

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday 11 July 2008

New Look, No Shush!

A Strategy for our Library and Information Service

Purpose of Report

The aim of this briefing is to alert members of the Committee to the draft strategy and to set out what the priorities for the service will be in the medium term, especially with regards to the needs of children and young people. Members are asked to comment on the strategy and, in their role as community leaders, to encourage input and comment from members of their communities, as part of the consultation.

Background

Our vision is that within the next few years our libraries will increasingly be seen as *the* place to be for the communities they serve. They will be lively and exciting venues of choice, in demand for use by local groups, County Council partners and other organisations for activities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our library service will work in partnership with many different organisations and deliver the service from a range of venues and on-line. Our libraries will be centres of excellence for books and opportunities for reading; for learning; and will provide access to computers and the internet.

They will be the 'first stop shop' for information about anything, with knowledgeable staff working with volunteers and other partners to deliver a service that is relevant and can be easily accessed by all members of the community. They will be a major player in creating the skilled, informed, creative, healthy citizens that North Yorkshire needs to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- (a) Note the attached draft strategy.
- (b) Comment on the strategy and, in their role as community leaders, to encourage input and comment from members of their communities

Julie Blaisdale
Assistant Director, Library and Community Services
July 2008

Background Papers: New Look, No Shush – A Strategy for the Library and Information Service

New Look, No Shush!

Library and Community Services Strategy 2008-2023

Draft for Consultation



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Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our vision and our ambitions for the Library and Information Service for the next 15 years.

Our Vision is that the Library and Information Service provides an excellent service that is accessible, relevant to and used by everyone who lives, works or studies in North Yorkshire.

This is a draft for consultation. We would like your views. You can email us at libraries@northyorks.gov.uk or Send a letter for the attention of Juliet Pudney

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.

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Executive Summary

The Local Government White papers, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and 'Framework for the Future', provide the background to this strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to set out our ambitions for the service for the next 15 years. Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How will we get where we want to be? The strategy will be supported by a three year programme, reviewed every three years, with annual action plans linked to the three year medium term financial strategy.

Our Vision is that the Library and Information Service provides an excellent service that is accessible, relevant to and used by everyone who lives, works or studies in North Yorkshire.

Within the next few years our libraries will increasingly be seen as *the* place to be for the communities they serve. They will be lively and exciting venues of choice, in demand for use by local groups, County Council partners and other organisations for activities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our library service will work in partnership with many different organisations and deliver the service from a range of venues and on-line. Our libraries will be centres of excellence for books and opportunities for reading; for learning; and will provide access to computers and the internet.

They will be the 'first stop shop' for information about anything, with knowledgeable staff working with volunteers and other partners to deliver a service that is relevant and can be easily accessed by all members of the community. They will be a major player in creating the skilled, informed, creative, healthy citizens that North Yorkshire needs to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

The four strategic aims for our Library and Information Service

1. Our libraries are centres of excellence for:

- books and opportunities for reading
- learning
- access to information technology and computers, including the internet.

2. Our libraries are the venue of choice for information

3. Our libraries are relevant and responsive and at the heart of local communities

The community is at the heart of the library and people are involved in the running of their local library, and have a say in the service it provides. Our libraries promote the health and well-being of our communities and

are the venue of choice for a range of activities run by ourselves, the community and other agencies.

4. Our library service has a workforce that is committed to these aims and fit for the purpose of delivering them.

Where are we now?

North Yorkshire provides a Library and Information Service from both static and mobile libraries. It also provides a Home Library and Information Service, and a School Library Service.

“Without the Home Library Service I should be very lonely as I rely completely on the people who bring me books. I cannot get out very often as I am old and disabled. Reading has always been my pleasure”

It has been recognised by the Audit Commission as providing a good service with promising prospects for improvement.

The service has benefited from over a million pounds worth of investment in the past few years. Nearly half the libraries have been refurbished or newly built and all libraries have been equipped with computers for the public to use. This has resulted in high and rising satisfaction levels amongst residents and users; and increasing numbers of items borrowed, against the national trend.

The Library Service overall provides an extensive range of services, but it recognises that not all services are available in every library. In order to meet the needs of this very rural county, more services need to be made available from different locations.

