

Item No. 11.	Classification: Open	Date: 22 January 2109	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Libraries and Heritage Strategy 2019 – 2022	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Rebecca Lury, Culture, Leisure, Equalities and Communities	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Libraries are truly magical places. No other place allows you to come through its doors, without asking why you are there, what you are doing and what entitles you to be there. There is a great sense of freedom in being able to enter and explore your local library.

In their most traditional sense, our libraries are continuing to provide borrowing services. Through borrowing these books, there are endless opportunities to grow your imagination, explore new worlds and realities, delve into history, learn about new things and create new experiences.

But our libraries are now so much more than just about books. They also provide a vital resource for so many of our residents by allowing them access to the internet, to computers, and to quiet spaces to work and study.

We want libraries to be spaces for the whole community to use, whether that be through baby sensory sessions, community group activities, or accessing local council services.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That cabinet agree to the proposed Libraries and Heritage Strategy 2019 – 2022.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Libraries are one of the strongest visible symbols of community service provision. They are much valued by residents and they contribute to a number of Fairer Future promises, council plan targets and cross cutting strategic priorities. These include economic development, education and skills agenda, digital inclusion and literacy, health and wellbeing and cultural engagement. The library service is also ideally suited to work in partnership with others to deliver these priorities.
3. Southwark can be truly proud of its library and heritage services, it's a high performing service that is focused on delivering the best provision for people who live , work or study the borough.
4. There are 12 libraries spread across the borough and a home library

service for people who cannot come to a library. There is also a borough archive, local history library, heritage collections including the Cuming collections and the service is the custodian of the borough art collection.

5. An excellent range of services is provided including a broad book stock catering for the borough's diverse population, a full range of events and activities for children and adults, internet and Wi-Fi facilities in all libraries, an expanding e-books service and up to date digital services such as the boroughs heritage website.
6. There has been significant investment in Southwark's Libraries over the past five years, including:
 - A new library in East Dulwich to replace the existing Grove Vale Library, opened in December 2018
 - Refurbishment of East Street Library completed in 2018 to include a new community meeting room
 - A new state of the art library in Camberwell opened in 2015 which won The Bookseller Library of the Year award in 2017
 - A new library planned on the Aylesbury, co-located with a health centre, due to open in 2021.
7. Elsewhere on this cabinet's agenda is a paper recommending that Southwark purchase a 250 year lease for a new library and heritage centre on the Walworth Road. If approved this will meet one of the key targets ion the Council Plan to build a new library on the Walworth Road and will provide a state of art permanent home for the Newington Library and Cumming and other collections, displaced from the fire at Walworth Town Hall in March 2013. The Heritage service celebrates Southwark's distinctive and unique character, spaces, places and stories whilst recognising that the borough is part of a larger picture of local national and global society and history.
8. However Libraries have never stood still and this strategy following extensive community consultation and engagement is designed to ensure that the Southwark Public Library service continues to grow and adapt to changing needs and demands. The review and new strategy is intended to ensure the services are fit for purpose and demonstrate best value for money.
9. To deliver our ambitions we need to make sure that the investment and expenditure on the services is aligned with our strategic priorities and focused on maximising usage and reach.
10. In the light of decreasing budgets for local government there is a constant need reduce budgets, become more efficient and find new ways of delivering services. Elsewhere on this Cabinet's agenda are recommendations to reduce the Library and Heritage service budget by £250,000. This strategy is ambitious but can be delivered if this budget reduction is approved and all libraries will remain open. Savings will be achieved by a combination of reviewing opening hours when most people want to use them, reorganising the staff team and efficiencies aimed at minimizing the impact on the services to library users.

