



LIBRARY STRATEGY

2020 - 2025

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Worcestershire County Council (WCC) is very proud of its library service and all that it does to deliver positive outcomes for the residents of Worcestershire.

Our libraries are thriving community spaces where people go to meet with one another and participate in a wide range of services from adult learning classes and job clubs to social connecting groups and health walks. For many they are a lifeline.

Our 24/7 digital services are available for residents who wish to access services online and our Mobile Library and Library Service at Home take library services out into the community.

Our library service forms part of a broader community service offer, which is now positioned within our People Directorate. I believe this creates a fantastic opportunity to create a 'Libraries First' mind-set in Worcestershire which will see libraries as the first choice of the council and community partners for providing information and services within local communities.

There is more the service can do to support our wider corporate priorities and help build resilient, independent and prosperous communities; adapting library services to reflect how we are all living and changing community need.

Change is not a new concept for libraries as over the last eight years we have introduced self-service technology; established libraries as community service hubs; developed a comprehensive adult learning offer and health and wellbeing offer; launched the Hive and significantly increased the support offer from volunteers.

This strategy consolidates and builds on all the changes that have gone before. It sets out our ambitions for the next five years with the aim of ensuring libraries are positioned at the heart of our corporate priorities and remain fit for the future.



Lucy Hodgson
Cabinet Member
for Communities





The new five year strategy for WCC libraries will:

- Promote the library service and its benefits more widely across the county to reach more residents
- Establish libraries as the front door for council and community services where appropriate
- Establish libraries as community assets and increase community involvement through use of library space and volunteering opportunities
- Tailor libraries' service offer to meet a wider range of council priorities and community needs, focusing on the most vulnerable and promoting independence
- Seek to sustain our existing 21 public libraries, 2 library links and 1 mobile library, by:
 - » extending self-service technology to allow customers to access library services independently at times that are convenient to them;
 - » building on our successes at Broadway, Hagley and Upton to engage communities in sustaining and supporting libraries with lowest need; and
 - » optimising library space by sharing it with other services to generate income
- Enhance and provide new ways to access our digital library services
- Right-size staffing resource to activity levels and need
- Introduce an optimal library management structure that can deliver strategic ambitions for the service
- Establish the Hive as a centre for service innovation and development for all county libraries
- Invest in library resources to improve service quality and meet changing customer expectations
- Manage libraries more efficiently through new approaches to funding
- Explore opportunities for library service growth, in partnership with local communities, and in relation to significant housing developments in the county.



About WCC Library Service 2018/19

A network of:



Public
Libraries;



Community run
Library Links;



Mobile Library
visiting **175** rural
locations; and a



24/7
Digital Library



2,758,136
library visits

 **2.1%**
on 17/18

576

Volunteers, gifting

21,120

hours of their time



328,764
website visits



1 **Prison**
Library
HMP
Hewell



352,453

hours on library computers



160,056

attendees at library
events and activities



2,821

visits to library service
at home customers

74,208

downloads of **e-books,**
e-audiobooks and
e-magazines



2,406,878
library issues





The Hive:

First integrated **public** and **university library** in Europe.

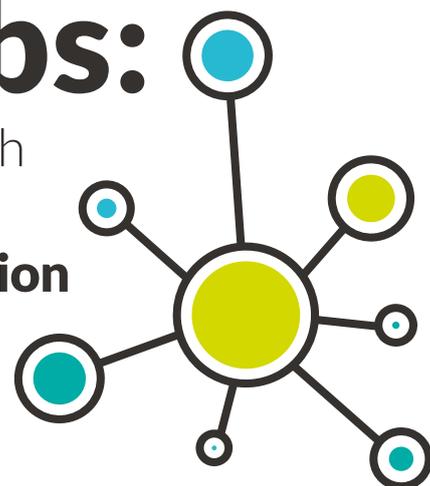
Community Connecting:

over **10,000** residents came together to **share interests** or **concerns at library social connecting groups**



Community Hubs:

bringing community services together through library co-locations with **Job Centre Plus, District Council Service Centres, Registration Services, Tourist Information, Health Centre, Age UK, Citizens Advice Bureau, Schools** and a **Gym**.



Learning & upskilling:

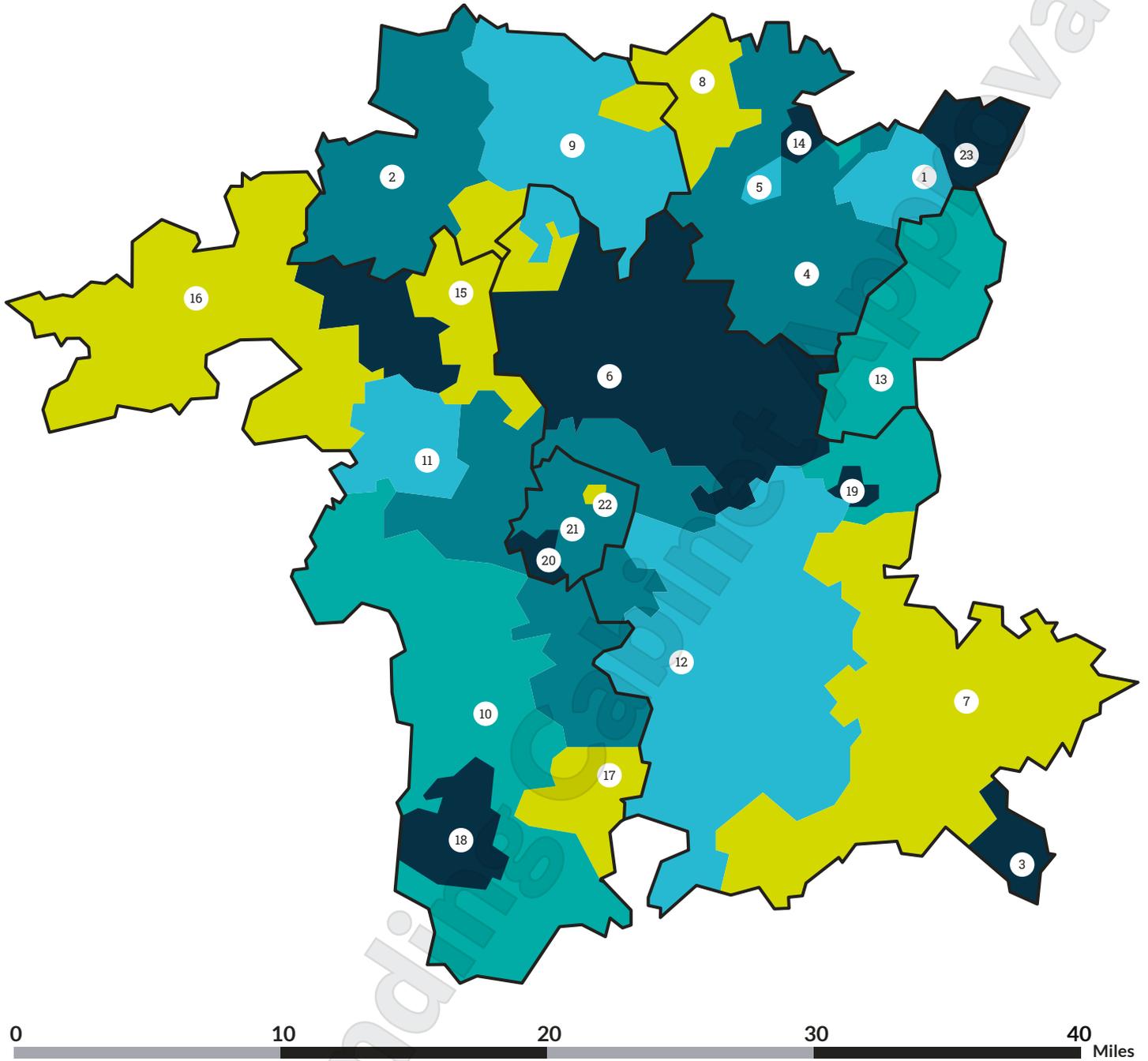
1017 learners acquired **new skills** and **qualifications** in libraries

Digital Support:



8000 customers supported by libraries to access WCC's digital Customer Services, with added value of signposting to further digital support from **97 library digital champions** and **adult learning IT classes**

Library catchment areas



- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Alvechurch | 11 Martley Village Hall Library Link | 21 Worcester - The Hive |
| 2 Bewdley | 12 Pershore | 22 Worcester - Warndon |
| 3 Broadway | 13 Redditch | 23 Wythall |
| 4 Bromsgrove | 14 Rubery | |
| 5 Catshill | 15 Stourport | — District Borders |
| 6 Droitwich | 16 Tenbury | |
| 7 Evesham | 17 Upton-upon-Severn | |
| 8 Hagley | 18 Welland Village Hall Library Link | |
| 9 Kidderminster | 19 Woodrow | |
| 10 Malvern | 20 Worcester - St Johns | |

Local Context

WCC Library Strategy is designed to support Worcestershire's changing communities.

Worcestershire has one of the fastest growing local economies and has a forecast for low positive growth in the short term. Being "Open for Business" remains a key priority for the Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (WLEP) 10 Year Strategy is to increase economic value in the county by around a third by 2025, creating 25,000 extra jobs and building 21,500 new homes.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) is consulting on Worcestershire's Local Industrial Strategy which will identify the county's local strengths and set out actions to improve productivity, including retraining an ageing workforce. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research¹ highlights the importance of developing adult skills in response to the effects of Brexit, rapid advances in technology and an ageing population.

The population of Worcestershire is projected to increase by 2.8% between 2019 and 2025 to 608,876, with the largest increase of 26% projected in the 75-plus age range. Increases are also projected among teenagers, with a rise of 11.3% in the 13-17 age group and 8.9% for 18-19s².

With half of all people aged 75 + living alone and the number of over 50s experiencing loneliness on the increase, services are required which improve health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation of an ageing population and tackle loneliness experienced by people of all ages.

Services are also required which will build young people's confidence, increase their sense of connection with their local communities and ensure that disadvantaged young people are not left behind digitally.³

The social economic status (SES) gap is widening nationally and the chances of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing upward social mobility are not improving. There are areas of poor social mobility in parts of Worcestershire with particular challenges in Wychavon.⁴ Two indicators of the origins of inequality in social mobility, that libraries are well placed to address, are time spent by parents playing and reading with children and time spent by fathers reading to children.

Large scale, long term housing developments in Worcestershire present a growth opportunity for libraries. Where these developments include new schools and community facilities there is an opportunity for libraries to bid for Section 106 funding to support the introduction of new library provision in partnership with other community providers. Three potential long-term schemes are in the pipeline including Worcestershire Parkway.

¹ IPPR Report – Building a skills system for the economy of the 2030s | ² ONS 2016 – based population projections

³ Princes Trust, Digital Literacy Survey 2013 | ⁴ Social Mobility Commission



Technology is constantly changing and services are increasingly being delivered electronically. Financial transactions are rapidly moving from being cash based to digital and self-service technology is becoming more widespread. There is a growing expectation that people will have the skills and confidence to navigate and participate in a digital world, whether applying for a job, sourcing online information and advice, paying for a parking permit or staying in touch with friends and relatives.