Libraries offer a safe, neutral and welcoming space. This is recognised by various partners around the county who provide some of their services in libraries, for example, some District Councils and the Adult Learning Service.

The Challenges

The Library Service is facing a number of challenges. These include population changes, rising expectations and the need to continually improve performance. There is also the County Council's ongoing drive to reduce costs and transform the way services are provided, in order to meet the changing demands of our customers. People have so much choice on how to spend their leisure time, and we need to be able to attract people to libraries. The Scarborough Literature Festival has helped with this.

“You provide a great service better than TV any day”

“Really enjoyed it...renewed my interest in the library”.

We need to develop ways of continuously improving performance with ever-declining resources and increasing expectations. This will include considering issues such as innovative use of ICT, alternative delivery methods, restructuring of the workforce and its skills, and improved methods of procurement.

A key challenge is to increase the number of people that use the service and who borrow from the library. The service will need to address a number of issues if it

is to provide what people want and achieve this aim of everyone being an active user of the Library Service.

The service needs to:

- Understand the reasons why people don't use libraries.
- Identify the needs of all sections of the community and what they want from the service and how they would like it provided.
- Publicise what the library service has to offer and provide regular guided tours of each library so the public are aware of the range of things available.
- Make the service attractive, up to date and relevant to all sections of the community, including people with disabilities, migrant workers, and young people.
- Make premises attractive and welcoming so local communities and our partners want to use them for activities.
- Make the service accessible to everyone regardless of where they live or any disabilities they may have. This will include making more services available on line and an expansion of outreach services, for example, the Home Library and Information Service, plus researching further innovative ways of getting the service out to individuals and local communities.
- Make the most of technology to improve access and achieve efficiencies.
- Raise the profile of the Library Service with colleagues across the County Council and with other partners and potential partners, so that they understand how the Library Service can help them to deliver their own objectives.

We will achieve our ambitions by:

- Talking to our customers and potential customers to understand their changing requirements.
- Looking at how, where and when we provide the service.
- Exploring opportunities to provide services jointly – with community groups, volunteers, partners such as archives, heritage unit, children's centres, adult learning.
- Maximising use of new technology.
- Looking at the skills we need to deliver services in a different way.
- Keeping up to date with what the best libraries in the country are doing.
- Looking for ways to save money and seeking out opportunities to make money to reinvest in the service.

Setting the scene

The Library and Information Service offers a service to every age group and to all sectors of the community across North Yorkshire. The service it provides therefore needs to fit with a wide range of national and local policies and guidance. It also needs to take account of the population or demographic changes, for example, higher numbers of older people and increasing numbers of migrant workers.

The Local Government White Paper, '**Strong and Prosperous Communities**' provides the overall framework for the strategy. It emphasises the need for revitalised local authorities to work with partners to make sure that public services provide what the citizens and communities want. It expects councils to focus more on their citizens and local communities and to challenge traditional methods of how services are delivered. There is an increasing emphasis on choice and personalising the service.

These themes are repeated in the Health and Social Care White Paper '**Our Health Our Care Our Say: A New Direction for Community Services**', which concentrates on general health and well-being. '**Putting People First**' reinforces the vision of placing the services in the centre of the community, and sets the context for wider providers of community services such as libraries.

The five statutory outcomes for children's services, which the Library and Information Service can help achieve, are:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.



Specific guidance for public libraries is found in '**Framework for the Future**', the Government's ten year strategy for public libraries published in 2003. This gives clear expectations about the role which it sees for the service. This has been updated by the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council's '**Public Libraries – Towards 2013**'.

The three main themes are:

- Books, learning and reading
- Digital citizenship
- Community and civic values.

The strategy is supported by a programme of national initiatives in which local library services are involved.

North Yorkshire County Council has clear medium-term objectives with specific priorities linked to them. The objectives are:

- Security for all
- Growing up prepared for the future
- Independence
- Ensuring good access for all
- Strengthening our economy
- Looking after our heritage and our environment
- Keeping in touch.

In addition to the above priorities identified by the County Council, individual services within the Council have developed their own strategies. The benefits of these strategies and this library strategy may potentially be greater when carried out together, particularly those relating to Adult Learning, the Children and Young People's Plan, Children and Young People's Arts, the Cultural Strategy, and Strategic Commissioning for Independence, Well-being and Choice (adult social care services).

