



# Bristol Libraries

## Scrutiny November 20th 2023



# Section 1 Background

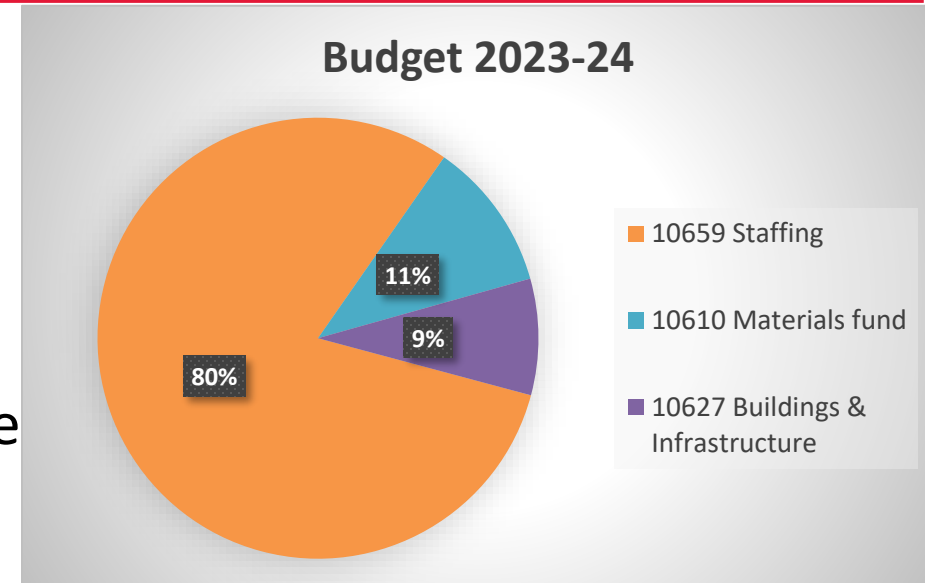
[www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

# Library Statistics

- Data Pack includes:
- Visits and issues – all 27 libraries
- Annual report 22/23
- Computer bookings – all 27 libraries
- Membership data
- Trend data
- Library Strategy map of progress to date
- Library building costs

# Current service - Library Budget

- 410 years old, 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest in the UK,
- 183 staff, 109.83 full time equivalents – majority are part time
- £4.66m budget per year
- Local Authority funded where all income to the service supports the budget.



- All building costs, utilities, repair and maintenance are held by Facilities Management and Property Services not the library service
- Income pressures are reducing traditional income, cost of contracts (IT and Library Management System) and rents rising with inflation.

# Grant Funding

Library Improvement Fund from Arts Council England and DCMS enabling Reference Library refurbishment to create a flexible event space, restoration and upgrading of historic desks, accessible desks and new exhibition spaces



Business Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC) in Central and 3 locals in Knowle, Southmead and Junction 3, to support business advice