11. There will be a renewed focus on work with external partners to add value to services and provide additional services recognising that our buildings are community assets for the use of all within that neighbourhood. Also developing a strong volunteer Programme to support additional service areas such as heritage activities needs to be explored.
12. The Libraries and Heritage Strategy (see Appendix 1) aims to bring communities together by forging connections through the services provided. These connections can be described as;
 - Digital Connections
 - Health and Well being Connections
 - Reading and Learning Connections
 - Cultural Connections
 - Community Connections
 - Connecting by telling the story of Southwark.
13. It will do this by:
 - Becoming a leader in digital access and usage for residents
 - Supporting the health and well-being of residents
 - Supporting educational achievement of residents through engagement with reading, literacy and learning
 - Improving access to the cultural riches that Southwark has to offer
 - Delivering social inclusion, economic development & libraries as community spaces
 - Celebrating Southwark as a place through engagement with its local history and rich heritage.

Consultation

14. To ensure that the strategy delivers the priorities of residents and communities a consultation exercise was undertaken in the autumn of 2018. The consultation in the form of a survey engaged children, young people and adults and sought to identify their priorities for the services that libraries and heritage should deliver.
15. The full consultation report is available in Appendix 3

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

16. Public libraries hold a special place in the heart of the communities they serve. Uniquely they present a free, democratic open place where all are welcome and no-one turned away. They are inclusive and reflect the diversity of their communities and their services designed to meet those needs. Everyone is welcome and services are specially designed to help people engage with learning, study, leisure and entertainment.
17. They not only provide access to books and information but also help people to help themselves and improve their opportunities, bring people together, and provide practical support and guidance. They can help people to realise their potential and provide access to the world of learning for those marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds.

18. Increasingly libraries operate as the face of the local authority offering an extended range of services designed around local needs.

Statutory framework

19. Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 local authorities have a statutory duty 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it. In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.
20. In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:
- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service
 - lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.
21. Additionally with regard to museums the 1964 act stipulates that:
- "A local authority may provide and maintain museums and art galleries within its administrative area or elsewhere in England or Wales, and may do all such things as may be necessary or expedient for or in connection with the provision or maintenance thereof".

Delivering local priorities

22. The council plan 2018- 2022 identifies the following priorities for libraries and heritage. These include;
- Build a new library on the Walworth Road
 - Open a new library at Grove Vale in East Dulwich
 - Keep libraries open, keep investing and ensure they are open when people need them
 - Ensure Kingswood House remains an asset for the local community and improve facilities on the Kingswood Estate
23. The services also have a key role to play in the following priorities:
- Promote Southwark's diversity and cultural richness
 - Ensure all residents benefit from opportunities to take advantage of the digital revolution
 - Support a range of cultural celebrations across the borough;
 - Continue to make culture in Southwark accessible and work with cultural organisations in the borough to offer opportunities to Southwark residents
 - Secure the future of Walworth Town Hall and make it a publicly accessible

Library and Heritage Service in Southwark.

24. Southwark has 12 libraries spread across the borough and a Home Library Service which delivers to library services housebound residents. The libraries range from heritage buildings such as Kingswood House, Dulwich and Nunhead to modern purpose built buildings such as Canada Water and Camberwell. John Harvard Library was redeveloped in 2008 as part of the Big Lottery Community Libraries programme. A new library in Grove Vale opened in December 2018. The council is committed to replacing Newington Library and providing a new heritage facility in Walworth in 2018. A new library in Aylesbury is planned for the future. Full details on libraries and their opening hours can be found here <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/libraries/find-a-library>
25. All the libraries offer a range of services including, books and other items for loan, online resources, e-resources, ICT facilities, study facilities and activities for children and adults.
26. The heritage services comprise an archive and local studies centre at John Harvard Library, the Cuming collection and borough heritage collections. The service is also custodian for the borough (South London Gallery) art collection. The collections are primarily accessed digitally through the heritage website

How we compare with others

27. The Charter Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) collect detailed statistics annually from all UK public library authorities. Their annual report is the standard benchmarking tool for key performance indicators, allowing library authorities to compare their performance to near neighbours as well as the whole of the UK. The last full CIPFA publication benchmarks data from financial year 2016/17, in which Southwark's performance was very good compared to other London library authorities.
28. The library service has some of the highest performance indicators across libraries in London including:
 - 309,000 books in stock
 - 2.1m annual visits
 - 1.5m annual book issues
 - Resident satisfaction with the service is 91%.
29. Key highlights for Southwark in 2016/17 were:
 - Total loans for Southwark overall was the highest in London
 - Canada Water Library achieved the highest number of loans of any individual library in London
 - Southwark was the 4th most visited library service in London.
30. Significantly more items were borrowed from Southwark libraries than from any other London library service in 2016/17 and Canada Water Library loaned 318,708 items in 2016/17, the highest number of loans of any London library. It was the 14th highest issuing library nationally.

