

Kirklees Library Service Strategy

Kirklees Council is ambitious for its library service and the impact it can have on communities.

Allied to the intention to work with our places, libraries should be at the hub of our communities and are much more than a place to borrow books – they belong to communities and we can't run libraries without local people.

Kirklees Library services are reflective of the three key principles of the Kirklees Corporate Plan 2018/20 - working with people, working with partners and place based working. The service is sensitive to the diversity of communities, their differing needs and abilities in terms of community capacity. The same is true of needs around accessing advice and information. There is a core partnership basis to service delivery, particularly with partners in health and the VCS, which enables library services to reach beyond the walls of physical libraries and into the places in communities where people really need them.

The Council's Access to Services Strategy makes reference to the availability of community hubs where appropriate that co-locate a number of services – these could include the voluntary and community sector, primary care, adult and children's social care, communities teams as well as access to a networked libraries offer. The total is more than the sum of all the parts.

Within every community there are individuals who are more vulnerable. This may be related to poverty, to ill health, to the barriers of language or as a result of social isolation. The Council's Early Intervention and Prevention approach is intended to ensure that support is available to support individuals to maximise their independence.

The library service is already delivering a range of projects to address the early intervention and prevention agenda. A more collaborative approach to the delivery of these projects will benefit the Council and the library service is developing links with other services and partners to deliver initiatives in local communities.

The demands that the library service and partner organisations place on a building have changed over the years. A single floor, open plan library is the most cost effective and accessible layout to deliver a library service from. Computers, events and groups place particular requirements on the way in which that building is fitted out. Full disability access is essential and parents with young children value toilets that have a changing table. Adults with profound disabilities benefit from a "changing place". We would like all our libraries to be dementia and autism friendly. Since many of the library buildings were built, the communities that they serve have changed markedly so that the library is no longer in the best location or other buildings that could also deliver the library service more effectively have opened.

We have developed the following principles around library provision.

- Libraries must be situated in the right building in the right place, to meet community needs and maximise the impact on early intervention and prevention
- Libraries should be situated where possible on one floor to ensure an efficient and cost effective delivery model
- A local plan should be developed for each area to reflect the differing needs of each community
- Staff should be equipped and supported to deliver on the future library strategy and job profiles should reflect the future roles needed to deliver the new service
- The services and activities provided must meet the Council's outcomes

We receive a great deal of support from communities with many of our libraries establishing strong Friends of Groups and approximately 450 volunteers helping with the day to day running of the library service. We

recognise the valuable role volunteers play in delivering our services and the delivery of this strategy is dependent on this co-production between library staff and volunteers.