

REVIEW OF EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE LEISURE AND CULTURE TRUST'S LIBRARY SERVICES

- **QUALITY INDICATOR 5: VISION, STRATEGY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**



**HOW GOOD IS OUR
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE?**



FINAL REPORT: FEBRUARY 2020

REVIEW OF EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE LEISURE AND CULTURE TRUST LIBRARY SERVICES

Introduction

This report is the Self-Evaluation and Peer Review of East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Services into the following quality indicators:

- QI 5 - Vision, Strategy & Continuous Improvement

The Self-Assessment was undertaken by members of staff within East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Services with each key theme within QI 5 being led by a different member of the team:

5.1: Vision, innovation and management of change led by Library Services Team Leader

5.2: Engagement with Community Development Processes led by Library Services Officer (Children & Families)

5.3: Planning, developing and enhancing the library service led by Digital Services Officer

Peer Review

The Peer Review visit took place at Kirkintilloch Town Hall on Friday 21 February 2020 and was conducted by a Convener and two other assessors. The assessors met with a variety of stakeholders including trust, council and external partners during the lunch session. Visits were also made to Bishopbriggs Library and the William Patrick Library in Kirkintilloch.

Results

The Peer Review Panel commend East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Service for over-arching strengths in inclusion and leadership evident from the review, demonstrated that they are a particularly strong leadership team and for their work undertaken in the self-evaluation for the review.

Quality Indicator 5: Vision, Strategy and Continuous Improvement

The evidence presented in the self-evaluation demonstrates that there are some notable strengths in provision here, including:

- Inclusion
- Strong Leadership
- Staff Development

The Peer Review team make the following comments about each of the component parts of Quality Indicator 5:

5.1 The written evidence presented as part of the self-assessment, and evidence gathered on the day from staff, showed the service commitment to staff training and the very good system of staff communications, which is in place. The library service demonstrated a commitment to involving staff across the service. Inclusion is a very strong theme, which is well demonstrated. The team are early in the process of their own service development and still revising the mission statement. The Annual report, presented to the Peer Review Team on the day, is an excellent document and a good example of reporting library activity. There are eight pages of library activities, many of them innovative such as work with young people from baby sensory activities to writing screenplays, events on neurodiversity, involvement with the national Fun Palaces initiative and wellbeing activities such as Relaxing Reads, Friendship Cafes and Mindfulness. The Annual Report included a paragraph about the service's work with the community in Westerton, to try to find out more about their needs with community-led sessions and talks supporting programming there. This has led directly to a trial

increase in the frequency of Bookbug sessions delivered there. Westerton is a library under threat of closure and an online survey was organised by The Supporters of Westerton Library (SWeL) the results of which have allowed the Service to gain a valuable insight into the Community's needs. It would have been good to hear more examples of engagement such as this. A member of the panel also picked up a What's On brochure in William Patrick Library and this was equally good in its coverage of the wide range of library activities offered. The panel would have liked to hear more about this activity and how it fits in to the library service rationale, and this would have influenced the evaluation. Although activities in themselves may not seem strategic, they do reflect the vision behind the service, its priorities and the direction it is taking. The peer review team met some staff who embodied the values of the service, such as Brenda at Bishopbriggs Library and staff across the service must be commended for their input and enthusiasm for delivering library service. However, it would have been good to see qualitative information about library programmes such as feedback from participants to demonstrate the impact of work done. While the panel agreed with the assessment of this component as a grade 4 they felt this may have been higher i.e. a grade 5 with more emphasis on these documents and more detailed or qualitative evidence to make the case.

5.2 Engagement with Community development partners was evidenced and we noted the impact shown in communities and felt that this was an area for further significant development. The peer review panel felt that there was no systematic demonstration of impact on communities in the self-assessment. The panel could see the great achievements in this area and would recommend giving a higher profile to this work, building in evaluation to activities at the planning stage and reporting on the results of what is delivered. In this area, despite some mention of Storing Stories, there was not enough qualitative indication of the difference library activities made and how important they were to participants. There is no Action Plan on this area or evidence of liaison with partners resulting in a targeted approach. The well-developed Marketing Plan should be part of a wider library plan still to be developed. The Public consultation for the changes to partnership centres needs a rationale for libraries.

