Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee - 3rd March 2016

Briefing Note - Update on the Library Service

Brief Summary

1. This report provides an update on the model for the library service which was agreed by Cabinet on 18 February 2015.

Background

2. In 2012, like other library authorities, we were dealing with changing demographics, changing customer habits/expectations, a changing local authority landscape and enormous budget pressures.

3. Having changed aspects of the library service and saved £1.1m between 2008 and 2012 without closing libraries or 'hollowing out' the service, there was still a requirement to save £1.675m by 2016.

4. In response to these types of budget pressures many authorities were closing libraries. Within Staffordshire we wanted to do everything we could to sustain our library service so we began to think innovatively, act collaboratively and lead creatively.

5. We took an ambitious approach to transforming our service and have designed, developed and implemented a new model for Staffordshire Libraries which was informed by extensive consultation.

6. Traditionally all of our 43 libraries had been managed by the county council and staffed by paid members of staff. Our ambition was to develop a sustainable library offer where all libraries remained part of our statutory service and the community was encouraged to become more involved in co-producing services that were relevant to local need.

7. During 2014 we held a 12 week public consultation on a tiered model and initiated a collective consultation process with our staff. We received:

   a. 4,255 responses to the questionnaires
   b. 3,500 people responded via a range of public events
   c. Feedback via letters, emails, social media and 9 petitions.

   We heard that:

   a. People valued their library offer
   b. People valued the library as a community space
   c. People saw the library as enabling them to stay connected and feel supported.

8. As a result we realigned our model (see Figure 1) and this was agreed by the County Council's Cabinet in February 2015 (Appendix A)
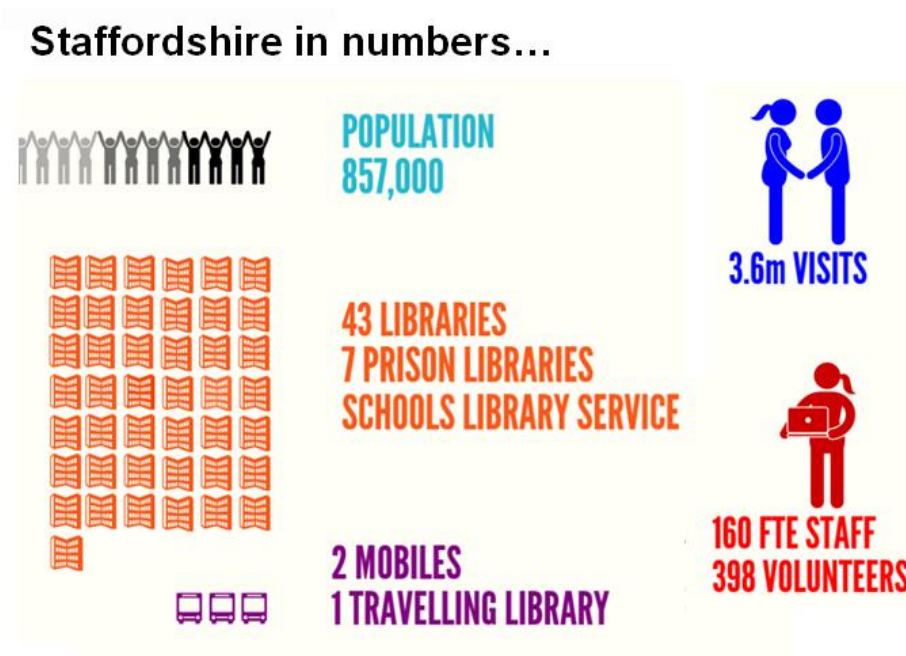
9. Figure 1:
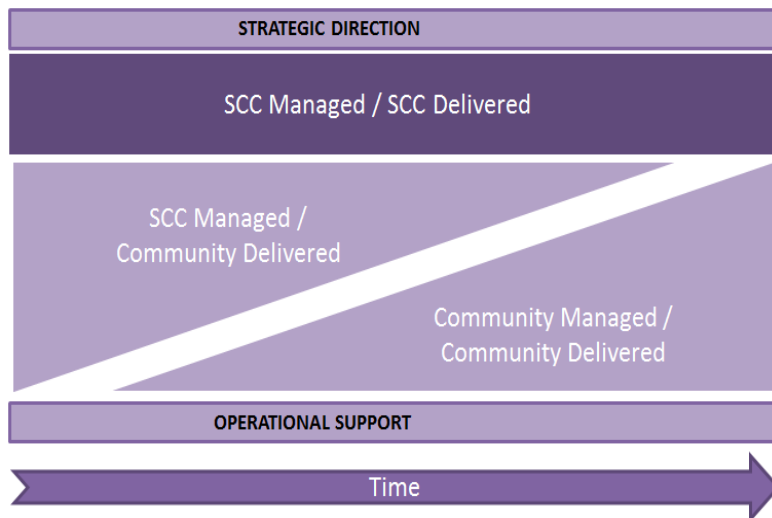
Staffordshire Libraries