2 years funding from WECA Shared Prosperity Fund

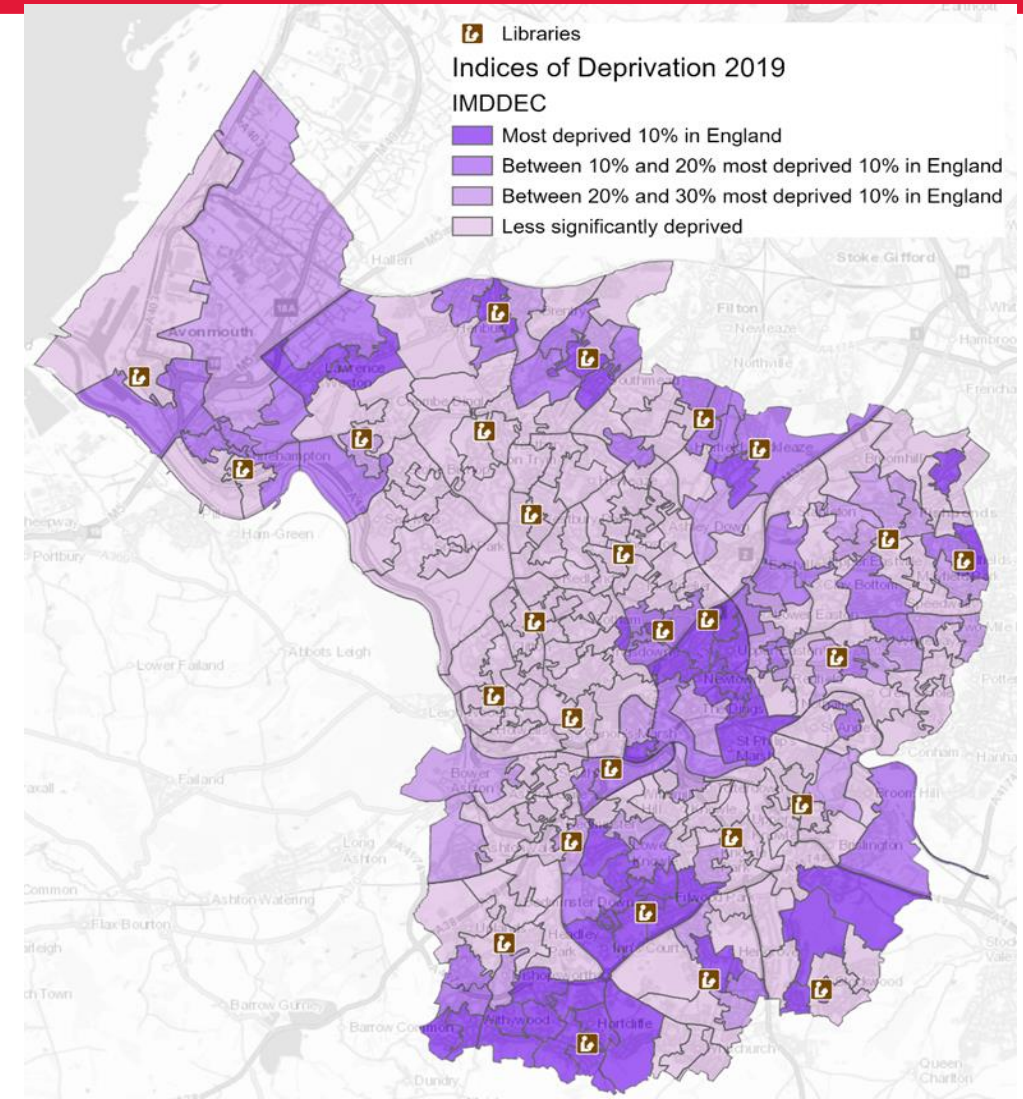


# Library Buildings

- Bristol Libraries has 27 libraries
- 18 libraries are Bristol City Council owned buildings
- 9 are leased spaces or buildings (some are leased from BCC). We pay a range of costs from peppercorn rent to full commercial rent to service charge.
- 4 are already collocated - Avonmouth and Shirehampton in CAT community centres, Hartcliffe in @Symes, St Pauls in the Learning Centre CAT to Ethical Properties

## Future Developments

- Filwood – Levelling Up Fund
- Southmead – Glencoyne Square



# Filwood Library - Levelling Up Fund Project

Opened in July 1960, refurbished 2003, new shelving in 2013. Open 22 hours a week

- 10 public computers, no accessible public toilet, no public use of the mezzanine
- ASB issues – isolated location
- Building issues – Heating, external appearance, lack of public facilities
- Awarded £14.5m Levelling Up
- Design Tender stage, stakeholder group convened



# Southmead Library – Glencoyne Square

Temporary Library in Southmead House – opened October 2022

- Working with Southmead Development Trust on Glencoyne Square development
- Collaboration model – library and community services
- Aspiration to extend opening hours with shared staffing