31. In terms of value for money and investment

- Southwark is fifth in London for total revenue spend per 1,000 population
- Southwark is 7th in London for total materials spend per 1,000 population, which reflects a successful stock purchasing policy as we have already seen that Southwark had the most item loans.
- Southwark is 7th in London for employee costs per 1,000 population.

32. In addition to the CIPFA benchmarking data Southwark library service collects a range of performance management statistics including internet and wi-fi usage, book issues, visitor figures, attendance at library events, volunteer hours and demographic breakdowns of library use. This data has also been used to inform the strategy. See Appendix 2 for additional library service statistics that compares the current membership profile of library users against demographic data for the borough. This shows that broadly Southwark's Public Libraries provide services that are seen to be relevant for the boroughs population, however this is continually reviewed and the service offer refined to meet local needs.

CONSULTATION

33. In order to ensure that library and heritage services are relevant and provide what our communities want and need the 'Let's talk about libraries' consultation was launched in September 2018 and ran for eight weeks. The consultation was in the form of a survey which was made available online and in paper form. It was publicised widely through all of the council's communication channels, and offered to all visitors to Southwark libraries during the consultation period. A copy of the consultation report is available in Appendix 3.

34. The consultation responses inform this strategy. 1,782 responses to the consultation were received, which has meant that a large amount of useful data was received to shape the strategy.

35. A separate shorter consultation was carried out with children, to which 345 responses were received. We also carried out a number of focus groups with library staff. All of this was based around the key themes of the proposed library and heritage strategy relating to digital literacy, health and well-being, reading and learning, cultural and community use and telling the story of Southwark through heritage and archive services.

36. The consultation reached a wide range of residents which in part mirrored the existing range of library members- 59.5% of respondents were female (57% of existing members are female), and 61% of respondents were 18-55 (61% of existing members are 18-59).

37. Equalities data showed that the consultation survey was not as successful in reaching members of the African and Black communities either in line with the borough population or existing members of libraries. 8% Black British and 4% African responded (the existing library membership breakdown African 14% and Black British 14%). Despite this, the equalities data does indicate that the survey was completed by respondents from a

wide range of ethnic groups. As this strategy is considered and an action plan developed one of the areas for development will be ensuring full and representative engagement in developing services in libraries and heritage.

38. In order to reach more respondents, including more non-users and those within the protected characteristics, the online survey deadline was extended by two weeks and was promoted in mail outs to all Southwark Presents card holders and to everyone who attended the council's annual firework display. 658 additional responses to the consultation were received as a result of this.

39. There were 22 questions on the survey, a large number of which contained free text boxes for respondents to expand upon their replies or enter additional useful data. A full analysis of responses has been produced and is available in appendix 3. Some of the key findings are summarised below.

- 89% of respondents used the library at least monthly, with only 1% not currently using our libraries. This indicates that the consultation has predominantly reached existing library users, and should give us a good indication what our existing users think of services, and what new services they require. The low number of non-users reached means the consultation results will be of limited use in determining what we need to do to attract more non-users to our services.
- Borrowing books (90% of respondents) was the most popular activity
- Using the library for study space (61%) was popular
- Digital services such as internet use (58%),
- using a computer, printer or scanner (61%)
- and using the Wi-Fi (61%).

