

People and Families/ Place Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Louise McKinlay
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Community, Equality,
Partnerships and Performance

Juliet Pirez
Head of Libraries

11/01/2023

Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026

The story so far

Launched in 2022, the Everyone's Library Service Plan is built on 3 Pillars: Library Service and Literacy; Communications and Infrastructure; and Supporting Our Communities and Levelling Up.

These Pillars provide a clear structure, but also allow for an agile approach enabling Libraries to meet new challenges in ways which support the Plan and -most importantly- everyone in Essex.

The Library Plan reflects the Everyone's Essex Plan. The themes of economy; environment; children and families; and supporting the health, care and wellbeing of all ages can be seen throughout.

I am here today to give you an update on the Library Plan, and to put forward an ambitious motion regarding literacy within Essex.

“Literacy sits at the heart of the levelling up agenda. Improving literacy will improve the opportunities of individuals and communities. It is great to see Essex committing to these priorities and placing libraries at the heart of their strategy. Libraries are lifelong centres of literacy, creating reading communities and of vital importance to the one child in 11 from our most vulnerable communities who don’t own a single book. With their commitment to literacy, Essex Libraries are showing themselves to be community activists and national leaders.”

Jonathan Douglas CBE, Hon FRSL,
Chief Executive, National Literacy Trust

Key themes under the 3 pillars of the Plan include:

Library Service and Literacy

- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing

Communications and Infrastructure

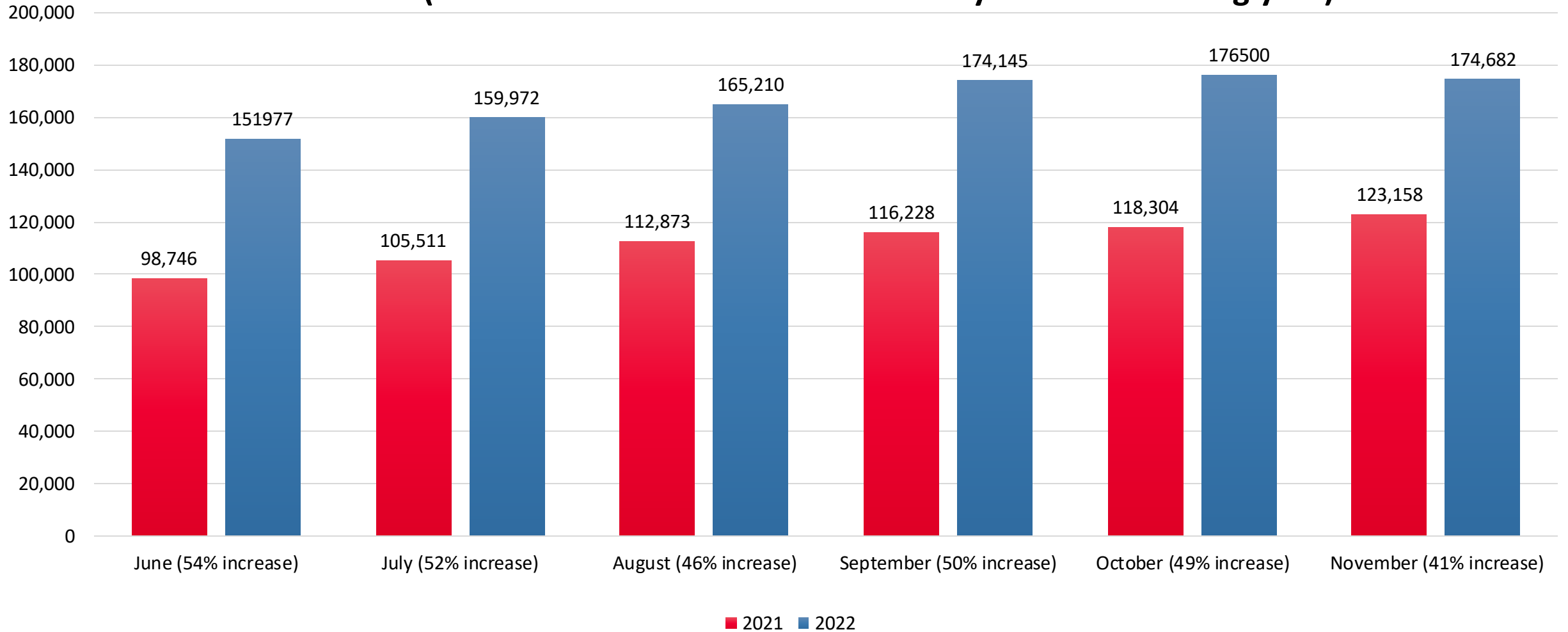
- Improve our communications to existing users and new audiences, to get people involved at a local level
- Improve communications with staff and volunteers
- Develop service outreach
- Improve our buildings and reduce our carbon footprint