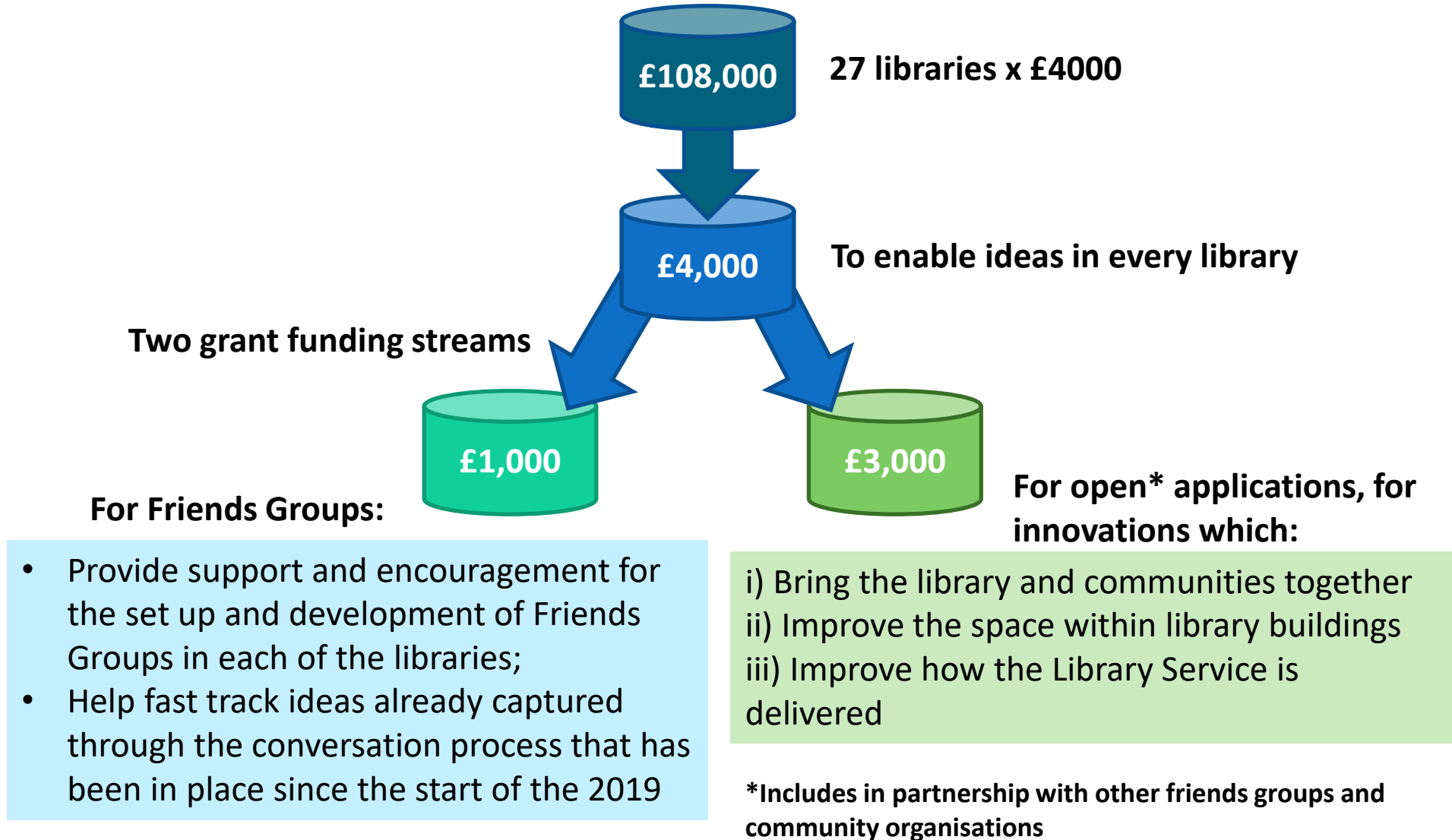


Any Questions? Any items for discussion?

# Section 2 Innovation Fund

[www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

# Bristol's Library Innovation Fund



# Innovation Fund Evaluation Report - summary

- Why was it needed? Stemmed from the Strategy engagement work and aimed to work more closely with communities, test the collaboration model of communities using libraries out of staffed hours, bring the service closer together with communities, test activities and pilot projects communities wanted to do and grow confidence in groups managing funding and running events from a library building
- 3K Grants given to 13 Friends Groups and 9 organisations totalling 54K of 81K available (27K unallocated)
- 1K Grants given to 12 Friends Groups, totalling 9.5K out of 27K available (17.5K unallocated)
- Covid interrupted much of the planned activity, which was designed to increase visits to libraries.
- Reserve Fund was used for in-year savings in October 2022 leaving no further funding available - Of the total of 108K, 63.5K was awarded.
- [Library Innovation Fund \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://bristol.gov.uk)

