



Fingal Libraries Development Plan **2018-2023**





Vision

Fingal Libraries will be a dynamic and inclusive space, supporting culture, recreation, literacy, education and economic development in the County.



Mission

We will respond to the needs of our diverse communities.



Mission

We will preserve and make accessible Fingal's unique historical identity.



Mission

We will anticipate future service needs.

VISITOR
NUMBERS
1,143,387

ITEMS
BORROWED
1,096,915

REGISTERED
MEMBERSHIP
40.3%
OF POPULATION

KEY FIGURES FOR FINGAL LIBRARIES 2017

ACTIVE
MEMBERSHIP
30.4%
OF POPULATION

AVERAGE OPENING
HOURS PER WEEK
44.6

SPEND PER HEAD
OF POPULATION
€39.29 (2016 FIG)

An Irish language version of this document is available in hardcopy format and at www.fingal.ie/libraries

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“Libraries have become the most democratic,
non-judgemental spaces we have ...
In libraries we become citizens not consumers.”

Dermot Bolger



Paul Reid
Chief Executive

Foreword by Paul Reid, Chief Executive

With over a million visits made to public libraries in Fingal in 2017, it is clear that the service is valued by the citizens of the County. This Development Plan sets out the vision, mission, values, principles, strategic objectives and priorities of the Libraries Department for the next 5 years.

Prepared by the Libraries Department under the direction of Margaret Geraghty, Director of Services and Betty Boardman, County Librarian, the Plan was adopted by the Council in January 2018, as required by the Local Government Act 2001. This is a very positive time for Fingal Libraries with three new mobile library vans on the road and a fourth on order, with the plans to refurbish Skerries Library well underway and the near completion of the strategic brief for the new County Library in the Swords Civic and Cultural Centre.

The Plan takes cognisance of the 77% growth in Fingal's population over the last 20 years and its position as the country's fastest growing and youngest County. It recognises the diverse nature of the population and the need to have a relevant and responsive library service. It reinforces the position of Fingal Libraries to enable literacy, education and economic development and to host and support cultural and recreational activities. Most importantly, the Development Plan emphasises the value of the library space for community engagement, entrepreneurship and self development.



Councillor Mary McCamley
Mayor of Fingal

Message from Councillor Mary McCamley, Mayor of Fingal

Since being elected Mayor of Fingal in June 2017, I have launched and attended many events in libraries throughout the County. I am very impressed with the diversity of activities organised by library staff, everything from celebrations of the written word, to history festivals, to events for entrepreneurs and job-seekers. It is therefore my pleasure to welcome the Libraries Development Plan, which will shape the future of the library service in Fingal for the 2018-2023 period.

Libraries are a frontline service of the Council and play an important role in the community, through a network of 10 branch libraries, mobile and housebound services and a local studies and archives section. At launches and events, I meet people of all ages and backgrounds who use libraries for different reasons – to study, to use a computer, to meet friends at book clubs, to trace their family tree, to research the history of their areas, and of course to borrow books. What is truly wonderful, is that all this is provided free of charge and everyone is eligible to join. “Fluirse Talaimh is mara” meaning “Rich in land and sea” is the motto of Fingal County Council and I believe that libraries add to this richness in terms of the varied and innovative services they provide to our communities.



Betty Boardman
County Librarian

Introduction by Betty Boardman, County Librarian

Fingal Libraries Development Plan, 2018-2023, is the result of extensive consultation and discussion with our stakeholders including the general public, elected representatives, local groups and organisations, users and non-users of our services and our staff. We are very grateful for the time people took to respond to our survey, to make submissions and to meet with us to discuss how libraries in Fingal will develop over the next five years. Consultant, Sinead Begley, was instrumental in the engagement process and I would like to express my thanks to her for her advice and practical help in progressing the Plan through its various stages. Fingal Libraries staff are well trained and knowledgeable and, as the public face of the service, know the communities in which they work. I also would like to acknowledge the dedication and inspiration from staff who were members of the Development Plan Working Group and to thank those staff at all levels and service points throughout the County who contributed their ideas and thoughts to the document.

