

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET7 MARCH 2024Report by Director of EducationEAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGY 2024 - 2029**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the draft Public Library Strategy 2024-2029.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Cabinet is asked to comment on and approve the draft Public Library Strategy 2024-2029.

BACKGROUND

3. In 2019 East Renfrewshire Council approved the Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022 which has now expired. This strategy replaces it and sets out the vision and strategic direction for our Public Libraries over the next five years.

4. The East Renfrewshire Public Library Strategy 2024-2029 is aligned with and will contribute to and support the East Renfrewshire Outcome Delivery Plan, Community Plan and Fairer EastRen Plan and its outcomes.

5. It aligns closely to the aims of the [Forward Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2-25](#) whilst focussing on the areas of greatest impact and benefit to East Renfrewshire and 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; and,
- Create an enduring library service for the twenty-first century.

REPORT

6. The draft Public Library Strategy 2024 – 2029 is attached as Appendix 1.

7. The strategy reflects the 3 key themes of the national strategy for public libraries and how they are applied at a local level:

- **People** - Libraries will support people and communities to reach their full potential and celebrate the unique skill set of staff.

- **Place** - Libraries will be recognised as both valued places and place-makers, with community led design at the heart.
- **Partnership** - Libraries will deliver on local and national priorities through a strategic approach to collaboration and partnership.

8. Recognition is given to the impact that Covid-19 had on the effective delivery of public library services for much of the period of the previous strategy.

9. The Strategy builds upon the work of the previous version and reflects East Renfrewshire's demographics in order to meet the needs of different groups of East Renfrewshire Residents and in particular:

- Children and Young People;
- Older People;
- Families from Low Income Households;
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups;
- Vulnerable Children and Care Experienced Young People; and,
- People with Disabilities/Additional Support Needs.

FINANCE & EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

10. 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.

11. Capital investment decisions are aligned with the draft Public Library Strategy 2024-2029 and prioritise the development of the new Eastwood Park Leisure and Neilston Leisure Centres which will include a library at both sites.

12. The impact of the Strategy will be monitored and measured through the performance of ERCL. 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 libraries is scrutinised at Trust Board level through a balanced scorecard approach. The timeframe over which the actions will be taken forward is the four year period 2024-2029.

CONSULTATION

13. The East Renfrewshire Public Library Strategy 2024-2029 has been developed in consultation with local and national partners and stakeholders to ensure maximisation of the potential impact of libraries for the learning, development and health and wellbeing of the whole community.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

14. A key element of the strategy is the emphasis on partnership working. These partnerships enable ERCL to deliver its services and also promotes, enables and supports partnerships with other organisations in order 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

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRATEGY

15. In developing this strategy an equalities, fairness and rights impact assessment (EFRIA) has been carried out and evaluated the proposal as having: no adverse impacts; the potential to advance equality and foster good relationships; and the potential to advance children's rights.

16. A Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) has been completed and has been found to have no relevant impacts (positive or negative).

CONCLUSION

17. The East Renfrewshire Public Library Strategy 2024-2029 replaces the previous Public Library Strategy and sets out the vision and strategic direction for the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATION

18. Cabinet is asked to comment on and approve content of the draft East Renfrewshire Public Library Strategy 2024-2029.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
7 March 2024

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Appendices

1. ERCL Draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2023 – 2028

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**CULTURE
and
LEISURE**

**PUBLIC
LIBRARY
STRATEGY
2024-29**

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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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**CULTURE
 FOR
 LEISURE**



Introduction

In 2019 East Renfrewshire Council approved the Public Library Strategy for 2019 – 2022. This refreshed strategy seeks to build on the success of the previous strategy, and sets out the future direction of the public library service in East Renfrewshire over the next five years from 2024 - 2029.

- 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.



The library always has a positive impact on my life. It's a beautiful building. Even driving past brings a smile to my face. The staff are always welcoming. It's always warm. The displays are useful. Good source of local information. And a great source of books.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

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 this strategy through engaging with stakeholders, reviewing practice and engaging with National policy and practice and will deliver this 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 library service in East Renfrewshire remains highly valued, as shown by the consistently high satisfaction levels in the citizens' panel (92% in 2022-23), and by the results of the adult and children's customer surveys. At a national level the Scottish Household Survey for 2022 recorded that 89% of library users expressed satisfaction with library services.

