

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET28 November 2019Report by Director of EducationEAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGY 2019-22**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the draft Public Library Strategy 2019-2022.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet comments on and approves the content of the draft East Renfrewshire Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022 replaces the previous Libraries Strategy and sets out the vision and strategic direction for the library service over the next four years.
4. In the period since the approval of the previous Strategy and the development of this new Strategy the management and operation of public library services were transferred to the East Renfrewshire and Culture and Leisure Trust.
5. In 2015 the Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015 – 2020 was published by the Scottish Library & Information Council. This national strategy has been adopted by all Scottish public library services, and the key national strategic themes are reflected in East Renfrewshire's local Public Library Strategy.

**REPORT**

7. The Public Library Strategy 2019 – 2022 is attached in Annex 1 and a summary of the main points are detailed below:

The strategy reflects the 6 key themes of the national strategy for public libraries and how they are applied at a local level:

- Libraries promoting reading, literacy and learning
- Libraries promoting digital inclusion
- Libraries promoting economic wellbeing
- Libraries promoting social wellbeing
- Libraries promoting culture and creativity
- Libraries as excellent public services

The strategy also identifies the library service's contribution to the relevant outcomes of the Community Plan, Outcome Delivery Plan and Fairer EastRen.

8. The Strategy builds upon the work of the previous version which sought to establish libraries as community hubs within each East Renfrewshire locality. The Strategy also reflects on the evolving role of the library service with a greater emphasis on partnership working and collaboration to support the delivery of national and local outcomes.

9. Recognition is given to the changes in the East Renfrewshire demographic, and emphasises the signposting and referral role that libraries play at the heart of their communities.

## **PROMOTION OF THE STRATEGY**

10. The Public Library Strategy will be promoted amongst staff from both East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure and East Renfrewshire Council, elected members, Trust Board members, volunteers and residents as part of a co-ordinated communications approach.

## **CONSULTATION**

11. Consultation has taken place with staff within East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure, and draft versions have been shared with key staff in the Health and Social Care Partnership, ICT, Education and other relevant Council departments.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

12. A key element of the Strategy is the emphasis on partnership working. There are two elements to this – partnerships which enable the library service to deliver its services, and partnerships where the library service enables and supports other organisations to meet their aims and objectives. Key partners include:

- East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure services
- East Renfrewshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Library and Information Council
- Carnegie UK
- Scottish Book Trust
- The Reading Agency
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

13. There are no financial implications to this Strategy. Resourcing of libraries – including savings or efficiencies - is addressed as part of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Management Fee in relation to the Service Agreement and the agreed Change Control Procedure.

14. The impact of the Strategy will be monitored and measured through the performance of the library service. Progress will be reflected in monitoring and self-evaluation processes, and the scrutiny of the Trust performance brought to Council. In addition, the performance of the library service is scrutinised at Trust Board level through a balanced scorecard approach. The timeframe over which the actions will be taken forward is the three-year period 2019-2022.

## CONCLUSIONS

15. The East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022 replaces the previous Public Library Strategy and sets out the vision and strategic direction for the library service for the next four years.

## RECOMMENDATION

16. It is recommended that the Cabinet comments on and approves the content of the draft East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022.

Mhairi Shaw  
Director of Education  
November 2019

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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### Appendix

A East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Public Library Strategy 2019 - 2022

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with  
east renfrewshire  
**CULTURE  
and  
LEISURE**

# PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGY 2019-22



*"He has knobbly knees and turned-out toes  
And a poisonous wart at the end of his nose.  
His eyes are orange, his tongue is black,  
He has purple prickles all over his back."*

Julia Donaldson - the Gruffalo



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## Vision

To inspire, inform and entertain in a safe and welcoming modern library that supports and empowers the community.

## Mission

To provide the people of East Renfrewshire with a high quality library service that stimulates cultural, social and economic wellbeing, that is digitally inclusive and universally accessible.

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# Introduction

This strategy sets out the future direction of the library service in East Renfrewshire for the next four years. It seeks to:

- maximise value from the service for residents and communities;
- maximise the service's contribution to national strategies and outcomes, ERC's Community and Outcome Delivery plans and the Trust's business plan;
- respond to current and foreseeable financial pressures by delivering increased outcomes at reduced cost
- Create an enduring library service for the twenty-first century.

Working collaboratively with colleagues and partners across a number of sectors will be a key feature of the strategy.



# Background

In July 2015 East Renfrewshire Council's culture and leisure services, including library & information services transferred to East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL). ERCL has developed and will deliver the strategy on behalf of the Council.

There are ten public libraries in East Renfrewshire, providing access to knowledge, information and learning in every community.

There are four medium-sized libraries; Barrhead Foundry, Clarkston, Giffnock and Mearns; smaller single staffed libraries in Busby, Eaglesham, Neilston and Thornliebank; two library centres at Netherlee and Uplawmoor, open a few hours each week.