# Friends Groups

## Libraries with Friends Groups

- Bedminster & Marksbury Road
- Bishopston
- Clifton
- Hillfields
- Henleaze
- Horfield
- Knowle
- Redland
- Sea Mills
- Shirehampton
- Westbury
- Whitchurch

## Libraries without Friends Groups

- Avonmouth
- Bishopsworth\*
- Central : in progress
- Filwood\*
- Fishponds
- Hartcliffe\*
- Henbury: in progress
- Junction 3: in progress
- Lockleaze: in progress
- Southmead: in progress
- St George
- St Pauls\*
- Stockwood\*
- Wick Road\*

\* Ceased during Covid

# Case Study 1:

## St Pauls Library

Strategic theme: Bristol's Libraries are fair and inclusive

Group involved: Imayla CIC awarded £3,000

Project: 'Book Jam'

To deliver a series of workshops with young people from the St Pauls area to encourage a wider engagement with reading and develop stronger relationships with the library.

*"what I like about Book Jam is, everyone, confidence and creativity"*

Learning:

- Imayla as an established organisation working within the St Pauls community was able to adapt their plans to accommodate Covid restrictions
- The Library Development Officer being at each of the sessions helped link the idea of the library and highlight the books and resources the children were able to access.
- For future project planning, it would be useful to consider over a longer period how the legacy impact could be measured



# Case Study 2:

## Bishopston Library

Strategic theme: Bristol's Libraries are fair and inclusive

Group involved: Friends of Bishopston Library

Project: A Series of Talented Events awarded £3,000

To engage the age group 18-23 in activities in the library through appointment of a coordinator and following a launch event, put on up to 10 workshops across a range of themes such as creativity, science, and technology, culminating in a showcase event.

### Learning:

- Advantage of having a dedicated named contact or project manager
- Managing organisational requirements i.e safeguarding and DBS
- Use of social media to engage young people
- Young people in the area didn't know about library services
- Recruiting young people as ambassadors
- Flexible opening times of the library
- Free pizza!



Friends of Bishopston Library & the Library Innovation Fund present...

## A SERIES OF TALENTED EVENTS

FREE WORKSHOPS FOR 18-23 YEAR OLDS

WED 17 NOV - ORIGAMI + WELLBEING  
THU 18 NOV - POETRY + PERFORMANCE  
WED 24 NOV - ART OF KINDNESS  
THU 25 NOV - STREETPHOTOGRAPHY

7:00PM - 8:30PM  
BISHOPSTON LIBRARY

BOOK NOW



@talentedevents  
bishopstonlibrary.org.uk

Printed thanks to Benoit Harper

# Case Study 3:

## Horfield Library

Strategic theme: Bristol's libraries help connect people in communities

Group involved: Friends of Horfield Library

Project: 'NEW LEAF'

To open up the unused land by the library as a garden and organise events and activities in the space.

Learning:

- Determination and resilience of the group key to success
- Communication between different BCC service areas was problematic
- Groups benefit from developing their own dialogue with other BCC service areas
- The public assume that more is within the 'gift' of the library service than is often the case
- For Friends Groups to continue to be successful they must be able to access further funding streams





# Innovation Report – What the Library Service learnt and were the project aims realised?

- To successfully deliver a grant fund to communities for the first time - achieved
- To work more closely/collaboratively with the community - achieved
- To rebuild trust after a period of uncertainty - achieved
- To experiment with community-led projects - achieved
- To challenge the service to respond to community-led ideas - achieved
- To support communities in their ideas and priorities for their local library - achieved
- To guide communities through the complex council processes to achieve their aims - partly achieved
- To find out how the service could adapt to a more blurred delivery of community as well as local authority activity - partly achieved
- To test how residents responded to a blurred offer - partly achieved

