

# Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of Shipley Area Committee to be held on 17 January 2024

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## Subject:

Overview of Bradford Libraries, with particular focus on the work of libraries in the Shipley Area.

## Summary statement:

This report provides a brief overview of the work of Bradford Libraries Service. It summarises overall developments in the Service, as well as more detailed information about libraries in the Shipley area.

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Bradford Libraries contribute to the 'Community' theme of the Council's equalities objectives, taking 'Action to support the creation of a place where everyone feels that they belong, are understood, feel safe and are able to fully participate in and contribute to the economic, social and civic life of the district.' By developing access to more services in libraries, local people will benefit from this more local support. It also contributes to the 'Service Design' theme of the Council's equalities objectives, 'Ensuring that our services are designed in an accessible and an inclusive way including co-production with local people and organisations.' This principle is demonstrated in our work with Community Managed Libraries and with a wide range of internal and external partners.

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## Portfolio:

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## Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Healthy People & Places

## 1. SUMMARY

This report provides a brief overview of Bradford Libraries Service and developments across the Service over the past 12 months. It also provides an update on each of the libraries in the Shipley area. A more detailed update on Bradford Libraries service was presented to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Regeneration & Environment on 5 December 2023 and can be found on the Council's website.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF BRADFORD LIBRARIES SERVICE

The Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries Act of 1964 to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for anyone that wishes to use it who lives, works or studies in the district. In financial year 2022-23 Bradford Libraries served 734,859 visitors, issued 601,347 items, hosted 64,008 sessions on public PCs, enrolled 15,026 new members, and provided more than 3000 events attended by 21,583 children and 20,193 adults.

Bradford Libraries Service is delivered through 27 libraries across the district: 10 Council run libraries (City, Keighley, Shipley, Bingley, Eccleshill, Ilkley, Laisterdyke, Manningham, Wibsey and Wyke), 15 community managed libraries (Addingham, Allerton, Bolling, Burley, Denholme, Great Horton, Heaton, Holme Wood, Idle, Menston, Queensbury, Silsden, Thornbury, Thornton, Wilsden), and 2 'hybrid' libraries (Baildon and Clayton) which are community managed supported with one paid member of Council staff.

There is also a Home Library Service which visits some 200 housebound customers across the district who are unable to visit a library, and two Local Studies Libraries (in Bradford and Keighley) which collect and provide information in a wide range of formats (books, documents, newspapers, photographs, maps etc.) about the local area.

In March 2020, the Council's Executive agreed a new vision and model for the Library Service, following a comprehensive review of the service during 2019 as part of a requirement to reduce the library service budget by more than £1M. A summary of the vision and model is given at Appendix A.

## 3. SHIPLEY AREA LIBRARIES

There are 5 libraries in the Shipley Area – in Shipley, Bingley, Baildon, Denholme and Wilsden. These are managed and overseen by an Area Manager reporting to the District Libraries Manager. This alignment between managerial posts and the 5 constituency areas was the result of a management staff remodelling which took effect from April 2023.

- 3.1 **Shipley Library** is well located in the centre of Shipley, adjacent to Asda, with public transport and plenty of public parking nearby. It is the third busiest Council library in the district (following City and Keighley libraries) with more

than 80,000 visitors in 2022/3 and is the hub library for the Shipley Area. It was our highest lending library that year with 61,607 loans. It has 2 meeting rooms available to be used by local community groups and due to good level access is well used. It has a small collection of local history items.

Recent highlights at Shipley have included:

- the redevelopment of the library garden, with the valuable assistance of a variety of partners including Shipley Town Council, NEET and the Kirkgate Gardening Club who have provided funding and volunteer support to upgrade the garden area for public use. The garden was used for events such as wreath making, potting plants, displays from support groups in the area and a green space for customers to sit and enjoy whilst reading
- the launch of the Shipley Enterprise Hub in the remodelled former exhibition space, funded by Shipley Towns Fund. The Hub will provide support to entrepreneurs and new businesses, with access to a specialist business database and book stock, a dedicated advisor, 1:1s, co-working and live streamed events.
- Shipley Memories project with the Neighbourhood's Team, which aims to bring people together to help with social exclusion to collect tales of Shipley in the past, they hope to be able to publish these in the future.

The library also accommodates the Library Service's stock and distribution centre, which is the 'engine room' of the service and organises the cataloguing, processing and distribution of stock and supplies across the library network. Over the coming year it is planned to replace the two current delivery vans with electric vehicles and install an EV charging point.

### 3.2 **Bingley Library**

Bingley Library is well located within the 5 Rise Shopping Centre in the heart of the town. In 2022-3 the library served 46,577 visitors and issued 48,565 items. The library was fully refurbished in 2008. Recent highlights at Bingley include:

- Investment as part of the Arts Council England funded *Libraries as Locality Hubs* project, which enabled a new layout to be created and the purchase of additional furniture and equipment. This has enabled the creation of a small meeting room and flexible space which can be opened up to accommodate larger meetings, activities and events. Refreshment facilities for events have also been enhanced.
- Regular use made of the library by Councillor Susan Fricker to have space to hold Councillor Surgeries, to be available for local constituents to raise any concerns.
- Bingley holds regular Story times and Rhyme times. Recently the library hosted school class visits to introduce children to the library and become a member. Bingley has held two Music days with the support of Bingley Music town group, which has been very successful.
- Contact has been made to be able to use the library outside of our opening hours by a local ukulele beginners group.

Unfortunately, Bingley Library suffers from regular bouts of anti-social behaviour. As a result, the Service has had to employ security guards during the year to support and protect staff and customers, at an additional cost to the service.