Supporting our Communities and Levelling Up

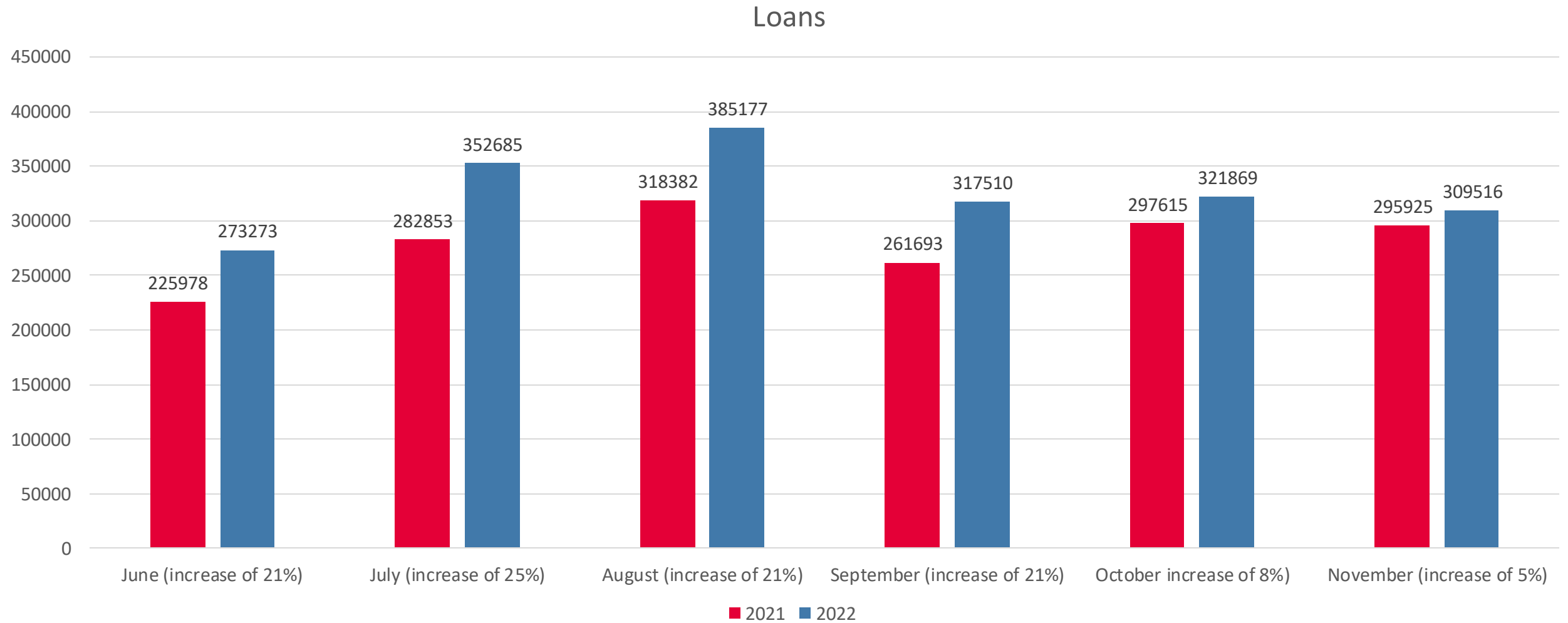
- Ensuring all residents have the same access to the support and skills they need to achieve their aspirations, regardless of where they live.
- Improving opportunities for everyone, locally and countywide.
- Encouraging new users, thinking of new ways to attract them