As a trusted brand, providing a variety of services in safe and welcoming spaces at the heart of local communities, WCC Libraries are well placed to respond to changing community needs, taking advantage of strong links with Council and community partners to engage residents, connect communities and provide information, signposting and services to help Worcestershire's residents develop the skills and confidence to live independent lives and fulfill their potential.





National Library Context

Public libraries are a statutory service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Act requires library authorities to provide a “comprehensive and efficient service” for people who live, work or study within the authority area.

In 2016, the national Libraries Taskforce published ‘Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021’ in which it sets out the strategic vision and commitment to public libraries in England, recognising the challenging times that councils are facing running library services, calling for radical thinking to protect frontline library services and acknowledging the need for councils to work in ‘new and different ways’ to ‘thrive and not just survive’.

The Libraries Taskforce recognises that local libraries provide a unique ‘cradle-to-grave service’, offering significant reach into local communities and a cost-effective way of ensuring that people are connected to local services. The report sets out an ambition for everyone to:

- Choose to use libraries, because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so;
- Understand what library services offer, and how they can make the most of what’s available to them;
- Be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life;
- Receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world.

To achieve these ambitions the Libraries Taskforce identifies seven outcomes that library services should contribute to at a local level:



How Worcestershire compares to other areas

Number of library visits per thousand residents shown by financial year from 2014/2015

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	% +/- 14/15
Worcestershire	5,536	4,787	4,849	4,564	-12.4
West Midlands	3,775	3,344	3,265	2,947	-13.5
English Councils	3,843	3,535	3,345	3,152	-13.0
All English Local Authorities	4,136	3,848	3,696	3,500	-10.6

Source: Annual CIPFA Public Library Statistics and 2018/2019 Worcestershire visits counts

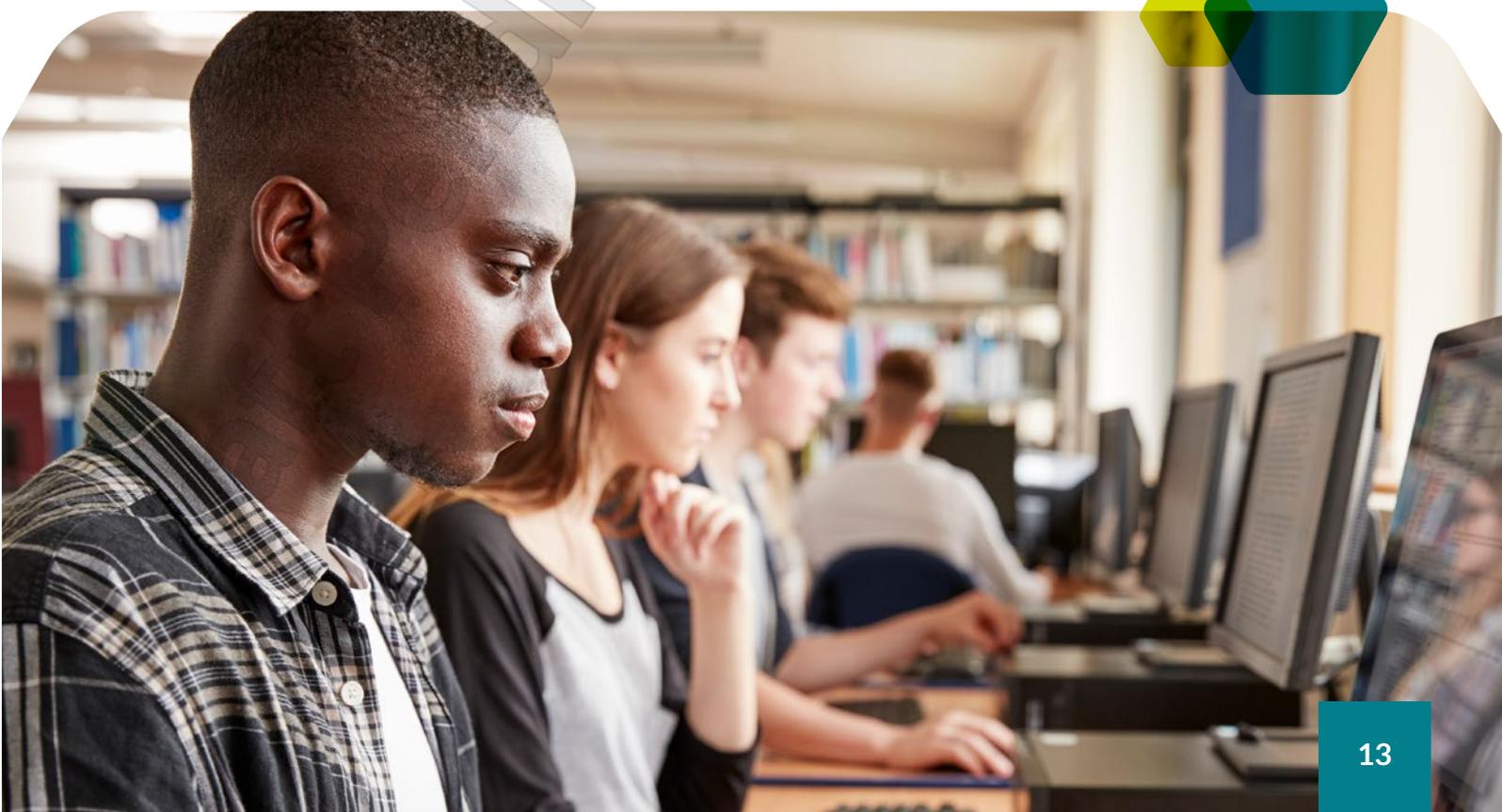
From 2014/2015 to 2016/2017, Worcestershire's visits-per-thousand-residents' figures were the highest of any English County Council.