### **3.3 Baildon Library**

In September 2022, Baildon Library moved out of Ian Clough Hall into temporary premises – an ex-shop unit in the centre of town, adjacent to a bus stop. The Ian Clough Hall was no longer fit for purpose and is being sold for redevelopment. The Council has purchased the former Social Club in the centre of Baildon for the purpose of re-providing the permanent library. The building has now been stripped out ready for refit, however this process has revealed more extensive remedial works required than had been anticipated. The increased cost of the scheme is under review as part of the Council's current overall financial review.

The library shares the premises with Baildon Town Council, which takes joint responsibility for running the service as a 'hybrid' library. The Town Council employs a Volunteer Co-ordinator who recruits and manages the volunteers, whilst the Council provides one paid member of staff. During 2022-3 the library served 12,412 visitors and loaned 7573 items.

As there is insufficient space in the temporary library for activities and events, currently local community venues are used for regular rhyme times and story times in different parts of Baildon to promote the library and make sure that children have the opportunity to access books and be part of the summer reading scheme.

### **3.4 Denholme Library**

Denholme Library is one of the smallest of the community managed libraries across the district, open just 4 hours per week. It is based in the old Mechanics Institute building in the village. In 2022/3 it served 981 visitors and loaned 411 items.

### **3.5 Wilsden Library**

Wilsden Library is a community managed library, open 7 hours per week. In 2022/3 it served 1464 visitors and loaned 259 items.

## **4. SERVICE WIDE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **4.1 A bumper year for participation**

2022-3 saw very high levels of participation in activities and events in libraries, significantly above pre-pandemic levels, which demonstrates the impact that the new vision and model for the Service has delivered. 21,583 children attended children's activities -15% higher than in 2019/20, and 20,193 adults attended adult's activities - 31% higher.

The annual [Summer Reading Challenge](#) in 2023 was also a great success: 3,049 children took part (a 93% increase on last year), more than 72,645 books were borrowed during the Challenge (20,000 more than last year) and 837 children became new members of the library. 1,608 children completed the challenge (an increase of 10% on last year) by reading six or more books over the summer period and received certificates and medals to celebrate.

And more than 5000 children took part in our annual [Rhyme Challenge](#) in which parents are encouraged to teach their child to learn 5 rhymes. This received extremely positive feedback, with 98% of parents saying it had improved their child's speech and language. 240 childcare settings got involved, as well as libraries across the district.

#### 4.2 **Libraries as Warm Spaces**

During Winter 2022/3 (October – March), all Council libraries (and many Community Managed Libraries) registered as '[Warm Spaces](#)' offering a warm and welcoming place to gather for free, with a hot drink and the opportunity for a chat and to take part in activities including reading, jigsaws, games etc. Funding to offer hot drinks, more easy seating and board games was provided as part of the Household Support Fund. Across all Council libraries there were 33,448 recorded uses of the Warm Spaces offer, with Bingley Library staff commenting on one gentleman: "today he was particularly cold at home and said being able to come here where it is warm and have a hot drink and soup, whilst reading the paper, has really helped - not having to warm the house for as long."

#### 4.3 **Opening hours review**

During August – September 2023, public consultation was carried out on proposals to change library opening hours with a view to reducing the number of evening sessions. Data analysis had revealed that evening sessions were underused in libraries across the district, and that Bradford Libraries was offering a generous amount of evening opening compared to library services elsewhere. Since a restructure in 2019, the service was struggling with capacity to meet these opening hours, resulting in a high number of ad hoc temporary library closures. 76% of respondents to the survey agreed with the proposals, and the changes were implemented from 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Shipley and Bingley Libraries both reduced from 5 evenings per week to 2 evenings per week.

#### 4.4 **Self-service upgrade**

During December 2023 a new self-service kiosk was installed in Shipley Library for testing, ahead of the roll out of the new kiosks across all 10 Council libraries during January 2024. As well as offering improved functionality including on-screen promotions, the kiosks will offer the ability to pay charges using chip and pin technology. The Service has bid for external funding to provide wifi enabled printing which, if successful, will integrate with self-service payment at the kiosks. This is expected to be a popular service judging by feedback received from a public consultation on IT in libraries, carried out earlier this year.

#### 4.5 **150<sup>th</sup> anniversary book**

2022 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year for Bradford Libraries, and was celebrated with special promotional materials, a children's library card design competition, and an anniversary event. Now, a new illustrated book telling the story of Bradford Libraries, *150 years of Bradford free libraries 1872-2022* by Bob Duckett (former librarian), has been published by Bradford Libraries and was launched on 6th December 2023. Copies are available for loan from Bradford libraries and for sale.

### 5. **FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

There are no specific financial or resource issues to highlight for libraries in the Shipley Area. For the Library Service as a whole there remains a c£400k pressure from unachievable savings and rising costs, which is being dealt with as part of the Council's current financial review.

### 6. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

No significant risks have been identified.

### 7. **LEGAL APPRAISAL**

No legal risks have been identified.

### 8. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### 9. **AREA COMMITTEE LOCALITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Library managers have been involved in the development of the Shipley Area Locality Action Plan and are committed to libraries contributing to the priorities of the local area as appropriate. There is great scope for libraries to contribute in the Shipley Area, for example to be a local space for events and activities, groups to meet such as the new Shipley tales group. With support of the Shipley Town Council the library is the only location within Shipley to have a defibrillator available in emergencies.

### 10. **NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

### 11. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended to note and comment on the report.

### 12. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Libraries Update report to Regeneration & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023:

<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=402&MId=8133&Ver=4> (item 5)