

# Beyond our walls

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN  
LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2022-2026



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Child using Virtual Reality headset



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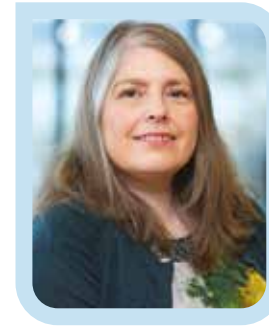
# Foreword



**Frank Curran**  
*Chief Executive*



**Cllr. Mary Hanafin**  
*Cathaoirleach*



**Catherine Gallagher**  
*County Librarian*

We are delighted to publish the Library Development Plan 2022-2026 that sets out the priorities for the development of the library services in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown for the next five years. The Plan is an ambitious one and will provide a platform for the library service to respond to the changing needs of our communities. It will also ensure that we continue to maintain, expand and develop our library spaces and services.

The Library Development Plan 2022-2026 is built on the significant achievements of our previous Library Development plans. Its ambition is informed through extensive and wide-ranging public consultation.

It emerged from the consultation that respondents were of the view that library service is the backbone of their community and respondents were keenly aware of the value of their library space and its staff. A love of reading, opportunities for literacy and numeracy skills development, lifelong learning and the provision of information rated very highly among respondents. The role of libraries in supporting environmental responsibility was also noted and the commitment to extend existing collections and event programming to include the neurodivergent and those with disabilities. Many who took part in the consultation process acknowledged the value of supporting cultural and creative pursuits through the library service and how they not only enrich individual quality of life but also enhance a sense of belonging and of community.

At the heart of this Library Development Plan is our vision for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown libraries as a progressive, innovative and vibrant library service that is inclusive and accessible to all communities within the County ensuring a high

standard of customer service delivery. This will provide opportunities for all of us to connect, collaborate, create and learn.

The Library Development Plan will prioritise its work around three themes:

- Access
- Inclusion
- Service delivery.

These themes are underpinned by four goals that will shape the library services future direction. They are:

- Connecting with our communities
- Collaborating with our partners
- Creating reading, learning, creative and cultural opportunities for all
- Consolidation of our library spaces and services.

The Plan was developed during the pandemic and outlines how the service adapted to those challenges particularly around the areas of accessibility, inclusion, hybrid event programming and digital literacy. This has delivered new creative engagement initiatives in relation to for example older people, children and young people and those with diverse needs.

The Library Development Plan 2022-2026 provides great opportunities for everyone to access our libraries and enables inclusion, participation and creative expression that improves quality of life for all of our communities.

We would like to thank and acknowledge all those who have contributed to the preparation of the plan. We look forward to working with all of our partners and communities to bring this plan to fruition.

# Executive summary

dIrl Library Development Plan 2022-2026 sets out the priorities for the development of the library services in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown for the next five years, responding to the changing needs of our communities. This plan will ensure that we continue to maintain and develop our library spaces and services.

We will focus on access, inclusion and service delivery. These themes underpin our four goals which will direct and shape the actions for our library service:

**1** Connecting with our communities

**2** Collaborating with our partners

**3** Creating reading, learning, creative and cultural opportunities for all

**4** Consolidating our library spaces and services

Our plan has been informed by the views of our public and our other stakeholders. We are very grateful for their contribution, and we also thank the dIrl Community, Culture and Wellbeing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).



# Introduction

## *What is this plan?*

This plan sets out the priorities for the development of our library services for the next five years. It will guide the management and programming of dlr Libraries and their engagement with their communities and partners.

## *Who is this plan for?*

This plan is for all the people and communities within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County, and everyone else interested in dlr library services.

## *How we developed this plan*

Following an assessment of our previous plans, we carried out a comprehensive process of engagement and consultation with our audiences and stakeholders.

## *Our plan in context*

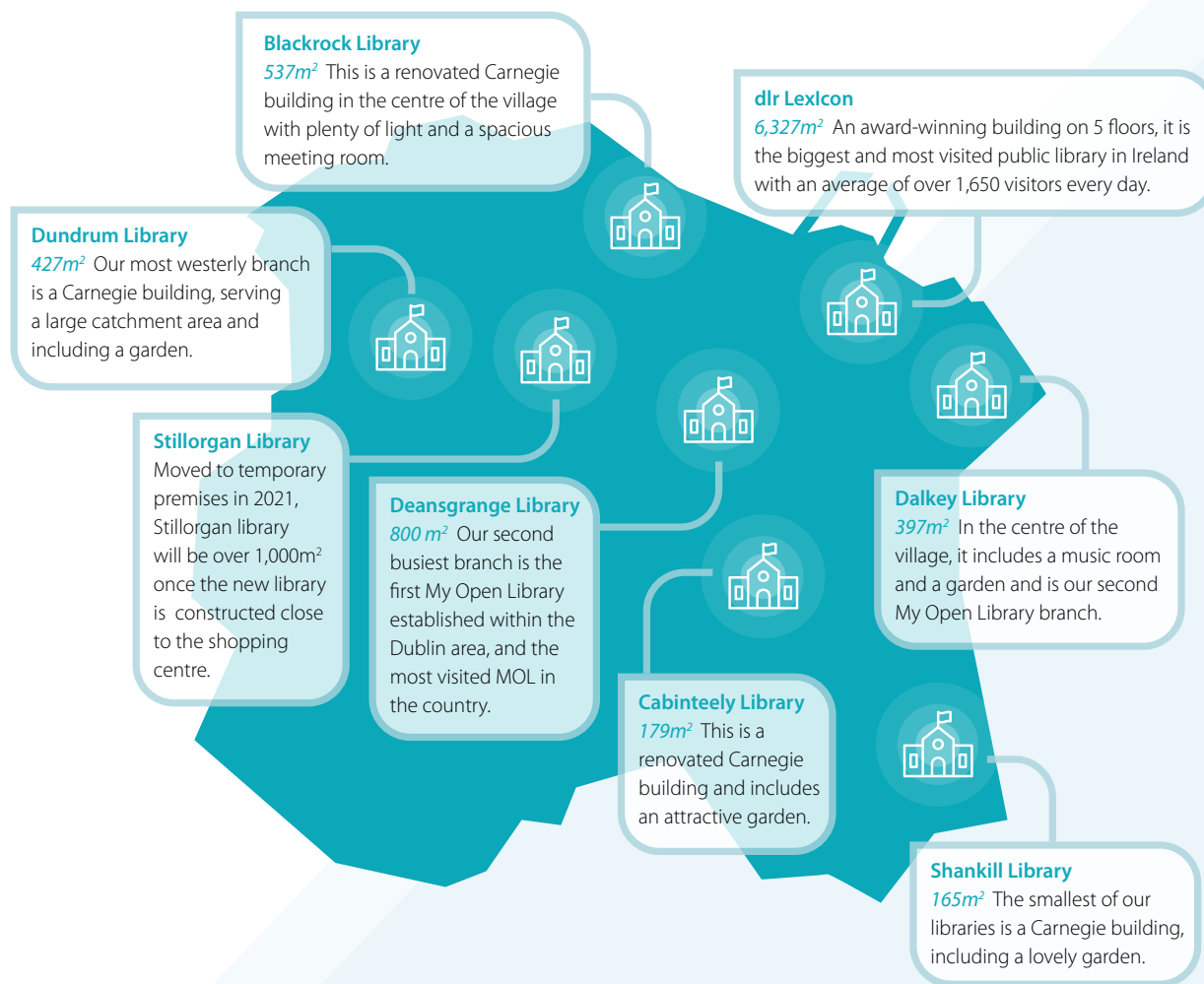
This plan builds on the work of **dlr Library Development Plan 2016-2020** and our previous dlr library development plans.