The model for delivery of the library service in Barrhead is different from other libraries in that the library is part of the Barrhead Foundry venue, and while library development officers programme events and activities it is venue customer assistants who deliver these and serve customers.

The library service in East Renfrewshire remains highly valued, as shown by the consistently high satisfaction levels in the citizens' panel, and by the results of the adult and children's customer surveys.

In 2015/16 the service was restructured resulting in a reduction in the number of staff and reduced opening hours for most of the libraries beginning in April 2016.

Usage levels for the service have continued to be positive despite the generally falling national trends for public library usage. CIPFA benchmarking data for 2017/18 (i) shows that for book issues, eBook issues, physical and virtual visits, and active borrowers East Renfrewshire remains in the top quartile.

The cost per visit to libraries in East Renfrewshire has fallen considerably from £3.97 in 2015/16, to £1.06 in 2017/18, against a national average of £2.08. For comparison, the national average in 2015/16 was £2.58(ii). It is expected that East Renfrewshire's cost per visit will continue to fall as staff expenditure reduces and visits (both physical and virtual) remain the same or improve.

Library service KPIs comprise indicators reported nationally such as the statutory measure of visits per capita, and cost per visit, and a number of other indicators scrutinised at ERCL Board level via a balanced scorecard, and reported to Council for scrutiny quarterly and included in mid and end-year reports. These include total visits (on-line and physical); customer satisfaction; sickness and absence; staff turnover; cost-per visit and book borrowing. In addition ERCL maintains its own risk register for each service, and the highest risks are reflected in the council's own risk register whilst joint risks (including facilities, ICT, demographics, change management, financial pressures, and demographics) are part of a shared ERC / ERCL risk register.

## Policy Context:

The primary legislation is the Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887, as modified by subsequent local government legislation s163(2) of the Local Government (Scotland Act 1973) which gives local authorities a statutory duty to secure the provision of "adequate" library services for all persons resident in their area.

Legislation also requires local authorities to "manage, regulate and control" those public libraries that comprise the Council's statutory library service.

## National Strategy for Public Libraries:

The Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) in partnership with COSLA, Carnegie UK and the Scottish Government has developed a national strategy for public libraries called *Ambition & Opportunity: A strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-20(iii)*. There are six strategic aims within the national strategy.

Each of these has a local and national context and it is intended that the East Renfrewshire library strategy will address these themes.

### Libraries promoting -

- Reading, literacy and learning
- Digital participation and inclusion
- Economic wellbeing
- Health and wellbeing
- Culture and creativity
- Libraries as excellent public services

## Community Plan:

At a local level the following outcomes (iv) remain central to the work of the library service:

- All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed.
- East Renfrewshire residents are healthy and active and have the skills for learning, life and work.
- East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses.
- East Renfrewshire residents are safe and live in supportive communities
- Older people and people with long term conditions in East Renfrewshire are valued; their voices are heard and they enjoy full and positive lives.

## FAIRER East Ren:

The FAIRER EastRen – Working with communities for a fairer East Renfrewshire (v), identifies four key themes and two cross cutting themes, with the library service well positioned to be able to provide support across all of them:

- Tackling poverty
- Promoting employability
- Promoting positive mental health & wellbeing
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness

## East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Business Plan:

The Trust business plan (vi) has five strategic aims

- Create a financially sustainable business model
- Develop an understanding of our customers and audiences and an offer than attracts them
- Develop a strong, diverse, resilient and committed workforce
- Establishing ERCLs role at the heart of vibrant communities
- Developing resilient, dynamic and productive partnerships that are developed and nurtured

## Market position:

We have reflected on what the East Renfrewshire demographic looks like as a market.

Across East Renfrewshire the household size and composition is broadly:

- Single adults – 39%
- Single parent with young child or children – 8%
- Couples with young children (under 16) – 20%
- Couples with older children – 7%
- Couples without children – 26%

In terms of age profile children and young people currently make 20% of the population while older people make up a further 20%, with 60% in the 18 to 65 age range.

Over the next 25 years the proportion of children and young people and over 65s will increase as overall the population is projected to rise from around 95,000 at present to circa 110,000 by 2040.

It is widely recognised that across our area we serve two relatively distinctive communities with differing demographic profiles.

- Eastwood (population 74%), which encompasses Busby, Clarkston, Crookfur, Eaglesham, Giffnock and Newton Mearns, is a relatively affluent area comprised predominantly of owner occupied households with young families or households of older residents (60 plus) living as couples or alone.
- Barrhead/Neilston (population 26%) is an area with pockets of significant social and economic deprivation and a wider spectrum of household types: young families; older residents; single parents, and younger couples/singletons.

Analysis has identified four key customer groups or segments as a target market that ERC/ERCL need to look at across all services.