10. Across Staffordshire there are 43 library buildings, 2 mobile libraries, 1 travelling library, 7 prison based libraries, a Schools Library Service and a developing virtual library experience which enhances the traditional offer (see Figure 2).

11. Figure 2

12. 41 of our libraries are Wi-Fi enabled and all are open for more than 10 hours per week.

13. 20 libraries are managed and delivered by Staffordshire County Council and 23 libraries will become Community Managed and Delivered by April 2017. All 43 libraries remain part of our statutory network.

14. In 2015/16 there were 3.6m visits to Staffordshire's libraries (which equates to approximately 4.2 visits per resident).

15. Following the implementation of a new operating model in April 2016 we now have 160 FTE staff – this represents a 23% reduction to our paid workforce from 2015/16.

16. During 2015/16 398 volunteers provided almost 15,000 volunteer hours, covering 15 different volunteer tasks.

17. From January 2016 we have received over 800 expressions of interest in volunteering and now have over 600 trained library volunteers. In October 2016 3,400 hours were volunteered which has a financial value to Staffordshire County Council of approximately £47,000.

Community Managed Libraries – implementation

18. Figure 3 below details our time line for implementing the community managed model:
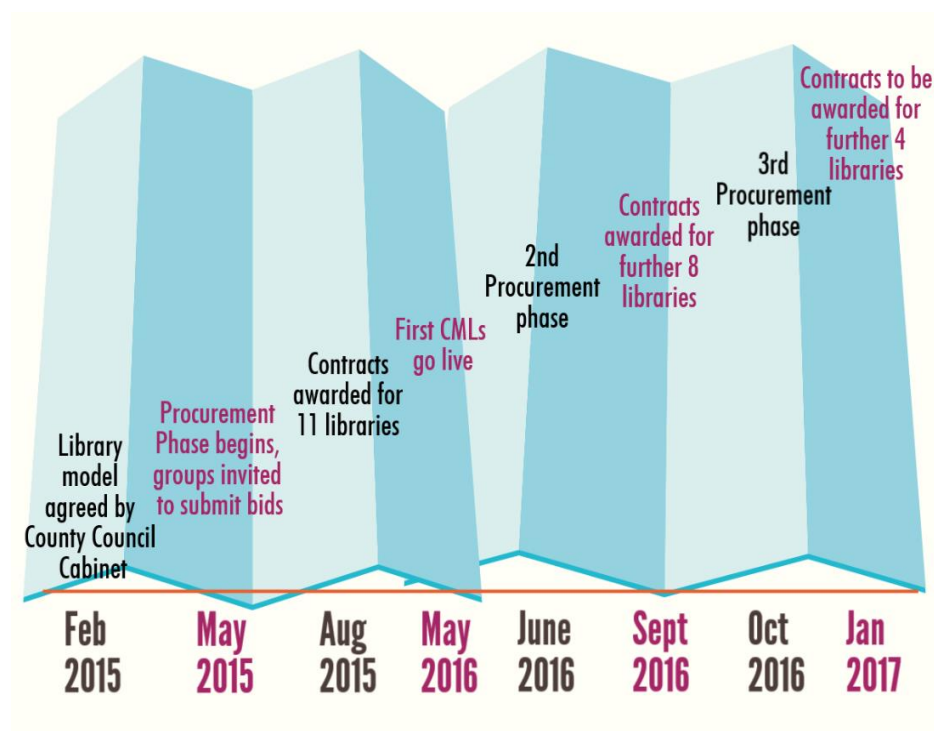
19. Following Cabinet agreement of the new model in February 2015, local community groups and organisations were invited to officially apply to manage and deliver the library through a three phases of formal procurement. The first phase took place between May – July 2015.