At the heart of our plan is the **dlr Corporate Plan 2020-2024**, whose vision is to 'create a progressive, vibrant county that is attractive, inclusive and accessible, with connected communities in a clean environment, underpinned by a strong economy for all'. It also draws on the key principles of the Public Library Strategy, **Our Public Libraries 2022**, which focuses on improving access, use and visibility of the public library service and establishing the service as the go-to place for a range of sustainable integrated public services.



# Our services

dlr Libraries play an important role in the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of our county. We form a key part of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Our eight branch libraries are a central hub and meeting place for our communities. Our libraries are open to the public for a total of 382 hours per week, including My Open Library hours— one of the most comprehensive public library services in Ireland.



- We provide access to safe, vibrant and stimulating communal spaces, where adults and children can meet, learn, share, and co-create.
- We are committed to ensuring social inclusion, diversity and access to our resources for our communities.
- We support reading, literacy, personal development and lifelong learning.
- We provide the technological capacity and resources to improve our library users' experience and to bridge the digital divide.
- We curate and coordinate a rich and varied programme of events to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone who visits our libraries.
- We work collaboratively with a range of partners to implement key national programmes at local level.
- We provide cultural and outreach programmes to empower communities, enable community cohesion, nurture resilience and reduce isolation and loneliness.
- We support innovation and creativity and develop and showcase the County's cultural identity.

# A day in our libraries



# The Community we serve

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County covers an area of only 125 km<sup>2</sup>. Located between the outer suburbs of Dublin City and the Dublin mountains, the county includes 17 km of coastline, harbour, attractive towns and villages where residents and visitors enjoy some of the best natural amenities in Ireland. It also has the benefit of unparalleled access to public transport, employment opportunities, leisure facilities, education, shopping and an attractive public realm. It is a smart, vibrant county; attractive, inclusive and accessible to all.



Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is home to **18.6%** of the population of Dublin, with a population of over **218,000** as per 2016 Census.



It is the county with the oldest population, with the majority of the County's residents over 35 years old (**55%**) and the number of retired people in dlr increasing by **18%** since 2011.



While most people living in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are Irish (**87.5%**), the area is multicultural. Other nationalities include British (**2%**); Polish (**1.5%**); the EU (**3.8%**); Rest of World (**4.2%**) and not stated (**1%**).





# Our progress:2016-2020

## Key achievements

- With **382 hours** service per week, we grew our membership with **25%** dlr population now library users

- In 2019, Deansgrange Library became the **first library** to offer the My Open Library service in the Dublin area, offering free access to library users **365 days** a year from 8am to 10pm



- Increased our book collection to **340,267** items with **€3.21 per capita spent on stock: the 2nd highest** in Ireland

- Free access to **60** online languages and **500** e-Learning courses



- Over **1,135,400** items borrowed each year

- Over **1,100,000** visitors each year

- **9,867** programmed events with audiences totalling **247,867** across all our branches

- Developed exhibition programme across our branches



- Coordinated the **Creative Ireland Programme 2020** with over **50 projects**

- Pioneered **autism friendly** collections and spaces in our libraries

- Developed the **dlr library app**, allowing quick access to stock and check out of items from your own phone

- Awarded a Chambers Ireland **Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020** with the publication of *Divine Illumination - Oratory of the Sacred Heart*

- Collection of sensory toys



- Appointed **Curator archivist** to drive digitisation of collections and a Local Studies Plan

- **Transforming music education** with dlr Music Generation



- dlr Lexicon library: **most popular public library** with **over 1,650** visitors every day

# 2020-2021: Adapting to the Covid challenge

Our library service was to the fore in participating in the Community Call initiative that operated throughout the pandemic. We joined with our Community Department colleagues and local volunteers to support the most vulnerable in our communities. Working with staff from other Council departments highlighted our interdependencies and provided library staff with an enhanced understanding of the operational challenges faced by colleagues. An innovative system for logging calls for assistance was developed by dlr County Council.

The joy of the wonderful books freely delivered to my home keeps me sane and content at home.