**1**

Parents of young children

**3**

Older (60+) Adults

**2**

Children in young families (<16)

**4**

Young adults (16 – 25)



There is a strong tradition in Scotland of funding the majority of public library services free at the point of use and the ability of library services to generate earned income is usually low.

The library service is universal and accessed by all demographics in the community and so is well positioned to direct members of those four key segments towards other ERCL services such as arts and theatre, sport and fitness, etc. as well as other key council services including HSCP.

Through cross selling of services, marketing and promotion, signposting and referrals, etc. in partnership with ERC we will work towards maximising income opportunities for the Trust.

### We will...

- Support the work of East Renfrewshire Council where appropriate to ensure effective delivery of the Outcome Development Plan and other relevant policies and strategies
- Maintain cost per visit and customer satisfaction levels in the top quartile
- Support the delivery of Ambition & Opportunity: A strategy for public libraries in Scotland
- Support the Trust to continue to thrive and succeed through effective delivery of the ERCL business plan, and maximising income opportunities
- Explore a diverse range of partnerships to broaden our support and supporter base



# 1. Libraries promoting reading, literacy and learning



“The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment”(viii) published in June 2015 found that reading has a dramatic impact on life outcomes. Among the benefits it finds are improved social capital for children, young people and the general adult population; better parent-child communication and reduction of depression and dementia symptoms among adults.

Another key finding of the report is that enjoyment of reading is a prerequisite for all these positive outcomes: people who choose to read, and enjoy doing so, in their spare time are more likely to reap all of these benefits.

Reading is the most popular form of cultural participation in Scotland with 65% of adults having read for pleasure in 2017 (Scottish household survey). In order to effectively promote reading and literacy it is vital to have the right resources to do so.

East Renfrewshire libraries and information service has developed both Adult and Children’s stock development and collection policies. These policies set out to explain why we buy what we do, how we promote it, what formats we choose, how we dispose of older stock, etc.

As times change the library service must evolve to reflect these changes by updating its policies. For example the recent popularity and availability of eBooks and digital magazines has resulted in resources being moved from purchase of physical stock to investing in digital stock.

The vision of a thriving library service which effectively promotes and develops reading and literacy requires sufficient financial resources to support it.

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”

– Frederick Douglas

## Scottish Public Libraries Strategy for Literacy and Reading:

The Scottish Public Libraries Strategy for Literacy and Reading (ix) was implemented in 2014 with the commitment by each library authority in Scotland to deliver a consistent, standardised service that promoted reading and literacy to every individual.

This is to ensure that any customer regardless of age, ability or demographic will have the same level of service at any library they visited in any part of Scotland, such as Bookbug sessions and books on parenting or reading groups and author events.

### The vision of the strategy is:

“Through free access to the life enriching, creative activity of reading, contribute to health and wellbeing, improved level of literacy, inspiring reading across all interests and age groups, drawing communities together to bring reading alive.”

East Renfrewshire libraries will work with partners and colleagues to refresh the reading strategy, and deliver the national outcomes at a local level.

## National programmes and initiatives:

A number of Scottish Government initiatives have been adopted by public libraries nationally which support children and families from birth, through early years and school.

Every Child a Library Member (ECALM) is a national programme that aims to ensure that every child in Scotland has access to public libraries from birth.

Read, Write, Count aims to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Scotland’s children. It encourages the use of reading, writing and counting in everyday

activities and provides help and support for the families of young children.

The Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) continues to work closely with the Scottish Government on Read, Write, Count – promoting reading, writing and counting in everyday life and encouraging the use of libraries in the campaign. East Renfrewshire libraries will continue to support and promote the initiative.

The First Minister's Reading Challenge is a reading initiative delivered by the Scottish Book Trust for children in primary school to encourage children to read widely, explore a range of books and develop a love of reading. The main focus of the Challenge is to encourage reading for pleasure and support schools, libraries and communities to build reading cultures. In East Renfrewshire schools and public libraries work closely to support this.

In partnership with the Scottish Book Trust the annual themed summer reading challenge encourages children aged 4 to 11 to read 6 books during the long summer holiday. Children's reading can 'dip' over this period so this is an excellent way of keeping those reading skills and confidence active.

Also, in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust the BookBug programme has been an unqualified success in East Renfrewshire libraries. The sessions delivered by library staff are aimed at both babies and toddlers and offer parents and families a fun way to –

- Develop the child's language skills
- Give you time to cuddle and help you bond with your child
- Help you and your child feel more relaxed
- Boost your child's confidence
- Encourage your child to draw and write
- Give your child a head start in life

## Supporting schools:

In East Renfrewshire public libraries and both primary and secondary schools have a close working relationship.

In 2018 the Scottish Government published its first national strategy for school libraries – Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools – A national strategy for school libraries in Scotland 2018 – 2023(x).

The strategic aims of the school library strategy are broadly similar to those of the public libraries strategy and cover reading, literacy and learning, digital literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, etc.