1. Executive Summary

19
2016

Clár Comair
Cúil Bliain
Cineál
Pleanála

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



1. Executive Summary

The Fingal Libraries Development Plan provides a road map for the period 2018-2023, setting out the vision for the future of Fingal Libraries as a dynamic and inclusive space supporting culture, recreation, literacy, education and economic development in the County.

This vision is contextualised by the Council's mission for Fingal to be the place of choice to live, work, visit and to do business in Ireland, and is underpinned by the Council's core values of citizen-focussed, impartial, responsive, inclusive and innovative service provision.

This strategy sets out how we will respond to the needs of our growing, vibrant and diverse communities, preserve and make accessible Fingal's unique historical identity and anticipate future service needs.

Since the early 1990s, Fingal Libraries has been a progressive and innovative service, building and developing new branch libraries, renovating and enhancing existing buildings and adopting new technologies and work practices. Key developments in recent years include a branch library co-located with a community and leisure centre at Donabate, the introduction of self-service using RFID technology, 3 new mobile library vans, new library management and book distribution systems and the increased use of digital resources and eServices.

The next five years will see more development, with a new 21st century County Library in the Swords Cultural Quarter and the refurbishment of Skerries Library. We will continue to provide accessible, democratic, inclusive and dynamic spaces in which people can engage, enjoy, create and learn. The key challenges of having a young, diverse and growing population present us with opportunities to respond with innovative uses of space and technology, with relevant print and digital collections and with imaginative cultural and educational programmes.



Key Objectives

We have identified 7 key objectives that will inform the development of Fingal Libraries over the lifetime of this programme. These objectives are informed by our strategic goals to:

- Provide a dynamic and inclusive space for the community
- Support culture and recreation
- Enable literacy, education and economic development

These 7 objectives are:

Objective 1: Workforce

To ensure that libraries are staffed with well trained, informed and customer focussed staff.

Fingal Libraries and the Council's HR Department have developed and are currently implementing a workforce plan, as determined in the report 'Managing the Delivery of Effective Library Services'. Recent recruitment at all levels of both professional and non-professional staff has brought current staffing levels in Fingal Libraries to 131.

Objective 2: Capital and Infrastructure

To provide high-quality, welcoming, accessible spaces which meet the needs of library users.

Public libraries today are not only defined by their print and digital resources but also by the high quality spaces they provide for individuals and groups. The Library has become the 'community living room' or that 'third space' between home and work where people are welcome to engage, create and learn.

Objective 3: Collections and Resources

To endeavour to both recognise and meet the changing needs of our borrowers, in accordance with our recently reviewed Collection Development Policy.

An appreciation of ever-evolving technology will enable us to remain relevant in the resources we offer. We appreciate the degree to which an innovative approach to collection management will enable the provision of state-of-the-art electronic services in conjunction with more traditional formats.

Fingal Libraries will continue to recognise that collections and resources must reflect the increasingly diverse needs of our borrowers. Collections will, as far as is practical, meet distinct demographic, linguistic and cultural requirements.

Objective 4: Programming of events and activities

To encourage the community to reach its full potential and engage all citizens through an innovative programme of events and activities.

Fingal Libraries' programming will reflect national programmes around themes such as culture, creativity, heritage, entrepreneurship and science and will be reflective of the diverse and specific needs of our citizenry across Fingal. It will reach audiences across all ages, cultures and ethnicities and create an inclusive platform for collaboration, development, participation and engagement.

Lifelong learning will be a key aspect of Fingal Libraries with opportunities to engage in informal learning at all life stages in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Objective 5: Technology

To reinforce the position of libraries in the community as key points of access to information technology and digital services.

We will endeavour to continuously enhance our library service via emerging information and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), reflective of societal trends in general and specifically to improve channels for communication with all stakeholders. We will develop, promote and enhance access to our digital collections, including archival and local history material and provide training opportunities to bridge the digital divide internally and externally.

We are committed to providing an innovative and technology-rich service that will meet the present and future needs of our communities.



Objective 6: Marketing and Communications

Fingal Libraries will market itself as a democratic, inclusive and dynamic space freely open to all who live and work in the County. The need to address users and non-users alike will be embedded in our marketing and communications strategy and we will continue to be responsive to changing information and community needs.

Fingal Libraries will engage with all key stakeholders including elected representatives, citizens, staff, other departments in the Council and local and national organisations to ensure that we understand what is required of our library service during the lifetime of this plan and beyond.

