



Library Strategy Template

This template has been designed to help people write a library strategy and pulls together common themes and elements identified after reviewing several library strategies. Library Strategies may sit within broader strategic plans in which case the template may not be as relevant in its entirety but there may be specific elements that will be appropriate.

A library strategy will outline the Library's aims and values, drawing together the strategic priorities and future direction for the service. It should show how these priorities link to the needs of library customers and the wider local and national priorities, considering future technological and sector developments.

The library strategy doesn't need to be a lengthy and can include graphics, photos and diagrams to add to its visual appeal and make it easier to read (see app 1).

You may want to consider how you engage with customers and stakeholders to develop the strategy and it might be useful to look at the seven design principles outlined in the Libraries Taskforce's [Ambition for Public Libraries](#) document.

Before writing your strategy you should consider who your audience will be and what your corporate house style and processes are. You may also want to consider having different versions for different audiences i.e. a summary for the public and a more detailed document for trustees, politicians etc.

Below are some headings/sections you may want to include in your strategy.

Executive Summary

Give a brief summary of the strategy emphasising the key points.

Introduction

Explain the motivation behind creating the strategy highlighting what the aim of the document is and what period it covers. It is also an opportunity to reference the evidence base or any research that has been used to inform the strategy.

Questions to consider:

- What is this strategy?
- Why has this strategy been written? – e.g. meeting changing local/local authority contexts
- What are the timescales for this strategy?
- What is the evidence based for the strategy i.e. public or staff consultation?
- What will the strategy achieve?

Background and Context

Outline the position of the library service currently, summarising key facts and figures and give an overview of the current local and national environment.



Questions to consider about your current library service:

- How are library services currently delivered?
- What are the library service's current challenges and successes? You may want to use a SWOT analysis.
- What are the current customer usage trends? How do they compare with national/comparator/regional trends?
- What are the key facts and figures?
- What do customers think/say about the service?
- What do people who don't use your libraries think about your services?

Questions to consider about the wider environment:

- Local socio-economic/cultural/demographic context - what are the local issues/priorities affecting the library service?
- How does the library service fit into the wider council and area agendas?
- What are the national issues affecting libraries and/or national library priorities?

Horizon Scanning/Future Needs

Highlight what developments are likely to impact on library services over the period of the strategy and beyond. Discuss how this will change the way customers use services and what they will need from their library service.

Questions to consider:

- What challenges/opportunities will the library service have moving forward?
- What new developments/technologies will impact library services?
- What will customers need from their library service in the future?
- How will developments change the way customers access library services?
- What needs to change?
- What are the budget forecasts/pressures?
- What are the future wider council and area agendas?
- Who might be key partners in the future?

Legal Requirements and core values

Outline the statutory requirements and how the library service meets these and the values that underpin your service.

Questions to consider:

- How does/will the library service deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service?
- How does/will your library service comply with the Equalities Act?
- What is your library services Environmental Impact Policy?

Strategic Vision Aims and Outcomes

Describe the vision of the service moving forward and define the strategic aims of the service over the period of the strategy. Give details of why these aims have been chosen,



how they will be met and what the expected outcomes will be - considering the issues identified in the 'background and context' and 'future developments' sections.

Questions to consider:

- What is the vision for the future library service?
- How does the vision translate into strategic aims? How will the strategy deliver against local priorities, and national priorities e.g. Universal Offers, Ambition outcomes?
- Why are these aims important?
- How will these aims be achieved?
- What are the time scales/milestones?
- What do you expect the outcomes to be?

The average number of aims in the documents we reviewed were 4 – 5.

Here are some examples of strategic aims from recently review library strategies:

- *Encourage and support literacy and reading*
- *Facilitate and deliver opportunities for learning*
- *Improve digital services and inclusion*
- *Provide access to trusted sources of information*
- *Facilitate access to cultural experiences*
- *Contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities*
- *Reducing inequality*
- *Supporting communities*
- *Giving every child the best start*
- *Reducing social isolation*
- *Develop the workforce*
- *Supporting local economy and employment*

How will you implement the strategy?