Cost per library visit from 2014/2015 to 2017/2018

Financial Year	All visits Worcestershire	All visits Worcestershire per 1,000 residents	Worcestershire Cost per visit (£s)	All English Local Authorities Cost per Visit (£)	Worcestershire average % +/- CIPFA performance family average
2014/2015	3,185,207	5,536	2.28	3.08	-23.0%
2015/2016	2,770,023	4,787	2.39	3.18	-22.5%
2016/2017	2,827,561	4,849	1.77	3.15	-43.8%
2017/2018	2,685,481	4,606	1.80	3.17	-52.6%

Source: Annual CIPFA Public Library Statistics and 2018/2019 Worcestershire visits counts and financial information

The cost-per-visit figure for WCC Libraries (including The Hive), in the most recent years for which comparative data is available, is lower than the average for all English local authorities.



Library Premises Costs 2014/2015 to 2017/2018

Financial Year	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - Worcestershire	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - performance family	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - English County Councils	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - All English Local Authorities	Worcestershire average % +- performance family average
2014/2015	1,162	1,434	1,777	1,922	-19.0
2015/2016	1,205	1,346	1,654	1,855	-10.5
2016/2017	1,196	1,199	1,586	1,787	-0.3
2017/2018	1,198	1,366	1,680	1,893	-12.3

Source: Annual CIPFA Public Library Statistics

Worcestershire libraries' premises costs per 1,000 population are consistently lower than all comparators

Library Premises Income 2014/2015 to 2017/2018

Financial Year	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - Worcestershire	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - performance family	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - English County Councils	Premises Costs per 1,000 residents - All English Local Authorities	Worcestershire average % +- performance family average
2014/2015	37	91	93	105	-59.3
2015/2016	221	80	84	112	+176.3
2016/2017	238	84	102	120	+183.3
2017/2018	228	124	110	133	+83.9

Source: Annual CIPFA Public Library Statistics

Worcestershire libraries' premises income per 1,000 population is consistently higher than all comparators





Financial Challenges

Growing demand for adult and children social care services have resulted in budget pressures for Worcestershire County Council which are only partially offset by business rates and increases in Council Tax.

In response to these pressures, steps are being taken to transform the way the Council works and delivers services. To become fit for the future, the Organisational Redesign Programme commenced in 2019 to ensure that the Council and its workforce will be effective, efficient, and flexible to meet the changing needs of Worcestershire residents.

In 2018/19 the net budget for WCC libraries was £3,752,000, a figure that includes library-related costs of the Hive but excludes costs of other council services based at the Hive.

£300,000 of Libraries' overall base budget is funded by Public Health ring-fenced grant and £650,000 of premises-related income is generated each year through rental income from services co-located in library buildings and from library meeting room hire.

70% of the overall service budget is spent on staff, with the remaining 30% covering premises, hardcopy and electronic resources (books, newspapers, magazines, AV material, online reference sources), IT, service support and service development costs.

£196K permanent savings were realised in 2018/19 with £4K carried forward to 2019/20. The target for 2019/20 has been to save £395k (plus £4K carry forward) and is on track for delivery albeit only £310K are permanent savings with the remaining £89K being realised through one-off savings. This means the £89K will need to be carried over to next financial year. This leaves an additional £205K (total £294K) to be delivered in 2020/21 which will be identified through the development and implementation of the Library Strategy. This will be achieved through securing income from renting space in libraries, introducing new self-service technology in libraries, seeking further community support for libraries and right-sizing frontline staff and management resource in accordance with activity and need.

Strategic Ambitions for Libraries

WCC Libraries have identified five strategic library ambitions which articulate our vision over the next five years:

- **A Library Service for Everyone:** raise awareness of library services and their benefits to ensure wider community engagement
- **Libraries First:** put libraries at the heart of delivering Council and community services
- **Resilient, Independent and Connected Communities:** use libraries' trusted brand to deliver services that ensure residents are healthier, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible
- **Prosperous Communities:** develop new services to support business enterprise, improve skill levels and help more people into work
- **Sustainable and Innovative Libraries:** invest in new library service delivery models and secure new funding streams to future-proof libraries across Worcestershire



Our strategic ambitions consider the local, national and financial context described in this document. They have also been shaped by 5803 responses from Worcestershire residents to three library consultation and engagement surveys, which were carried out between Summer 2018 and Autumn 2019, and by feedback received at 23 public consultation meetings which were attended by a total of 800 residents.

Feedback from library staff and Council service leads has also shaped our strategic ambitions, alongside recommendations identified in Libraries' Needs Assessment and service improvements identified in a self-assessment review undertaken by the Library Service in October 2019.

Learning from the transformation experiences of other library authorities has also been considered.





Ambition 1: A library service for everyone

Raise awareness of library services and their benefits to ensure wider community engagement

WCC libraries occupy a unique position within local communities, offering a wide range of services that are available to all. Everyone in Worcestershire can borrow books and download e resources; access the internet and use computers free of charge; sign up to an adult learning course, attend a job club or job fair, receive one-to-one support getting online and using digital services, access specialist health resources, take part in one of many social connecting groups and sign-up to volunteer in a library.

We have received strong and clear feedback during public consultation and engagement that we need to do more to raise awareness of these services across the county, so that more residents understand our full library offer and choose to use our services now and in the future.

By raising awareness and expanding the range of library services on offer we will increase the number of local people who benefit from the skills, resources and opportunities available in libraries to improve their quality of life and fulfill their potential through participation, creativity and learning.