We are aligned to the corporate and strategic goals of the Council and we will communicate these goals through our activities, branch network and multiple marketing channels.

Objective 7: Collaboration and Partnerships

Ensure that Fingal Libraries continues to remain visible and relevant in the community through collaborations and partnerships. Network building and collaboration will allow us to share resources, develop new programmes, gain new expertise and reach new audiences.

In making connections and developing partnerships with stakeholders including other Council departments, national and local groups and the business and education sector, Fingal Libraries can provide a range of library and information services to meet the varied and changing needs of the community.

Fingal Libraries will engage in dialogue with partners in the community to extend our role as intermediaries in the lifelong learning process, from early childhood through to adult life.

These objectives will be implemented by way of 42 actions which are fully described in section 9 of this document.





2. Fingal Libraries Vision, Mission and Values

2. Fingal Libraries Vision, Mission and Values



Vision

Fingal Libraries will be a dynamic and inclusive space supporting culture, recreation, literacy, education and economic development in the County.



Mission

Our mission is to respond, preserve, and anticipate.

We will respond to the needs of our diverse communities.
We will preserve and make accessible Fingal's unique historical identity.
We will anticipate future service needs.



Values

We value:

Innovation • Collaboration • Intellectual Freedom • Accountability
Integrity • Adaptability • Inclusion • Accessibility

Strategic Goals

Provide a dynamic and inclusive space for the community
Support culture and recreation
Enable literacy, education and economic development



Objectives

The plan contains 7 objectives relating to the following areas:

Workforce
Capital and infrastructure
Collections and resources
Programming of events and activities
Technology
Marketing and communications
Collaboration and partnerships



Actions

The 42 actions described in this plan flow from our vision, mission statement, strategic goals and objectives and reflect the findings of the consultation process.



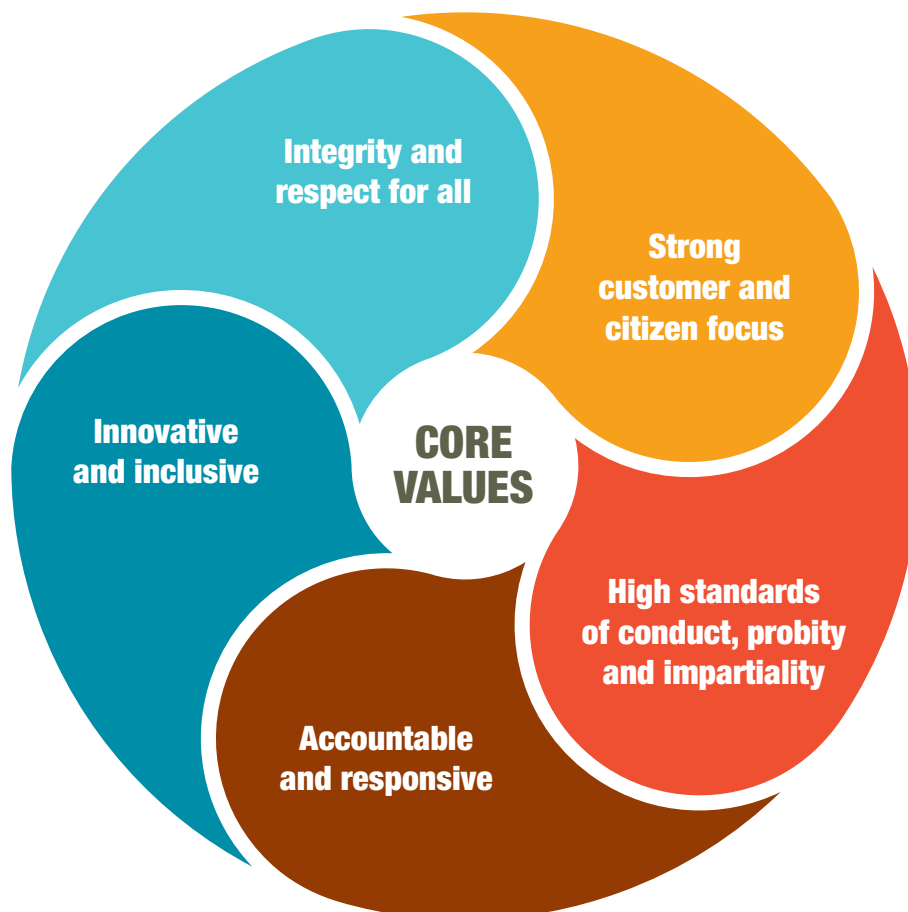


3. Introduction and Methodology

3. Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

Fingal County Council's Mission is for Fingal to be the place of choice to live, work, visit and to do business in Ireland. This is reflected through a wide range of strategic assets supporting vibrant communities, prosperous businesses and tourism.