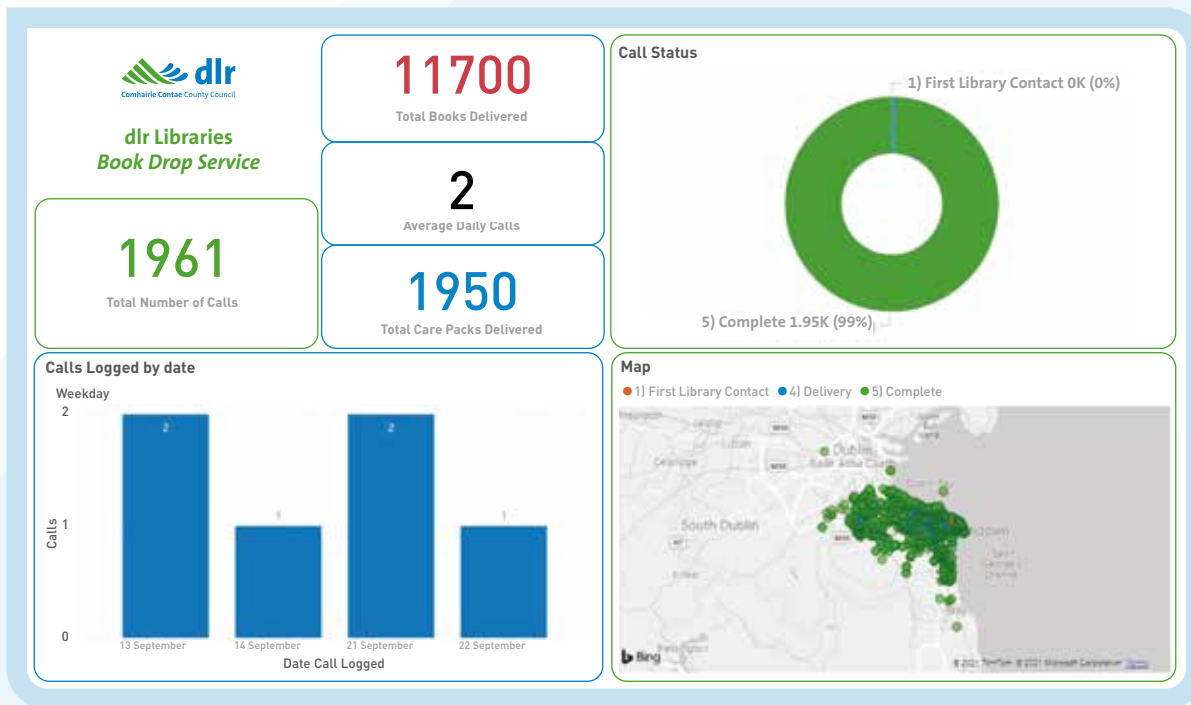
This service makes the pandemic bearable.

The books received ... it is like finding water in the desert!

## Book Drop Service

Best gift since I got my travel pass!

On 17 April 2020, dlr Libraries were delighted to launch a home delivery service of library material for our older people and more vulnerable citizens. The Book Drop service initially operated via the Community Call Helpline. A care package was provided with each delivery, including artwork specially commissioned by dlr Arts Office. **1,961 calls** were handled by library staff, with **11,700 books issued** by the end of September 2021.



To deal with the volume of requests, a special system was designed by our colleagues in dlr County Council IT Services, which integrated with the system already being used by the Community Call. Drivers from dlr Municipal Services volunteered to assist with deliveries and local volunteers also supported the initiative.

- Library members were able to access online services and stock **24/7** throughout the pandemic.
- Temporary **library memberships** were available **online**.
- Extra functionality was added to the dlr Libraries App with the launch of **Selfcheck** permitting self-checkout, and Covid-friendly innovations included a **stop/go** people counting system at all branches.
- Additional e-books, e-magazines, e-audio and other e-resources were provided. Digital usage increased by **108%**.
- Daily online **Storytime** via Facebook Live was introduced with more than **24,000 views** in 2020.
- **3D printers** from dlr Lexicon were sent on loan to Surfbox to manufacture face shields for frontline medical and healthcare staff.
- Our *Mountains to Sea* dlr Book Festival moved online with a dazzling **Of the Moment** programme.



### National initiatives catering for our younger audiences were adapted to move online and featured:

- **Spring into Storytime** initiative, the HSE **Let's Play** initiative and **Cruinniú na nÓg** – 25+ events and projects were produced with an online audience of more than **56,000**
- Our **Summer Stars** reading challenge for children which saw more than **900 children** participate in 2021

### Other national initiatives featured:

- Actively engaging in dlr **Keep Well** Campaign
- **Creative Ireland Programme** including dlr *Local Voices* competitions
- **Healthy Ireland Programme** supporting health and well-being in the county
- **Bealtaine Festival** celebrating creativity in older age featuring **39** events attended by some **640** people
- **Bloomsday Festival** programme with more than **490 views**
- **Festival in a Van**

### Local initiatives supporting access and inclusion were adapted to move online including:

- **73** Online Book Club sessions
- Online exhibitions, including **Sitting Pretty** photo exhibition
- **Positive Parenting** and **Back to School** video series
- **200** video sessions including arts & crafts, storytime and writing workshops with an overall of **4,745 views**
- Increased interaction via **social media channels** e.g. quizzes, mindfulness, *Doodle of the Day* and book recommendations
- Online Quiz Nights with a total of **36,622 participants**

### Outreach programmes supporting our creative communities included:

- **Jigsaw lending/book delivery** to Mount Carmel Community Hospital, Rathfarnham
- Distribution of a variety of **arts and crafts** and **activity packs** for all ages
- Guided **Eco-therapy Walks** in collaboration with dlr Sports Partnership
- **Artworks Home** – commission for artworks which were included in the Book Drop care package
- Our dlr Music Generation programme moved online for more than **1,408 students**

## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Online Quiz Nights

As part of our Covid response, we explored new ways of engaging online with audiences. The DLR Library Quiz Nights proved to be hugely successful. After our initial pilot, it quickly became clear that our quiz nights should expand. We had regular quiz nights on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings during the lockdown and beyond. Tuesdays were for the real quizzers, we christened it 'Tough Tuesday', not for the faint hearted, a real hit. Friday Night Family Trivia was one for all ages, a multi-generational team had a real edge on a Friday. Saturday Night was set aside for the Grown Ups, a quiz designed to be enjoyed by adults with their friends and families.

As the months rolled by, we introduced new themes for Tuesday Nights. A quiz league was introduced for the month of May and a Local History Quiz soon after. In April, a quiz was run in conjunction with the embassies of Australia and New Zealand to celebrate ANZAC day. Australian and New Zealand citizens here in Ireland took on our DLR quizzers in a hotly contested ANZAC themed quiz night.

Our quiz platform became a useful tool as it was used to run extra quiz nights for national library campaigns such as Right to Read, Summer Stars, Creative Ireland, Bealtaine Festival, and Seachtain na Gaeilge.