20. An independent panel, met in August 2015 and awarded contracts to 11 of the 23 libraries which we believed could be community managed. The decisions were made as a result of a comprehensive evaluation process that included senior officers from the county council as well as independent representation.

21. The successful organisations demonstrated their understanding of and commitment to the library offer; robust sustainable governance and decision making frameworks and a track record of community engagement and delivery.

22. The contracts were awarded to South Staffordshire & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT), Rising Brook Baptist Church, Blythe Bridge Care & Fun Club and Werrington Community Volunteers.

23. Between May and August 2016 we worked with these four organisations to enable 11 libraries to transfer to their management:

Library	Organisation	Opened as CML
Werrington	Werrington Community Volunteer Group	14.5.16
Rising Brook	Rising Brook Baptist Church	31.5.16
Blythe Bridge	The Care and Fun Club	31.5.16
Barton	SSSFT	2.5.16
Baswich	SSSFT	23.5.16
Holmcroft	SSSFT	6.6.16
Norton Canes	SSSFT	13.6.16
Brewood	SSSFT	20.6.16
Glascote	SSSFT	27.6.16
Hednesford	SSSFT	4.7.16
Heath Hayes	SSSFT	15.8.16

24. During the same period we held a 2nd procurement phase for the remaining 12 libraries. Contracts were awarded for 8 libraries to the following organisations in September 2016:

| Library	Organisation	Opened as CML
Kinver	Kinver Community Managed Limited	3.1.17
Silverdale	BES - Business Enterprise Support	3.1.17
Audley	Audley Library Volunteer Group	February 2017
Shenstone	Shenstone Library Volunteer Group	March 2017
Knutton	Knutton St Mary's Primary School	March 2017
Wilnecote	Wilnecote High School	June 2017*
Gnosall	GLEAN – Gnosall Library Education & Nurture	August 2017*
Brereton	Redbrook Hayes Primary School	See paragraph 25-26

   *Provisional dates

25. Redbrook Hayes Primary School believes that thriving and well used public libraries are important to local communities. It is with this in mind that they submitted a bid take on the day to day management of Brereton Library.

26. We are very aware that schools are under increasing pressure in terms of structure, finance and raising standards. Consequently following extensive conversations with representatives from the school, we have jointly agreed that the school will no longer manage and deliver this library. We are currently campaigning locally to recruit

individuals to volunteer at Brereton Library and have received 17 expressions of interest from volunteers at Brereton.

27. We have also completed the third procurement phase and have identified potential organisations to work with to develop applications manage Loggerheads, Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay Libraries.

28. We have not yet identified an organisation to manage and deliver Talke Library and will work with Support Staffordshire our Third Sector partner to develop a solution for this community.

29. Examples of Community Managed Libraries in Staffordshire can be found on our website: https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/librariesnew/Help-shape-library-service/managed-libs/Examples-of-Community-Libraries-in-Staffordshire.aspx

Community Managed Libraries – support

30. During our transformation we wanted to ensure that our libraries do not just 'survive', but flourish, and make an even greater difference in local communities. Our vision was, and continues to be, that we will work with organisations to develop a thriving and exciting library offer.