How will we achieve this ambition?

- We will develop a communications strategy to change perceptions of libraries and increase public awareness of the full range of library services on offer, and their benefits.
- We will work closely with internal and external partners to develop and extend the reach of our services, particularly to more vulnerable and isolated residents.
- We will continue to develop and promote our digital library offer for those who prefer to access library services online; increasing digital resources for download, developing a Library App to improve service access and introducing online payment facilities.
- We will use data from Libraries' Needs Assessment to put plans in place in local libraries to increase participation by under-represented age groups and socio-economic groups in their catchment areas.
- We will ensure that we remain responsive to changing community needs by giving residents more of a say in shaping library services. We will introduce new models of community engagement and will widen participation in our annual customer survey to include customers of our digital services and outreach services.
- We will seek further opportunities to develop our libraries as community hubs, bringing partner services together in the same space and making library services more visible and available to customers of other services.
- We will publicise our Customer Service Standards to raise awareness of the quality of experience that can be expected in libraries and implement a workforce development plan to ensure that library staff have the skills and confidence to deliver services to those standards in the face of changing community needs.

Ambition 2: Libraries First

Put libraries at the heart of delivering Council and community services

The National Libraries Taskforce has identified an ambition for Council services and community partners to understand what libraries have to offer them and see them as their first choice to provide information, signposting and services within local communities.

WCC Libraries are well placed to reach Worcestershire residents and communities. We already deliver face-to-face Council Customer Services across 5 out of 6 Districts and co-design services with co-located partners to meet shared service priorities.

By demonstrating what libraries can offer to the Council and community partners, and with backing from political and senior leadership, we will increase opportunities for libraries to play a more central role delivering council services to communities across the county.



How will we achieve this ambition?

- We will develop a communication strategy to raise the profile of libraries within WCC and increase understanding of how libraries can help to deliver corporate priorities.
- We will make the case for libraries to deliver council services to communities, drawing on national research and customer feedback data to evidence the social return on investment and outcomes that libraries deliver. We will also review WCC Libraries' outcomes framework and align it more closely with corporate outcomes.
- With the backing of political and senior Council leaders, we will establish libraries as the 'front door' for Council services where appropriate, and by doing so develop libraries further as community hubs for local residents.
- We will actively promote the development of digital skills to enable customers to access Council services independently and confidently. We will work with Council service leads to include libraries in their strategic plans where appropriate.
- Through improved marketing and networking, we will promote the benefits of libraries to service commissioners and decision-makers in external community organisations with a view to identifying new opportunities for libraries to deliver services on behalf of community partners. We will also adopt a cost-based pricing structure for delivering services for partners. We will build closer relationships with community partners to better understand their strategic plans, identifying opportunities to co-design services which meet shared priorities and benefit residents.

Case Study: Providing a front door for Council Services

Following a Council review of its face-to-face provision for residents applying for council customer services, including School Admissions, Blue Badges, and Concessionary Travel, a decision was taken to transfer responsibility for the delivery of these services, from third party providers to WCC Libraries.

As well as delivering these services at 50% lower cost to the Council, WCC Libraries have added value for service users through signposting to digital support services and promoting wider library-based social and learning activities. Of almost 2000 council service customers provided with support by library staff in 2018/19, 46% were referred to Library Digital Champions for additional one-to-one support and 18% to Adult Learning courses to support the development of digital skills.

Ambition 3: Resilient, independent and connected communities

Use libraries' trusted brand to deliver services that ensure residents are healthier, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible

WCC Libraries have an important role to play in building stronger, more resilient and connected communities. We provide multiple activities and services that can address health needs, impact upon the wider determinants of health and contribute to tackling health inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages. As trusted, safe and welcoming community spaces, libraries offer a route for public services to reach communities, providing access to information and signposting, creating social spaces for people to come together and access services that encourage learning and aspiration, improve skills and confidence, promote wellbeing and independence and reduce loneliness and isolation.

Our health and wellbeing offer is aligned to and contributes to, a range of Public Health outcomes and Health and Well-being Board priorities, through a collaborative service level agreement. Our provision for children and families is aligned to the Council's Best Start in Life and Early Intervention focus in the Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable and looked after children.

