

Library Plan 2017-20

Introduction

Libraries in Herefordshire have in the region of over half a million visits every year and over 30% of the county's population are regular library users. Libraries are part of the nation's cultural and heritage landscape and have transformed over the years to become community resources catering for changing needs and expectations. Though the main reason people visit a library is to loan a book, the scope of what people can do is increasingly diverse. Library services extend beyond the fabric of buildings to provide a multitude of opportunities for people of different walks of life and different ages to benefit from.

This document outlines Herefordshire Council's plans for library services during the next few years; recognising the value to individuals and communities along with opportunities to support the wider objectives of the council.

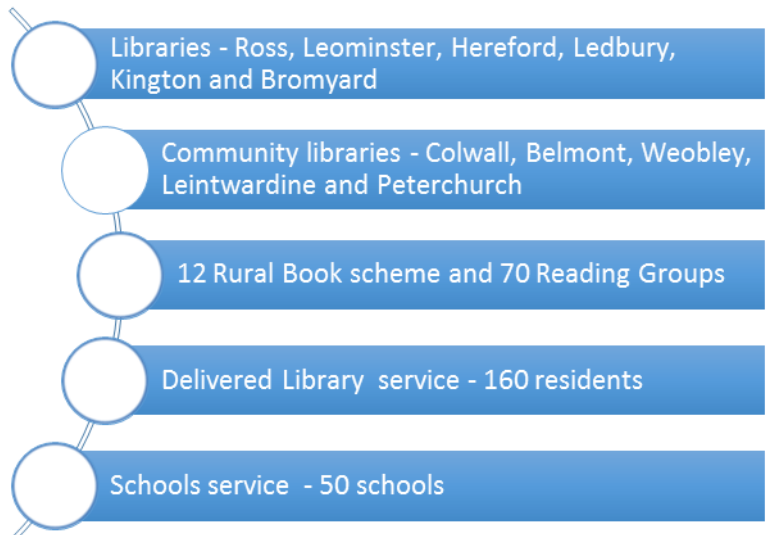


Ledbury Library in the Masters House as part of major development in 2015

Outline of the service

Herefordshire Council, along with many other councils, has had to review how it operates its library service. This includes responding to technology changes, digital access and how people access books and the wider use of libraries as community venues.

The authority has managed to maintain all the county's libraries, working closely with communities in many instances supported by volunteers, parish councils, service users and local groups. Each of the 11 libraries has its own character and will operate differently to meet local needs, with co-ordination and development by a central county library team. As well as the libraries, the service runs a host of activities including supporting a network of reading groups, reaching out to housebound residents with targeted delivery, visits to home and day care centres, schools library service, e-books, books on prescription, books for babies, along with special campaigns and programmes.



Purpose

The purpose of the library service is to promote wellbeing and enrich lives for people through different stages of their life. Libraries are ideally placed to be safe places that the community feel comfortable using, which have no barriers to age, background or income level. The range of services provided are particularly relevant to children at the foundation of their learning and for people of different ages that want to feel connected to others and their community. Libraries are also resource centres with access to technology and advice, often shared with other support services, and used by voluntary groups for community activity.

There are four key principles influencing the delivery of the library service:

- Provide and enable a free core library service across Herefordshire, supporting social interaction and reducing isolation.
- For centres to provide shared spaces as part of the community life of an area, fostering local regeneration and local identity.
- Promote reading for all ages and access to books, supporting learning and discovery.
- Work with the community to provide the level of library service want through support of community-run libraries and volunteering.