31. Figure 4 below details the support that we offer Community Managed Libraries:
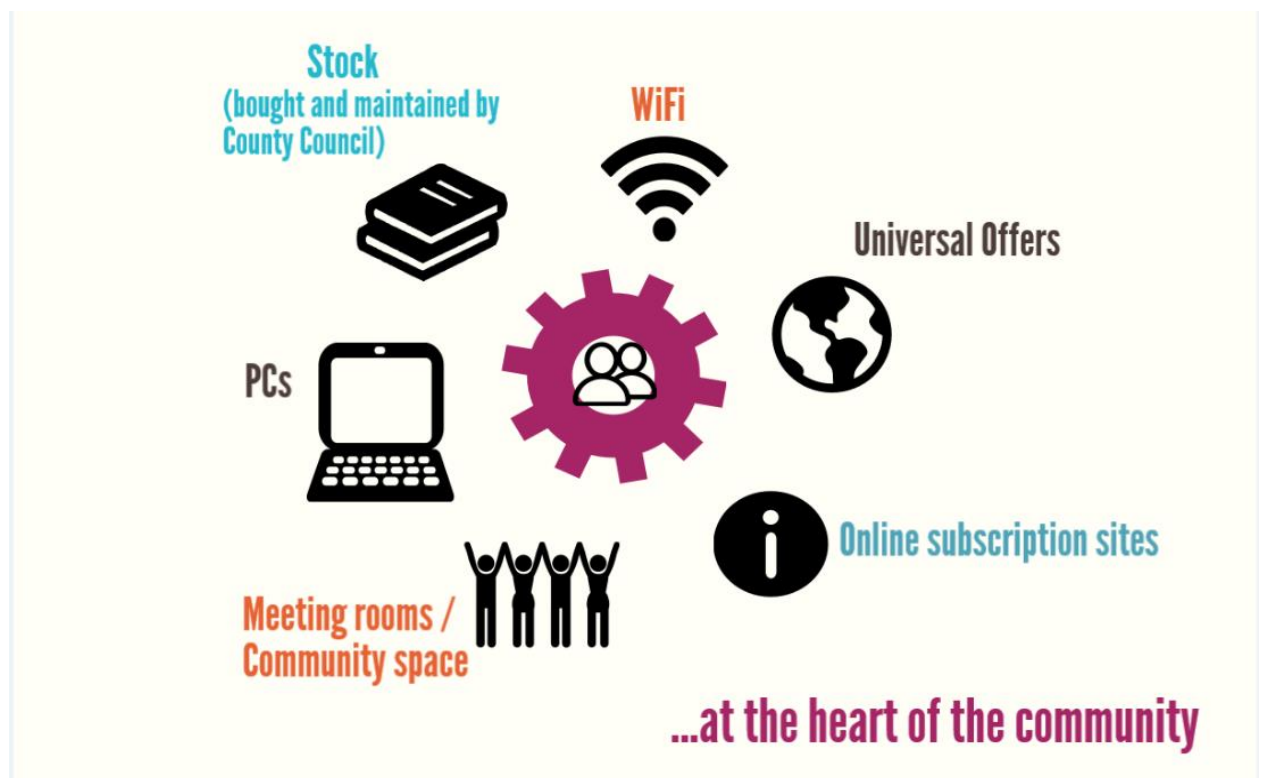
32. To ensure that communities are confident and equipped to take on the management of their local library, we developed a strong package of support.

33. Staffordshire County Council continues to maintain all library buildings and pay agreed running costs including cleaning and grounds maintenance.

34. We continue to provide the book stock and any income generated through over dues, requests or charged stock can be used by the Community Managed Library to re-invest into their library service.

35. We provide access to the library management system, online subscriptions, public internet access and WiFi with the same level of system support that we give to all libraries within our network.