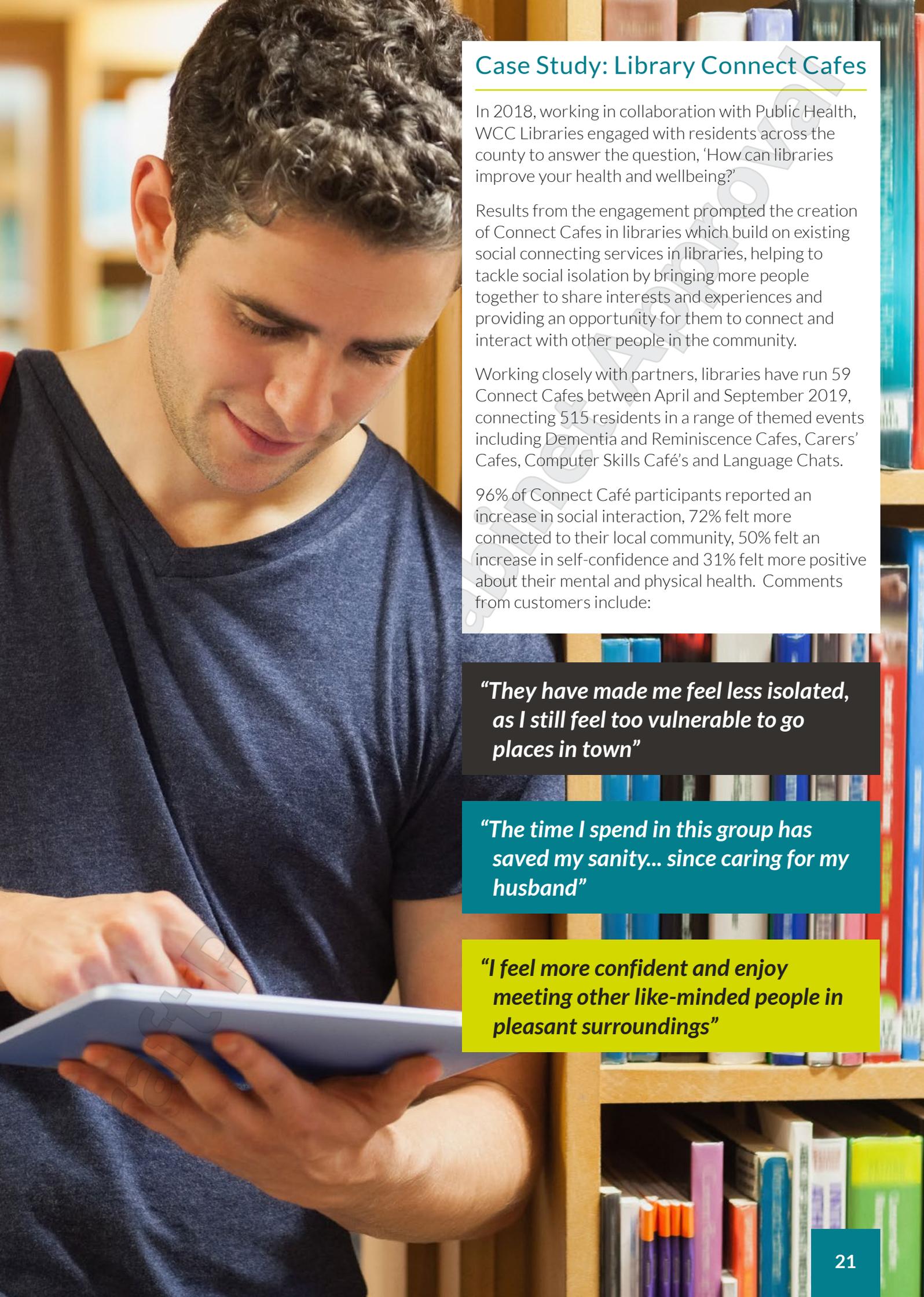
By aligning library services more closely to a wider range of Council priorities, with a focus on supporting adults to remain at home and live independently for as long as possible, we will help to build more resilient, independent and connected communities, whilst ensuring that the Council and residents get best value from their investment in libraries.



How will we achieve this ambition?

- We will support individuals to access information to support their needs, promote self-care opportunities and create safe and welcoming spaces for all.
- We will help to tackle loneliness and social isolation by developing our social connecting and outreach offer, working with Council, NHS and community partners to introduce new services for older, socially isolated or disabled residents and adults of all ages who are experiencing loneliness.
- In line with the Council's key priority to promote independence and health and wellbeing, we will enhance Adult Services' demand management strategy by establishing libraries as a hub for enabling services to support people to live at home independently for as long as possible
- We will help residents to make responsible choices for their future by promoting the importance of planning for long term care needs and raising awareness of how to prevent the need for long term care.
- We will work with Adult Services and District Councils to identify and target those most at risk and provide proactive engagement and support at a community level.
- We will continue to work with Adult Learning and community partners to develop services that promote good physical and mental health, particularly for an ageing population.
- We will continue to work with the Starting Well Board to support school readiness and with schools and the University of Worcester to develop a service offer that contributes to improving attainment across the curriculum and to developing teachers' skills through enhanced access to teaching support resources.
- We will work with partners to engage more young people, particularly those with the greatest need, and to develop services to connect young people with their wider community through meaningful activity that improves their employment prospects.
- We will seek external funding to develop new cultural services in libraries aimed at improving well-being.
- We will do more to promote libraries as digital support centres, providing one-to-one support and learning opportunities for people who do not have the skills or confidence to engage with digital services.
- We will also ensure that the library workforce has the skills to navigate an evolving information landscape and to support the digital inclusion agenda.





Case Study: Library Connect Cafes

In 2018, working in collaboration with Public Health, WCC Libraries engaged with residents across the county to answer the question, 'How can libraries improve your health and wellbeing?'

Results from the engagement prompted the creation of Connect Cafes in libraries which build on existing social connecting services in libraries, helping to tackle social isolation by bringing more people together to share interests and experiences and providing an opportunity for them to connect and interact with other people in the community.

Working closely with partners, libraries have run 59 Connect Cafes between April and September 2019, connecting 515 residents in a range of themed events including Dementia and Reminiscence Cafes, Carers' Cafes, Computer Skills Café's and Language Chats.

96% of Connect Café participants reported an increase in social interaction, 72% felt more connected to their local community, 50% felt an increase in self-confidence and 31% felt more positive about their mental and physical health. Comments from customers include:

"They have made me feel less isolated, as I still feel too vulnerable to go places in town"

"The time I spend in this group has saved my sanity... since caring for my husband"

"I feel more confident and enjoy meeting other like-minded people in pleasant surroundings"

Ambition 4: Prosperous communities

Develop new services to support business enterprise, improve skill levels and help people into work

WCC libraries contribute to the Council's Open for Business priorities through reading and literacy support, a comprehensive library-based adult learning programme, services for job seekers and volunteering opportunities for all ages.

By developing new services aligned more closely to Council priorities we will ensure libraries play a bigger role building prosperity and raising aspiration in the county.

How will we achieve this ambition?

