



Buckinghamshire Libraries Developing a new vision and strategy

Report to Communities and Localism Select
Committee, 5 October 2022

Appendix



Our Service

Buckinghamshire Libraries are multi-functional and serve as central 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.

Our people

- 140 staff members
- 600+ volunteers
- 120+ partner organisations



Our Customers

- 191,000+ Customers
- 24% age 15 and under
- 61% aged 16-64
- 15% aged 65 and over



Our sites

- 29 libraries in total
- 10 County libraries
- 9 Community-supported libraries
- 10 self-managed libraries



Physical visits (2021/22)

- 652,334

Services (2021/22)

- E-resource downloads: 670,443
- Council Access Point Enquiries: 15,816
- Loans: 1,050,604
- 271 customers signed up for the home library service

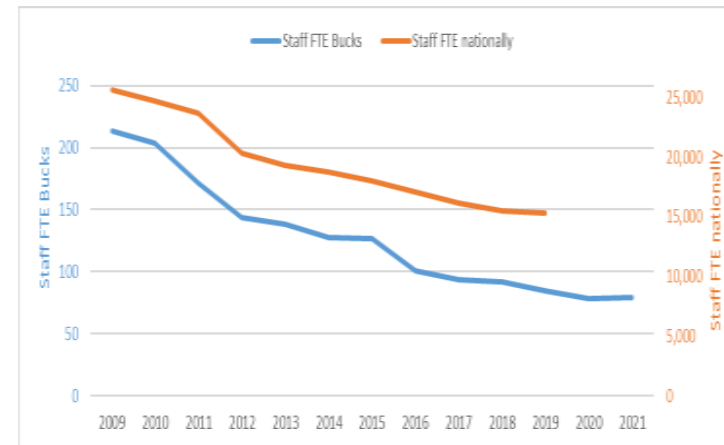
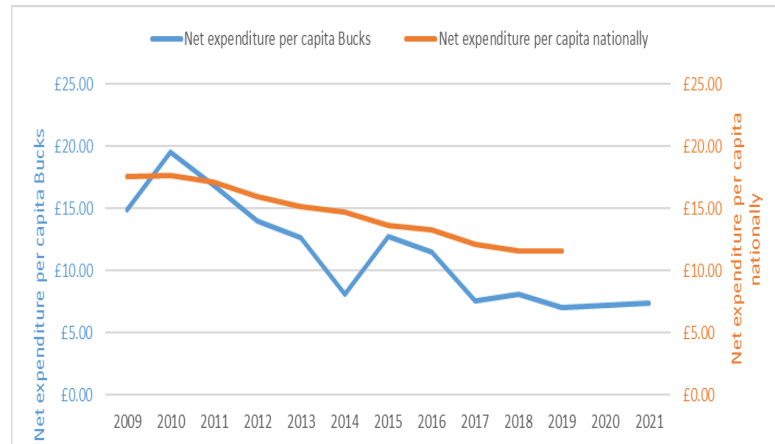


Our Offers

- Free public Wi-Fi
- Public Computers and tablets (1hour free per day)
- Free printing for CVs and job applications
- Low cost printing and scanning
- Access to over 7,000 online resources
- Health and wellbeing activities
- Cultural activities
- Digital inclusion support

Financial context

The library service has been successful in driving efficiencies and reducing costs through introduction of new self-service technologies and enabling of co-production delivery models (Community Libraries along with lean management structures). The net cost of the service has reduced from £5,825m in 2011 to £3,771m in 2021. Buckinghamshire libraries compare well against the national average in terms of cost. In 2019 the net expenditure per capita was £7.04 in Bucks compared to £11.54 nationally and staff in post per 1000 population was 0.14 in Bucks, compared to 0.23 nationally:



Current MTFP

Savings targets are currently in place as part of the Medium Term Finance Plan

YEAR	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Savings (£000)	180	75	75	330

Developing a Shared Vision and Purpose

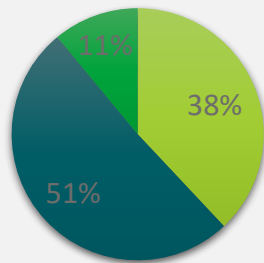
We asked our staff and volunteers what they liked

Purpose:

A purpose is why the library service exists, it's an unchanged description of the things that you do as a service. It's not deep, but its encompassing.