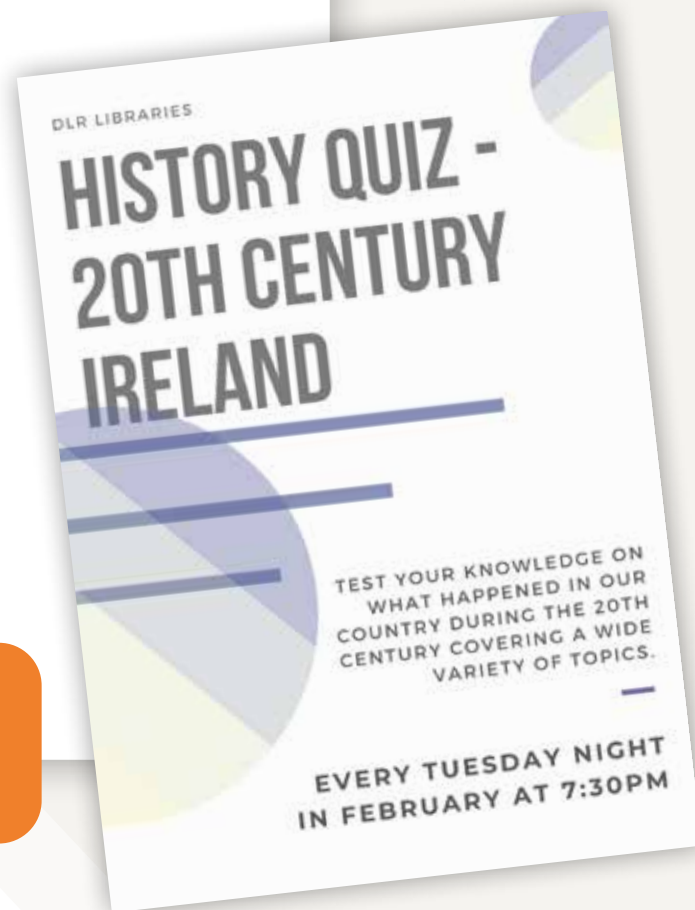
The quiz also became an excellent focal point for families to meet up online to enjoy an evening together during the pandemic. It quickly went beyond our borders, we had families and friends coming together from all over Ireland and from other countries too!! We had Irish living abroad in Belgium, USA, Canada, UAE, Greece, Malta, Spain, France, Sweden, U.K., South Africa, Germany, and Bermuda, all taking part with their friends and families back home.

We received hundreds of emails from people when we finished for the summer, and returned with a full quiz programme in January 2022.

**Thank you so much for organising the quiz nights; my daughter who is abroad also takes part with some of her friends and it helps us keep in touch in a fun way when everything was so bleak, you will never know how much the quizzes cheered us up.**

**Just wanted to say a big Thank You for all the work you and your colleagues have put into running these quizzes. They helped keep us sane and entertained us thoroughly all through lockdown and beyond.**

**36,622**  
participants



# Covid learnings: New departures

As we have adapted to the challenges raised during 2020-2021, we have developed new ways of delivering our services and engaging with our audiences. We are excited about the opportunities ahead and this is what we are aiming to develop:

Delivering a successful hybrid model

Welcoming the 'digital only' customer

Rebuilding trust in our indoor spaces

Developing and encouraging more digital literacy

Being accessible and inclusive

Encouraging cross organisation collaboration – internal and external

Getting the most from our outdoor library spaces



# How we consulted for this plan

An extensive public consultation took place in preparation for our Library Development Plan. The consultation moved online during the Covid restrictions when library buildings were closed to the public. Our plan reflects many of the ideas and suggestions that we heard.

## How it worked

Public Survey available online  
and in hardcopy

**718** online responses and **15** hardcopies

Workshop with Senior Directorate Staff

Consultation workshop with  
the Community via the dlr PPN

5 separate workshops with Library Staff  
followed by 2 update sessions –  
**over 90%** attendance

Consultation meeting with dlr Community,  
Culture and Wellbeing Strategic Policy  
Committee (SPC)

Focus groups

dlr homepage and press release

dlr social media channels

Libraries social media channels  
(Facebook – **6,141** followers;  
Twitter – **7,709** followers;  
Instagram – **2,226** followers)

Library e-bulletin sent to  
**6,600+** subscribers

Arts e-bulletin sent to **1,300+** subscribers



e-newsletter sent to **500+** PPN groups  
publicised the survey

Survey link shared with  
our elected members

Survey link shared with all primary and  
secondary schools, local youth groups  
and CYPSC network

# Public survey highlights

Reflecting on the achievements of the library service over the past five years, we asked participants to highlight its successes, what they might prioritise in the next five years, what might be improved and what fresh initiatives might be taken.

There is a strong sense that the library service is 'the backbone of the community'.

Widespread satisfaction was expressed about the broad range of library services available including access to literacy and lifelong learning opportunities, to digital technology and to online services (particularly during the pandemic). It is inclusive and a free service for all, serving diverse communities from families to young people to older people. It opens new vistas to people of all generations through its stimulating range of cultural programmes and events.

The Community Call service and the library service's response throughout the pandemic were cited many times, with online events and the Library Quiz receiving special mention.