40. Many respondents used the free text box in this question to make positive comments about the library:

"The library is my refuge, my sanctuary, my retreat. When I feel overwhelmed by life or grief, I go to a library and immediately feel at peace. A library is not just a source of practical services for me; a library heals my soul"

"Community space to be warm, safe and enriched by books, for all ages, incomes and backgrounds"

41. A preference was expressed for most libraries to increase their evening opening hours. Respondents also made it clear that they valued library and heritage digital services and would like to see these expanded. Useful suggestions were made for additional services, and for existing services to be extended, for example coding clubs and IT assistance sessions. There were a number of positive comments made about digital services, including this one:

"While I don't use these services at the moment, I have used them -needed them- in the past. They are a CRUCIAL part off keeping life together if you need a bit of help at some stage. A lifeline when there are few others"

42. Services to promote health and wellbeing were shown to be popular, with many positive comments about the contribution of the library and heritage service to resident's wellbeing, including identifying the library space as a potentially key place for health and wellbeing work. Study space was also identified as one of the most important library services for respondents. Respondents would like to see more arts and cultural services provided from libraries, including talks, lectures and film screenings. Children's activities and events were important to respondents, with coding clubs being mentioned across responses to a number of different questions.
43. In response to a question about volunteering, 48 respondents left their details and said they would be interested in finding out more about opportunities for volunteering in the library and heritage service.
44. Heritage and archive services were flagged up as being particularly important to residents, with a lot of people requesting more digitisation of services, including online maps, photographs and local newspapers. A question why people are not currently using heritage or archive services highlighted a lack of awareness of these important services. 40% of respondents said they were not aware of the services provided, which indicates heritage and archives services could benefit from some increased promotion.
45. The number of responses to the survey means that we have generated some really useful data on the library and heritage service in Southwark, including comments on existing activities and services and suggestions for additional services. All of this will feed into the library and heritage strategy, as this was the primary aim of the consultation exercise. Some of the key conclusions that can be drawn from the consultation, including next steps are:
 - **Input into draft library and heritage strategy-** The consultation survey was organised around the key themes of the strategy, therefore incorporating the key messages from the survey responses into the strategy document should be straight forward.
 - **Promotion of existing services required-** awareness around some existing services was shown to be lacking in survey responses, so there is a clear need to more effectively promote existing services. A lot of the things respondents asked for are already in place and clearly need to be promoted better, particularly the services of the local studies library and archives as awareness of the services offered here was shown to be limited.
 - **Suggestions for new services-** the consultation responses highlighted some existing services that can be expanded in order to meet a clear demand, for example the programme of code clubs in libraries. There were also suggestions for new services that will be investigated and implemented if they are viable and if there is sufficient demand.
 - **'You said, we did...'** - a summary of consultation responses will be made available to the public so that they can see what other people have been suggesting and how this fits in with their own priorities. It is

also important to show that we are acting upon the comments and suggestions made. A 'you said, we did' campaign will achieve both of these objectives by showing residents and library users the key things that were identified as a result of the consultation and explaining what the library and heritage service is doing to address the comments and suggestions that have been made.

- **Staff consultation-** in recognition of the importance of staff in understanding the needs of the service and the priorities for library users staff feedback has been incorporated into the overall results of the consultation and direct feedback will be given to staff on their contributions

The Strategy

46. See Appendix 1 for the detailed breakdown of strategy commitments.
47. The strategy has six overarching themes and will be delivered through the commitments in the strategy which will be delivered through an annual action plan.

Theme 1: Digital Connections

We want all residents to have free access to the highest quality, modern and innovative digital and online services. We want to enable them to embrace digital delivery of many services making sure that they are well equipped to maximise their use, understanding and navigation of digital technology. The library is well placed to deliver digital literacy and provide access to the internet in a safe environment to those in need of developing their online skills thus enabling them to participate fully and confidently in the modern world. The library service will strive to achieve this through developing programmes of IT skills sessions, coding clubs, expanding range of e-resources and being at the front of innovation in the provision of IT services for residents.