Options provided:

1. Our purpose is to enable access to inclusive spaces, services, tools, culture and support to promote learning, imagination, fairness and participation.
2. **Our purpose is to provide free and accessible resources to connect communities and support learning, culture and wellbeing in an inclusive and welcoming environment**
3. Our purpose is to inclusively support, inform and connect our communities to promote learning, imagination, fairness and participation for everyone.



■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3

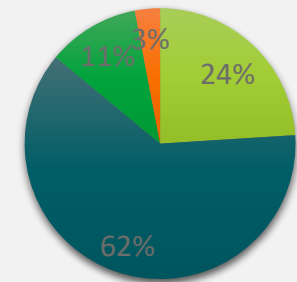


Vision:

A vision is aspirational, and something we are going to aim for. It is somewhere we want to be and provides us with a guiding light when we are delivering a future service and projects into the future.

Options provided:

1. Our vision is to be a trusted guide at the heart of the community, providing free services and resources that meet modern needs and are inclusive of all the communities we serve.
2. **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.**
3. Our vision is to provide welcoming, safe, inclusive and cultural spaces and services that are flexible to meet the needs of our communities and spark imagination.
4. Our vision is to be a trusted guide at the heart of the community and inspire and empower people to live happy and healthy lives.



■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4

Aligning to the corporate plan, working as one

We recognise the need to align services across the Council. Libraries will work towards the below corporate aims, actively collaborating to ensure we offer a joined up experience for our residents across our services.

- Provide an informal and accessible 'face' for Buckinghamshire Council and enable access to other information and services
- Support people through all stages of their life
- Connect people to other sources of support and council services which contribute to resident wellbeing
- Inspire interest in culture and enable access to cultural activities
- Support people with developing their digital skills and capabilities
- Meet the diverse needs of our communities
- Connect people to new ideas and experiences
- Provide free, accessible access to information
- Support and inspire learning, including intergenerational learning
- Build a sense of community with libraries at the heart
- Encourage residents to get involved in shaping the service

- Enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Provide an inclusive and safe space for all to visit
- Support those living with health conditions (e.g. dementia and chronic illness), and those in difficult life situations (e.g. refugees, homeless, lower income families, bereavement)
- Support those that are homebound through the home library service



- Deliver a service that helps the council achieve its net zero carbon emissions target by 2050
- Sustainable ways of working
- Reduce, reuse, recycle where possible
- Promote / raise awareness of green agenda

- Connect people to resources (e.g. courses, grants) that will support career development, jobs, training and business start-ups
- Support children with their development
- Support people who want to learn English and improve their literacy skills
- Provide space and technology for people to conduct work

Identifying Strategic Priorities

We recognise the need to align our services across the Council. Libraries will support a range of council priorities, collaborating widely to offer a joined up experience for our residents.