The strategy notes that "A close partnership between school libraries, public libraries, primary schools and ELC settings can provide an effective support system for pupils." It further notes that "using a shared

Library Management System (LMS) for schools and public libraries can facilitate ease of access and improved efficiency."

East Renfrewshire public libraries will continue to support both primary and secondary schools to deliver the strategy through our programme of school visits for pupils, which incorporate information literacy skills as well as access to resources.

We will continue to support the secondary schools in support of the Literacy Strategy, providing support for their use of the library management and self-service systems, and involving the school librarians in future relevant procurement exercises and appropriate training programmes.

Catch the reading bug!



Bookbug Sessions

### We will...

- Review and update stock collection policies for adult and children's stock
- Explore routes for further investment in the library resource fund
- Support national initiatives that encourage and promote reading, literacy and numeracy including the Scottish Public Libraries Strategy for Literacy and Reading
- Work with partners and schools to develop information handling and literacy programs delivered during school visits
- Support East Renfrewshire schools to deliver on the National School Library Strategy



## 2. Libraries promoting digital participation



Nationally public libraries play an important role in tackling digital exclusion and promoting participation.

Exclusion can come about through a lack of skills and confidence in using technology. Libraries address this in a range of ways from formal core ICT skills learning programmes to informal tablet and Smartphone taster sessions.

Exclusion can also come about through lack of access to physical resources such as PCs and tablets, or through lack of access to broadband and the variety of services that rely on it for use. The people's network of PCs, tablets and infrastructure has been developed since its inception in the early 2000s to become part of the public library service's core offer.

The most recent addition to the offer has come about through SLIC's Scottish Government funded programme to extend free public WiFi to all libraries in Scotland.

As UK government services become digital by default, access to services such as universal credit and the EU Settlement scheme will primarily be done online. Locally, East Renfrewshire Council's digital strategy has set itself a target to become a digital council by 2020(xii).

East Renfrewshire library service will support both the local and the national direction of travel, and will work with communities, groups and individuals to develop programmes to improve IT skills and confidence.

These programmes take place in welcoming, universally accessible library facilities with knowledgeable staff on hand to provide support.

The East Renfrewshire Council ICT Asset Management Plan (xi) makes the point that investment in technology

“The People’s Network was then and still is today a brilliant piece of visionary thinking – a pioneering initiative that set the template for the provision of free, supported internet access in libraries around the world.”

– Nick Pool, Chief Exec CILIP

supports “the direct delivery of digital learning ... and to libraries’ customers, contributing to Strategic Outcome 2 - Residents of East Renfrewshire have the right skills, learning opportunities and confidence to secure work.”

Access to modern, fit for purpose equipment is required and the library service will continue to work with East Renfrewshire Council to support the delivery of the ICT Asset Management Plan.

### We will...

- Develop and deliver ICT programmes to support residents to become digital by default
- Explore opportunities for volunteers and intergenerational partnerships as part of our wider commitment to Active Aging and social isolation
- Work with partners to ensure that the network infrastructure that supports public internet access is fast, stable and meets the needs of a modern ‘digital by default’ community
- Support the rollout of UK government initiatives such as universal credit and the EU settlement scheme by increasing East Renfrewshire resident’s digital skills and knowledge, and offering supported access to the internet

## 3. Libraries promoting economic wellbeing



“Some books leave us free  
and some books make us free”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

The relevant outcomes in the national library strategy are that “we realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people, and that we have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.”

Locally East Renfrewshire libraries provide help and support in a number of ways. Access to learning resources whether they are books, electronic resources or ICT classes will improve the skills and knowledge of our local communities.

STEM clubs are a powerful and enjoyable way to engage young people with science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. The delivery of library code clubs has been developed to offer primary school children the opportunity to learn the basics of coding in a friendly, informal environment.

The library service has also been successful in accessing funding through the Public Library Improvement Fund to invest in virtual reality technology. In addition to allowing residents to participate in cutting edge virtual reality experiences it is also planned to offer opportunities for people to create their own virtual reality experiences.

The library service will continue to explore funding opportunities to allow it to develop programmes which use technology to improve the skills and experiences of East Renfrewshire residents.

### Support to local business:

Free public WiFi in every library gives small businesses a base to work from, and dedicated study spaces provide a place for students to work and study away from the home.

Utilising their presence within the community, libraries offer the ability for other services and organisations to effectively reach people to deliver their message.

Libraries will work in partnership with council services to support them to reach as many residents as possible. Similar relationships with other local support organisations will be developed.


#### We will...

- Work with partners to develop and deliver code clubs for primary school children
- Support learners and small businesses by offering access to resources from books and e-resources to spaces and facilities in our libraries
- Explore funding opportunities for the development of further programmes in support of STEM learning

## 4. Libraries promoting health and wellbeing

CREATIVE  
WRITING  
SESSIONS

CLARKSTON LIBRARY



WITH  
MAGI GIBSON

east renfrewshire  
**CULTURE  
and  
LEISURE**

Warm, relaxed creative writing  
sessions, no experience  
required!