Objectives

1. **Children First:** support the learning and development of children through dedicated spaces and specific programmes for children, fostering the education, attainment and employment opportunities of future generations, showing that reading is a pleasure from an early age to any age.
2. **Multi-use:** to encourage the varied use of the library for different purposes, make the most of the library buildings, including a range of partners providing like and supportive services that generate an income for the services.
3. **Wellbeing:** to support people's wellbeing by developing the libraries as places for information, engagement and activities. To use the wider library services to aid people's mental health through reading, interaction with others and involvement in activities.
4. **Digital inclusion:** to help break down the barriers to going on-line by providing free-to-use PCs and wifi, often acting as an introduction to using the internet to access goods and services.
5. **Community involvement:** to work in collaboration with friends groups, town and parish councils to aid access to libraries including fundraising for projects and extended opening; operation of the community libraries and programmes to aid learning and engagement.
6. **Reaching further:** to encourage the use of libraries by people who would benefit most from the services, often reflective of generations of families who have not used libraries but would benefit from the opportunities they present. This to be achieved by collaboration with different parts of the council services, promotional campaigns and targeted activity.
7. **Safe places and safeguarding** – for the libraries to provide safe havens for people, with staff trained to respond to the need for help and to recognise a potential safeguarding issue and act on it.



Photo: self-serve at Hereford Library (above); Library service delivery against 7 outcomes “Library Delivery” Libraries Taskforce 2017.

Links to the Council Priorities

This section looks at how the services deliver on Herefordshire Council corporate priorities.

Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives

- Run the delivered services reaching housebound residents, residential homes and sheltered housing with reading choices
- Provide information on wellbeing at libraries and operate books on prescription scheme in partnership with GPs
- Collaborative with MIND including book club and exhibition in Hereford of art work
- Specific “access” membership for older people, vulnerable adults, residents with physical and mental disabilities, and carers
- National Reading Well offers for people with dementia, adult mental health, long-term conditions
- Books in alternative formats for visually impaired residents

Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

- Family friendly libraries providing a safe, welcoming environment
- Ceasing fines for children’s books
- Booktrust’s bookstart programme for children to have their own reading resources
- Resources and events to support literacy and learning
- Staff trained in “making every contact count”
- Schools Library service to primary school and library service to high schools
- Links with children centre services, including using libraries for activities
- Summer reading challenge; bounce and rhyme, schools visits
- National Reading Well offer supporting young people’s mental and physical health
- Targeted school events for improving and reluctant readers
- Workshops to stimulate interest in creative writing
- Special reading collections foster families

Support the growth of our economy

- Free wifi and public use PCs for job searches, plus IT courses
- Shared facilities at Ross Library for Job Centre+
- Volunteer work placements to improve skills
- Rural book schemes in shops and community venues
- Resources and classes improving language and functional skills
- Promote local authors and artists through sales and exhibitions
- Support and promote local festivals and cultural events

Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

- Introduction of self-services points to reduce the need to queue
- Shared sites with external organisations, departments and hire of venues
- Regional consortium for stock purchases to reduce purchase costs
- Increased income generation opportunities including online access to local history resources supported by sales
- Fundraising partnerships and projects to support the objectives of the library service
- Review and develop library online systems
- Working with parish councils and library friends / user groups to operate community libraries

Major programmes

Consider options for developing and maximising the use of Hereford Library.
Improvements to Ross Library linked to children centre provision.
Improvements made to the use and layout of Leominster Library.
Create wellbeing areas at libraries for easy access to resources and information.
Operate and promote adult events programme and school Book Festival, involving community organisations and partners.
Explore models for future delivery of the library service linked to archives and museums.
Extend the offer for e-books.
Promote schools library services and delivered library service.
Develop Herefordshire History website, improving online access to local history resources.
Publications programme and merchandising.
Involved in heritage and culture partnerships and projects e.g. Derek Evans Studio project, ROF project, Traveller collection, Dymock poets, Ross Gazette, etc.
Review and develop library management systems (move to cloud-based LMS, explore self-service printing, etc.)
Targeted projects with vulnerable adults, children and young people.



Children's author Tom Palmer
at a library event

Further information: Profile of Hereford Library service: www.herefordshire.gov.uk with the following links:

- Library Facts and Figures
- Books for Health
- Friends and Development Groups