36. The public consultation highlighted that access to paid members of staff across the 23 libraries which were proposed as Community Managed and Community Delivered was essential and this was therefore built into the model which Cabinet agreed.

37. We appointed a Community Capacity Manager and a team of Officers who work with our community managed organisations to provide professional guidance and expertise to ensure that the statutory library service continues to be delivered (see Figure 5 below).

38. Figure 5 – High level functions
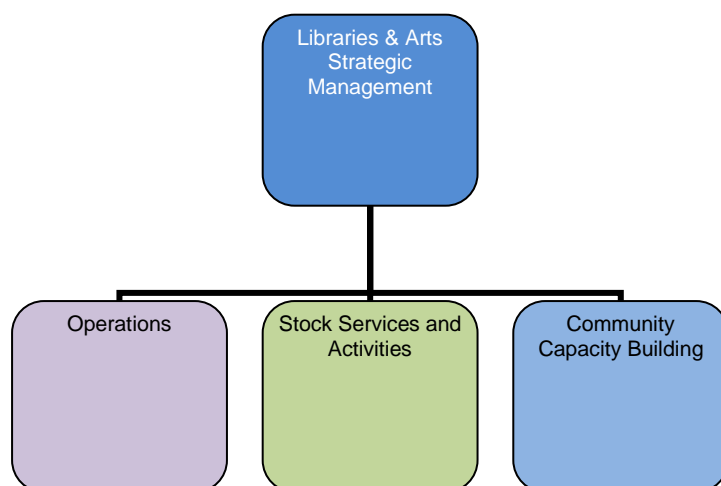
39. The Community Support Officers work across the county to support clusters of libraries. Their role purpose is to build strong relationships and develop effective partnerships within communities to ensure the sustainability of the Community Managed and Community Delivered library service.

40. Working alongside the Community Support Officers are the Stock Services & Activities Officers. Their role is to provide direction and support for Staffordshire County Council Managed Libraries to increase participation in the library service; and provide indirect support for Community Managed Libraries, ensuring all communities across Staffordshire have access to relevant activities and resources.

41. A key task for our paid staff has been the development and delivery of an extensive training programme for all volunteers. The training has been followed up with 2 weeks of direct on-site support once each has library transferred to ensure that the volunteers are confident in delivering a high quality library offer.

42. The feedback from all community managed library organisations and their volunteers has been excellent and we believe that our continued commitment to these libraries helps to ensure that they remain vibrant spaces at the heart of communities.

County Council Managed Libraries

43. All of our libraries changed as part of the Libraries Transformation and all Library staff work within a new operating model alongside volunteers.

44. We continue to manage and deliver the statutory library service to encourage increased engagement and programmes of activity which promote literacy, learning, prosperity and wellbeing within communities.

45. During 2016 the library service participated in the following initiatives which underpin the Society of Chief Librarians' Universal Library Offers: World Book Night, Staffordshire Day, Celebrating Shakespeare, Mental Health Awareness Week, Dementia Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day, Volunteers Week, Health Information Week, Young Teen Fiction Award Celebration, Young Poet Laureate, Summer Reading Challenge, Staffordshire History Festival, Fun Palaces, Festival of Learning and Get Online Week.

46. There are also new opportunities to engage with people through code clubs, dementia sessions, reading well and job clubs which are held at many of our libraries

47. Between April-Sept 2016 41,447 people attended events in libraries and 2,239 people attended outreach activities.

48. Remaining relevant to communities continues to be a challenge; between April – December 2016 library visits to County Council Libraries decreased by 5%, issues decreased by 13% and new members decreased by almost 8%. Trend graphs detailing visits, issues and new members can be found in Appendix B.

49. The way in which people use libraries in Staffordshire is in line with national trends. Figure 6 [1]below compares Staffordshire against the other English Shire counties and Library authorities in England.