**85.24%**  
of of survey respondents  
were library members

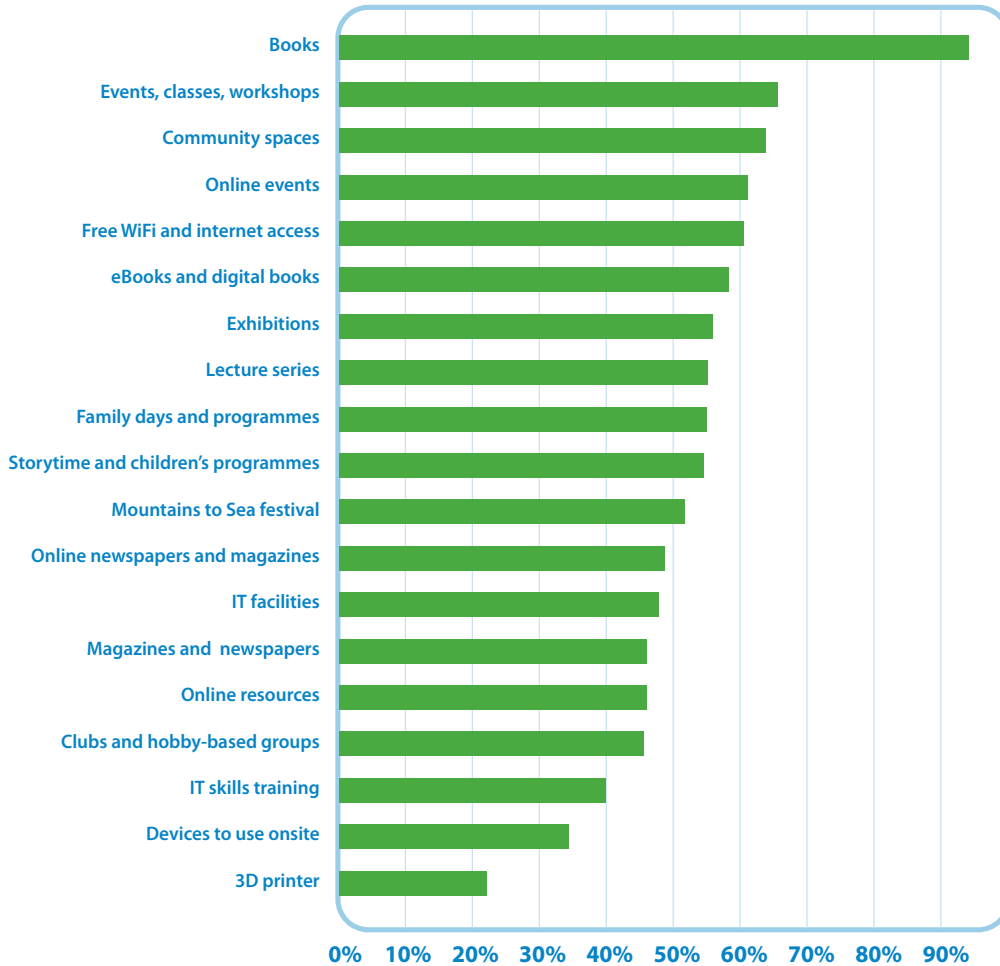
**73.4%**  
aware of library services on  
offer during the pandemic

**73.4%**  
use our online services

Customer Care (**46.73%**) and  
Accessibility (**45.87%**)  
rated most relevant  
service facilities



## What is most important to you as a customer?



Books rank highest in importance at **95%**

Staff were praised for their efficiency, knowledge, and willingness to help. Customers believed that staff are informed about a whole host of topics and are always ready to share their knowledge and resolve queries. They have shown their flexibility and how well they can adapt under challenging circumstances.

**90%** of customers are very satisfied with the service, with **81%** rating it either excellent, or very good. Library staff were identified as

**Expert** Great  
 Well-trained Pleasant  
**Helpful**  
 Brilliant Knowledgeable  
 Approachable  
 Polite Wonderful Efficient  
 Informed Excellent Professional  
**Patient** Friendly Enthusiastic  
 Obliging Inventive Kind  
 Nice Engaged  
**Welcoming** Amazing  
 Courteous



# Survey priorities

Survey priorities supported the feedback from participants in the workshops. Respondents were keenly aware of the value of the library service and rated a love of reading, opportunities for literacy and numeracy skills development, lifelong learning and the provision of information very highly. They acknowledged the value of supporting culture and creativity and how it enhanced quality of life and community cohesion in general. The library's role in supporting environmental responsibility was also noted.

Love of reading and literature  
**73.4%**

Fostering lifelong learning  
**98.69%**

Providing access to services and spaces  
**98.44%**

Supporting culture and creativity  
**97.62%**

Fostering a sense of community and civic partnership  
**97.49%**

Using technology as a service enabler  
**96.3%**

Supporting literacy and numeracy  
**95.76%**

Supporting the local community  
**70.88%**

Supporting environmental responsibility  
**67.85%**



# Consultation findings

## What people say we do well

Introduction of dlr **Babies Love Books** scheme where every child born in the county is gifted a free bag of books from their local library encourages a love of books

**Online events and courses** encouraging life-long learning, and in particular bridging the digital divide

**Everyday services** such as printing/photocopying

**The introduction of a library App**, allowing reserving/check-in and returning of books etc. is very useful

**The STEM programme/ Innovation Lab** for students with connections to teachers and schools has made the library a 'go to' place for younger people

**The COVID-19 pandemic response** i.e., the Community Call to older and vulnerable people as well as the book drop service

**Better communications channels** through social media, website and e-bulletin

**Library users really appreciate** the book collections and the value of the physical, quiet space

**Access to communal gathering spaces:** The connections that people make with others in the library, and ultimately with staff, are of great importance

**The popularity of the safe study space for young people**, which has been well utilised and is very successful

**Digital signage** for all branches is very beneficial

**Expansion of opening hours** and the introduction of the Sunday Opening for dlr Lexlcon, with evening and Sunday opening in Deansgrange library through the My Open Library service

**Improved accessibility and diversity of access** in general: Autism-friendly initiatives, age friendly collaborations, cultural activities, events, quizzes, book clubs, and courses online

**The library service has embraced the green ethos** through its environmentally friendly buildings, information workshops, energy saving kits, and education initiatives

# What people say we might improve

**Make improvements** to branch libraries, and **develop** the physical infrastructure, with a particular focus on service provision for the **west** of the county

**Access and inclusion:** Create access, expand outreach, focus more on diversity and inclusion: remove barriers to joining libraries, create linkages with new communities via our new libraries, encourage young people and marginalised communities to avail of the library service

**Service delivery:** Enhance service delivery with streamlined membership and a consistent approach to opening hours, with an emphasis on lunchtime opening

**Skills development:** Support reading, literacy and lifelong learning by enabling community potential through skills development and working with partners to deliver these services

**Marketing and communication:** Be more assertive in the marketing of the benefits of the library service to consolidate our membership and attract new members

**Cultural and creative programming:** Maintain our current range and scope of programmes and events. Provide opportunities for artists, arts facilitators and event coordinators to engage with new audiences via outreach

**Technology and digital literacy:** Use technology to support more access and bridge the digital divide by supporting those in need of digital skills

**Staff empowerment:** Realise the potential of library staff through training and development opportunities



# Our strategy

Our extensive consultation has informed our Library Development Plan. It aligns with our Corporate Plan vision 'to create a progressive, vibrant county that is attractive, inclusive and accessible, with connected communities in a clean environment, underpinned by a strong economy for all. These themes are also strongly influenced by national library policy and other relevant plans.

## Our vision

A progressive, vibrant library service that is attractive, inclusive and accessible to our communities, enabling them to connect with one another, collaborate, create and learn.

## Our mission

Provide free, accessible, inclusive, and quality library services to facilitate learning and fulfil the potential of our diverse and changing communities.

## Our values

Our values reflect dlr County Council corporate values.

### Inclusive

We treat everybody equally and with respect.