- Working closely with the Council's Economic Development team, we will seek European Regional Development funding to develop a business enterprise support service in libraries across the county for business start-ups and early stage new businesses.
- We will build on the Hive's membership of the British Libraries' Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Network to establish libraries as a gateway to business information and signposting and to the Council's wider business support offer.
- We will work with the local Growth Hub and Economic Development teams to provide a signposting service for companies looking to expand in the county and support local businesses to access business resources available within the library network.
- We will work closely with the Council's Learning and Skills service to introduce new services in libraries that meet requirements identified in Worcestershire's Local Industrial Strategy. By extending our adult learning and employment support services, developing our skills offer and working with local partners, including local councils, we will provide opportunities in libraries:
 - » for the existing workforce, particularly those in the over 50s age group, to retrain or upskill to meet the developing needs of local businesses.
 - » to address low levels of social mobility in parts of the County by ensuring residents have a skills pathway which will raise aspirations of the next generation of the local workforce.
- We will introduce traineeships to improve employment chances of young people, particularly those who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and 16-24 years old.
- We will continue to encourage interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths in libraries and develop the Hive as a showcase for STEAM innovation.
- We will work with partners to reach more job seekers and will strengthen our Job Club offer to improve the employment outcomes of participants.



Case Study: Working with partners to co-design services

Local Job Centre Plus (JCP) services are co-located in four WCC libraries at Redditch, Kidderminster, Malvern and Bromsgrove. Through the co-design of new services with JCP, our partnership allows us to improve services for job seekers.

In Redditch Library, working closely with JCP's Employer Advisor and Job Coaches, we have launched a new, targeted Careers and Job Fair service for young people aged 16-24, including those with lower skills and confidence.

Bringing together the Council's Learning and Skills services, local employers, education providers and third sector services including the Princes Trust and YMCA, the Careers and Job Fair for young people provides JCP customers and other local young people with information, advice and opportunities around employment, apprenticeships, work placements, volunteering and training.

At the Spring 2019 event, employers and partners engaged with 85 young people, 14 of whom gained an interview on the day. Comments from the young people who attended the event highlighted what they found most useful about the event:

'lots of apprenticeship and employment advice', 'good to chat face to face', 'a lot of questions answered for me', 'learned about Princes Trust and Army driving lessons' 'learned what to say in an interview'.

Case Study: Adult Learning in Libraries

Worcestershire libraries offer an extensive and diverse range of adult learning courses, from accredited qualifications to leisure activities and life skills, in a safe and welcoming environment. These courses improve the skills, employability and confidence of residents, helping them to reach their full potential and contribute to a prosperous county. Of the 1017 learners who attended courses across 16 library locations in 2018/2019, over 44% reported feeling motivated to learn more and 26% felt increased self-esteem. Other reported feeling more connected to their local communities and encouraged to look for work and to volunteer.

One library learner, Sadie describes the difference that attending a library-based learning course has made to her.

"I am stronger, more confident, more outgoing and more resilient. As a Mum of 3 I had been out of work for 4 years and hadn't studied for 20 years. My confidence was non-existent and while I didn't want to go back to work 9-5 in an office, I was terrified of trying something new. When changing my children's books at a library I bumped into Nikki who chatted to me like I was a person, not just a Mum, and we talked about the different learning opportunities available to me. Her encouragement and support got me onto the Level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning course where my tutor was incredibly supportive and encouraging providing constructive feedback and practical advice on studying techniques. During my course I gained full time employment as a TA at my children's school and after completing my Level 2 TA I went on to complete the Level 2 in 'Understanding Children and Young Peoples Mental Health'."



Ambition 5: Sustainable and innovative libraries

Invest in new library service delivery models and secure new funding streams to future-proof libraries across Worcestershire

WCC has a commitment to securing the future of its library network for the benefit of Worcestershire residents. There is recognition, however, WCC libraries must find new ways of providing library services that deliver efficiencies for the Council while future-proofing services, meeting the needs of Worcestershire residents as well as our statutory duty to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service.

In order to be able to respond flexibly to continuing change and challenge we must maintain a good understanding of the needs and preferences of Worcestershire residents, keep up to date with national and local trends that affect the county, stay connected to developments and innovations in the public library sector and implement a flexible library structure.

How will we achieve this ambition?

- In response to strong support from the public for sharing library buildings as a preferred transformation option, we will carry out a strategic property review of library accommodation and proactively market vacant space in libraries. Where it is efficient to do so, we will seek new partners to work alongside us in our library buildings and identify opportunities to re-locate our services to new community spaces.
- We will invest in extending self-service technology in libraries to allow customers to access libraries independently at times that are convenient to them. Whilst this will involve introducing some unstaffed hours in libraries, we will retain staffed hours at times of highest customer activity and will engage local community partners during implementation to ensure that libraries remain welcoming to customers when staff are not present.
- In response to low levels of public support for fully volunteer run Community Managed Libraries, we will instead extend the successful community supported library model in place at Broadway, Hagley and Upton, where support from library staff is retained. We will seek to engage local community partners to sustain those libraries which have been identified as having the lowest need in our Needs Assessment, based on deprivation, isolation, library visiting patterns and service activity levels.
- We will establish the Hive as a centre for service innovation and for leading the development and implementation of new services across libraries to deliver social and economic benefits for the whole county.
- We will ensure that our service offer continues to respond to changing community needs by strengthening our annual planning process to include an update of Libraries' Needs Assessment data and a review of demographic, economic, technological and other developments affecting Worcestershire.
- We will implement new approaches to reduce costs and generate income within the service by aligning staffing levels more closely to service activity levels and seeking to integrate frontline and back office functions with co-located partners.
- We will build skills & capacity within the service to explore and establish new and sustainable ways for funding libraries. We will work more closely with partners to bid for funding to develop library services, explore joint purchasing arrangements, seek commercial funding opportunities and exploring the benefits of an alternative delivery model for WCC libraries. We will re-invest a proportion of saved funds to improve the quality of library resources and meet changing customer needs.
- Finally, we will seek opportunities for service growth, working with the Councils Planning team to identify opportunities to bid for Section 106 funding in relation to significant housing developments in the county.