Increase of active members 2021-2022

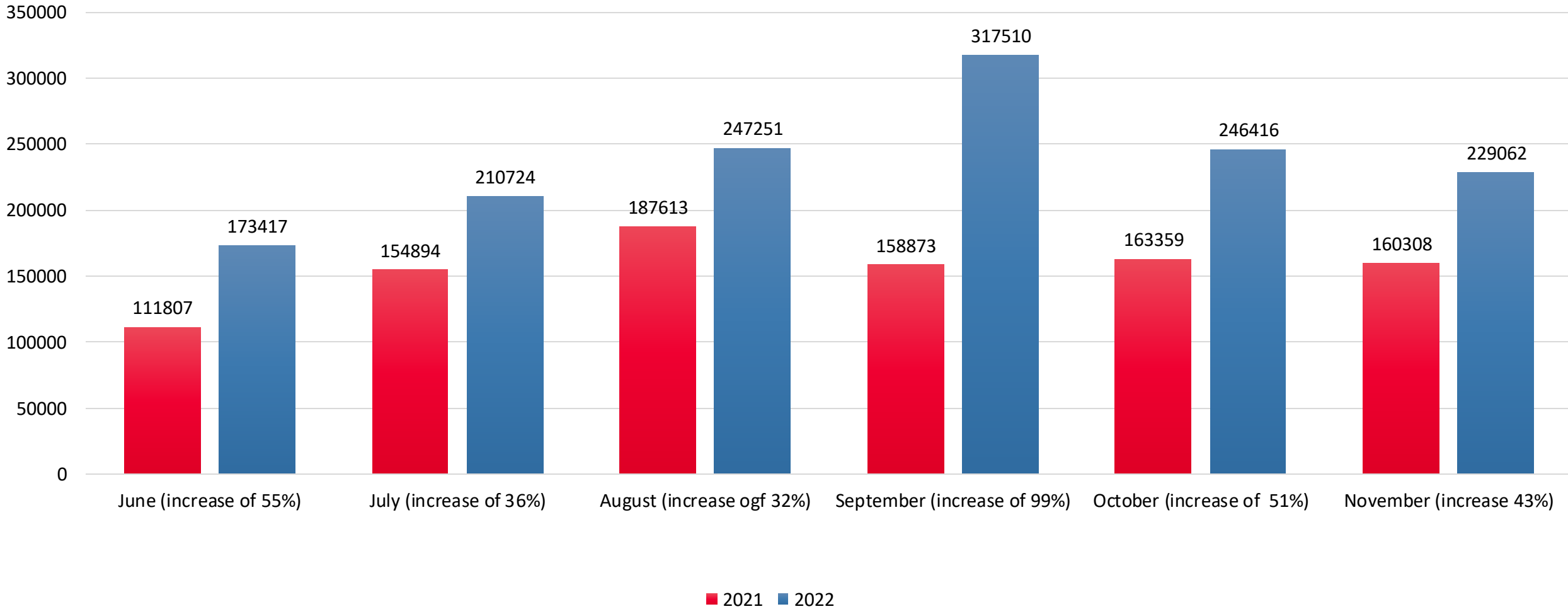
Active members (customers who have used the library in the last rolling year)



Increase in loans 2021-2022



Increase in visits 2021-2022



2022: New Members

Measure	2019	2020	2021	2022 (to end November)
New Members	55,123	15,307	29,474	60,132



Juliet Pirez- Head of Library Service

Our Service Delivery Plan builds on the strengths of the Essex Library Service whilst challenging us to do even more.

We have made good progress on our plan. What follows are examples of ways in which our plan is making a difference to the people of Essex.

- Progress on the plan
- Mobile Outreach Vehicle
- Marketing
- Services for adults