### Accessible

We enable participation and create a safe and welcoming atmosphere in our libraries.

### Excellent

We utilise our talents and skills to build and deliver an exceptional library service.

### Collaborative

We work in partnership to engage effectively with our stakeholders.

### Innovative

We aim to transform the way people experience learning, knowledge and creativity.

# Our themes

## Access

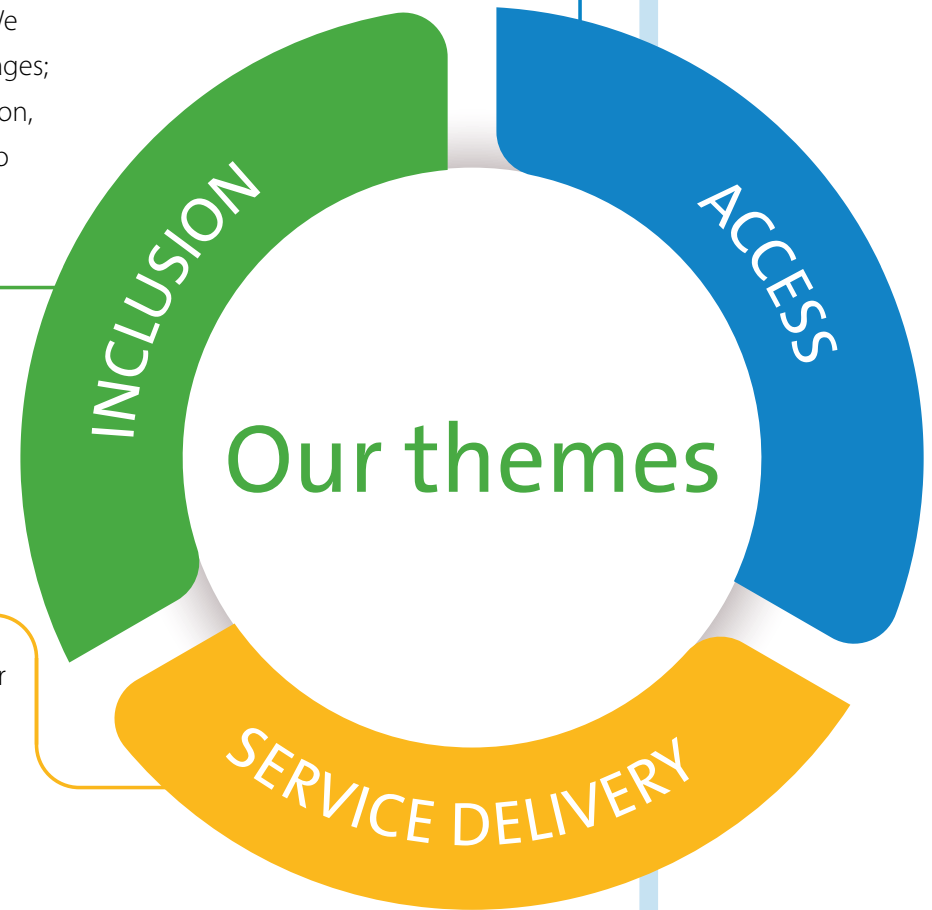
Our libraries are safe and trusted places. We provide welcoming gathering spaces in the heart of our communities, enabling free access to literacy, knowledge, learning and information. We ensure that there are no barriers to our services or our resources. We welcome people of all ages; our family programmes are in much demand, and we are a designated Age-friendly Champion, supporting older people to avail of our resources. We wish to attract more young people into our libraries, as well as those who are less familiar with what the library service offers.

## Inclusion

We help tackle isolation and social exclusion. We provide a single point of access to a wide range of public services to people of all ages. Our outreach services to older people in care homes or to people who are housebound provide vital social contact for them. We welcome new users to our service. We also work with a variety of partners on how best to provide inclusive information and advice for everyone.

## Service delivery

We provide an excellent service in our libraries, in person and online. We aim to improve user experience through technology, enhanced resources and opening hours. Our skilled staff give guidance and support across a range of areas. They also collaborate with our partners to implement a variety of national programmes designed to enhance healthy living, quality of life and wellbeing. Our rich programme of arts and cultural events enables self-expression and performance opportunities in places where there is no other option. We promote environmental awareness in how we work and in the quality of the information we provide.



# Our goals

Four key goals will direct and shape the actions for our library service over the next five years.

## Goal 1

### *Connecting with our communities*



## Actions

1. Deliver new library infrastructure to inspire, inform, and engage with our library users
2. Align opening hours across the branches to meet our customers' needs
3. Expand My Open Library service
4. Meet Public Sector Duty Obligations
5. Enable seamless access to our library resources and services for users both in person and online
6. Ensure provision of a rich library collection that is accessible to all, both physically and remotely
7. Enhance our existing resources using emerging technologies
8. Design innovative services that bridge the digital divide for people of all ages
9. Attract younger people to our services
10. Deliver a consistent quality customer service to each of our service users
11. Continue to deliver services that support wellbeing priorities
12. Expand existing resources to support our commitment to literacy development
13. Further promote the use of the Irish language
14. Raise the profile of the library service and work to create more awareness of its services and programmes via targeted engagement with key audiences

## Outcomes

- A new library in Stillorgan, including providing temporary premises in the interim period
- Progression of capital planned projects for Samuel Beckett (Ballyogan), Dundrum and Cherrywood
- Delivering My Open Library service in more branches
- Review opening hours to meet our customers' needs
- Expansion of automated self-service throughout the library system
- Culture of inclusion specifically targeting young people, new residents, and new residential developments throughout the county
- Continued participation in national programmes and campaigns focusing on literacy and cultural activities
- Expansion of our services for those with additional needs
- Design and delivery of a new dynamic, interactive library website
- Membership numbers growing and aligning with the national library membership target of 30%
- Per capita spend on stock to align with the national target of €4 per head
- Adherence to national Irish language policies and requirements
- Implementation of a fit for purpose library service communications and marketing plan

SPOTLIGHT ON

## My Open Library

My Open Library (MOL) service allows access to our library spaces on a staffless basis all year around, extending opening hours from 8am to 10pm every day including Sundays and holidays. Following the success of our MOL service in Deansgrange, we refurbished and equipped Dalkey library for the provision of the MOL service in 2020, with funding assistance from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

A new meeting room was added looking out at the main street of the village while the Music room, containing a piano, harp and electric keyboard, was also upgraded, allowing more light into the study area upstairs, with more study spaces and computers. The library was repainted, carpeted, and new front sliding doors installed. The library also acquired a 'Magic table', innovative equipment designed for use by people with dementia, autism and learning disabilities – but also for children and those young at heart! It comes with interactive light games projected on to a table with sensors that respond to players' movements. The library is now a bright, welcoming and accessible space with long opening hours, in the heart of the community, ready to welcome people of all ages.