In 2023 a national survey of public libraries conducted by Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) the East Renfrewshire-specific data showed that:

- 97% of respondents said that using the library service improves their quality of life
- 99% of respondents agreed that the library is a welcoming place to visit
- 100% of respondents agreed that the library is important to them.

COVID had a significant impact on the effective delivery of public library services for much of the period of the previous strategy. Following the announcement of lockdown in 2020 public libraries across Scotland were subject to operational guidance published and updated by the Scottish Government.

Many of the strategic aims in East Renfrewshire's Library Strategy were unable to be fully delivered as a result of the pandemic. However these aims remain valid and have been incorporated into this refreshed strategy with intention that they will still be delivered.

The pathway for recovery for public libraries across Scotland has been longer than other services. From outright closure, to being able to offer Click & Collect services, to partial re-opening and then finally being allowed to fully re-open, re-engagement with existing library users and new users has been challenging across the sector.

However, since April 2021 library visits in East Renfrewshire (both physical and virtual) are increasing quarter on quarter and while not yet at pre-pandemic levels they continue to demonstrate growth and show no sign of plateauing.

The diverse programme of events and activities aimed at both adults and children & young people are a significant contribution towards library footfall. Whether it is Bookbug, the summer reading challenge and school visit programme for young people and families, or activities aimed at adults which promote reading for pleasure and tackle social isolation and loneliness, library events and activities account for around 20% of the total physical visitors.

Virtual visits, which include hits to the library website, the app, the online catalogue as well as social media also continues to rise. Digital engagement with library users and non-users tends to focus on transactions such online reservations and renewals, and online bookings for our events and activities. Social media promotion of library services increases awareness and drives virtual visitors to our electronic resources.

Although relatively small compared to other library services, our eBook and eAudio platform allows 24/7 access to books to users of all ages while our Digital Newspaper and Magazine platform offers access to over 7,000 titles worldwide.

Library service Key Performance Indicators comprise indicators reported nationally such as the statutory measure of visits per capita, and cost per visit, and a number of other indicators which are presented at ERCL Board and Council level for scrutiny quarterly, and included in mid- and end- year reports.

This include total visits (on-line and physical); customer satisfaction; sickness and absence; staff turnover; cost-per visit and book borrowing. In addition ERCL maintains a risk register, and the highest risks are reflected in the council's risk register whilst joint risks (including facilities, ICT, demographics, change management, financial pressures, and demographics) are part of a shared ERC / ERCL risk register.

I am a keen reader and always enjoy browsing and choosing something new to read. Also I really appreciate the book group here at Neilston. I have met new people in my community through coming along. The library staff are very welcoming and always have time for a friendly chat.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

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.

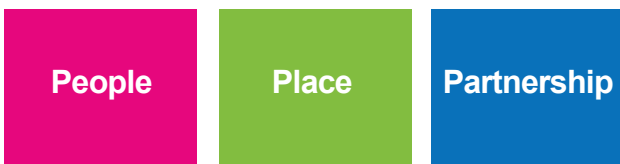


National Strategy for Public Libraries:

The Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) in partnership with COSLA, Carnegie UK and the Scottish Government has refreshed its original national strategy for public libraries and produced the updated Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021 - 2025.

This strategy is centred around 3 main themes - People, Place and Partnership. Within each of these three main aims are a further 5 sub-aims which seek to develop the role of the library within the community and define how the library service supports other services to achieve their corresponding aims and objectives.

As with the previous iteration, East Renfrewshire's local public library strategy will again align closely to the aims of the national strategy while focussing on the areas of greatest impact and benefit to East Renfrewshire.



Community Plan:

East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) works for and with communities to ensure everyone has the best possible quality of life.

At a local level the following outcomes continue to 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, identifies a number of key themes, with the library service well positioned to be able to provide support across those identified below:

- Reducing the impact of child poverty
- Promoting employability through the No One Left Behind Employability Agenda
- Improving positive mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness and increasing safety.

East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Business Plan:

The Trust business plan has five strategic aims:

- Create a financially sustainable business model
- Develop an understanding of our customers and audiences and an offer that 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 continue to reflect on what the East Renfrewshire demographic looks like as a market. East Renfrewshire's population is 96,800 based on the 2022 Census First Data Release Report. We analyse East Renfrewshire's demography regularly to assess the potential uptake and demand for existing services and the development of new services. This provides us with insight into the potential market for new services and the attractiveness of our services to different customer groups in particular areas.

