Appendix 1:

Other Local Authority Themes and the Essex Libraries Consultation

Themes

Essex is not alone in investing in its libraries to ensure their future sustainability. Many library authorities across the country are improving their libraries and there are some common themes:

- Creating modern, light, vibrant facilities that are genuinely inviting to the whole community (such as [Eye Library](#) in Suffolk, which recently moved from an old pre-fab location to a purpose built facility in a previously dilapidated building)
- Introducing a fresh, contemporary colour scheme, reflecting current needs and allowing for future changes (such as Edwinstone Library, Nottinghamshire, which has doubled the number of new users and increased visits by 20% since a completely new design and furniture was installed)
- Reaching and attracting new audiences and users (such as [Rugby Library](#) where a new Makerspace has been included in their redesign)
- Working with partners to maximise use of the space and generate income (such as Hove Library in Brighton and Hove, which has invited in partners and charities to raise revenue)
- Helping users develop new skills (such as [Fleet Library](#) in Hampshire which has invested in technology to teach coding)
- Redesigning the space to make traditional library fixtures such as self-service machines and shelving more flexible and less intrusive (such as Milton Keynes Library which has completely revamped its entrance and foyer)
- Taking into account those with additional needs, such as autism, dementia or learning difficulties (such as Dartford Library in Kent where a purpose-built space has been created to teach life skills to adults with learning difficulties).
- Using flexible spaces, to accommodate:
  - Coffee mornings to address loneliness such as Birmingham Council.
  - Provide after school facilities for children such as homework clubs in Islington or a Kitchen Social club, at Sutton library which provides study support and activities plus a meal for children who are entitled to free school meals.
  - Working with adult social care and children's services to provide sessions for families and older people such as the baby-weighing clinics and Older Day Care sessions run by Hampshire Libraries.

Essex Libraries Consultation

Many of these themes also reflect what Essex residents want to see in their libraries. In two recent pieces of customer engagement carried out by Essex Libraries (public research in 2018 and in the consultation on the draft Future Library Services Strategy in 2018/19), some of the comments respondents made in respect of their libraries were:

- To be better designed and delivered to meet their needs.

- To be for multi-purpose use, e.g. offering a mixture of quiet study areas and community use spaces
- To have spaces for young people to study, reading, games and chilling out.
- To have more digital provision
- To be accessible to disabled users, wheelchair users and those with special needs, e.g. to provide accessible toilets/ baby changing facilities
- To be more attractive to children
- To have sensory areas
- To have a play area/ shop space to enable income generation.

Some individual responses when asked what they wanted to see from their libraries were:

- *'Libraries were a source of info and books in the past but need to reinvent to a modern and connected world and be a gateway for many to connect, both in a modern way and a traditional way.'*
- *'Invest, invest, invest! So much potential which would change the whole area if appeal and focus could be broadened out.'*
- *'They may need to diversify further, to offer more services if it means to keep going.'*
- *'...should develop and modernise becoming a community hub.'*

We already have some examples of good practice in Essex. In March 2018, Chelmsford Library completed a refurbishment of its children's library

- An innovative, integrated children's library and family hub space was created where parents, carers, children and young people have access to family health and wellbeing support; children's literacy, cultural awareness and digital skills.
- Families take part in cultural and learning activities in an exciting, state of the art, library space, designed to meet their needs and inspire their imagination.
- Features chosen include soft colours that are calming for children, wipe clean flooring, dimmable lighting and autism-friendly features, a performance area with staging, a new sensory wall and a chill out corner. It has a private meeting room, a sink and an accessible toilet with nappy changing facilities. There is an interactive floor and cosy reading areas among the shelving.

References and Full stories:

- Edwinstone Library: https://www.fglibrary.co.uk/storage/user/Case%20Studies/Public/Edwinstowe/Edwinstowe%20Library%20v1.pdf
- Essex Libraries Consultation: https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingP

ublic/mid/410/Meeting/4320/Committee/36/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3T8t7FdMVxrKcxxemAvYcTq_IWGQuvpdmfCU108QzNRTzq9lTcLZE7vvM

- Hove Library:
https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/libraries/hove-library-developments

- Milton Keynes: http://designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1512

- Dartford Library: https://www.scapegroup.co.uk/case-studies/dartford-library-1 & http://designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1367

- Birmingham: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/blog/library-news/post/255/library-services-at-home-helping-to-combat-loneliness

- Islington:
https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/service.page?id=OcsXmOETEg8

- Sutton: https://www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/kitchen-social/about/

- Hampshire:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/events/libraryevents-eventsearch/child-health-leigh-park-19dec?date=201910311230

What other Local Authorities have done?

Rugby Library

As part of the Warwickshire Framework agreement The Design Concept fitted out Rugby Library and introduced a Makerspace.

Description

The aim of Warwickshire County Council was to encourage a wider audience to participate in library use and to increase the use of available resources. The brief called for an exciting and innovative solution to the provision of internal design and fit out to create a Makerspace as well as designing the entire library space including the main entrance, and activities room, children's library and mezzanine space.

The space was to be designed to be flexible, welcoming, customer friendly and approachable.

The design concept rose to the challenge. The new space has clearly defined zones for quiet reading, soft seating areas to encourage social/ relaxing visits, while a bright children's space with cocoon seating, character chairs, mobile shelving and book storage is always busy with curious and playful children.