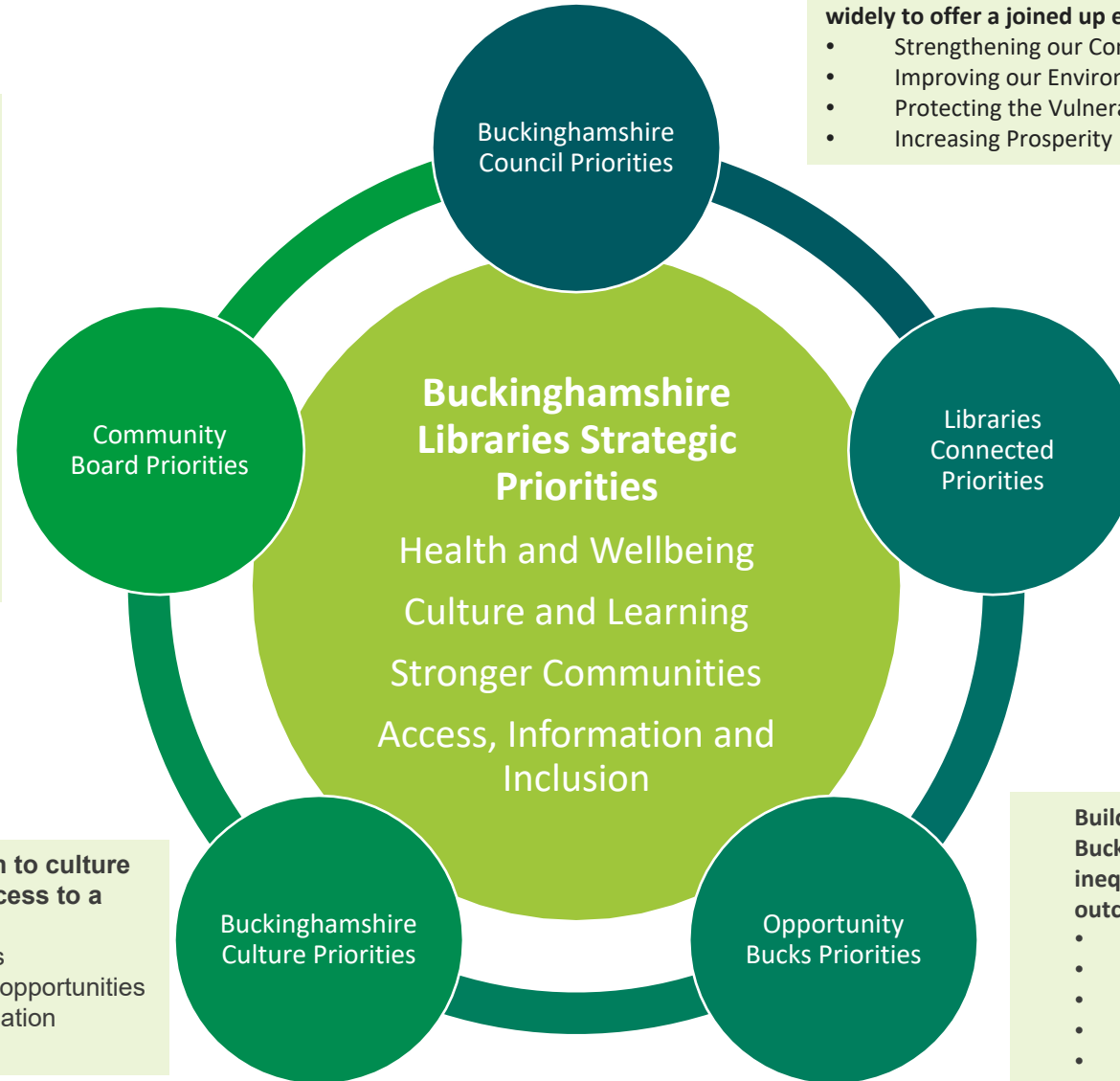
- Strengthening our Communities
- Improving our Environment
- Protecting the Vulnerable
- Increasing Prosperity

National / universal libraries offers which aim to enrich the lives of individuals and communities by improving wellbeing and promoting equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.

- Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and Creativity
- Information and digital inclusion
- Reading

Building on the 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All' framework to reduce inequality within communities, whilst improving outcomes for all residents.

- Education and Skills
- Jobs and Career Opportunities
- Quality of Public Realm
- Standard of Living
- Health and Wellbeing



Community Boards bring the council, groups, organisations and local people together to look at local issues and find ways of improving them together. Libraries will continue to work in partnership with community boards to ensure we listen and respond to local needs.