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Our Four Strategic Aims

1a. Our libraries are centres of excellence for books and opportunities for reading

The importance of reading and reader development

Books and reading are two of the core elements of a library service. Reading gives access to a wide range of experiences and enables individuals to live a fulfilled and varied life, '*Being unable to read cuts people off from their own potential and the society around them*' (Framework for the Future, DCMS, 2003).

Reading enables independence by creating learners, developing literacy skills and educating

aids personal growth and development and stimulates creativity and imagination

empowers individuals by aiding self discovery and learning

promotes citizenship by offering cultural and social awareness

develops the health and wellbeing of individuals by relieving stress and creating mental balance.

Public libraries are champions for books, reading and learning. "*Successful libraries thrive when they play a role within local authority strategies to promote learning and social cohesion*" (Framework for the Future). People cannot be active or informed citizens unless they can read and a significant number of adults in England have low levels of attainment in reading and writing. Reading, literacy and learning are inextricably linked. Libraries encourage reading and this supports both formal and informal learning, as well as starting people of all ages on the learning ladder.

Libraries have a key role to play in motivating and inspiring individuals to develop their reading habits.

Where we are now



North Yorkshire County Council's library service provides a range of activities which celebrate books and reading, and endeavours to keep people reading from the cradle to the grave. Babies can join the library from birth; under-fives are encouraged to develop an interest in books and reading. Various activities help school age children to keep up the reading habit through making reading pleasurable and fun; libraries have teenage reading areas which teenagers themselves have helped to design.

. "I had a fantastic time at the festival which was the one of the very best I have ever attended.....Thanks for the warm welcome and for a wonderfully run event. I would come back like a shot."- Mark Billingham (author)

To encourage adult readers, libraries provide a wide selection of books, ranging from the latest publications, to classics, and out of print books that are difficult to obtain through any other route. Our libraries offer a home for reading and writing groups and play an active role in local literature festivals.

We have a free home delivery service for those who cannot easily leave their home and provide a service for hard to reach groups such as travellers, and we provide books for migrant workers in their first language.

Currently North Yorkshire libraries are issuing an increasing number of books, in contrast to libraries elsewhere in the country.

What we will do

- We will continue to work closely with colleagues in the Children and Young People's Service to get more children and families into reading, e.g. through initiatives such as the Year of Reading.



- We will provide, and ensure access to, a range of books and other materials of sufficient depth, variety and appeal to meet the demands and needs of the communities of North Yorkshire.



- We will continue to develop a range of outreach services so people who cannot get to a library can still have access to books and other materials
- We will increase the number of people who can read, by working closely with Adult Learning and Skills for Life providers and by providing appropriate books, resources and activities to help developing readers acquire and improve reading skills.

- We will encourage reading for pleasure through widening reading experiences and opportunities in libraries, for example through providing opportunities for authors and readers to meet and develop enthusiasm for the written word.
- We will encourage people to use information technology as a means of accessing information about books and reading, and provide opportunities for online reader development activities.
- We will maximise the percentage of the budget that is spent on stock.
- We will continue to work with colleagues in Adult Social Care and the voluntary/community sector to provide services to people in their own homes.

The Literature Festival was "Particularly inspiring to my 12 year old son who has wanted to be an author since he was 5"

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1b. Our Libraries are centres of excellence for learning

Why is library involvement in learning important?

From their inception, learning has been a main function of public libraries. They have traditionally been recognised as the “People’s University” and as such play a key role in the lifelong learning of communities. They have provided places, resources, opportunities and support for individuals, groups and communities engaged in learning.

The Library Service caters for the full age range. It provides a community space for learning and should be seen as an integral part of the learning network. Libraries are ideally placed to share the fun of learning with all age groups.

Libraries support a range of types of learning:

- Formal learning: providing access to texts, IT and information to support courses, some of which may lead to a qualification.
- Informal learning: providing access to information to support individual lifelong learning – learning for pleasure and personal interest.
- Cultural and creative learning: supporting a shared culture and strengthening an ethos of citizenship, developing social skills and reinforcing a sense of community.
- Lifelong Learning is a major strand of Framework for the Future, the Government’s 10 year vision for libraries. Most recently, “Inspiring Learning for All” is a framework for learning that enables libraries to develop as effective learning organisations.