Fingal County Development Plan 2018-2023 sets out the intention of the Council to:

Continue to support the development of the existing library service and provide for an expanded service and network subject to need and the availability of resources.

Under the Local Government Act 2001, the Council has a statutory obligation to produce a Library Development Programme to be adopted by the Council. The programme is a public statement encompassing the vision, mission, values, principles, priorities, strategic and development objectives of Fingal Libraries for the next five years.

The Council's mission and core values have informed the Library Development Plan 2018-2023, which will provide for delivery of a library service that responds to the needs of the vibrant, diverse community of Fingal, preserves and makes accessible Fingal's unique historical identity and anticipates future needs.

Methodology

A Library Development Plan Working Group was convened in January 2017 and devised a plan for consultation with stakeholders across the County, using a variety of methods and forums. The consultation process began in February 2017 and concluded at the end of May 2017.

Through an online survey and SWOT Analysis workshops, staff were invited to share their views on current services and their ideas for the future in relation to library collections, customer service, staff skills needs, collaboration, communication and promotion and technology.

Public consultation included an online survey for the public and a submission form for organisations, which were hosted on Consult Fingal, the Council's online consultation portal.



The surveys were promoted by staff in branches and on the Library and Council websites. Fliers and posters were displayed in branches and at community centres. Articles were published in local newspapers and the Fingal Public Participation Network (FPPN) newsletter. In total 500 responses were received to the public survey and seven organisations including schools, community centres and voluntary bodies made online submissions for consideration.

A series of focus groups was conducted with a cross section of people from Fingal, consisting of both library users and non-users. In total, over 60 people took part including participants involved in groups meeting at community centres and Fingal Senior Citizens Forum. The Foróige Youth Services in Blanchardstown and Balbriggan kindly assisted in consultation among young people involved in a range of youth groups through facilitated discussion.

Library staff also consulted with service users at a wide range of programmed events in Library branches across the County including book clubs, class visits, afterschool clubs, chess, scrabble, active age, camera clubs and at language and ICT classes. Feedback was also invited from users of the Mobile Libraries and Housebound Service (by telephone interview).

Library Development Working Group members made presentations and invited feedback at meetings of the Fingal Public Participation Network Arts, Heritage, Culture and Community Linkage Group and the Fingal Local Community Development Committee.

The key findings of the consultation process are summarised in Appendix 3 & 4 and form a key input into the formation of the Library Development Plan.

Europe Direct

The Europe Direct Centre at Blanchardstown is your starting point for finding information about the EU. The Centre provides access to material covering a wide variety of topics, including:

- General information about how the EU works.
- Information about the various EU institutions and agencies.
- The latest news about EU affairs and events.
- Information about citizen rights in the EU.



4. Fingal: A Diverse and Vibrant County



4. Fingal: A Diverse and Vibrant County

Fingal County stretches from the River Liffey and the Dublin City boundary in the south to the Meath boundary north of Balbriggan and from the coast in the east to the Meath and Kildare boundaries in the west. Fingal covers 450 square kilometres and is defined by the diversity of its landscape, with rural, urban and suburban dimensions.

Fingal is a high amenity area characterised by rich cultural, natural and historical heritage, with more than 80 kilometres of coastline stretching from Howth to the north of Balbriggan, three large protected estuaries and 13 major beaches. The County has strong traditions of horticulture, agriculture and fishing, a range of medieval settlements such as Swords and Lusk, and several heritage properties including the castles at Malahide and Ardgillan. Fingal has a thriving arts sector, with Draóicht and the Seamus Ennis Centre providing hubs for creativity and culture in Dublin 15 and the North County.