The new extended access hours in Deansgrange are fantastic!



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# ACORN tablets

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we all came to increasingly rely on digital tools to access goods, services and stay connected to our friends, family and the wider community. Those who did not have access to devices, or access to the skills to use them properly, became increasingly excluded from society.

We were involved in a cross-departmental working group for digital inclusion with dlr Community section. One successful project was to assist the Older People's Council (OPC) to upskill on how to use a range of devices that we loaned to their members, including the Acorn tablet.

The Acorn tablet is designed with the older person in mind, and the principle behind the tablet is to provide more accessible options for those with little or no computer or smart device experience. The Acorn is extremely user-friendly; with an intuitive design, strong colours, large fonts, and with user guide videos in-built.

Following the success of this initiative, we have introduced Acorn tablets for lending from our branch libraries, as well as a training support service supplied by library staff for those with little or no IT skills on how to get the most out of the devices.



**I've sent my first email, so I was over the moon, and I've since been in contact with my nieces and nephew, because they're all familiar with that kind of stuff.**



# Goal 2

## *Collaborating with our partners*

### Actions

1. Build on existing partnerships and explore new directions to create value for our communities
2. Strengthen partnership with literacy-based organisations in line with the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy
3. Continue to drive the local delivery of the Creative Ireland programme
4. Continue to work with dlr Community Development and local agencies, businesses and groups to facilitate greater engagement with marginalised communities
5. Continue the delivery of national programming and initiatives on literacy, business, and health and wellbeing in collaboration with key stakeholders through Right to Read, Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Work Matters programme
6. Develop digitisation projects focusing on our local history collection in association with national providers
7. Implement corporate measures to support Climate Change and Energy efficiency initiatives and programmes
8. Work with our colleagues in dlr County Council to create dynamic and challenging programmes

### Outcomes

- Increased collaboration with partner agencies, for example, Southside partnership, the Public Participation Network (PPN), Volunteer Ireland, Alone, NALA, Healthy Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices etc.
- Increased collaboration with other stakeholders
- Increase in target groups currently underrepresented in their use of the library service
- Increased resources and a partnership approach to address issues around digital inclusion and access for those who do not have the skills or resources to do so
- Sharing of evidenced-based data to demonstrate libraries' impact
- A comprehensive series of programmes and events attracting a broader audience base



SPOTLIGHT ON

## What's in a Name?

### *Dun Leary - Kingstown - Dún Laoghaire: A Visual History*

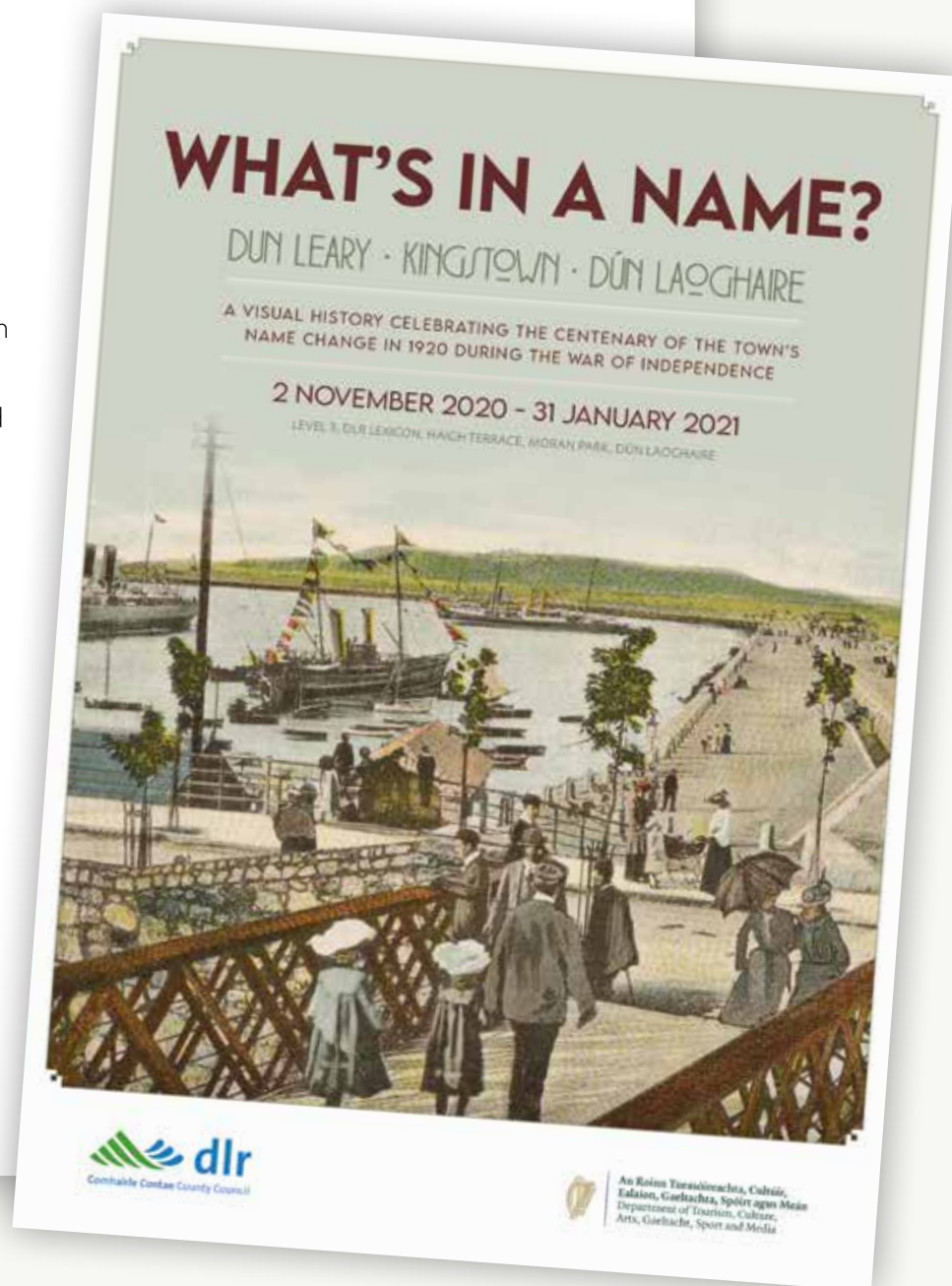
In 1821 the name Dunleary or Dun Leary was changed to Kingstown in honour of King George IV's visit to this bustling and rapidly developing town. In 1920 it was officially given the name Dún Laoghaire, referring back to the original Irish name for Dunleary. It was a deliberate political act during the War of Independence, an act of defiance against the old order in Ireland.