Progress on the Service Delivery Plan

Pillar	Commitment	Example of Activity	Progress vs Service Delivery Plan
1	1. Supporting children and adults to improve their literacy	Creation of Literacy Areas in every library	
1	2. Encouraging people to enjoy reading for pleasure.	Author events across the service	
1	3. Delivering further local and national initiatives and programmes to encourage residents to get reading.	Summer and Winter Reading Challenges	
1	4. Introducing relevant and exciting events and activities that will engage and inspire new and existing library service users.	Author in Residence (start date 16/01/2023)	
1	5. Increasing the range and diversity of online resources.	Introducing Kanopy (film streaming service) and Moshi Kids app (children's mindfulness)	
1	6. Engaging with residents as we shape the service and encourage local promotion of events.	Community involvement in delivering Warm Welcomes (e.g. Basildon CVS)	
1	7. Developing further our volunteering opportunities to expand the additional services we can offer through our libraries.	Health and Digital Literacy Champion volunteer role created, working in partnership with Mid and South Essex NHS Trust	
2	8. Benefitting from a programme of refurbishments to libraries across the county.	Refurbishment of Harlow Library	
2	9. Making use of our updated digital and IT services to improve the customer experience.	Library Service Platform intending to launch end of January 2023	
2	10. Using data and other information to better understand the trends, habits and interests of our library users.	Ongoing work, including the production of different surveys for different types of user	
2	11. Ensuring marketing of our services is dynamic and engaging, using relevant platforms e.g. Instagram.	Over 15,000 downloads of the Library App across Apple and Android devices	
3	12. Providing support and skills to residents to help them achieve their aspirations, regardless of where they live.	Mobile Outreach Vehicle visiting schools, events, targeted groups eg, travellers' sites	
3	13. Forwarding the Levelling Up agenda by targeting new and existing resources to specific areas in order to support families and communities.	Afterschool Welcomes in Harlow, providing tutor-led homework support as well as a meal to pupils (in partnership with ACL)	
3	14. Continuing to work with partners to provide joined up and equal access to additional services.	UK Visa Checking Service in Chelmsford Library	
3	15. Identifying opportunities to use the Library Service to help educate and inform on global subjects such as climate change.	October "Love Your Library" day had an environmental theme, highlighting steps we all can take to protect our environment. 73 libraries took part	

Mobile Outreach Vehicle and Marketing

Since launching in May 2022, our Mobile Outreach Vehicle:

- Has made 27 visits to nurseries and primary schools, and attended 41 community events and parks
- Has had 2,885 visitors, issuing over 500 new library cards
- Has visited a hotel where people seeking asylum from Afghanistan are housed- with more such visits planned



Our marketing has continued to develop, promoting our services in ways which are relevant to existing and potential visitors:

- Over 15,000 downloads of our app (Android and Apple)
- Facebook reach of 1.2m over 12 months
- Internal and external communications plans
- Successful launch and promotion of Warm Welcomes



Library Services for Adults

Library of Sanctuary

- Sourced stock in Ukrainian and various Afghan languages
- Visits to hotels housing asylum seekers from Afghanistan
- Started the process of making every library a Library of Sanctuary

Memory Café/ Dementia Friendly Library Service

- Running in Harwich, expanding to Manningtree and West Clacton. Now running fortnightly due to demand
- Fantastic feedback and community involvement
- Working with Alzheimer's Society to make every library Dementia Friendly



Top left: an example of new stock for customers from Afghanistan

Top right: certificate thanking St Joseph's Primary School, Dovercourt, for their involvement with the Memory Café

Bottom: Christmas fun at the Harwich Memory Café

Pillar 1: Jo Powell

Pillar 1 – Library Service and Literacy - Supporting residents with their learning, development and engagement with reading

Promoting literacy amongst the residents of Essex is at the heart of our offer and underpins everything we do.

- Literacy Areas
- Literacy Support sessions
- National Literacy Trust
- Targeted support for Levelling Up areas and cohorts
- Providing stock relevant to all our communities
- Community Connectors



National Literacy Trust – Essex Stories

Pillar 1: Library Service and Literacy

- Support children to be school ready and helping adults to improve their literacy
- Relevant and exciting events and activities
- Inspire and encourage people to read for pleasure
- Keep our book stock and other resources - digital and online – appealing
- Providing training opportunities for staff volunteers
- Expanding volunteer roles



- Open to all with any children who are of early-years age from 10-11:30am for a rhymetime and other literacy-themed activities
- Open to all who have invested interest in early years education from 11:30-1pm to action plan how we can work together to improve literacy within all levelling-up areas
- Goodybags for child attendees whilst stock last

Headline facts and figures - 2021/22

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1

75%
down from 82% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading TA

67%
down from 75% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in writing TA

58%
down from 69% in 2019

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths TA

68%
down from 76% in 2019

These are the first phonics screening check and key stage 1 attainment statistics since 2019, after assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

“Research has shown that in households where children hear fewer words, their literacy levels at age 5 are lower than those who have been exposed to a higher number of words, which impacts significantly on longer-term literacy and attainment outcomes (e.g. Gilkerson et al., 2017).”