Fingal is situated in a prime location for business on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor and has a number of major assets, including Dublin Airport. The key sectors of business in the Fingal area include the Information & Communication Technology and Aviation sectors with some of the world's leading companies operating here. The Food, Beverage and Agribusiness Sector are growing and the Healthcare and Pharmaceutical sector is also prominent in the County. Unemployment in Fingal is at 10.3% (compared to 12.9% nationally) according to Census 2016. Creating the environment to increase employment in Fingal is a key objective of the Council.

In terms of third level education providers, Fingal has an Institute of Technology in Blanchardstown and links with Dublin City University.

Fingal has a population of 296,020¹. This is the third largest, fastest growing, and youngest population of any county in Ireland and represents growth of close to 80% in comparison with 30% nationally since 1996². Since the 2011 census the population of Fingal has increased by 8% and by 2021 the population of this vibrant and diverse County is expected to be over 330,000. The population is ethnically and culturally diverse; 23% of the population were born outside of Ireland (Census 2016). Fingal's primary and post-primary school populations increased by 19% and 20% respectively.

The Write Time

Throughout the month of September Fingal Library branches hosted creative writing workshops and author talks for the second annual Write Time Festival. The Write Time Festival celebrates the written and spoken word in Fingal, sparking the imagination and inspiring creativity.

¹ <http://census.cso.ie/sapmap/>

² Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2020

Fingal Libraries & Council Offices





Participants in public consultation were asked to write what comes to mind when they think of the Library, a sample of responses are illustrated above.



5. Overview of Fingal Libraries

5. Overview of Fingal Libraries

Fingal Library Service, which forms a fundamental part of the community and cultural infrastructure in the County, has 131 staff³, operates through a network of ten branches and offers Mobile, Housebound, Local Studies and Archives services.

Active membership of the service is at 30.4% of the population and Fingal has the highest average opening hours of any library authority in the country at 44.6 hours per week.

In 2017, 1.14 million visits were made to our libraries and nearly 1.1 million items were borrowed. In tandem with branch libraries, our Local Studies and Archives section and Mobile and Housebound units provide a wide range of services, opening up a world of opportunity and learning to Fingal's diverse communities.