Where we are now

All libraries in North Yorkshire provide a range of printed material for learners of all ages. Smaller libraries have basic material up to GCSE, the largest can support up to Undergraduate level. All holdings are universally available via a request system. Requests are free for under 18s. The introduction of Internet access in libraries through computers provided by the People’s Network scheme, has enabled much greater access to information, support and learning electronically.

The School Library Service supports the school curriculum by delivering a book loan, library advice, information and training service to schools and educational groups in North Yorkshire and the City of York.

A number of libraries, particularly refurbished ones, have appropriate space to provide areas for learning and teaching and are used for this by other agencies, as well as the Library Service. - Enjoyable activities in libraries help people to develop literacy and independent learning skills. We are also developing and delivering a number of learning modules relating to ICT and Family/Local History.

"After only 2 helpful courses, computer/internet do not seem as daunting and I feel a desire to progress further"

What we will do

- We will engage with local communities, consulting with and involving them in making decisions, and, through partnership working with other groups and sectors, create opportunities for the broadest possible range of people to access learning.
- We will continue to work with early years groups and teachers to provide all children under 5 with a head start to learning.
- We will provide interesting activities which parents and children and grandparents can join in together, as a family.
- We will engage and consult as broad a range of people as possible to develop learning.
- We will identify the widest possible range of potential partners and work with them to plan and develop learning opportunities and broaden the appeal for people
- We will actively create and provide opportunities for people to learn.
- We will broaden the range of learning opportunities in order to engage with new and diverse users.
- We will develop resources and stimulate discovery and research.



1c. Our Libraries are centres of excellence for access to information technology and computers, including the internet

Why is it important?

The provision of computers and internet access in libraries, for the public to use, is a central government initiative and is now an accepted feature of all public libraries in England and Wales. The internet is one of the ways to access information about services and increasingly, to access the services themselves. The provision of computers and internet access greatly expands the range of information libraries can provide; particularly to those who would otherwise have no access.

Libraries also offer the added value of having knowledgeable staff who can show people what to do and help people find their way through the plethora of information available. This support increases people's confidence and makes them more comfortable with using electronic sources to gain access to the information they need. It has been shown that IT literate communities have an advantage in accessing learning and information. As well as the major advantage of people being able to access services and pay bills on line in libraries, IT also provides the main link for migrant workers, both to their new community and to their home country.

"Really enjoyed the absolute beginners course. It has given me the confidence"

It is important that libraries keep up to date with the benefits technology can provide and improve the service accordingly. More and more people have the expectation that they will be able to access our services electronically. At the same time, the Library Service needs to rise to the challenge of providing virtual access as one way of reducing the effects on the service of a small population spread over a large rural area.

Where we are now



There is a generous provision of computers available for public use in all static libraries across the county. They have all been replaced with the latest model and all include Windows XP and the current version of Microsoft Office. The software installed ensures that however a user may alter the computer, it will revert to normal at the end of their session. Further work is scheduled via the county's new 'NYNET' partnership to improve county-wide network coverage. This will increase libraries' ability to cope with the demands that the internet now makes.

North Yorkshire residents can book to use the computers, which can be used free of charge for a limited period each day. Further time can then be purchased if required.

The computers in libraries are used by many different groups of people, for a range of purposes – for example, research on the internet for studies or personal interest, for local and family history research; emailing families and friends; internet banking; playing games etc. Our research has shown that the majority of users of the computers in libraries do not own their own computer. As well as providing access to the internet generally, the library service subscribes to various online sources such as the Oxford English Dictionary, Encyclopaedia Britannica and, of great interest to family historians, Ancestry (Library Edition).

The libraries in Scarborough, West Ayton and Northallerton also provide WiFi connections, so that people can use their own laptops in these libraries. This is a major advantage particularly for the increasingly mobile business community.

We are currently developing ways of making it easier for people to join the library on-line and request and renew books on-line.

