

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR CARLISLE

Meeting date: 5 January 2021

From: Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services

CARLISLE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE SERVICE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *This report provides local committee with an update on Library & Archives Services in the Carlisle area since March this year and how services have responded to customer demand despite the impact of COVID-19. The report highlights an increased digital offer, services for older adults and our continued support for young people through engagement and activities. The report also incorporates the work undertaken by Carlisle Archive Centre through collaboration with local partners.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 *The items covered by this report support the council to achieve the outcomes stated in the Council Plan 2018-2022:*

- *People in Cumbria are healthy and safe*
- *Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving*
- *The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone*

2.2 *The items covered by this report support Carlisle Local Committee to achieve its agreed priorities of:*

- *Developing our economy and infrastructure*
- *Improving health and wellbeing*
- *Improving outcomes for children and young people*
- *Developing thriving communities*

2.3 *Improved locality working is one of the ways the council is delivering on its priorities. The county council vision, included in the Council Plan 2018-2022, sets out that it will be 'A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.' The approach and work of the Local Committee directly contributes to this vision.*

2.4 *Locally devolved funding is available for Carlisle Local Committee to allocate within the area to support positive outcomes, targeted and mainstream, designed to improve outcomes for the communities of Carlisle. This funding can be targeted to initiate new activity or to enhance/complement existing provision according to locally determined need.*

2.5 *A separate Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report since equality issues are dealt with at a project level for each of the applications to funding within the course of the year.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 *That the Committee notes the work of the Library and Archive Service in Carlisle over the last 12 months*

4.0 BACKGROUND

Libraries

4.1 Libraries were closed as part of the national lockdown back in March 2020 and immediately staff took up voluntary secondment opportunities to work to support critical services at the Service Hub in Parkhouse. The remainder of staff were provided with IT equipment to support home working. Whilst operating frontline services on reduced hours, we have seen healthy visitor numbers with an average of 600 customers per week. We have recently increased our hours and expect footfall to rise as a result of this change. We have new procedures in place to keep staff and customers safe and we are also capturing details for NHS Track and Trace. We continue to signpost to the Blue Badge and Bus Pass services and our customers are very happy that we have resumed our offer to supply hearing aid batteries in a central location in the city. Since reopening Carlisle Library, the Community Learning and Skills Team have been able to facilitate 49 English and Maths initial assessments, Level 1 mental health and wellbeing classes and Beginners computer course. Courses have now been scheduled for 2021.

Libraries enhancing the digital offer

4.2 The lockdown has provided opportunities for working differently using a digital platform to project services to library customers. Our online membership has increased significantly since March 2020 which has resulted in an increase in book loans of 89% for adults. eAudio loans have also seen an increase of 51% since March. A new Library Management System, KOHA was launched in October. The software is fairly intuitive and an improvement on the old system. The new system will provide us with additional features to support the delivery of a modern library service.

4.3 Activities have been created and delivered through social media platforms. These have included an animated Lego Club and online story and rhyme times are available through Facebook.

- 4.4 Carlisle Library is part of the Online Centres Network and through this partnership we have helped people in our community to get online and connect to services. Carlisle Library has worked with the Good Things Foundation (GTF) on a project called Devices Dot Now, distributing donated tablet devices and data to some of our more vulnerable Online Centre learners and to our Home Delivery customers. We helped customers connect online by setting up the tablets for them so they were ready to use, and then coaching them on how to use them over the phone and by using video calling. Due to the success of the Carlisle pilot, other libraries have secured funding to roll this initiative out to other areas in the county.
- 4.5 Cumbria Libraries launched its own You Tube channel and Carlisle library's retired Librarian has facilitated talks for an online audience.

Library Services for Older Adults

- 4.6 The Home Delivery service has resumed and is currently delivering to over 120 local residents who are housebound. It is anticipated an increase in numbers over the coming months as older adults remain indoors due to COVID restrictions.

Select & Collect

- 4.7 A new Select & Collect service has been set up from 10th August when we reopened Carlisle library. This service allows customers to request up to 6 books by phone or email and staff make them ready for collection. Whilst the take up has been slow but steady, we do think that this service will become popular as people become more aware of it.

Library Services for Young People

- 4.8 To support children during the Covid-19 pandemic and maintain their reading levels, the charity Booktrust has distributed 2,400 childrens packs and 250 care packs for children across the county. We have worked with the Service Hub during lockdown to ensure the packs were sent to those who needed them the most.
- 4.9 This year's Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) was delivered like many other services, digitally, to ensure children still had the opportunity to participate and support maintaining their reading levels. This was particularly important this year as children had been off school prior to the traditional Summer holiday period. Looking at the national picture, Cumbria is second in the national league table. Since March 2020, eBook loans for children's' titles have increased by 208% and children's' eAudio loans have increased by 64%.
- 4.10 The Winter Mini Challenge started on Tuesday 1 December 2020 and finishes on Friday 15 January 2021. The Winter Mini Challenge is essentially a winter version of the Summer Reading Challenge. To take part, children simply read three or more books - these can be any books of their choice. Every time they finish a book, they add it to their Challenge website profile

and leave a short book review. Reaching their online reading goal will unlock a virtual badge and a special Everyone Is A Hero certificate to print off and keep.

Carlisle Archive Centre

Carlisle Archive Centre safely reopened on 21st October.

- 4.11 Staff at Carlisle Archive have worked in partnership with Tullie House on the Black Memories Matter project this October to support Black History Month. The project celebrated untold stories of black lives in Cumbria through oral history recordings, videos, portraits and object exhibitions. We will continue to ask for submissions throughout the year to add to our archive collections and we have been contacted by a national magazine, Who do you think you are? to run a feature on the project.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members are requested to note this report only

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report provides Local Committee with an update on Library and Archive Services in Carlisle during the last 12 months

Dawn Roberts

Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services

11 December 2020

APPENDICES

No appendices

Electoral Divisions: All

Executive Decision

	No
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Key Decision

	No
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If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

		N/A
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Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

	No
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If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

		N/A
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Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?

	No
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If so, give details below.

Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

		N/A
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Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

		N/A
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N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

REPORT AUTHOR

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