The role of public libraries across Scotland in helping tackle issues such as loneliness and social isolation, inequality and ill health is increasingly acknowledged at Scottish Government level.

Within its report of January 2018 “A Connected Scotland: Tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger communities”(xiii) the Scottish Government promotes the role of public libraries by saying – “We will work to ensure that our approach to increasing access includes hard to reach groups, and consider further how to build on what libraries already offer as community hubs with a role in tackling these issues.”

Public libraries in East Renfrewshire already contribute heavily towards tackling health issues and inequalities. The Community Connections project developed a programme of events and activities designed to target people who suffer from loneliness and social isolation. It is the aim of the library service to work with partners and professionals to develop this programme further.

“A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead”

– Caitlin Moran

It is well known that reading for pleasure, as well as being the most popular cultural activity in Scotland, also brings health benefits in the form of relaxation and reducing stress.

But access to quality, authoritative information is also critical in helping residents become better informed. Better informed people will have greater control and greater input into courses of treatment which leads to shared decision-making between GP and patient. Public libraries must offer –

- Quality assured patient and public information
- Signposting into community information and local support groups
- Insight into local social / environmental context e.g. population needs.

Loans of health related non-fiction books continue to form a significant percentage of the total overall loans from East Renfrewshire libraries. There is a clear demand by residents to be better informed and public libraries must respond to that demand.

Collaborative working between libraries and colleagues in the Health and Social Care ALLIANCE, HSCP, colleagues in the NHS and colleagues in other health and wellbeing groups and organisations will ensure that residents are signposted to the correct and appropriate places, that they have access to the most relevant, accurate and up to date information and that those who suffer from loneliness and social isolation have the opportunity to participate in library events and activities.





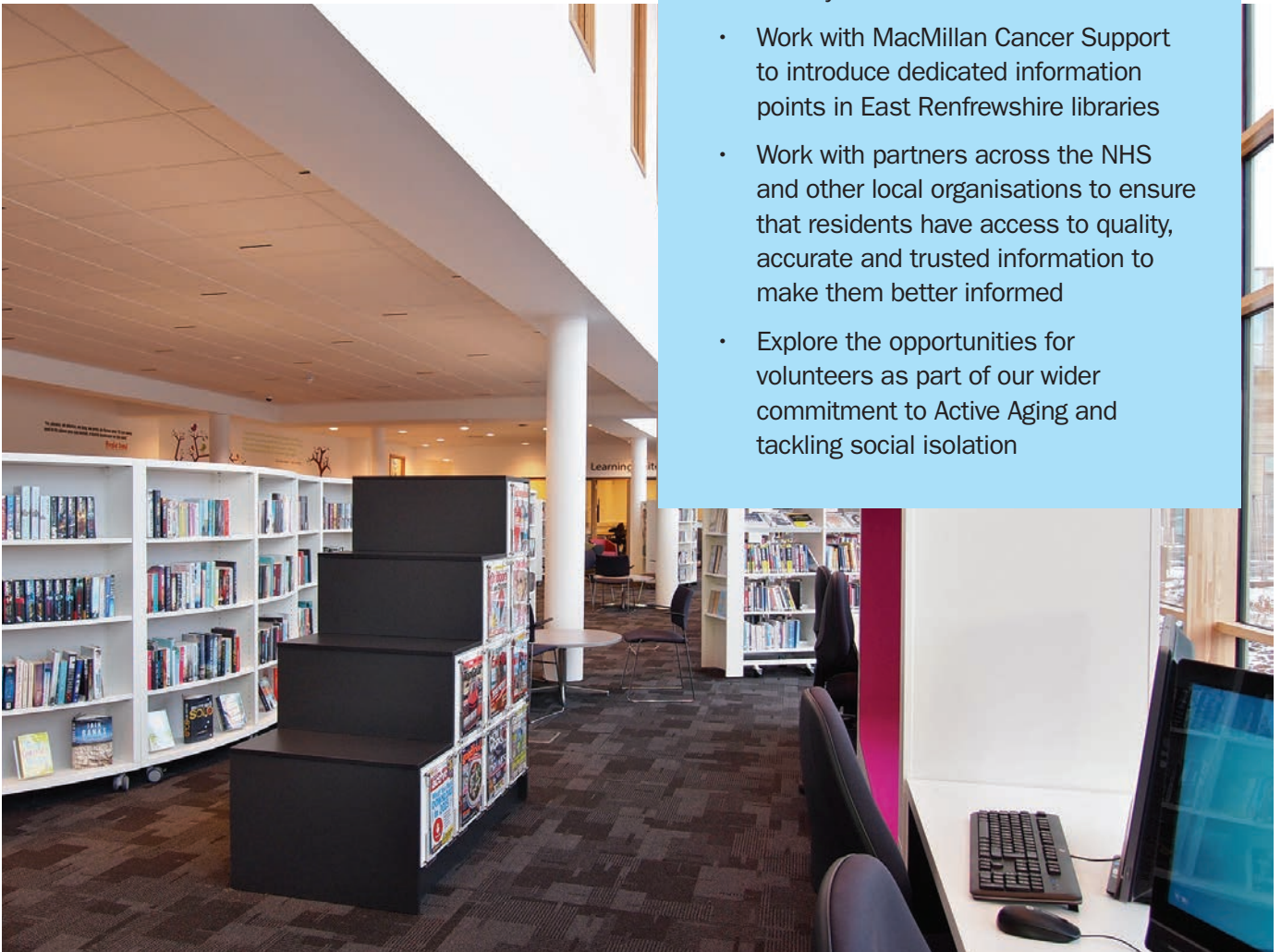
## MacMillan Cancer Support:

Like other public libraries in Scotland, East Renfrewshire libraries have formed a partnership with MacMillan Cancer Support which will see the introduction of dedicated information points.

These will be supported by MacMillan volunteers and will offer information and advice to support people who suffer from cancer as well as their families.

### We will...

- Work with partners to develop programmes and resources tackling loneliness and social isolation
- With colleagues in other Scottish public library services work towards all of our libraries attaining dementia friendly accreditation
- Work with MacMillan Cancer Support to introduce dedicated information points in East Renfrewshire libraries
- Work with partners across the NHS and other local organisations to ensure that residents have access to quality, accurate and trusted information to make them better informed
- Explore the opportunities for volunteers as part of our wider commitment to Active Aging and tackling social isolation



## 5. Libraries promoting culture and creativity



Public libraries offer access to a range of cultural activities from author talks and themed literary displays to creative writing sessions and access to films.

Partnerships with agencies like Scottish Book Trust allow our libraries to participate in national events such as Book Week Scotland. The library service also delivers its own programme of events outwith Book Week Scotland, with author visits targeting both adults and children.

East Renfrewshire libraries also work closely with the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in promoting its vast range of cultural and literary materials. In 2018 East Renfrewshire was the first library service in Scotland to host the “Going to the Pictures” touring display.

These displays give opportunities to create and deliver events and activities around specific cultural themes. In addition to promoting Scotland’s culture these activities also form part of the library service’s strategy towards tackling social isolation and loneliness through bringing people together to participate in shared experiences.

Working in collaboration with the NLS we will regularly programme a series of themed events using our combined resources. These activities will be targeted at both adults and children.

Across ERCL there are opportunities for greater collaboration between the libraries, arts and heritage services to promote and support each other’s

“Come with me,’ Mom says. To the library.  
Books and summertime go together.”

Lisa Schroeder, *I Heart You, You Haunt Me*

activities. Public libraries can contribute by offering access to skills and technology such as 3D printing which can be used by the arts service to form part of their offer.

East Renfrewshire’s local history and heritage service is based in Giffnock library with small collections also located in other libraries. The library services will continue to work closely with the heritage service to enable and support public access to resources, facilitate events and provide digital support where required.

### We will...

- Work with partners to develop our programme of cultural activities and promote participation across our libraries
- Develop a partnership with the National Library of Scotland to promote and offer access to Scotland’s culture and literature
- Work with colleagues within arts and heritage to better promote access to cultural activities delivered by the Trust
- Work with colleagues across various sectors to support the delivery of the Scottish Culture Strategy



## 6. Libraries as excellent public services



Customer satisfaction levels in public libraries vary from source to source. In 2017 the Scottish household survey found that nationally amongst library users the satisfaction rate is 91% which sits closely with the councils own citizens panel survey which rated customer satisfaction in libraries at 93% in 2018 (xiv).

However when non-users are factored into the Scottish household survey this satisfaction figure drops to 49%.

The challenge for public libraries across Scotland is to improve engagement with non-users, leading to an overall increase in satisfaction. Through working with partners within the Trust, across East Renfrewshire Council and other relevant organisations and agencies we will explore ways to better engage with non-users.

East Renfrewshire libraries has held Customer Service Excellence accreditation from 2006 to 2018 and while it no longer participates the learning experience and culture of customer care remains embedded within our systems and processes.

The How Good Is Our Public Library Service (HGIOPLS) framework has been produced by SLIC to build on the previous quality improvement matrix PLQIM.

We will use the HGIOPLS self-evaluation toolkit, and our CSE experience, to build on our excellent standards of customer service, and to help us improve our overall service planning and delivery.

### Staff:

The promotion of reading and literacy to all residents in East Renfrewshire is a fundamental function of the library service. One of the most crucial resources, and the most effective means of delivery of this is through library staff.