What we will do

- We will continually upgrade and introduce modern technology to meet the needs of our customers.
- We will ensure that computers in libraries can be accessed by all, including disabled people.
- We will continue to develop and expand into services that can be accessed on line.
- We will continue to work with colleagues in Adult Learning and other partner providers to ensure individuals and communities have the opportunities to develop the skills they need to make effective use of information technology.

"A super, informative morning. At last I've found a course that HELPS ME."

"Our tutor has been very, very helpful. This is the first time I have tried to use a computer for 18 years."

"I find these sessions very helpful & I am beginning, very slowly, to feel confident with the computer. I can see all the benefits, & hope eventually to be proficient."

"The course was very informative and interesting. Maybe now I will get my own computer and not be afraid of technology"

"Very good course. I now have basic computer skills"

2. Our Libraries are the venue of choice for information

Why is information provision in libraries important?

Information provision is a key library service. Information is core to the well-being and prosperity of communities. Information is power. People have the right to good quality, accurate, up to date information. The Library Service is there to ensure that people can gain access to it. Libraries are seen as 'honest information brokers' in a helpful environment with staff who are able to guide people through information on the internet or on the shelves. Accurate and timely information is a key part of the County Council's Access to Services agenda.

'Framework for the Future' recognises that '...libraries have a central role to play in ensuring everyone has access to the resources, information and knowledge they need'.

Where we are now

The Library Service has a vast range of information available. This includes community information about local services and organisations; statutory government information; extensive general reference sections in the larger libraries; local studies sections in larger libraries, covering both local and family history; and on-line information including access to a national web-based information service and a range of national and international databases. The service has well-trained information professionals who can help people access the information they need, whether that is for business purposes, study or personal interest.



The County Council's Access to Services Strategy places emphasis on the accessibility of services to all. Information is an important part of this. Libraries are now recognised as important points of presence within local communities. In several places they deliver services on behalf of County and District Councils, as well as being key access points to other services. The Library Service provides a venue for other organisations' information services, for example, business information via a Business Information Service hotline and Tourist Information in Selby.

The Library Service provides an information service for some of the District Councils, and a venue for drop-in sessions for services such as the Police and business Link, and information days for the Pension Service etc. Where they are designated as One Stop Shops, libraries provide seamless access to County Council and other agency services; information and advice from other agencies by advisors, web access, publicity or signposting; private interview rooms and telephone hot lines; as well as public internet access computers.

What we will do

- We will constantly review all the information services we provide and could provide in the future to ensure the service meets the diverse information needs of our communities.
- We will constantly review the way information is provided to make it more accessible.
- As part of improving the health and well-being of local communities, we will enhance the information service for people needing health and social care services and their carers; we will offer space in libraries for health and social care staff to provide information and help people access information on the shelves and on line, including the dispensing of Information Prescriptions as required in Our Health, Our Care, Our Say.
- We will engage with local communities, organisations and agencies to develop information services relevant to local communities, seeking out information from local groups and making libraries the hub for local information and a signposting centre for other Council and agency information.
- To assist the above, we will implement a community information database which allows local groups to input information about their organisation and to indicate what their interests are.
- We will provide and maintain information services and a stakeholder database on behalf of the county council and other partners.
- We will enhance the well-being and prosperity of communities by providing worldwide links to information which is relevant to the needs of local businesses and individuals.
- Remote access to trained information specialists will provide an equitable information service across the county.
- Staff will be trained to provide information for all our partners.
- We will explore ways in which libraries, organisations and agencies can work together to minimise duplication of information services.
- We will publicise the information service that we provide.
- We will enhance the local and family history service available to the public by merging the local studies service with the archive service. Less frequently accessed documents will be kept by archives. Local vital information will be provided in the larger local libraries and more information will be available digitally.
- In partnership with Surestart/Children's Centres, we will provide information for children and young people.
- We will ensure our reference collections are up to date.

3. Our libraries are relevant and responsive and at the heart of local communities

The community is at the heart of the library and people are involved in the running of their local library, and have a say in the service it provides.

Our libraries promote the health and well-being of our communities and are the venue of choice for a range of activities run by ourselves, the community and other agencies.

Why is this important for library services?

The Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and 'Framework for the Future', highlight the importance of re-shaping public services around the citizen and communities that use them. To do this, we need to engage with local communities, focusing on them and challenging traditional ways of providing services. We want to talk to communities to make the library a centre of the community. We need to put people first, providing the services that they want and at a time they want them, eg. Sundays and evenings, giving them more of a say in how services are run – empowering people to shape their local services and community.

The Library Service is well placed to play a key role in this agenda, with a network of static libraries, mostly sited in the heart of their communities. A good library makes an important contribution to a sense of place in communities as our new and refurbished libraries have shown. The Library Service is the most visible universal service of the County Council. It is the one service which every member of the community can join, regardless of age and ability to pay.

For this reason, library buildings must be attractive and modern and appeal to all different kinds of people and age groups. They must be places of real significance in their communities, well used for a wide range of activities and well situated in localities.

Libraries play an important role in helping people to feel more secure in their identity, reinforcing their sense of place and helping to create cohesive and sustainable communities.

People have high expectations of services in a climate where resources are declining. Working with other partners and involving the community in running their local services is a way of joining up and enhancing the services provided by different agencies and ensuring the services people want are available.

Through community engagement, we will work with our communities to identify what they want from their library, and how they can then be involved in designing and delivering services. A range of library activities will require community engagement including information, communication, consultation, involvement/participation and empowerment. We will make special efforts to engage with current non-users of services and also individuals belonging to seldom heard groups.

Where we are now

Most of our libraries are now strategically located in communities and ideally placed to join with other services. Currently a number of services are co-located with libraries across the county. For example, a housing association is based in Eastfield library; Jobcentre plus and Surestart are in Sherburn library.

Some NYCC services are available through libraries by appointment, for example Registration Services.

The Library and Information Service can make a contribution to a number of the County's strategies as follows:

– Our libraries promote the health and well-being of our communities

'Putting People First' talks about 'first stop shops' for health and social care information, advice and advocacy. The Library Service is well placed to be the 'first stop shop' for information. As a provider of a universal service, the Library Service already influences the health and well-being of communities and has the potential to do much more.

Libraries are welcoming, neutral spaces in the heart of communities, where people can join reading groups or borrow written or audio visual material. They provide information and signpost people to local services.

"Very friendly & welcoming. I will walk out of the library a happier person!" – (Comment following a complementary therapy session)

"I don't know what I'd do without my visits to the library." (97 year old)

Together with mental health services, libraries provide book therapy collections – locally recommended self-help books and videos for those experiencing mental distress. There is potential to develop those links further, in conjunction with the NHS, as part of the Information Prescriptions Service recommended for those with long term conditions in 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'.

Libraries provide opportunities for volunteering – enabling people to participate as equal and active citizens, sharing their love of books with fellow members of the community. The Home Library and Information Service for people who cannot easily leave their home helps to tackle loneliness and isolation in

"I am 92+ and housebound, it is a godsend. I look forward to deliveries as I only see 1 or 2 people a week."

older people.

– Our libraries contribute to economic well-being

Reading, learning and information are important aspects of the work of libraries and are all essential elements of achieving economic well-being. A key role of libraries is to increase the number of people who can read. Libraries support the Skills for Life agenda by linking with national literacy campaigns and providing the right kind of books and resources to help developing readers acquire and improve reading skills, thus increasing their opportunities in life and employment.

The information about careers and job opportunities found on-line in libraries also contributes to this economic agenda.

Employment is only one aspect of economic well-being. It is also about making sure that the non-working population can claim the benefits to which they are entitled. Pensions Service Information days in libraries help with this.