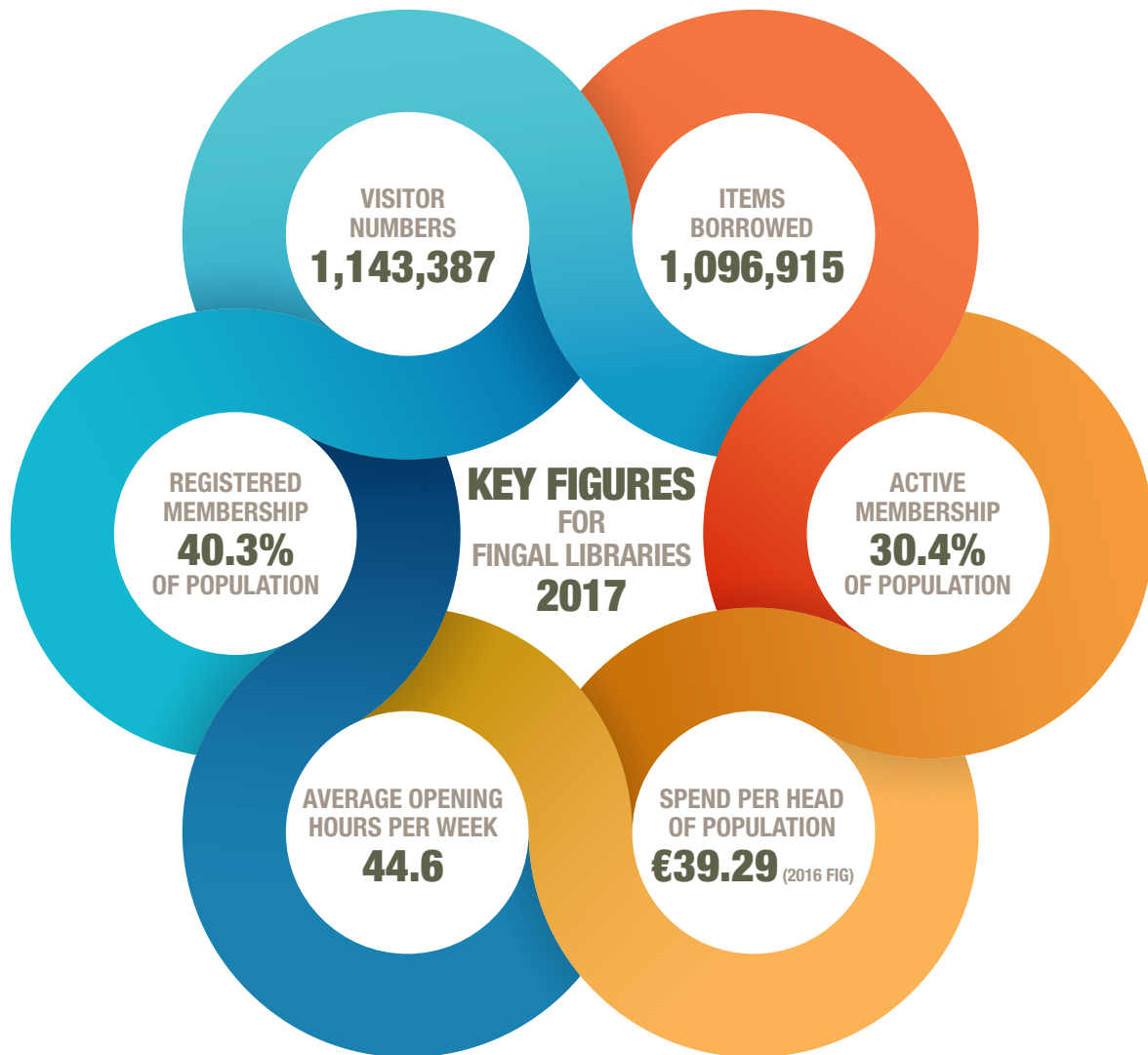
Fingal Libraries provides a wide range of traditional and digital services, offering 24-hour access to ebooks, emagazines, enewspapers and elearning courses. Libraries offer a varied programme of cultural and educational events from author visits and storytelling sessions to history lectures and genealogy courses. Blanchardstown, Fingal's flagship Library, houses a Europe Direct Centre and a Work Matters Service to support business and enterprise (the latter service is also available in Balbriggan Library).

The library service is part of the Housing and Community Directorate which also includes housing services, community development, arts and sports. The County Librarian reports to the Director of Services for Housing and Community who in turn reports to the Chief Executive.

The library service reports to the Council's Art, Culture, Heritage and Community SPC (Strategic Policy Committee). This Committee meets four times a year and assists the Council in the formulation, development, monitoring and review of library policy.

Mobile Libraries

Three new mobile vans joined us in late 2017 and in 2018 a fourth van will mean that our whole fleet has been replaced. This investment of €1m in the mobile library fleet will ensure that all areas of the County have access to a library service.



Fingal Library Branches

Fingal County Council has a network of ten branch libraries at Balbriggan, Baldoyle, Blanchardstown, Donabate, Garristown, Howth, Malahide, Rush, Skerries and Swords. Blanchardstown, a suburb in the west of the County, is the location of the largest branch in the network at 2,619m², with Garristown providing a rural setting for the smallest branch at 76m².

The newest branch, Donabate/Portrane which opened in April 2014, is the only public library in Ireland to be co-located with a community and leisure centre. This Library has also been equipped electronically to accommodate My Open Library - an initiative which will facilitate use of the Library outside of regular opening hours.

The library in Rush which opened in July 2010, won awards for the architects who converted it from a 19th century church to a fully functioning modern library.

Two original Carnegie Libraries in Fingal were refurbished and extended - Balbriggan in 2006 and Malahide in 2007. Howth Library dates from the 1930s and Baldoyle Library, which opened in 2004, is a conversion and extension of a former house and RIC barracks.

The Council plans to build a new library in Swords in 2020, which will not only replace the existing library in the town but will also be the County Library for Fingal. Located in the Swords Cultural Quarter (SCQ), it will adjoin a theatre and encompass an exhibition area, meeting rooms, themed areas for children and adults, creative spaces and areas for study and reflection.

The Council also plans to begin the process of the refurbishment of Skerries Library in 2018. This Carnegie Library first opened in 1911 and its many intact original features will be incorporated into the refurbishment process.