“Perhaps no place in any community is as totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.”

– Claudia Alta Johnson

Modern library staff require to be passionate, outgoing and effective communicators. They need to be confident in talking to people young and old, readers and non-readers alike. Their role in signposting customers towards the right information requires a breadth of knowledge and understanding. A love of reading is critical and the ability to enthuse and encourage it in others is a pre-requisite.

East Renfrewshire libraries will work to recruit and train the right people for what is evolving into a fast moving, always changing role.

The use of volunteers is relatively low in East Renfrewshire libraries, but in line with ERCL's People Strategy and the Ambition & Opportunity national strategy we will explore volunteering opportunities to both support community engagement, and active aging and support the effective delivery of the library service.

### Library buildings and spaces:

There is a public library in almost every community in East Renfrewshire. While they vary in size, staffing and opening hours all libraries deliver the same core services of supported access to books and literature for adults, children and young people, supported access to the internet and online resources, access to learning opportunities, local community information and resources, etc., they remain the safe, universally welcoming and accessible space they have always been.

As with any public building they are subject to wear and tear over time. A modern library space requires to be adaptable and flexible and offer the customer a positive and enjoyable experience.

## Technology:



Refurbishments at Giffnock library and the Barrhead Foundry have resulted in two such attractive and flexible library spaces. They have a modern and vibrant look and feel which results in a better experience for the customer, with a greater prospect of retaining them as library users.

East Renfrewshire Council's Property Asset Management Plan(xiv) states that a well-maintained property *"contributes to the Council being modern and ambitious by the provision of property for staff to work in whilst directly or indirectly delivering services."* Similar investment in our other libraries is therefore required to ensure that the same quality of experience is offered across the authority, and maximise usage to encourage retention. We will work with ERCL in planning capital investment projects in the library estate over the lifetime of this strategy.

We will work with colleagues in East Renfrewshire Council to identify those libraries which require that level of investment and explore how these improvements can be realised. Further to this, in line with the Property Asset Management Plan we will look for opportunities to co-locate library services in other physical spaces.

Modern public libraries are often found ahead of the curve when it comes to embracing and deploying new technology. In 2019 East Renfrewshire libraries became the first in Scotland to pilot a digital approach to improving access to library services through the Open More project at Clarkston library. If successful this pilot is a model which could be rolled out either to existing library buildings or as part of any planned new builds.

The library service has a strong online presence including a fully transactional online catalogue, a native app for mobile users, an eBook and digital magazine service and offers guided access to a number of online information resources.

The library management system is well established and fit for purpose, and integrates seamlessly with other systems including the library app, the PC booking system and self-service kiosks.

As the digital landscape across Scottish public libraries continues to evolve East Renfrewshire libraries will continue to explore new and innovative ways to improve services and encourage participation.

The Scottish Government is exploring the possibility of a single library membership card that can be used across the whole of Scotland.

Consortia now exist for the purchase of library products and services e.g. purchase of library management systems, book supply, etc. which will allow for a more joined up approach to library services nationally.





East Renfrewshire libraries will actively participate in these national programmes and initiatives to help to shape the direction of travel to the benefit of the residents of East Renfrewshire.

We will explore the potential of consortium purchasing to help reduce costs and offer best value to customers.



## We will...

- Work with East Renfrewshire Council to modernise and improve the look and feel of our buildings, and enhance the customer experience
- Use the 'How good is our Public Library Service' self-assessment framework to evaluate existing service provision and enable service improvement
- Train existing staff in the skills required for a modern thriving library service
- Recruit staff who demonstrate a passion for reading along with the confidence to pass this onto customers
- Explore the possibilities of co-located services across ERCL/ERC venues and the potential benefit to the customer
- Explore volunteering opportunities to support the delivery of library service
- Work with partners and colleagues to support Scottish Government initiatives around national library membership and consortium purchasing
- Continue to use technology to develop and improve the library service for the benefit of the residents of East Renfrewshire including the expansion of Open More beyond the initial pilot library



## Measures of success:

Throughout this strategy a number of We will... statements are made within each strategic aim. Not all of these objectives are easily measurable, particularly where the library service is playing a supporting role in the successful delivery of another organisation's strategy or initiative.

The measures of success for this strategy and the library service lie in the impacts that it brings to the reading and literacy levels, health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, etc. of the residents of East Renfrewshire.