Specific Literacy Support Sessions

Pillar 1: Library Service and Literacy

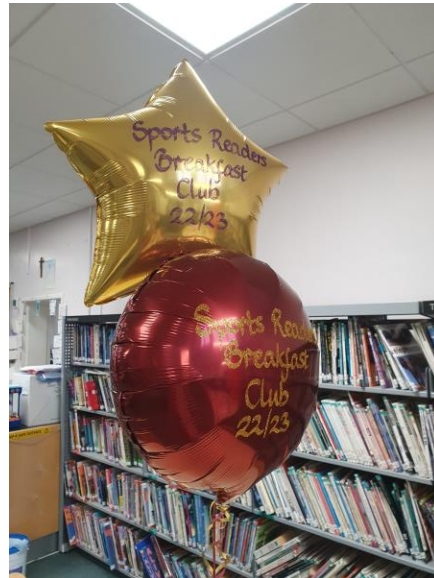
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Reading for pleasure

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World of stories



Supported using public funding by
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Community Connectors

Events attended from launch in
August to mid-December 2022: 60
Customer sign-ups: 332



Pillar 2:

Carolyn Peters

Pillar 2 – Communications and Infrastructure - Making sure our communication is accessible and our buildings are in the right place, modern and sustainable

Ambitious work across our estate is helping to make our libraries even more inviting, providing an enhanced range of services to support our residents whilst protecting the environment.

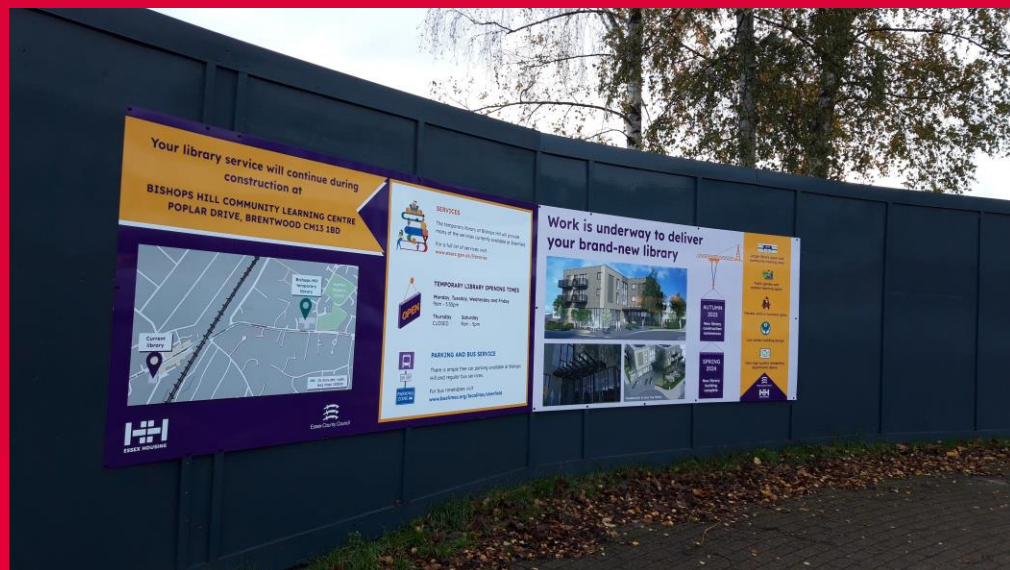
- New buildings and refurbishments
- Improvements to our Public Network system
- Exploring and implementing new ways to use IT
- Effectively marketing our offer to all





Harlow Library is open!

- Shenfield Library temporary relocation to Adult Community Learning (ACL), Bishops Hill, Hutton. Essex Housing Project
- Refurbishment of ACL 'Small Hall' to accommodate temporary public library
- New build has begun with expected completion date around Spring 2024



Pillar 3:

Geoff Pearson

Pillar 3 – Supporting Communities and Levelling Up -
Improving our ties with the community, making the
library invaluable

Our libraries are seen as safe spaces and so our staff, volunteers and partners work together to give residents even more reasons to come in. By providing access to a wide range of information and services we can help to guide our visitors on their journeys.