Household composition and age profile are key considerations in understanding our customer base.

The age profile is:

- **20.3% aged 65 and over**
- **59.7% aged 16 – 64**
- **20.0% aged 15 and under**

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 to 101,230 by 2028.

Within the Trust it is widely recognised that across our area we serve two relatively distinctive communities with differing demographic profiles.

Eastwood (population 75%), 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 (65+ plus) living as couples or alone.

Barrhead/Neilston (population 25%) is an area with pockets of significant social and economic deprivation and a wider spectrum of household types including: young families; older adults; and younger adults with no dependent children.

There is a strong tradition in Scotland of funding 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.



Strategic Aims:

The local library strategy will align to the strategic aims of the national library strategy. The following sections detail each aim and the ways with which East Renfrewshire public libraries will deliver that aim where possible. This local strategy will again prioritise and focus on those areas which best meets the priorities of the Trust, the council and the residents of East Renfrewshire.

The aims are underpinned by five foundations for success which will ensure East Renfrewshire libraries deliver effective outcomes:

- Data Driven Service Design through analysis of data such as issues, visitors, participation and feedback
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through consideration of Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments and commitment to children's rights
- Seamless Customer Journey through continual improvement based on feedback such as new library management system, introduction of card payments, public internet access and WiFi
- Staff Culture through the ERCL People Strategy
- Sustainability by supporting the council's Get to Zero ambitions.



PEOPLE - Libraries will support people and communities to reach their full potential and celebrate the unique skill set of staff.



When my kids were young I regularly brought them to the library which was a social event but also instilled a love of reading in them. Now I continue to use the library myself as I value the services and expertise of staff.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

1.1 Embed libraries as lead contributors to reading and literacy by closing the learning gap in communities, through national programmes and local initiatives

1.2 Improve wellbeing and support post COVID-19 recovery with programmes which target health, economic growth, and strengthen communities

1.3 Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions

1.4 Equip library staff with the skills to deliver a progressive library service and nurture leaders at all levels

1.5 Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all.

Libraries support the aspiration that Scotland is a reading nation. Reading and literacy are core to the heart of library services. Libraries in East Renfrewshire support early and family learning, school readiness and attainment across the 3-18 curriculum; they provide support for individuals to return to learning throughout their lives. Libraries will continue to create and innovate across the learning offer to attract new audiences and further enrich the experience of current participants.

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.

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.

The greatest resource of any library is the people who make up the unique and diverse communities within which libraries sit, and the committed and highly valued workforce that help bring the library service to life. Library staff connect people to ideas, knowledge and learning whilst fostering a sense of belonging that connects communities.

One of the strengths of the library service in East Renfrewshire is that there is a library in almost every community. Access to the physical space can be just as important as access to books and resources when it comes to reading, study and a safe, warm, universally accessible and free space to visit.

The link between reading for pleasure and positive mental health and wellbeing is well-established but libraries in East Renfrewshire support health and wellbeing in other areas too from access to health information, MacMillan cancer support, replacement hearing aid batteries to tackling social isolation and loneliness. This in particular is reflected in the range of activities programmed for adults designed to bring people together such as Read, Relax, Refresh, singing groups and virtual reality experiences.



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. Since the publication of the original library strategy ECALM has been refreshed during 2023 and a simpler joining process has been implemented to incorporate registration at birth, nursery school, and at primary school enrolment.

I have always been a member of a library and some of my earliest and happiest memories are of going to the library and getting new books. This is still one of my favourite things to do. I think libraries provide incalculable benefits to people of all ages.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

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 deliver an ongoing programme of themed Read, Write, Count activities. During 2022-23 213 children and 141 adults attended these sessions.

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.

East Renfrewshire pupil's participation and completion levels are consistently high. Compared to 2022 the number of participants in 2023 increased by 26% from 1,218 to 1,535, with number of completions increasing by a similar percentage from 711 to 899. The challenge for the library service in East Renfrewshire remains to maintain and increase these levels.