Strategic aim	What we want to achieve	Current position	Measures of success
Libraries promoting reading, literacy and learning.	<p>Engagement with initiatives such as BookBug, First Ministers Reading Challenge, Every Child a Library Member, etc. has a positive impact on reading and literacy in East Renfrewshire.</p> <p>Participation levels in the annual Summer Reading Challenge remain in the top quartile.</p>	<p>East Renfrewshire libraries are in the top quartile for both book issues and active membership in the Annual CIPFA survey of Scottish public libraries.</p> <p>In 2018 the participation level was 13.5% with the completion rate 64%.</p>	<p>East Renfrewshire consolidates its place in the top quartile for both book issues and active membership in the Annual CIPFA survey of Scottish public libraries.</p> <p>The Reading Agency annual Summer Reading Challenge report confirms participation and completion levels remain or exceed current levels.</p>
Libraries promoting digital participation.	<p>East Renfrewshire residents experience high levels of digital inclusion and participation.</p>	<p>In 2018/19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 885 learning sessions were delivered to 622 learners</li> <li>• 90,000 PC sessions took place</li> <li>• PC utilisation (including WiFi availability) stands at 13% of capacity</li> <li>• East Renfrewshire residents have opportunities to participate in digital taster sessions delivered and supported by library staff.</li> </ul>	<p>PC utilisation (including WiFi) rises to an average of 20% across all libraries by 2022.</p> <p>Opportunities to experience new technology such as 3D printing and Virtual Reality are delivered through a programme of events and facilitated sessions.</p> <p>All persons referred to the library service for digital support successfully complete the online EU Settlement scheme.</p> <p>95% or more of adult learners who participate in library learning activities indicated their learning experience made a positive difference to their lives.</p>

Strategic aim	What we want to achieve	Current position	Measures of success
Libraries promoting economic wellbeing.	Children in East Renfrewshire are engaged with STEM activities programmed by the library service.	Code clubs are delivered in 6 East Renfrewshire libraries to young people aged 7 - 13.	The number of code club participants who successfully reach the end of the programme is 95% or greater by end 2020.
Libraries promoting health and wellbeing.	Residents of East Renfrewshire are supported to improve their health literacy and self-management skills.  Fewer residents of East Renfrewshire are at risk of social isolation and loneliness.	East Renfrewshire libraries support and signpost residents to access reading materials and information that promotes health and wellbeing.  East Renfrewshire libraries programme events and activities that target people at risk of social isolation and loneliness.	The MacMillan Cancer information project is successfully delivered in all nominated libraries by 2020.  All library staff are effectively trained in the use of the ALLIANCE toolkit by 2020.  Participation levels in library-based activity programmes increases and positive impact is measured through feedback and evaluation.  In partnership with HSCP a programme of Talking Points is introduced to East Renfrewshire libraries.
Libraries promoting culture and creativity.	Residents of East Renfrewshire have access to book-based cultural activities.	East Renfrewshire libraries participate in hosting touring displays from the National Library of Scotland.  East Renfrewshire libraries programme regular book related events and activities.	East Renfrewshire libraries will continue to participate in hosting National Library of Scotland displays and other cultural activities.  Book Week Scotland and similar book related cultural activities are delivered, and evaluations show a positive impact on participants.
Libraries as excellent public services.	East Renfrewshire libraries is an excellent public service which demonstrates best value and is highly rated by the residents.	East Renfrewshire libraries cost per visit stands at £1.06 in 2017/18, well below the national average of £2.08.	Cost per visit levels for East Renfrewshire libraries are rated in the top quartile for best value by both CIPFA and the Improvement Service each year.  The library service is rated 95% or higher in the annual East Renfrewshire citizens panel each year for customer satisfaction.



Strategic aim	What we want to achieve	Current position	Measures of success
		<p>East Renfrewshire libraries received a rating of 93% in the 2018/19 citizens panel.</p> <p>East Renfrewshire libraries received a rating of 67% in the period 2015-18 and sits in the 3rd quartile according to the LBGf.</p> <p>Physical visits to East Renfrewshire libraries stand at 5,650 per 1,000 head of population against a national average of 4,430 in CIPFA 2017/18 survey.</p>	<p>The library service is rated in the top quartile in the Scottish Household Survey for customer satisfaction.</p> <p>The library service will have undergone a self-assessment exercise on at least 2 HGIOPLS criteria by 2021.</p> <p>The number of physical and virtual visits to libraries in East Renfrewshire is rated in the top quartile of the annual CIPFA survey of Scottish public libraries.</p>

# Sources

- i) CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2017/18
- ii) Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework National Benchmarking Overview Report 2017/18
- iii) Ambition and Opportunity - A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020
- iv) East Renfrewshire Council Outcome Delivery Plan
- v) FAIRER East Ren
- vi) East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Business Plan 2019
- vii) The Reading Agency - The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment
- viii) Scottish Public Libraries Strategy for Literacy and Reading
- ix) Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools – A National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland 2018 – 2023
- x) East Renfrewshire Council ICT Asset Management Plan 2016 - 2020
- xi) East Renfrewshire Digital Council Strategy 2016 - 2019
- xii) A Connected Scotland: Tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger communities
- xiii) East Renfrewshire Council Property Asset Management Plan 2016 – 2020
- xiv) East Renfrewshire Citizens Panel 2018



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