Theme 2: Health and Well Being Connections

The Southwark Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 – 2020 highlights the level of health inequality in Southwark. We know that life expectancy is lower than the national average. Alcohol/substance misuse, smoking, unhealthy diet (e.g. Child obesity) and unprotected sex continue to be major risks to good health in our population. There are high numbers of undetected cases of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease in Southwark population. Socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poor housing result in a relatively higher rate of child poverty and social exclusion which subsequently contribute to poor physical and mental health manifesting in health inequalities.

The library service is well placed to reach residents that may otherwise be difficult to engage with. Working with partners the service will contribute to tackling key health priorities through the provision of targeted activities and resources.

Theme 3: Reading & learning Connections

Reading and literacy are two of the most fundamental skills in life. Increasing literacy is vital to increase people's chances in the job market, reducing dependence on benefits and improving quality of life. Reading is also a great source of enjoyment and pleasure. It can be an individual passion or a shared experience. Learning equips people for life with the development of life and employment skills. Around 15 per cent, or 5.1 million adults in England, can be described as 'functionally illiterate,' with literacy levels at or below those expected of an 11-year-old. (From National Literacy Trust). Libraries are well placed to support adults with low literacy levels which helps to increase their self-esteem and persuade them of the benefits of improving their reading and writing. Libraries also have a key role to play in enhancing the literacy and reading skills of children and young people, supporting children's education and providing a rich variety of reading opportunities.

Theme 4: Cultural Connections

Cultural and creative opportunities enrich lives. They are important in developing local quality of life, sense of place and individual wellbeing. They also help to build skills and reduce social isolation by encouraging participation in shared activities. Libraries can offer spaces and opportunities for people to create and explore. They can introduce people to the world of arts and culture, provide access to arts experiences and help foster ideas and imagination.

Theme 5: Community Connections

It is estimated that there are around 3.9 million workless households and 120,000 families in the UK experiencing multiple problems related to social exclusion. (From Dept. for Work & Pensions). Research shows that children from poorer economic backgrounds and troubled families experience the very worst outcomes and make significant demands on a wide range of local services. Through its range of services libraries can do much to improve the life chances of young people, support adults in improving their skills and enabling them to find work. The library also acts as a place to meet others thus helping to tackle isolation and loneliness.

Theme 6: Connecting the story of Southwark

The heritage and local history service aims to value Southwark's distinct and unique spaces, places and stories whilst recognising that the borough is part of a larger picture of local, national and global society and history. The challenges ahead centre around how to preserve, protect and promote the heritage of the borough, how to maximise access to the collections and how best to tell the story of Southwark to develop a sense of belonging and engender community purpose and pride. There is an obvious need to find a new fit-for-purpose physical home for the heritage collection to enable displays and exhibitions, however, it is important also to utilise the latest in digital technologies to bring the past to life and inform new audiences

through new mediums so that it engages, informs and inspires the local community.

Community impact statement

48. As set out under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (PSED) an equalities impact assessment was carried out during the initial development of the strategy. The aims of the strategy are broadly inclusive, and should foster good relations between people from different communities as well as advancing equality of opportunity.
49. The strategy has no clear detrimental impact to any group or protected characteristic as outlined in the Equalities Act or the PSED, and the broad aims and actions programmed are likely to increase participation, representation and accessibility to library and heritage provision within the borough. Consultation with the community is an integral part of delivering this strategy.

Resource implications

50. Staffing and any other costs connected with this recommendation to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

Legal implications

51. Please refer to the concurrent report of the Director of Law and Democracy below.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

52. This report seeks approval of the new Libraries and Heritage Strategy the Strategy"). The decision to agree the Strategy is one that can be taken by the Cabinet collectively.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (FC16/042)

53. The report is requesting cabinet to approve the Libraries and Heritage Strategy 2019-2023 Full details are provided within the main body

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Connection Communities: Southwark Libraries and Heritage Strategy 2019-2022 (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Libraries Statistics Report (circulated separately)
Appendix 3	Libraries and Heritage Consultation Report (circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Rebecca Lury, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Equalities and Communities	
Lead Officer	Fiona Dean, Director of Leisure	
Report Author	Aileen Cahill, Head of Culture	
Dated	11 January 2019	
Key decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		11 January 2019