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

As an indicator of the importance and popularity of Bookbug, attendance in 2022-23 saw 606 sessions delivered across all libraries with 13k children and 11k adults participating. In 2023-24 these participation figures have been already exceeded with 13.5k children and 12k adults participating despite being only ¾ through the year. Customer feedback is positive with the statements below from the 2023 public library survey indicative of value and impact:

“Attending Bookbug has improved my grandson's confidence which makes me happy.”



“When we had our child she was very small and underweight, through the bookbug sessions we met June who led the sessions and a great group of friends who our daughter is still friends with to this day. We take out books regularly and our two children benefit greatly as we simply could not afford to buy that many books for them. Our 4 year old can read already because of the library and its services.”

“Bookbug with a newborn was very valuable.”

“Bookbug's a great event, very welcoming, great for kids and their development.”



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 .

The strategic aims of the school library strategy are broadly similar to those of the public libraries strategy and covering broad themes of supporting reading, literacy and learning, digital literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, etc. This strategy has now expired but as work begins nationally on its refresh East Renfrewshire public libraries commit to supporting it when it is published.

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.”

In 2021 both public libraries and school libraries migrated to the new Civica Spydus library management system and opportunities for shared system development and training continue.

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, and partnership working by continuing to support national initiatives such as Read, Write, Count.

PEOPLE

We Will	How Will We Know?	Measures
Explore options to support staff at all levels to undergo relevant training and awareness as the library service continues to evolve to meet current needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from supervisors, staff and from library customers - Horizon scanning improves current awareness and leads to relevant service design - Staff better trained to meet current and future service needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive feedback from staff engagement surveys - Positive feedback from library customers - Less staff absence and improved morale
Continue to work with partners across the sector to develop programmes and resources tackling loneliness and social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library staff and relevant partners create programme of events and activities - As programme is delivered fewer East Renfrewshire residents report instances of loneliness and isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation levels in relevant library programmes are high - Positive feedback from library customers
With colleagues in other Scottish public library services work towards all of our libraries supporting neurodiversity, and attaining dementia friendly accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accreditation is achieved - Libraries are delivering programmes and experiences which recognise neurodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accreditation is achieved - Participation levels in relevant library programmes are high
Work with MacMillan Cancer Support to develop the existing dedicated information points in East Renfrewshire libraries, and support the wider ICJ programme across the local authority area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MacMillan Volunteer Co-ordinator post is funded for a further three years to 2026 - East Renfrewshire residents who are affected by cancer are better supported and informed - ICJ programme is supported to be successfully rolled out across East Renfrewshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application for funding is successful - Positive feedback from library customers affected by cancer - Representation by library staff on ICJ programme board and working group
Work with partners in HSCP and across the NHS and other local organisations to ensure that residents have access to quality, accurate and trusted information to make them better informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library staff are confident in delivering Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing Action Plan activities - East Renfrewshire residents are better informed about their health and wellbeing options - Library stock on health and wellbeing subjects is accurate, up to date and well used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library staff have successfully completed the Collective Force online training - Feedback from library customers is positive - Book issues in this area increase from 2023 baseline

We Will	How Will We Know?	Measures
Review and revise stock policies in both Adult and Children & Young People categories to ensure that library stock reflects the communities that we serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised Adult & Children & Young People stock policies are published - Library book stock reflects the reading and information needs of the communities in East Renfrewshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline - Feedback from East Renfrewshire library users is positive
Support national initiatives that encourage and promote reading, literacy and numeracy including the Scottish Public Libraries Strategy for Literacy and Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised Reading Strategy is published and actions are implemented - Relevant library programmes such as Every Child A Library Member and Read, Write, Count are delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation levels in library programmes are high - Feedback from library customers is positive - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline
Work with partners and schools to develop information handling and literacy programs delivered during school visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School visit programmes are developed and delivered by library staff - School pupils are better able to demonstrate good information handling skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from ERC Education is positive - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Access to library e-resources such as Britannica Online increases from 2023 baseline
Support East Renfrewshire schools to deliver on the aims of the National School Library Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new Scottish strategy for school libraries is refreshed and published - Actions from the strategy are successfully implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from ERC Education is positive
Work with the ERC Local Employability Partnership and Work EastRen to raise awareness of the No One Left Behind Employability Agenda.	Work EastRen and Employability partners have a presence within East Renfrewshire libraries to help support local residents with all aspects of job searching and support into work.	Access to a range of employability provision aimed at priority groups across the locality.