- Environment and Climate Change
- Covid 19 Economic Recovery and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport and Travel
- Enhancing The Lives of the Elderly, Vulnerable and Young
- Community Safety
- Road Safety, Highways & Infrastructure
- Community Cohesion

Developing a stronger partnership approach to culture will result in greater impact and open up access to a wider range of funding opportunities.

- A thriving economy and transformed places
- Equality of access to cultural activities and opportunities
- Improved health and wellbeing of the population
- An energised creative and cultural sector

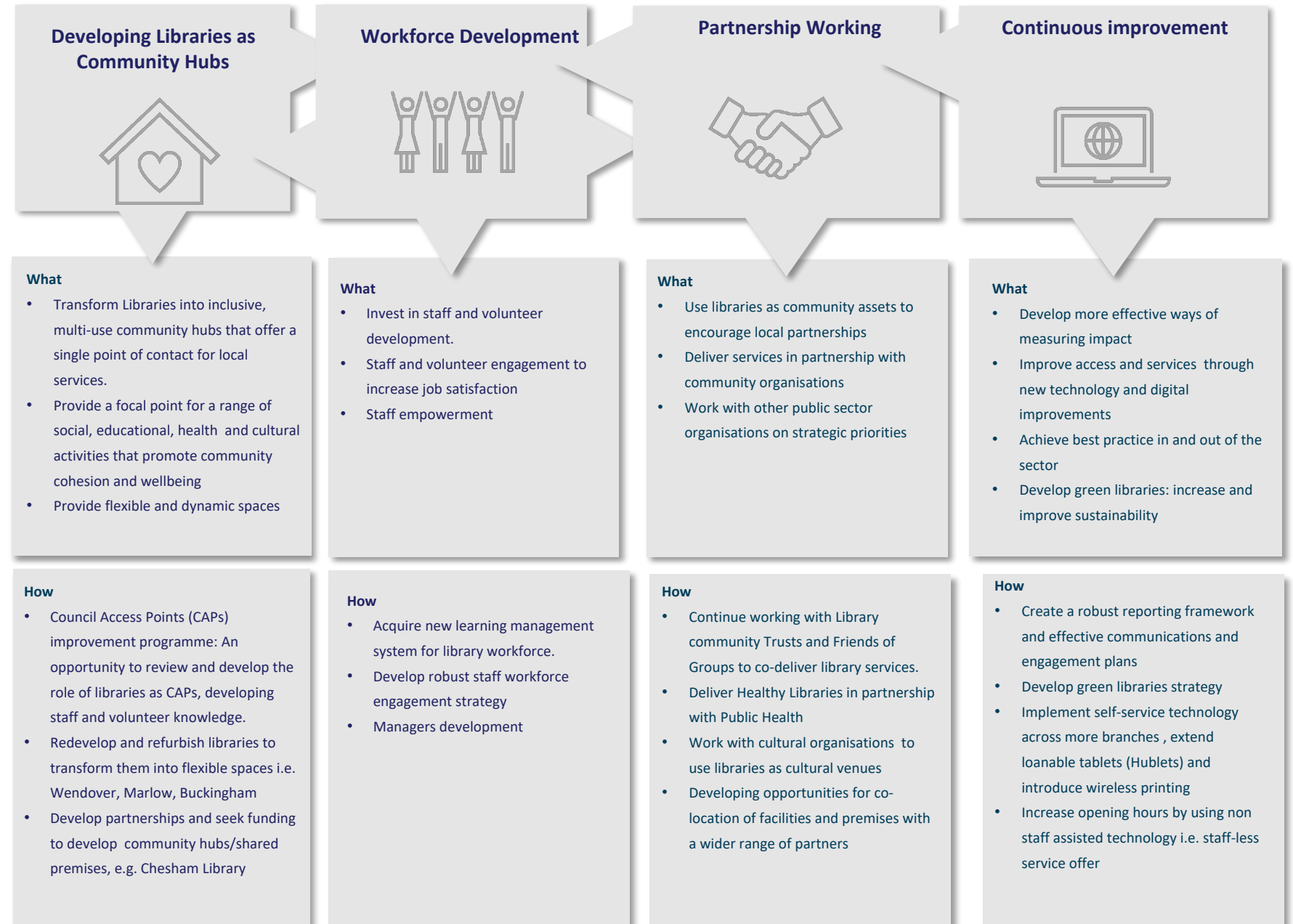
Buckinghamshire Libraries



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.

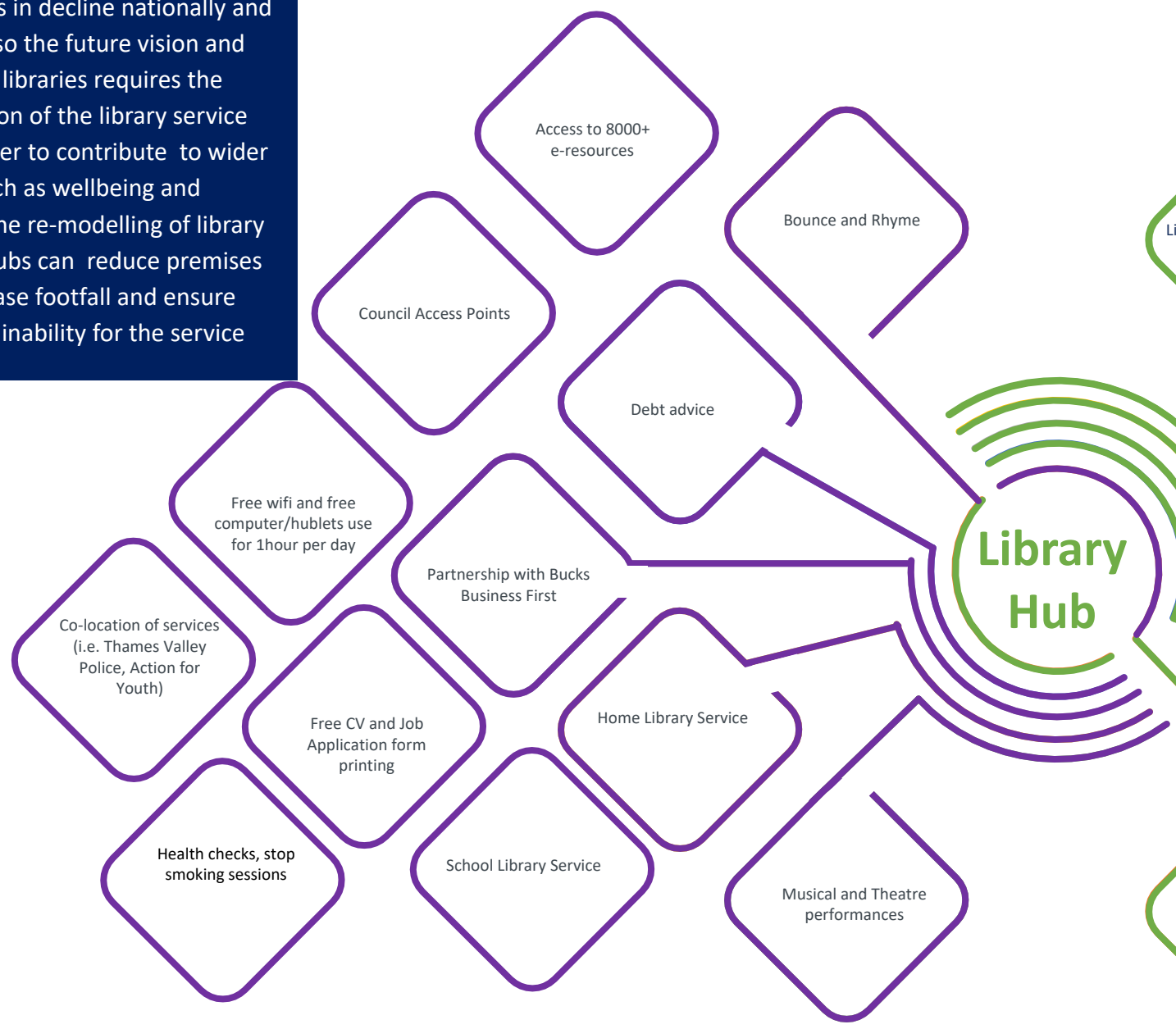
Our Purpose is to provide free and accessible resources to connect communities and support learning, culture and wellbeing in an inclusive and welcoming environment