What we will do

- We will work closely with partners to develop an understanding of the profile of our communities.
- We will review where we provide the service and look at how we can provide access to services through ways other than using buildings and vehicles, exploring alternative outlet models such as extra care housing developments, and looking at ways of delivering a service to more remote communities.
- We will make the services that we offer better reflect community needs, for example, by reviewing when the service is available through the hours of opening etc.
- Our libraries will continue to develop in their role as local 'one stop shops' for County Council and other agencies' services.
- Where feasible, libraries will share premises with other service providers, including statutory agencies, voluntary and community groups and other partners, and our development plans will ensure that wherever possible new build services will co-locate with other services.
- Where possible we will include a 'Changing Place' in all our libraries.
- Where other services and libraries are based together, we will explore how staff from the different services can work across the services to enhance the service available to the public, for example, adult learning.
- Where it is not possible to share premises, all libraries will invite other agencies and community groups etc to have a regular presence in the library.
- We will explore ways of providing library services from other premises in communities where we do not have a suitable library presence.
- Where we have the space, we will provide venues for adult learning classes and space for other local activities, for example, space for youth bands to rehearse.
- We will advertise the availability of meeting rooms for hire to local groups, businesses and organisations.
- We will make the financial commitment to ensure an ongoing programme of refurbishment of libraries.
- We will consult and involve people in identifying areas for development and in the planning, design and delivery of services.
- We will provide new opportunities for communities to assume greater responsibility for their library service
- We will seek to enrich and extend the work of the Library Service, broadening and strengthening the diversity of the staff and helping to build goodwill in communities. We will do this by providing more opportunities for people to get actively involved in their local library in a voluntary capacity, in order to help them gain skills, raise their self esteem and meet new people.

- We will seek to bring communities closer together and help to increase tolerance and understanding amongst communities through the activities and literature we provide.
- We will seek input from seldom-heard groups about service development
- We will work to bring individuals into society, for example, by working closely with the Youth Offending team, Restorative Justice Team and 4Youth.
- We will raise the profile of the library across North Yorkshire so that the service becomes the obvious choice for partners looking to deliver their own agendas, for example, the learning, health and well being, and public access to services agendas.
- We will continue to develop our libraries as neutral and welcoming spaces offering a safe and non-threatening environment during a wide range of opening hours with helpful and expert staff to guide and support.
- We will improve the quality of our customer service.
- We will participate in the work of local groups, for example, the Children and Young People's integrated service liaison meetings.
- We will work closely with the Connexions service to manage project packs on careers on their behalf.

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4. The library service has a workforce that is committed to the strategic aims and fit for the purpose of delivering them.

Why is it important?

There will be increasing emphasis on involvement with local communities; working jointly with other agencies, community groups and volunteers; and delivering services through other people and for partners. As the expectations and demands on the library workforce (including managers, library professionals and those involved in the frontline delivery of services) continue to grow they will bring with them the significant challenge of developing new skills sets alongside new models of service delivery. Staff will need community engagement skills and a balanced range of entrepreneurial skills, including customer service, leadership and project management.

We need to ensure that we recruit staff who are enthusiastic, flexible and able to communicate effectively with all sections of the community. Whilst there is still a need for professional input in terms of library and information provision that will enable the service to deliver on its statutory duties, there is a growing recognition that the service must develop and recruit its staff beyond purely professional lines.

Where we are now

The Library Service employs a range of highly skilled, enthusiastic and committed staff, some of whom are professionally qualified.

What we will do

- We will look at the mix of skills we need to deliver services in a different way and make sure that we have the right staff with the right skills in the right places.
- We will proactively recruit to change the profile of our workforce and broaden their management experience; and increase collaboration with other partners/providers, including the voluntary sector.
- We will establish a staff development framework which will map the knowledge, skills and competencies needed in the different roles and which ensures all staff have a good understanding of the strategic issues for libraries.
- We will explore where technology can free staff up to undertake different roles, and explore what is best done centrally and what should happen locally.
- We will ensure staff at all levels have excellent customer service and enquiry handling skills, and ICT skills and a high level of stock awareness.
- We will continue to develop the skills of our front-line staff so that they can continue to deliver other partners' services, as well as the core elements of information, learning and reader development.
- We will ensure our managers have the skills to develop closer strategic links with partners as well as the leadership, project management and performance management skills to develop the service within local communities.

Conclusion

The Library and Information Service has a lot to offer local people, both through our own services and working in partnership with County Council colleagues and other organisations within North Yorkshire. Libraries have facilities that can be used by local groups and other organisations for interesting activities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Working in partnership with many different organisations we will deliver our services from a range of venues and on-line. Our libraries will be centres of excellence for books and opportunities for reading; for learning; and will provide access to computers and the internet.

We will be the first port of call for information about anything. Our knowledgeable staff will work closely with volunteers and local communities to deliver the service that community wants. We will be a major player in creating the skilled, informed, creative, healthy citizens that North Yorkshire needs, in order to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

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