5.3 We noted strong staff development and training in place and embedding volunteers was good practice. We would have liked to see more partnership agreements in this area and believe that these will develop over time. Impressive strides were demonstrated in the digital area and in promotion of e-services. The Peer Review Panel would advise that the Mission Statement is agreed before rolling out the Marketing Plan or striving for Customer Service Excellence. The Participation and Footfall Action Plan are good and the Marketing Working Group a great idea. It would be more useful to both Libraries and Trust if the activities programmed can be shown to make a clear contribution to The Trust's Business Improvement Plan under its key themes of People and Partnerships; Assets and Facilities; Access and Services and Communications and Promotion. These links could be the starting point for the Libraries Strategy and achieving these themes could be central to planning for the future. There could be a strategic approach to the use of volunteers and it is very positive that this is now being addressed.

More generally, the Peer Review Panel would emphasise the vital importance of a Library Plan, which would reflect the priorities of the Culture, and Leisure wider plan. The Panel could see that Performance was embedded in the service but not strongly evidenced and explicit in the self-assessment. We feel that the service should make much more of impact of their very innovative delivery citing here the Brainwork's project and the Friendship cafes. We felt too that Storing Stories could be used in the annual library plan as evidence of impact and could help to minimise the risk of the threatened closure of the small libraries in East Dunbartonshire. Inclusion is so strong across the service.

Visibility within the Trust could be higher we feel, and it would be good to see libraries having a higher profile in the Trust Objectives. The peer review panel felt that the organisation as a whole is not making enough of the drive and energy of this great library service, not linking it clearly to their aims. As mentioned above, the Trust's Business Improvement Plan addresses four themes: People and Partnerships; Assets and Facilities; Access and Services and Communication and Promotion. The Actions set out in the model on p5 of the 2019-2020 document for these themes, do not mention Libraries at all, when they have so much to contribute to all the areas. We think that Libraries should be a key objective of the Trust and that there should be a clear understanding and recognition of the

role of Libraries in the wider Trust.

The Peer Review visit demonstrated (orally) examples of very good evidence of impact and value of the library service. Case studies and feedback from participants as part of the evidence presented would have shown more clearly the difference it makes to individuals and the community. The libraries that the peer review panel visited, were attractive, thoughtfully designed and clearly very well used. They did seem to reflect the aims and ethos of the library service.

The Peer Review Panel endorse the Self-Evaluation Report and with the rating given by the Library Service (or note a different rating if appropriate).

Quality Indicator 5 , Vision, Strategy and Continuous Improvement is LEVEL 4

LEVEL 4 GOOD - Important strengths with areas for improvement

Important strengths that have a positive impact:

- Staff are intermittently involved in developing policies and guidelines
- Dissemination of good practice is structured and accessible to all staff
- Two way feedback
- Management of Change processes aligned with HGIOPLS assessment, CSE and Council Priorities
- Review of traditional models of delivery and
- openness to change
- Co-location with community centres,
- Councillors' surgeries, community councils, council services etc.

Quality Indicator	Self-Evaluation rating (1-6)	Peer Review rating (1-6)
QI5 – Vision, Strategy & Continuous Improvement	4	4

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel endorse the Improvement Action Plan for East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Service and summarised below:

Quality Indicator 5 – Vision, Strategy & Continuous Improvement

- To make our Vision and Performance information available to customers, as part of our Marketing aims
- Development of service provision and performance at Branch Level
- Direction for use and support of volunteers, based on our strategic goal

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel, while endorsing the Improvement Action Plan for East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Service, make the following additional key recommendations:

- Creation of a Library Service's Plan
- Heightened visibility for the Library Service within Trust Objectives
- Promotion of strong Innovative areas of service delivery
- Stronger evidence of Impact, ie from Storing stories, use in Annual Plan to help minimise risks of library closures

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Peer Review Panel wish to express their thanks to all members of staff at East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust Library Services for preparing the self-assessment report and for their engagement on the day of the Peer Review visit. We would also thank all stakeholders who met with us.