Case Study: Study Happy at the Hive

As a result of WCC Libraries' unique partnership with the University of Worcester, The Hive has piloted a 'Study Happy' programme, supporting students across Worcestershire to study healthy, happier and smarter.

A programme of well-being and study support sessions and advice and awareness campaigns, which are provided year-round for students of the University of Worcester, has also been made available for students across the County, including those in Sixth Form or studying for GCSEs.

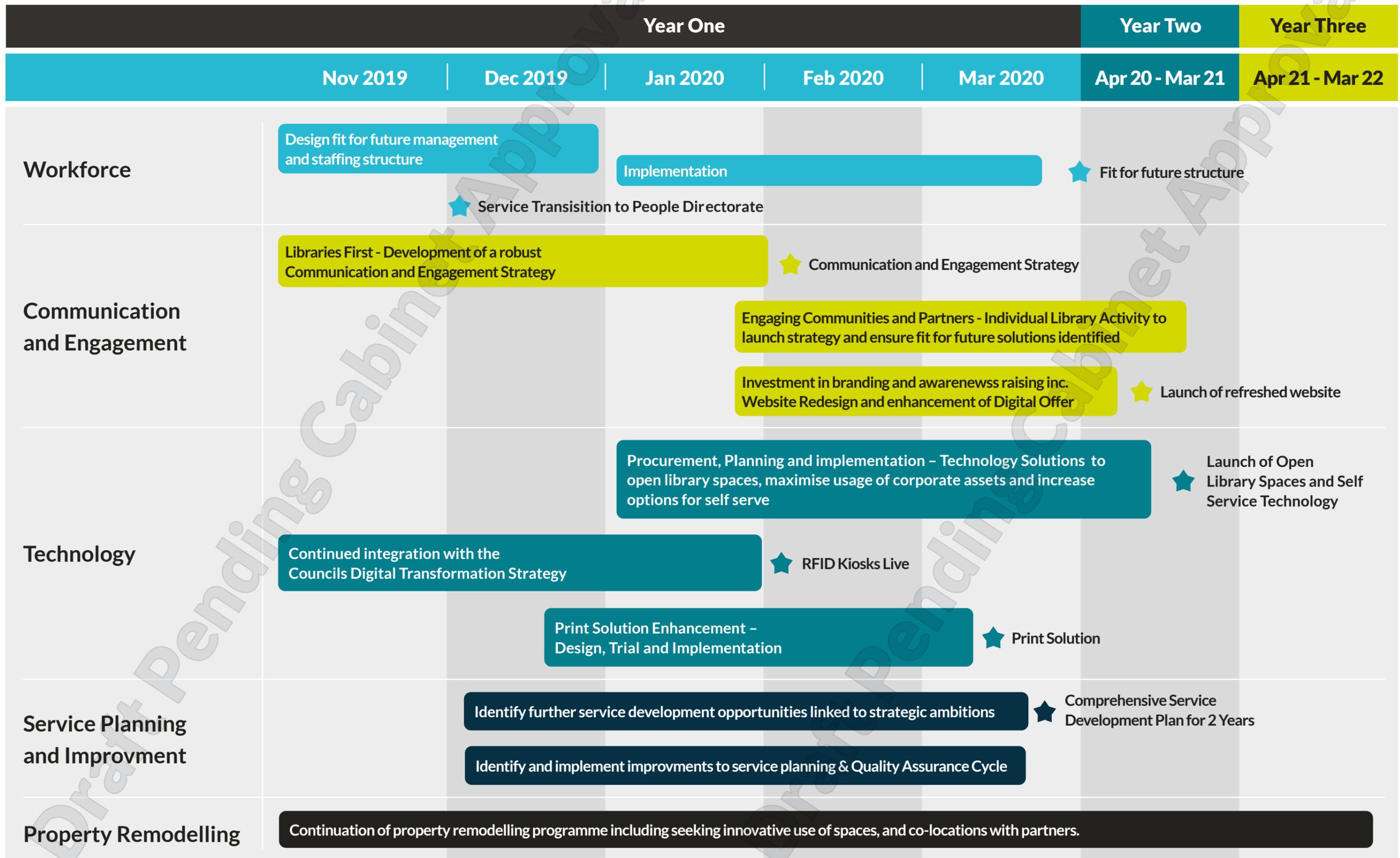
All students in Worcestershire are welcome to attend Study Happy sessions at The Hive and other off-campus locations, including Pets as Therapy (PAT) Dog sessions which encourage taking time out and relaxing as part of a study regime; 'ask a librarian' advice sessions, Qigong relaxation sessions and nutritional advice. Study Happy has been taken on tour to visit local sixth form students in several institutions.

After taking part in the Study Happy programme, 93% of participants reported that they felt less stressed about their studies, 90% said they felt more confident and motivated to learn and 87% of non-university students felt more positive about going on to Higher Education. Comments from participants included:

"So nice of you to do this for all students – all the more reason to study at The Hive"
A level student

"I love this session, it keeps me going"
GCSE student

"It's a really sound idea. Been dying of stress and needed the short, happy distraction"
University of Worcester student





Find out more online:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/Libraries