The mezzanine area is a study haven with PC banks and 'bring your own device' facilities. A branded Makerspace provides the community with access to cutting-edge technology and equipment designed to encourage new ways of thinking and boost creativity.

Opening to the public in October 2018 the library and makerspace has received amazing feedback and the space is constantly filled with users of all ages and abilities.

References and Full stories:

- https://thedesignconcept.co.uk/project/united-kingdom/rugby/rugby-library-and-makerspace-united-kingdom/pr/27317
- http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk/?PageID=1620

Hove Library

Description

Visitor numbers were up to 35,919 in November 2018 and December 2018, nearly 10% higher than the equivalent months in 2017.

Hove Library is a much-loved historic building, but the age and design of the building makes it expensive to run.

Funding from central government is reducing each year and all council services, including libraries, need to change how they deliver services to save money.

To continue providing a modern library service that the public use and love from Hove Library's building, we needed to find new ways of generating income to help cover the costs.

In early 2017, they held a public exhibition to gauge support for a number of potential new public and commercial spaces in Hove Library, and the majority of respondents were positive about the proposals.

The first stage in developing these new areas was setting up a new study space for British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM) on the first floor in spring 2017.

In summer last year, internal refurbishment and alterations were made to free up the basement to accommodate a nursery and provide space for a community café on the ground floor.

The work also involved installing new ICT equipment and extra shelving to replace that lost elsewhere. The amount of shelving space for books and other stock in the library remains as it was before the refurbishment.

The total cost to the council of the refurbishment work was £87,958.

The library service is working with new partners to make the most of the educational and cultural facilities of Hove Library to reach new audiences and attract new users. These partnerships also bring in much needed income to help support library services and to ensure the long-term sustainability of running library services in the current building.

References and Full stories:

- https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2019/visitor-numbers-hove-library
- https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2018/planning-future-hove-library

Eye Library, Suffolk

"The use of colour showcases a modern, vibrant facility to form a focal point for Eye, rejuvenating Cross Street by making use of a site occupied by an unattractive, dilapidated office building. The vaulted ceiling in the internal library area creates a light and inviting space which offers itself to becoming flexible as a resource centre for the benefit of Eye and the wider community."

Description
The new library has wheeled shelving which can be moved aside to create more space for events and activities. It also offers accessible toilet facilities and an interactive information screen and a hireable meeting room. Like all of Suffolk's libraries, it will offer a range of books, DVDs and other items, activities for children and families, free wifi and internet access, printing facilities and information about the local area. The furnishing was installed by FG Library & Learning who delivered:

- An improved layout with better access for wheelchair users and parents with buggies
- A flexible space with shelving on castors and other furniture able to be easily reconfigured to suit a variety of events
- Shelving with Wow end panels and display wedges for book promotion
- Stock capacity at least equal to the previous library
- A new DDA compliant staff counter with sitting and standing height sections suited to modern practices
- A modern colour scheme to help promote well-being and aid users living with autism or dementia
- A fully revamped Children's area with feature StoryWall (including shelving, display, storage and a Seating Cave suitable for children and parents to read together) a bespoke seating/kinderbox, woodland theme with applied graphics and themed seating/rug.
- Shelving and furniture of a quality commensurate with the finish of the new building

References and Full stories:

- http://designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1581

Milton Keynes Central Library

Description

Refurbishment of the foyer at Central Library was intended to modernise the area and provide an additional seating/study area, refreshment area/vending machines, new flooring, public toilets, an additional meeting room (for hire) and more appropriate self-service kiosks.

- The heavy, permanent housing for self-service technology and the staff desk were removed.
- Updated vending/coffee machines were added.
- A study/meeting space was delineated using wooden flooring and power points were added.
- Standalone self-service kiosks were installed which are less intrusive to the space and sit against a wall rather than in the middle of the room.
- New flooring was installed (carpets/wooden) and this extended up to the half landing display area.
- New public toilets were installed, accessible from the foyer.
- A room directly behind the foyer was transformed into a fourth meeting room, available for hire by the public.
- Mobile shelving units were installed to provide a variety of 'Quick Choice' last minute treats for borrowers.
- A new staff pedestal was installed rather than a large desk, encouraging staff and visitors to mingle and self-serve.
- New signage and map of the city installed for public information.
- Improved heating system was installed to ensure the area remains warm and welcoming.

References and Full stories

- http://designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1512
- https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/libraries/about-libraries/updates

Fleet Library

Description

The ground floor has been refurbished and there have been partial works to the first floor, including self-service technology for books, magazines, audio books and all other item borrowing. A new accessible toilet has been installed on the ground floor and a new entrance built as customers could previously access the library only via The Harlington Centre. The ground floor refurbishment also includes a brand new 'Makery' space kitted out with IT, coding tools and equipment to help customers develop new skills which will make them more digitally aware and confident in using new technology. The Makery offers the environment and facilities for technical play and digital application, with courses to launch in the near future for curious minds young and old.

Special services:

- Audio-visual/multimedia areas
- Exhibition/display areas
- Group study spaces
- Provision of special materials
- Services to particular groups
- Sound and image processing facilities
- Specialist subject collections
- Meeting rooms
- Open learning provision

References and Full stories

- http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1454