Looking towards the future. Together.

Buckinghamshire Libraries have transformed in recent years in response to a number of challenges and opportunities. As a result, a broader range of services are now on offer:

- Council Access Points (CAPs)
- Welcoming Spaces in Buckinghamshire
- Support for residents throughout the pandemic
- Support for refugees
- Safe Places for vulnerable people

A bright horizon for Buckinghamshire Libraries

We are developing a five-year vision and strategy for Buckinghamshire Libraries and we want to hear your views. The following draft purpose, vision and priorities have been developed with library staff, volunteers, trustees and key stakeholders. This joint work is also guided by key national and local priorities.

Buckinghamshire Libraries include those managed by Buckinghamshire Council and community libraries. Some community libraries are managed by local community organisations and volunteers, and some are managed by Buckinghamshire Council and delivered with the support of volunteers. Our new vision and strategy will be for all our libraries.

Our vision – 'what we are aiming for'

Our vision is for all libraries to be welcoming and safe spaces for everyone in our communities to access services, information and tools they need to learn, imagine, discover and thrive.

Our purpose – 'why the library service exists'

Our purpose is to provide free and accessible resources to connect communities and support learning, culture and wellbeing in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

How will we deliver our Vision and Strategy?

Developing Libraries as Community Hubs

- Offer inclusive, multi-use community hubs that offer a single point of contact for local services
- Provide a range of social, educational, health and cultural activities
- Provide flexible and dynamic spaces

Workforce Development

- Invest in staff and volunteer development
- Staff and volunteer engagement to increase job satisfaction
- Staff empowerment to deliver a more responsive front-line service

Partnership Working

- Use libraries as community assets to encourage local partnerships
- Deliver services in partnership with community organisations
- Work with other public sector organisations on strategic priorities

Continuous Improvement

- Develop more effective ways of measuring impact
- Improve access and services through new technology and digital improvements
- Achieve best practice in and out of the sector
- Develop green libraries: increase and improve sustainability

Proposed Strategic Priorities

Buckinghamshire Libraries serve as community hubs offering a wide variety of local activities, services and facilities that support local communities. Our libraries are trusted places which connect people to their communities and council services.

We have looked at the main county-wide strategies in Buckinghamshire and identified the following priorities for the library service.

Health and Wellbeing — 1

- Our libraries can make an important contribution to supporting the health and wellbeing of Buckinghamshire residents. We work in partnership with health organisations to provide services such as health checks and stop smoking sessions, and have extensive book collections to support healthy diets, exercise, and good health.

- We have a range of bibliotherapy resources to support mental health (Reading Well) and reminiscence collections to support people living with dementia. Libraries provide pop-up events to signpost and provide information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities. Libraries are safe meeting places that provide social contact and emotional support to combat isolation and loneliness.

Culture and Learning — 2

- Providing arts and cultural experiences in our libraries with author events, theatre performance, arts and crafts, poetry, writing workshops, exhibitions, music and so much more. The libraries culture and learning offer celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, values identity and contributes to an active local cultural economy.

- Promoting literacy and the enjoyment of reading with an extensive range of reading materials, early year activities (Bounce and Rhyme), reading schemes, book promotions, reading groups and project collections to support children in schools. With support for study, skills and employment by providing learning materials, study spaces, access to ICT, jobs clubs and information to support businesses.

Stronger Communities — 3

- Buckinghamshire libraries are neutral, safe, welcoming spaces in the community, making them excellent venues for local activities which build cohesion, resilience, civic activity, and community safety.

- Two thirds of our libraries are already delivered in partnership with volunteers and third sector organisations. We will position libraries as local community hubs and build stronger links with and through local community boards.

Access, Information and Inclusion — 4

- Ensuring local access to council information and services by developing libraries as Council Access Points (CAPs) and supporting our customers by signposting to organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau.

- Offering digital access, with an extensive range of online resources and providing free computer classes and gadget days to ensure that Buckinghamshire residents are not digitally excluded.

- Ensuring that we are an inclusive service by working in partnership with organisation such as Bucks Vision, Age Concern, Dementia Friendly, Autism UK and Bucks Disability Service and by identifying and addressing the different language needs of our communities.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Help us to shape Buckinghamshire Libraries

Access the survey:
buckinghamshire.gov.uk/libraries-your-views or scan the QR code

Contact us for more information about our 'Vision and Strategy'
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