# Innovation Report – Lessons learnt from the award beneficiaries

- Covid - Need for flexibility in delivery and additional support from Library staff
- Evaluation and evidence – Not being prescriptive, added pressure for beneficiaries
- Communication with the service and the council - Need for clarity, advantage of single points of contact, complexities of dealing with multiple service areas
- Being adaptable – Established organisations adapt more easily
- Legacy – Preparation for legacy work during project planning and continued access to funding are key
- Future of Friends Groups – Dependency on individual members, capacity and commitment vital
- Young People – Finding better ways to communicate

# IF recommendations for the new Strategy

- Ongoing communication with communities and other council departments
- Use of library spaces outside staffed hours
- Access to library buildings, room booking and charges
- Data collection – helps with evidence impact, for both communities and the libraries
- Engagement of young people essential
- Inclusion of non-traditional events and activities in library spaces
- Continuation of working with Friends Groups and community groups

# What innovations are replicable?

## What was innovative?

- Experimental, risk-taking approach
- Use of library spaces
- Type of activity
- Promotion of Friends Groups
- The Innovation Fund itself

# What is required to replicate and build on the Innovation Fund work?

- A solid network of dedicated Friends Groups
- Networking opportunities for Friends Groups
- Support from library staff dedicated to and skilled in community engagement
- A dedicated role to oversee Friends and community engagement
- Funding

Any Questions? Any discussion points?

# Section 3 Library Strategy

[www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

# Current Strategy 2020-2024

- Created from citywide engagement in January – March 2019.
- Approved by Cabinet February 2020

## Key Targets delivered:

- 23 measures of success – 19 delivered, 3 not yet delivered and 1 not yet started
- Innovation Report and actions delivered, business support started, activities and events restarted, upgrade of public computers and self-service kiosks

## Feedback from the service:

- Aspirations to return to the satisfaction levels pre-Covid (Annual Quality of Life survey)
- Very useful impetus to annual planning for each year
- Focus on data – what we collect, how and its use, with impact and outcomes



# New Strategy post 2024

What has changed since 2020

- Refresh of the Corporate Strategy

Homes and communities 5 (HC5) p/46 Community Participation

*We will build further on projects such as the School Streets and the Community Toilet programme, as well as innovative approaches to developing parks, play areas, libraries and community hubs and facilities for people to share neighbourhood spaces in an accessible way.*

- Impact of the pandemic, post Covid changes e.g., change of reading habits and visiting habits
- Cost of living crisis – marbles, coat swap, seating, jigsaws, community spaces
- Welcoming spaces – libraries participated via Friends funded activities – Clifton, Hillfields, Shirehampton

# Peer Challenge recommendations

- Peer Challenge May 2022 – revise the Strategy, have a delivery plan, engage with Scrutiny.
- 1. Revise or rewrite the Library Strategy in line with Corporate Strategy and emerging Estates Rationalisation proposals. Ensure there is a strong and compelling narrative for libraries to be strong deliverers and enablers in cross-cutting themes such as Children and Young People, Economy and Skills and Health, Care & Well Being.
- 2. Ensure that the revised Library Strategy is supported by an appropriate Delivery Plan to realise the vision. Where relevant, ensure that the library service is flexible where it can be on its demands for space and staffing facilities.
- 3. Provide significant opportunities for member engagement to help build cross party ownership, trust, and confidence for the future of Bristol's libraries including Scrutiny, task and finish groups and member seminars, as necessary.

# Suggested New Strategy Themes

## **New Themes and Priorities to consider**

- Digital services – rise in online membership, use of ebooks and eaudio
- Condition of our library buildings, links with Corporate Landlord priorities
- How the library technology is refreshed and what is needed
- Maintenance of advertised opening hours
- Capital requirements for funding bids, library refurbishments, relocation of spaces
- Marketing of the service
- Working in partnership – within Bristol and in LibrariesWest and the South West region
- Continued community engagement
- Working with Friends Groups
- Co-delivery of council services through appropriate library buildings

# New Strategy post 2024

Engagement discussion:

In light of new budget 24/25 and future budgets

- How should stakeholders be engaged?
- Resources and capacity in the service to achieve engagement
- Work with the Policy Team

Suggested timeline:

- Work begins after May 2024 with the new administration and budget approved
- Calendar year Dec 24 or financial year 24/25 – no deadline for refresh
- Cabinet approval required as a citywide document in 2025

# Any questions? Any discussion?

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