication and literacy, and also provide opportunities for parents to socialise and build support networks.

Combating social isolation and ensuring services are accessible to all

Libraries make a significant contribution to combating social isolation. We run our Housebound Service to support older people and people with particular disabilities which mean they cannot leave their homes. We currently support 95 clients through a specific service that costs approx. £15,000, including some management costs.. We will continue to support these clients in ways that offer better value for the Council, such as using volunteers. Activities for young mums and families will also continue to provide a neutral space for mums to share experiences and build confidence. As community hubs we hope more local community members and groups will use the library for a wide range of activities to support socially isolated groups.

Libraries also work closely with Customers with Special Needs and Caring Organisations to make our services more accessible. The service will continue to train staff and volunteers to enable them to recognise and be aware of clients with autism and dementia.

3.4 How Libraries contribute to Learning and Personal Development

Literacy

Public libraries serve an important function in the literacy development, which in turn has a major impact on quality of life. Poor literacy skills are part of a cycle of factors that lead to disadvantage and poverty of opportunity. Research shows the links between low literacy and crime, poor health choices, low educational attainment and unemployment[v].

Recent reviews of child poverty and the Early Years Foundation Stage have identified early language and literacy as building blocks for children's lives, helping to narrow the gap in the life chances experienced by children from poorer homes.

The development of literacy and reading form the core of the public library offer, and visiting libraries and library activities are generally viewed as enjoyable recreational activities by children and young people. This is important as both children's reading attainment and their enjoyment of reading has declined in recent years; yet research studies have shown positive links between enjoyment, learning and academic success.

Digital Access

Public libraries have a vital role in bridging the digital divide and enabling people to get reliable information from the internet. Not everyone has broadband access, let alone internet access, and many lack the skills or confidence to use the internet. It is also more often those of an older generation or poorer background who do not have access.

Hosting training and development

Libraries can provide even more opportunities for local people by being a 'host' for training and development, by partnering with organisations who are specialist in other areas to help people gain skills, become more employable, and build their confidence.

We already work with a number of agencies such as Learn Direct and The Sure Trust to deliver such courses in our branches.

Informal Learning

Libraries provide a safe and welcoming space for community groups or individuals to learn, explore, improve their skills and socialise. We want to work more closely with local communities around our libraries for them to become community hubs and so build on the wide range of opportunities currently available.

CHAPTER 4: Our Action Plan, 2015-17

Objective 1: Health and Wellbeing

Objective / Tasks	Base line position 2015	Target 2017	Culture Strategy Principle
Maintain and improve Health and Well being corners in all libraries	5 in place	Maintain the current provision	2,3,4
Maintain the Books on Prescription stock and promote to a wider audience	Stock currently at some branches but not well publicised	Add stock to the Health Corners in libraries where resources allow	4
Run events focused on food, exercise and healthy living	Each of our monthly themes will include one of these key areas	Each of our monthly themes will include one of these key areas.	2,3,4
Continue to promote joining the library from birth to encourage reading and rhyme for children and investigate option for re engaging at reception age	All children born in the borough to automatically have a library card	Maintain the current service	3
Work with the Health & Wellbeing Board to explore new ways for public libraries to contribute to the Borough's Health & Wellbeing priorities.	A number of existing initiatives are already underway or being established, including Healthy Living Corners in all libraries.	Implement new initiatives in libraries, in partnership with other services, which contribute to the health & wellbeing priorities.	1,2,3,4
Deliver the Literacy Strategy to improve opportunities for people in the borough	Literacy Strategy agreed.	Take forward literacy work where resources allow.	1,2,3,4

Objective 2: Learning and Personal Development

Objective / Tasks	Base line position 2015	Target 2017	Culture Strategy Principle
Engage with other partners and stakeholders to manage learning opportunities for the residents of Havering	Partners currently delivering learning opportunities in Romford Library	Maintain existing service and secure new partnerships in Rainham, Harold Hill and Hornchurch libraries.	2,3
Build on our Volunteer Strategy	A draft strategy has been written, but will now need to be rewritten in	New Strategy written and implemented	1

Objective / Tasks	Base line position 2012	Target 2015	
	the light of this strategy.		
Increase the number of volunteers working in the Library service	380 volunteers	Up to 760 volunteers	1
Continue to digitise the Local and Family History collections using volunteers, to create learning opportunities for the volunteer groups and the local community	Current % digitised	Higher % of the collection digitised	1,4
On-going training for staff and volunteers to promote our on line reference resources to help customers get the most from the wide range of resources	Current training programme	All staff and volunteers trained as required	4
Promote basic IT skills training and run courses with our partners	Currently courses are run in Hornchurch and Upminster	Library to look at opportunities for running self help courses via on line resources to support partners. Courses run at Rainham and Harold Hill libraries.	2,4
Encourage children to start and finish the Summer Reading Scheme	Current participation rates	Continue to run the Scheme and maintain as much of the current participation as possible, taking account of reduced resources	1,2,3,4
Promote our new on line courses including on line languages to improve mental health and support learning	Current number of hits	Increase hits by 10%	3

Objective 3: Towns and Communities

Objective / Tasks	Base line position 2012	Target 2015	Culture Strategy Principle
Maintain high resident satisfaction levels with Libraries	81.5 % satisfaction	Satisfaction levels at 75%.	4
Use Community Profiles to maintain library membership, including a focus on increasing membership in our most deprived areas of the borough	Increase the % of the population currently has a library card.	Maintain the current % of the population who have a card	1,2,3,4
Increase usage of the new library at Rainham	New Library has recently opened	Increase in the number of activities, partnerships and bookings, in	1,2,3,4

		comparison to the "old" Library.	
Deliver a new library at Harold Hill	Tenders have been returned to construct the new library.	New library opened	1,2,3,4
Continue to support the annual Culture & Leisure Disability Forum	Library presence and presentations given at forum	Continue to actively support	1,2,3,4
Actively work with local communities to develop libraries as community hubs	380 volunteers already in place	Up to 760 volunteers in place. Branch libraries to be co-run with broad opening hours with help from the local community	

i Projected Ethnicity Growth in Havering, London & Outer London Boroughs 2011-2021. Round Population Group Projections, Greater London Authority, 2010 (14).

ii Working Age People with Disabilities, Annual Population Survey: Department for Work and Pensions, (2012).

iii Limiting Long Term Illness in Havering, Census: Office of National Statistics, (2001).

iv Residents Aged 65+, Living Alone with LTLI, POPPI, (2012). Available online at www.poppi.org.uk

v National Literacy Trust (2011) Local authorities improving life chances