50. While at County Council Managed Libraries visits and issues are falling in line with national trends, there has been an increase in visits at the following Community Managed Libraries: Norton Canes (29%), Werrington (12.3%), Baswich (12%), Hednesford (5.7%) and Barton (0.6%).

51. In January 2017 there was also a 12.5% increase in new members across the 11 libraries that have transferred to community management.

52. Figure 6:

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[1] CIPFA Public Library Statistics Actuals 2013-16

Issues per 1,000 Population

Visits per 1,000 Population
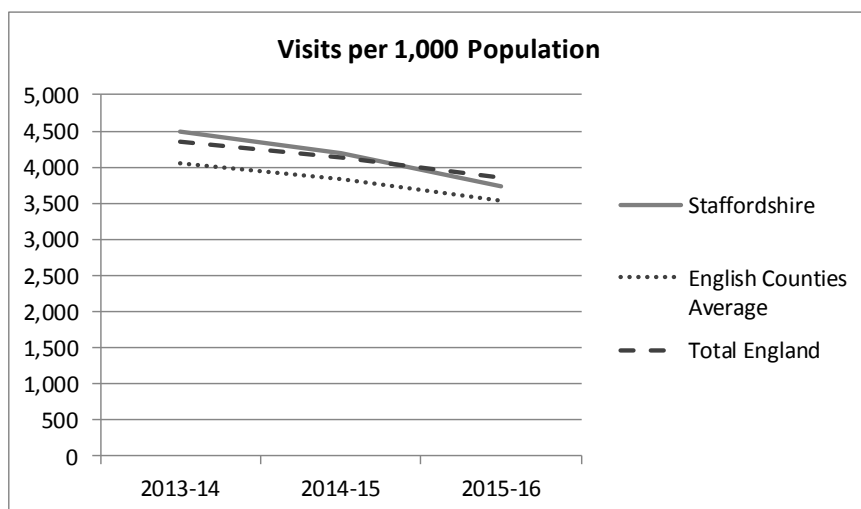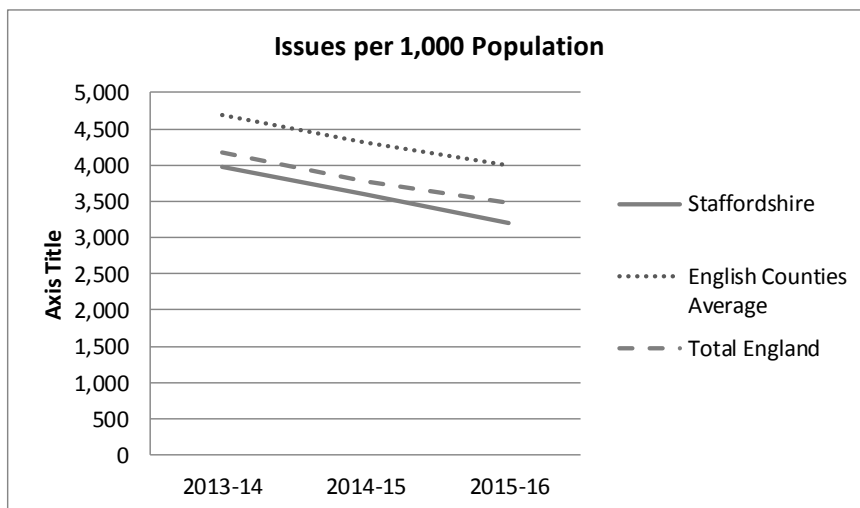
Mobile Library Service

53. The Mobile & Travelling Library Service was reviewed during 2015/16 and following public consultation a new model was implemented in April 2016. The service is now delivered via two Mobile Libraries and one Travelling Library.

54. This review realised savings of £350,000 and as agreed as part of the 2016 MTFS the service will be reviewed again during 2018/19.

55. Through business as usual the routes were reviewed in October 2016 resulting in recommended changes based on low or no use and customer requests.