PLACE - Libraries will be recognised as both valued places and place-makers, with community led design at the heart.



Linking to a community of other people - reducing isolation and helping a small family feel 'part of things'. We have a son with a Learning Disability and find the library to be a welcoming, safe space where he is accepted and given freedom to be himself.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

2.1 Deploy people-centred design principles and decision making to ensure service development is collaborative

2.2 Design library services which reach the heart of communities and engage with new audiences

2.3 Ensure the digital and physical space are blended to create a high-quality offer responsive to evolving needs

2.4 Curate a diverse cultural offer which celebrates local and national heritage and encourages community led experiences

2.5 Explore new ways to support business start-ups, economic growth and stimulate co-production.

Nationally public libraries continue to 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 customer-focused tablet and smartphone support 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.

East Renfrewshire library service will continue to 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. Since the beginning of 2022 through to the end of 2023 the libraries Digital Participation team have supported 1,022 individual learners over 1,568 learning sessions in a combination of both in-person and virtual sessions.



The welcoming side of public libraries can also be seen in the recent work done over the winter months as part of what was initially Warm & Welcome spaces, and is now more generically Winter Support. Libraries have always been safe, trusted hubs in the community and this has been demonstrated by the number of people attending events and activities as part of Warm & Welcome spaces.

Libraries have successfully worked to develop resources and activities to remove barriers to a number of curricular areas. One specific example of this is STEM literacy. These services are especially vital for children and young people whose families might not have the means for extracurricular STEM enrichment opportunities. East Renfrewshire libraries offer a full programme of STEM activities throughout the year.

Virtual reality offers a new, fun and exciting way to learn and experience the world and the development of our virtual reality programmes has been very successful, with other library services copying our model of delivery. The use of our headsets are extremely popular with both older people and younger children and we will develop this further by looking ahead at what opportunities new technology will bring. Artificial Intelligence remains relatively undeveloped across libraries and even in the wider public sector, but given the library services ability to horizon scan and adapt new technologies into new and existing services AI is an area that we will undoubtedly develop going forward.

In order to successfully deliver the aims of both this strategy and the national strategy our public libraries must be modern, welcoming, fit-for-purpose buildings.



In December 2023 East Renfrewshire Council approved plans to build a new leisure centre in Eastwood Park. The plans include the inclusion of a new library to East Renfrewshire which will be part of the new leisure centre, replicating the co-location benefits of Barrhead Foundry.

The council also has plans to create a leisure hub in Neilston into which includes the co-location of the library there.

To make sure that the libraries in those locations best meets the needs of the community the design of the space is fundamental. But just as critical as the design is also the ability for staff to have the training, skills and support necessary to deliver library services effectively.

Over the next 12 months we will carry out a service review of the library operating hours across East Renfrewshire. The desired outcome of this review is to implement a sustainable model of service delivery within existing staffing that reduces the risk of closing libraries due to lack of staff. This review will also reduce reliance on library supervisors to provide cover, give them more time to work with their teams and ultimately provide a more stable, better planned and prepared programme of events and activities.

PLACE

We Will	How Will We Know?	Measures
Review the current library operational model with a view to developing sustainable, excellent customer service delivery	- New library operating model is implemented	- Instances of closures due to lack of staff is reduced - Staff are better trained and have more prep time for quality activities and events
Work with stakeholders to deliver new, fit-for purpose people-centred designs for libraries in the new Eastwood Park Leisure Centre and the Neilston Leisure Campus	- Excellent library services are delivered from these new sites when fully opened	- Feedback from library customers is positive - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline

We Will	How Will We Know?	Measures
Continue to identify funding opportunities and work with PaTS to improve the look and feel of existing library buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Renfrewshire libraries are modern, fit for purpose and welcoming environments that are flexible and adaptable for current and future use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from library customers is positive - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline
Work with the ERCL Arts & Heritage service to support the delivery of a high-quality heritage service and the delivery of the Arts strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to heritage resources is enabled and available and accessible to all - Arts & Heritage team are supported in the delivery of their strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical and virtual visitors to heritage services increase from 2023 baseline - Feedback from customers is positive - Relevant actions from Arts strategy are delivered
Build on the Warm & Welcome space initiative and tackle poverty by continuing to offer free access to books, eBooks, WiFi and ICT facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library customers are supported to access and use free resources - East Renfrewshire residents are signposted towards relevant anti-poverty information and resources - Library spaces are universally accessible and available for all members of the community to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline - Virtual and physical library visitor figures increase from 2023 baseline
Develop our programme of ICT learning and digital participation opportunities to support East Renfrewshire residents to become digital citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Renfrewshire residents are supported to access ICT learning opportunities - Partnership working between Adult Learning and library digital team is embedded - Digital participation programmes are designed to reflect changes in technology and meet evolving demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library participation in ER Digital Inclusion Partnership - Number of learners and learning sessions increases from 2023 baseline - Feedback from learners is positive
Explore the potential offered by AI to enhance service provision and raise awareness of its potential amongst library users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge and awareness of AI and its impact on library customers is fully understood and relevant learning opportunities around its use are developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of learners and learning sessions increases from 2023 baseline - Feedback from learners is positive



PARTNERSHIP - Libraries will deliver on local and national priorities through a strategic approach to collaboration and partnership.



I have very fond memories of my son and I sitting on the sofa in the library carefully going over the books he chose and deciding which one to take home that week. I feel it has made a massive impact on his love of learning and made lifelong memories for both of us. I think the library is a wonderful place.

East Renfrewshire resident,
SLIC National Public Library Survey

3.1 Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer, healthier communities

3.2 Amplify the voice of public libraries through inclusive communication to ensure key messaging reaches all stakeholders

3.3 Collaborate with partners to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030

3.4 Explore sustainable investment opportunities and preventative spend impact whilst demonstrating libraries return on investment

3.5 Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices.

Public libraries deliver a wide range of benefits which place them at the centre of the collective endeavour to improve literacy, raise attainment for all, close the poverty related attainment gap, promote health, champion wellbeing, and pioneer sustainability, tackle social isolation, reduce inequality, and close the digital divide. Public libraries deliver significant economic benefits on preventative spend and return on investment.

The health and wellbeing offer from libraries is estimated to bring a cost saving to NHS Scotland of £3.2 million each year. An Economic Impact Analysis of the British Library Business and the Intellectual Property Centre National Network carried out in 2019 highlighted the unrivalled value for money and return on investment that libraries deliver, standing at £6.95 generated for every £1 of public funding.

With sustained investment, public libraries will deliver globally recognised innovation and transformational outcomes for the people of Scotland.

Meanwhile elsewhere in the UK a study published in July 2023 showed that public libraries in England generate value of at least £3.4 billion each year, according to analysis by economists from the University of East Anglia (UEA).

The report authors estimated that a branch library typically provides £1 million in value annually. They then extrapolated the findings to all of England's 3,000 libraries, giving a national total of £3.4 billion. Using Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) spending data for the year 2021/22, this represents a return on investment of at least six times cost.

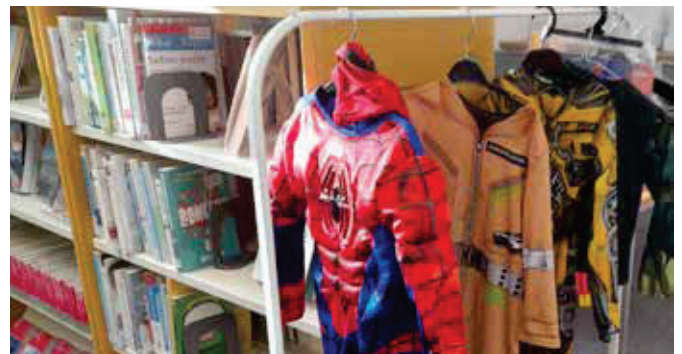
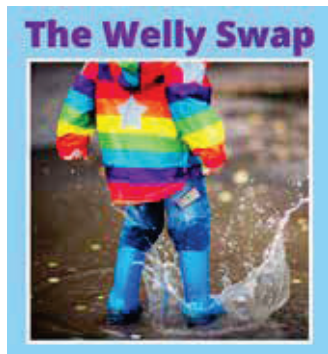
ERCL partners with 4Global to calculate the social value of its sports activities. A similar exercise will take place to calculate the social value of the public library service in East Renfrewshire.

Sustainability, and the move towards greener library services across the country has led to the development of Lend & Mend hubs which offer access to sewing machines and other materials.

