Libraries vision and outcomes

Vision: Somerset's libraries are a dynamic, evolving and integral part of the community: they open up a world of opportunities for reading, understanding and discovery

Outcome 1: More people enjoy a vibrant and dynamic reading experience

What this will result in:
- More people – of all ages and from all backgrounds – will enjoy reading more on their own, through groups and social activities
- People will be inspired by what we offer and how we offer it and engage with them
- It will support improved literacy among the young, and contribute to efforts to improve Somerset's educational outcomes
- Vibrant libraries will be a key part of Somerset's cultural offer

Why does this matter?
- Reading is pleasurable and enhances people's life chances
- Enjoying reading improves literacy and through that, educational outcomes
- It will improve people's health and wellbeing: for example reading can help improve mental health and delay the onset of dementia
- Reading-related activities can bring people together from across generations and diverse sections of the community and combat social isolation, particularly amongst the elderly
- Our statutory duty is to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone who wants to make use of it, to promote the service and to lend books and other printed material free of charge for those that who live, work or study in Somerset

Outcome 2: More people are enabled and inspired to make the most of the digital world

What this will result in:
- Libraries will work in partnership with others to support digital inclusion through addressing access, skills, motivation and trust.
- Libraries will lead by example through the digital services it offers its customers and the skills of our staff in helping people access digital information
- Libraries will enable people to effectively benefit from digital information and services (both governmental and non-governmental)
- Libraries inspire people to make the most of the digital age, meet the rising expectations of a new generation, and open people’s eyes to what is possible
**Why does this matter?**
- We need to evolve what we do and how we do it to respond to the needs and demands of digital natives
- It will benefit individuals and the public sector if we can raise the pace at which the number of people digitally included increases
- We are uniquely placed to support people to become digitally included and to benefit from everything the digital world enables: this role for libraries is increasingly an expectation of a comprehensive service
- Being digitally included can help people live independently in their own home for longer
- Digital transactions and signposting to digital information is often more cost effective to provide: libraries have a crucial role in enabling savings across the public sector
- Inspiring people by the possibilities the digital world updates the traditional role of public libraries and will raise aspirations

**Outcome 3: Library services strengthen and enable communities**

**What this will result in:**
- Libraries making a meaningful contribution to the creation of thriving and resilient communities
- Communities feeling that they have a real role in supporting and shaping how the library service works with them
- Library services proportional to need and targeted to the areas, groups and individuals that need them most
- Libraries being recognised for the excellent customer service they provide and how they are accessible to all
- Libraries being seen (within SCC and by our partners) as key places through which to connect with local communities
- Communities will feel ownership of their library and feel that it enables them to make things happen within their community
- Library services support communities of interest as well as local communities in towns and villages

**Why does this matter?**
- The nature of what a library is, what it does, and how people interact with it is changing – but what is special about libraries isn’t
- People value their local library highly and see it as a key part of a thriving and resilient community
- By working with local communities and partners we can make libraries more sustainable
- We are under a statutory duty to make available information to people using libraries
- Many people identify more with their community of interest than their local community
- Where and how we deliver library services will change over time, including through the creation of community hubs

**Outcome 4: People, in particular the most vulnerable, are enabled to make informed choices for their health and wellbeing**

**What this will result in:**
- People’s health and wellbeing is advanced through what the library service offers and through what we enable through the partnerships (with associated funding) we develop
- Libraries enable people to make informed choices to help themselves improve their health and wellbeing, but which provide particular support for those most in need (including the socially isolated and vulnerable)
- Libraries will be seen, by both customers and potential partners, as one of the key places to access trusted/assured information and government services through the way it works in partnership and as part of the Council’s integrated information offer
- Libraries will be increasingly commissioned to deliver targeted interventions to support prevention and health and wellbeing
### Why does this matter?
- Libraries are trusted, safe and creative spaces, which are free to enter and open to all, providing crucial non-clinical infrastructure in the heart of many communities – for information, digital access, promotion, signposting, referrals and activities
- By building strong strategic partnerships, libraries can make a key contribution to improving health and wellbeing,
- There is an increasing demand for quality mental and physical health information
- Libraries can make a key contribution to the preventative aspects of adult social care and health
- Libraries have a statutory duty to provide information as may be required by persons using it

### Outcome 5: Libraries contribute to economic growth in Somerset

**What this will result in:**
- Libraries will have a key part to play creating a more dynamic and growth focussed business population and through that encourage innovation, help raise the level of successful business start-ups and help existing businesses survive and grow
- Libraries will provide access to business information and facilities as part of the Council’s integrated approach to supporting growth
- Libraries, working in partnership, will help people develop skills and access the labour market
- Our library service will be part of an attractive inward investment offer through the way it enriches Somerset’s cultural offer

### Why does this matter?
- Libraries have a key part to play in the Council’s priority around economic growth through the facilities they offer within communities, the resources they provide, and the expertise of their staff in signposting people to assured information
- Libraries provide safe and trusted space and facilities, which through working in partnership, can help people into employment
- A strong cultural offer is a vital component of a prosperous economy – including through the indirect way in which this supports inward investment
- Being in employment is a crucial element of people’s health and wellbeing and supports social mobility