Library Relocations

56. The business case for the Newcastle Civic Hub, which includes relocating Newcastle Library was agreed in September 2014.

57. The Civic Hub, overlooking the Queens Gardens in Newcastle, will bring together services from the borough council, county council and police under one roof within the town centre when it opens later this year.

58. A delegated decision was taken in July 2016 to relocate Lichfield Library to the ground floor of St Mary's in the Market Square in 2018. This will ensure that the city has a first-class and sustainable library for the next 30 years, and will safe guard an historic building from closure.

59. The new library at St Mary's will be a fully accessible and flexible space incorporating many of the original building features including the chapel, pews and organ.

60. Meeting and performance space will be created by the Guild of St Mary's on the first floor alongside the Lichfield History Access Point which will give access to digitised archive materials and local and family history resources.

61. During February 2017 the relocation of Lichfield Library was discussed briefly in Parliament. Michael Fabricant MP praised the Library Service's work in Lichfield, suggesting that the county council could be a model of good practice.

62. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Mr Rob Wilson welcomed the approach that has been taken at Lichfield library congratulating Staffordshire County Council on its work. Rob Wilson reaffirmed that local authorities need to think imaginatively about how libraries can deliver their priorities, and stated that the ambition document recently published through the Libraries Taskforce challenges them to do so. He concluded "Standing still is really not an option. I encourage local authorities to embrace change and to be bold in finding solutions, as Staffordshire has done".

Summary

63. The Libraries Transformation programme delivered £1.675m savings however further savings of £1.3m have been identified in the MTFS between 2018/19 – 2020/21

64. Through the transformation programme we learnt the importance of a clear narrative and the need to be transparent and honest with stakeholders and our workforce. Listening and responding to stakeholders enabled us to act collaboratively and lead thoughtfully as we developed and implemented our model.

65. In December 2016 DCMS published Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 (Appendix C).

66. The report advocates a "Libraries First" approach and highlights that libraries support other public services to achieve outcomes that are essential for individuals and communities to flourish (see Figure 7 below[2]).

67. Figure 7

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[2] Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England. DCMS 2016

Libraries deliver

Health & wellbeing
£27.5 million
saving to NHS through
public library services

Digital literacy
26 million hours
of internet access
provided in 2014-15

Reading & literacy
786,547 children
took part in Summer
Reading Challenge
in UK libraries in 2015

Learning
10 million
academic journal
articles provided
free across UK

Communities
224.6 million visits
in 2014/15. More
than visits to Premier
League football
games, the cinema
& the top 10 UK
tourist attractions
combined

Economic growth
£38 million
in added value to UK economy in
2013-15 by Enterprising Libraries

Culture & creativity
£6.6 million
invested in 141 projects through Grants
for the Arts Libraries Fund since 2013

68. Libraries are strong partners in delivering agendas across the public sector, including health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, literacy, life skills and social cohesion.

69. It is essential therefore as we develop a Libraries Strategy for the future that we continue to work with internal and external partners to ensure that not only does the library service remain relevant but that it is sustainable.

Link to Strategic Plan

Enjoying Life

25 - Encourage local people to participate in social and leisure activities that they enjoy by promoting the attractiveness of the County to businesses and residents

25.13, 25.15, 25.16 – Support communities and individuals to take an active role in managing and delivering their local libraries

25.17 – Manage and deliver the statutory library service

25.18 – Plan and deliver the relocation of Newcastle and Lichfield libraries

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

"Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire" has been discussed by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee on:

Part 1 - 19 December 2013
Part 2 - 12 May 2014
Part 3 - 23 January 2015

Contact Officer

Janene Cox OBE - Commissioner for Culture & Communities
Telephone No: 01785 278368
Address/e-mail: janene.cox@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices/Background papers

Cabinet report 18 February 2015 – Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire: Part 3
http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=6555&Ver=4

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England. DCMS 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021

Appendix A – Performance trends