Explain the steps the service will go through to implement the strategy

Questions to consider:

- What steps will you take to implement the strategy?
- How will you communicate your strategy to different stakeholders/audiences?

Impact

Explain how the impact and success of the strategy will be judged. Outline the methods that will be implemented to measure whether the aims were achieved and what the outcomes were.

Questions to consider:

- What will success look like?
- How will impact, outcomes and success be measured?



Appendix 1. Examples of Graphics

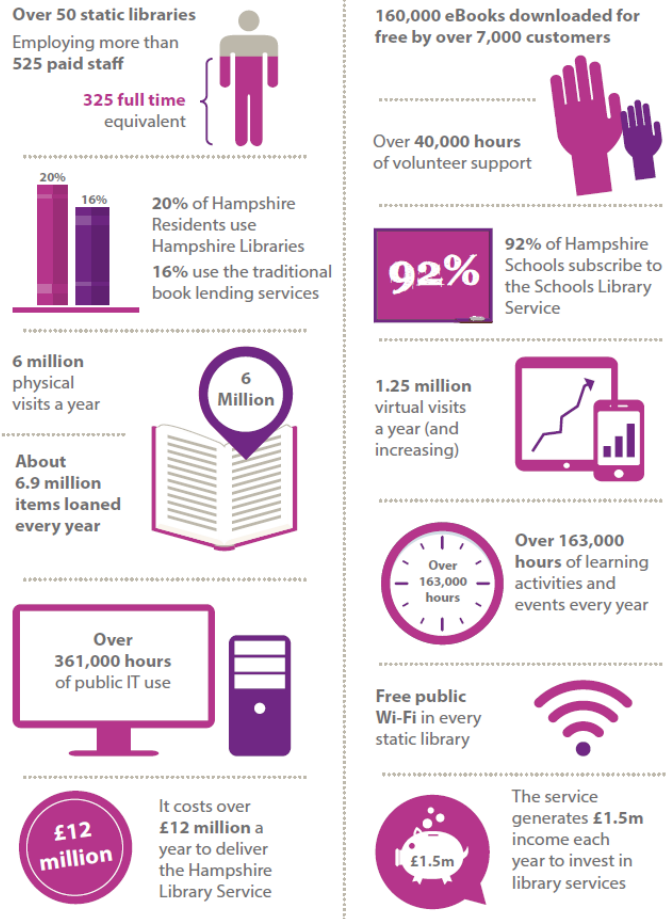
Example 1.

This example from Hampshire County Council's ['Library Service Transformation: Strategy to 2020'](#) published in April 2016 shows how you can use infographics to highlight key data and statistics.

If you don't have a design team to create infographics for you free templates can be found online, although you often need to sign up first. Here are a few websites offering free templates –

- <https://www.hubspot.com/infographic-templates>
- <https://slidemodel.com/free-powerpoint-templates/free-animated-business-infographics-powerpoint-template/>
- <https://24slides.com/templates/featured>

Figure 1: Key facts about Hampshire Library Services in 2015



What we believe – our three core values

1

Suffolk Libraries will inspire learning, literacy and access to information, knowledge and opportunities.

We'll do this by:

- ✓ Providing the best resources and facilities we can
- ✓ Talking to people about what they need and how we can help
- ✓ Bringing people together and offering personalised learning opportunities

2

Suffolk Libraries will guarantee that libraries are safe, welcoming, supportive and accessible places for everyone.

We'll do this by:

- ✓ Supporting our staff to understand the different needs of people and how we can help them
- ✓ Promoting libraries as inclusive, safe and welcoming places
- ✓ Working with the most vulnerable people in society to help them find the opportunities and support they need

3

Suffolk Libraries will strengthen communities by bringing them together in a number of ways.

We'll do this by:

- ✓ Hosting and initiating creative events to encourage people to come to the library for new experiences – ie music, arts, meeting new people and exploring new activities
- ✓ Bringing diverse communities together to promote understanding and tolerance

Example 2.

This example from Suffolk Libraries' ['2020 Strategy: Our vision for our future'](#) published in 2014 demonstrates how you can use graphics to draw attention to key points such as your core values.