

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

21 April 2026

Library Strategy Mid-Term Review and National Year of Reading

Report of the Corporate Director, Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to progress the Mid Term Review of the Library Strategy to Full Council for publication on the North Yorkshire Council website, and to seek approval to progress the proposed actions to support the National Year of Reading to Full Council.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Library Strategy: *Your Library, Your Place 2020-2030* has been running for five years and is not due to be renewed until 2030. The Library Service has reviewed the current document to check that it still reflects the needs of customers and aligns with national and local priorities.
- 2.2 The Mid-Term Review, available in Appendix A, provides an updated assessment of progress against the strategic objectives adopted at the start of the Strategy period, reflecting changes in local needs, service delivery priorities and national policy direction. Publishing the review ensures transparency, supports effective public engagement, and reaffirms the Council's commitment to delivering a modern, accessible and community-focused library service across North Yorkshire.

3.0 DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

- 3.1 The Library Strategy is based on national Universal Library Offers (Information and Digital, Reading, Health & Wellbeing and Culture and Creativity). These have been adapted to reflect the library service in North Yorkshire, and our service is organised into four major strategy themes: Digital, Literacy & Learning, Health & Wellbeing and Communities. These themes are set out in the current strategy document and were agreed following public engagement in 2019. The teams have reviewed these and agreed these are still fit for purpose, but the content has been amended to reflect services in 2025/6. The vision has remained unchanged but the 2021 Action plan has been removed and the following changes made:
- New cover and logos to reflect the new Council
 - Updated statistics to reflect business in 2024-25 rather than 2019-20
 - Communities theme to include cultural and arts activities to reflect the national Culture & Creativity Universal Offer
 - Literacy & Learning theme to focus on Reading for pleasure to reflect the national Reading Universal Offer
- 3.2 This year has been declared The National Year of Reading, a joint initiative by the Department of Education, The Reading Agency and The National Literacy Trust.

- 3.3 At Executive on 20 January 2026 it was agreed that the Council should sign the National Literacy Trust pledge to formally show support for the National Year of Reading. The Leader and Executive Member requested further information about actions we are taking as a Council. These have been proposed as:

This Council:

- *Declares its formal support for the National Year of Reading 2026 by:*
 - a. Promoting National Year of Reading activities and events through Council communications, both internally and externally.*
 - b. Working with the Library Service, Children's & Young People's Services, Adult Learning & Skills Service, local schools and partners including the National Literacy Trust, the Reading Agency and Booktrust to increase engagement with target audiences.*

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 4.1 The draft Mid-Term Review document was shared with Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2025 where it met with full approval. Staff teams and volunteers have contributed to the updated content and case studies.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The Library Strategy aligns with the priorities in the latest Council Plan and contributes as following:

- **Support thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire**
- Libraries provide a network of 42 branches, including 31 run in partnership with local communities and a mobile library to support communities across the county
- **Develop more sustainable and connected places across North Yorkshire**
- Libraries support access to digital services and promote digital inclusion by offering IT support and access to public computers and free WiFi.
- **Ensure the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well**
- Libraries work with partners including Public Health to provide support and information as well as resources and spaces to meet in order to promote health and wellbeing
- **Maximise the potential of North Yorkshire's people and communities**
- Libraries offer free access to books and learning opportunities for all, from material to support early language, speech and communication to resources and spaces to support self-study.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 One option considered was to leave the current Library Strategy to run in its current form until the end of its term (2020-2030). However, this would mean the public document and wording on the website is out of date and does not reflect the current service.

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 7.1 The Library Strategy and the National Year of Reading actions impact the community library organisations who deliver library services in partnership with the Council.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of progressing the mid-term review. The actions arising as a result of signing the pledge will be delivered from existing service budgets.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None. An Equalities Impact Assessment is included at Appendix B.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None. A Climate Change Impact Assessment is included at Appendix C.

12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 To ensure that there is an up-to-date version of the Library Strategy available on the Council website to share with internal and external partners and residents.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 To progress the Mid Term Review of the Library Strategy to Full Council for publication on the North Yorkshire Council website

13.2 To agree the wording for the National Year of Reading Pledge.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – The Library Strategy Mid-Term Review

Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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26 March 2026

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Presenter of Report – Councillor Simon Myers, Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.