How will we deliver our Vision?



Traditional use of libraries e.g., book borrowing is in decline nationally and locally and so the future vision and strategy for libraries requires the diversification of the library service offer in order to contribute to wider agendas such as wellbeing and inclusion. The re-modelling of library spaces as hubs can reduce premises costs, increase footfall and ensure future sustainability for the service

Some of our current offers



Some identified opportunities



Buckinghamshire Libraries: Suggested Strategic Priorities



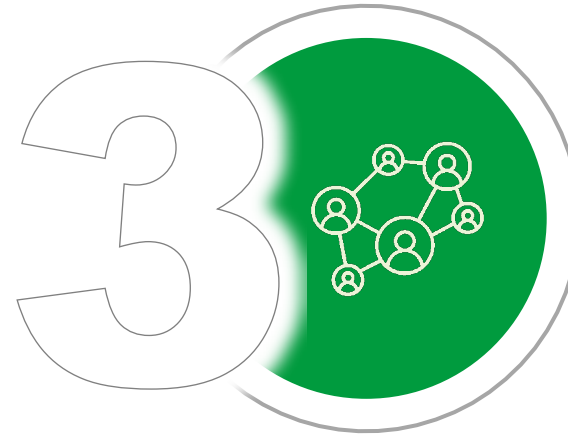
Health and Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire Libraries will support place-based strategies including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, focusing in areas such as early years outcomes, mental health, social isolation, obesity, diabetes, cardio-vascular illness and ageing well. We will do this through local and national partnerships working with Public Health, Children's Services, Adult Social Care, social prescribers, GPs, schools and social activity groups to ensure we meet the needs of our local communities.



Culture and Learning

Buckinghamshire Libraries are inclusive cultural venues that host activities offering diverse cultural experiences, encouraging individuals to explore, create and learn. We will continue developing partnership work with the arts and culture sector providing diverse and inclusive resources (i.e. books, e-resources, history and heritage materials, playbooks, reminiscence collections), and cultural activities (i.e. book talks, reading groups, bounce and rhyme, plays, musical performances). To encourage learning through reading at all ages we will increase reading groups and continue supporting reading campaigns such as the Summer Reading Challenge and Read Well.



Stronger Communities

Buckinghamshire Libraries are neutral, safe, welcoming spaces in the community, making them excellent venues for local activities which build community cohesion and resilience. 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

Buckinghamshire Libraries are committed to enabling digital inclusion and access to information through our library resources, Council Access Points and technology. We will develop a stronger and more robust offer with a focus on providing support to the most vulnerable residents in Buckinghamshire and marginalised groups (elderly, refugees, young parents etc), plus specific activities in line with emerging priorities, for example to help people experiencing financial insecurity.

Possible areas of discussion for the Communities and Localism Select Committee

How well do the proposed purpose and vision statements describe a library service for the 21st century?

Are the four proposed service priorities the most relevant areas for library service focus in Buckinghamshire?

Are there additional ideas and suggestion for stakeholder engagement to help shape the vision and strategy?