- Warm Welcomes
- Partnership work- building links with internal and external partners, including from public health organisations
- ACL
- Multiply



Warm Welcomes

Pillar 3 – Supporting our communities and Levelling Up



- Currently 33 Warm Welcome volunteers across the Library Service. They are involved in sign posting customers to organisations that can provide support and advice, having social conversations with those who may be lonely and/or vulnerable, explaining all the activities and events that take place in libraries and making refreshments.
- Staff have received Fuel Poverty training – provided by CAB
- Staff can signpost customers to local organisations and groups if support is required. Many of these organisations are using the library to speak to customers.
- Warm Welcome noticeboards in libraries to signpost people to help and support
- Activities, crafts, jigsaws, puzzles and newspapers are available for free in libraries along with free wifi, computers so customers can be occupied while keeping warm
- Increase in numbers for attending activities such as community teas. Discovered this is not only to keep warm but also people who are feeling isolated at home in the cold winter months.



Warm Welcome Feedback

We've noticed our regular customers who pop in for books are actually staying in the warmth of the library for longer and longer

Hadleigh library staff

Just what I needed as I'm having problems with my heating at home

Stansted library customer

It's great to study somewhere warm

Student at Burnham –on- Crouch library

It's lovely and warm in here. I like the fact there are puzzles and newspapers too

Rayleigh library customer

I appreciate the warm library and being out of the cold

Great Tarpots library customer

Thank you for the warm drinks, it has made such a difference,

Pitsea library customer

Thank you for everything you are doing to help us during the cold

Greenstead library customer

Thank you for the warm library and great wifi

Student using Sible Hedingham library

What a great idea the Warm Welcome initiative is. I'll spread the word in the community

Galleywood library customer

Partnership Work

NHS:

- Digital Health and Literacy Volunteers (Mid and South Essex Trust)
- Working with mental health employment services (Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust)

HSBC:

- “Always on” webinars, available via HSBC website

UKPN:

- Targeted activity in Levelling Up areas

Active Essex:

- Seated yoga classes, West Clacton (expanding in new year)
- Planters, compost, seeds given to libraries for community use
- Funding to support Geotech/ Lego STEM activities

ECC Employment and Skills Team, ECC Working Group on Domestic Abuse, ECC Cost of Living Strategy Board, Digital Inclusion

- Working together to make the difference

Libraries and Public Health meeting, 13/12/2022

- Brought multiple partners together



Above: Some of the NHS organisations we are working with

Partnership working in action

ACL:

- Shared spaces- Harlow, Shenfield
- Upcoming Skills Hub in Chelmsford Library
- Regular Library/ ACL meetings to report on joined projects supporting adult reading, wellbeing courses, Work Clubs and HMP Chelmsford
- Afterschool Welcomes, Harlow
- Apprenticeships within libraries
- Working together on sustainability



Support for Ex-Offenders

- Enjoy the opportunity to network with other agencies and find out what we have to offer within the Library Service.
- Presentations from Essex Library Service, Adult



Multiply:



- Enable East (part of Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) will be delivering sessions within some of our libraries, particularly targeting Levelling Up areas
- The Library Service is in the process of bidding to deliver Multiply in a variety of ways supporting adult numeracy

Looking Ahead – over the next 12 months

- Leading the way with literacy” - a pledge to ensure every resident has the access and opportunity to improve their literacy
- Developing outreach work – taking literacy and books out to the community
- Working with adults and parents to develop and support literacy levels
- Expanding and developing our Family School Readiness programme
- Building on the success of our Summer and Winter Reading Challenge
- Continuing to refurbish and modernise library buildings and facilities eg modern heating facilities that are environmentally friendly, enhance staff areas eg toilets, improve meeting rooms
- Continuing to build up partnership and collaborative space opportunities eg work with the NHS, Foster team, Active Essex, etc
- Growing our access to a wide range of service offers – eg Multiply, homework clubs, supporting targeted groups
- Review the skills of the workforce – to ensure the service has the right skill set to deliver and grow the service
- Improve technology through more staff tablets, IT skills hub at Chelmsford Library, wifi printing solution

Questions?