There are already a number of hubs in Scotland, and through supporting the circular economy by providing access to materials and equipment libraries in East Renfrewshire will provide similar opportunities for local groups and individuals to get involved in recycling. The library service is able to support the council's Get to Zero statement through these actions, and by using its position within the communities of East Renfrewshire to publicise and promote Get to Zero locally, as well as the wider climate messages.

Starting in 2022 the PLIF funded #RootCause project harnessed collective community action to transform the outdoor space at Thornliebank library that has laid down roots needed to provide a sustainable community allotment and multi-functional space. The transformation has been the catalyst for an ongoing programme of focussed events and activities designed to provoke reactions, spark conversations and empower individuals to take positive actions towards greener libraries and a greener East Renfrewshire.

Working in partnership with local primary schools, volunteers and the wider East Renfrewshire Citizenship, the project has created a space for pollinators, for fruit and vegetables, encourage wildlife and for seeds to establish a reseedling initiative that will not only benefit the immediate Thornliebank library space, but the wider community.



Across libraries in East Renfrewshire we now accept donations of wellington boots and Halloween costumes that we make available for the community borrow. We will develop this further into other areas as we continue to look at ways where we can promote sustainability and tackle poverty.

The **How Good is Our Public Library Service?** (HGIOPLS) framework allows libraries to embed this continuous improvement culture with five

Quality Indicators offering a framework for self-evaluation supported by a system of peer review. HGIOPLS is in the process of being updated to align with strategic aims and reflect local and national priorities. Once complete and available East Renfrewshire library service will use this framework to help us improve our process and achieve excellent customer service.



PARTNERSHIP

We Will	How Will We Know?	Measures
Partner with 4Global to demonstrate the social value provided by public libraries in East Renfrewshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social value delivered by East Renfrewshire libraries is calculated and able to be used for information and advocacy purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4Global deliver Social Value data
Continue to support the circular economy and promote sustainability through the development of local Lend and Mend hubs in libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lend & Mend hubs operate successfully in East Renfrewshire libraries - Existing programmes of clothing recycling (welly boots, Halloween costumes, etc.) become mainstream across all East Renfrewshire libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from library customers is positive - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline
Continue to develop the outdoor space at Thornliebank library and embed the work of the #RootCause project to work towards a greener, more sustainable library service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community seed library is established and used by the community - Programme of outdoor events and activities at Thornliebank library is developed - Action plan to promote sustainability across the service is developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from library customers is positive - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline - Sustainability Action Plan is developed and delivered
Use the How Good Is Our Public Library Service self-evaluation framework to improve processes and work towards delivering excellent customer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer reviewed self-evaluation exercise takes place once revised HGIOPLS is available - Actions resulting from evaluation are implemented - East Renfrewshire libraries are excellent public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Processes and procedures are developed which lead to high performance of both staff and service - Feedback from library customers is positive - HGIOPLS accreditation is obtained
Continue to explore and develop partnership opportunities with local groups and organisations, council services and the wider community to improve access to services, increase referrals and benefit the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Renfrewshire residents are better connected and signposted to relevant organisations and agencies - Local groups and organisations are able use library facilities and resources to provide better, more targeted services - Library spaces are highly valued, well used community resources universally accessible by all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from library customers is positive - Participation in library activities and events is increased - Book issues increase from 2023 baseline - Active library membership increases from 2023 baseline - Positive relationship between library services and local groups and communities.

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Appendix 1 – Baseline library performance data 2022-23

Visitors and Attendances	Value	Source
Physical visitors	243,403	Library electronic and manual people counters
Virtual visitors	218,918	Reporting tools for library websites, catalogue, app, e-resources and social media
Adult events	762	Attendance records
Adult event attendances	4,085	Attendance records
Children & young people events	1,158	Attendance records
Children & young people event attendances	23,451 (plus 15,717 adults)	Attendance records
Issues (physical and eBook)	Value	Source
Adult book issues	176,266	Library management system
Children & young people book issues	234,137	Library management system
eBook / eAudio issues	23,776	eBook platform
Digital magazine and newspaper issues	539,179	Digital magazine platform
ICT usage	Value	Source
PC and WiFi usage	33,873	PC Booking system and WiFi reporting tool
Learners	531	Attendance records
Membership	Value	Source
Members	51,023	Library management system
Active members	6,274	Library management system

LIBRARY LANE



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