As part of the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 programme, we acquired nearly 700 postcards of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area from the sale of the Seamus Kearns Collection of Postcards in 2019.

These images form the basis of a publication entitled ***What's in a Name? Dun Leary – Kingstown – Dún Laoghaire: A Visual History***, an accompanying onsite and online exhibition featuring a selection of these postcards and a series of talks and videos to mark the centenary of the name change.

In addition, a Primary Schools Resource featuring five Lesson Plans for teachers was prepared by Séamus Cannon and Ríonach O Callaghan in association with Blackrock Education Centre. A link to these resources for teachers can be found at [scoilnet.ie](https://www.scoilnet.ie).

The initiative is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.



# Goal 3

*Developing, reading, learning, creative and cultural opportunities for all*

## Actions

1. Make our branches places of reading discovery
2. Provide unique opportunities to connect with authors and reading events
3. Design programmes that enhance the quality of life for our local communities
4. Support our communities to access and participate in lifelong learning opportunities
5. Cultivate collections that excite and energise customers
6. Enable convenient access to books, information and ideas
7. Invite broader participation in our services, ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all
8. Leverage new data and feedback channels to inform collection development
9. Continue to support a highly literate community
10. Carry out research into current audiences and further develop programming to invite broader participation in our services
11. Embedding the library offer in new locations, where there has not been a library presence to date

## Outcomes

- Increased usage as per National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) performance indicators
- Increased access to digital skills and resources
- Programmes that are accessible, inclusive and engage a broad audience
- Increased facilities and programmes for marginalised and other groups with additional needs



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Babies Love Books

Did you know that dlr Libraries **Babies Love Books** is a book gifting scheme, launched in February 2014 to promote reading and literacy in our youngest citizens?

What it means is that every child born in the county is entitled to a free book bag at their local library. More than 2,500 packs have been collected from our libraries since the scheme was launched: an average of one pack collected every single day since 2014!

dlr Library staff liaise with public health nurses in different local areas and ask them to hand out invitations to parents to collect their free book bags at the baby's nine-month check-up.

Even better, the scheme includes all pre-school children, not just babies.

**Babies Loves Books** raises awareness about the range of library services. Parents love it, children love it, and it is great for encouraging library usage from a young age.



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Cuairt agus Cultúr

In 2018, **Cuairt agus Cultúr**, the highly successful events programme initiated by dlr Libraries and Arts Office, was offered in residential care settings for older people in the county. The programme was forced to move online at the height of the pandemic. In 2020 alone, we had 40 online sessions scheduled across 5 nursing homes. In addition to live programming, we were also able to offer a selection of recorded activities for all nursing homes in the county during Winter 2020.

Residents took part in dancing, storytelling, singing, music and art recordings - plenty for everyone to join in and enjoy. This very popular programme has gone from strength to strength throughout 2021 and we plan to continue to support residents, staff and family members in these settings.



# Goal 4

## *Consolidating our library services and spaces*

### Actions

1. Maintain our existing buildings to the highest standards
2. Regenerate and develop our library collections to ensure that they are accessible to all, both physically and digitally
3. Preserve and progress local history research and legacy
4. Strengthen our position as providers of key information and life-long learning opportunities to our customers
5. Continue to provide access to all to our spaces and services
6. Promote our multilingual and multicultural collections
7. Play a lead role in sustainable energy awareness initiatives – through improving energy efficiency in our buildings and infrastructure, and in providing energy awareness resources and programmes for our customers and staff
8. Maintain our staff's commitment to exceptional customer-driven service
9. Continue to adapt to changing work practices in a dynamic environment
10. Continue to contribute to implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

### Outcomes

- Upgrade of Deansgrange Library
- Conservation works in Dundrum Library and Shankill Library
- Outreach programmes and services with local communities and schools
- Promotion of our local studies collections
- Production of a new Collection Development policy
- Funding opportunities availed of individually and collaboratively
- Universal design principles ensuring equal access employed throughout the branch network
- Promoting environmental awareness to our customers and staff through library resources and programmes which will bring a change in public opinion
- Staff supported in skills development via Performance and Management Development System (PMDS)



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Accessible services

Our spaces are welcoming and accessible to all, including wheelchair, visual and hearing impaired, and other users.

Since 2019 we have also been working to improve our services for people with autism including programming autism friendly and autism specific events as part of our annual programme.

We have created social stories/visual guides at each of our branch libraries and we have had an enthusiastic response to our quiet evenings and designated quiet areas in some of our library spaces. In addition, each library has a sensory box for visitors to use.

Many of our staff have availed of online training provided by AslAm. Our accessible collection includes a recommended list of books for those with autism/sensory issues as well as books about autism and resources for families/carers. We have a lending T&T (Toys and Technology) collection for those with autism and additional needs. We received funding in 2021 to install a sensory wall in Deansgrange Library, along with outdoor furniture, seating and sensory planting in Cabinteely, Dundrum and Shankill. Our programme of library events tries to be as inclusive as possible and to reflect the broad spectrum of library users. We welcome all members of our communities to attend.

**I am so thrilled that I stumbled across your Autism reading booklist and to find the Yoga for Children with Additional Needs! It is such a challenging journey to access any supports and to find that my library recognises and 'sees' my child and our family, has been so supportive.**



# How we will implement this plan



Our Library Development Plan will be regularly reviewed; we will agree a timescale for the implementation of each action.

We will consult on a regular basis with our communities and ensure that our services respond to their needs.

We will present regular progress reports on the implementation of the plan to the Area Committees and Strategic Policy Committee.

We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our progress through the national performance indicators and the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC).

An evaluation at the end of the planned delivery period will allow us to assess our progress and the impact of our services.