The Mobile Libraries and Housebound services are located in the Coolmine Industrial Estate in Dublin 15. Three of the four mobile vans were replaced in 2017 with a fourth new van due to join the fleet in 2018.

Local Studies and Archives are based at Clonmel House in Swords but it is planned to move these services into the new County Library in Swords in due course. The headquarters of Fingal Libraries is based at County Hall, Swords.

Buried in Fingal

This unique database was launched on 8 May by Fingal libraries Local Studies and Archives department. This is a free, online database of all of Fingal's burial records, indexed and fully searchable accessible to all. Find it at <https://buried.fingal.ie/>



Fingal Library Staff

Fingal County Council's Libraries Department currently employs 131 permanent staff who deliver frontline services to the public throughout the County over a six day week. A workforce plan agreed with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in 2016 is being implemented by the Council to ensure that there are adequate numbers of staff in place to deliver and develop library services.

Fingal Library staff, through continued up-skilling and training, ensure the library service provided is dynamic, enhanced and relevant to the citizens it serves.

Fingal Library Collections and Resources

Fingal Libraries currently holds 617,520 items of stock including the following special collections:

Early Years Collection: A core collection of sets of books suitable for use from birth to six years, aimed at pre-school and junior primary classes.

Bibliotherapy Collection: 38 titles recommended by health professions covering subjects such as depression, anxiety and other challenges in the area of mental health. These are currently being supplemented by the Healthy Ireland at Your Library and by the Jigsaw (Youth Mental Health Service) collections.

Work Matters Collection: The Work Matters collections offer books and reference materials, newspapers, journals and online resources for people seeking advice on employment, career development and business enterprise.

More specialised collections include:

Travel Collection: A large collection of classic travel writing.

Local Studies and Archives: Special collections include the Cloghran Stud Records, Cumann na mBan correspondence and memorabilia, Thomas Ashe collection, Fingal Sports collection and a selection of the Talbots of Malahide estate papers on CD. Archival stock includes The Hely-Hutchinson Collection; The Fingall Estate Papers; the Papers of the Hamilton Estate, Barons of Abbottstown; the Records of Cloghran Stud; papers relating to the Battle of Ashbourne 1916 and Bridgid Connolly; the Shackleton Mill Archives; the Minutes of the Fingal Farming Society and a number of small collections. Archive collections may also be viewed by appointment.

I view Blanchardstown Library as an invaluable resource. It has served me from student days, pregnancy, motherhood, resources for my young children now my teenagers.

Response to staff survey



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair pulled back, wearing a bright pink ruffled top. She is smiling and looking down and to the left. The background shows an office environment with a desk, a blue folder, and a computer monitor. A semi-transparent white box with an orange border is overlaid on the image, containing the text '6. Fingal Library Services'.

6. Fingal Library Services

6. Fingal Library Services

Traditional and Digital Resources and Services

Our Library Management System, Sierra, provides a single point of access for library members to over 15 million items in the 333 library branches across the country. The service allows members of the library to request titles and have these delivered quickly and efficiently to their local branches.

Fingal Libraries offers traditional print resources - books, newspapers and magazines - and non-print resources such as talking books, DVDs, CDs and framed prints.

Digital services, which are available 24/7, include free access to electronic books, newspapers, comics, language courses and a variety of online learning resources. They continue to remain popular, with 78,539 eService transactions in 2017.

New members can register online and the Fingal Libraries app ensures that the online catalogue, item renewal and the range of digital services are available on mobile devices. Free Wi-Fi, access to public PCs and a self-service print/copy/scan facility is on offer in all branch libraries. Self-service using RFID technology is currently available at six branch libraries. Wii devices with games, and iMacs are available at larger branches and Donabate Library offers a Smart Board and a 3D printing service to the public. Balbriggan Library also offers a 3D printing service.

A range of assistive technology is available in all branch libraries to ensure accessibility for all levels of ability and disability. Digital signage is used for promoting services in branches and a range of social media platforms are utilised by library staff to promote and communicate with individuals and the community.

Fingal App

The Fingal Libraries app allows you access your library service at the touch of a button. Some features include:

Remote catalogue search - now you can find a title, reserve, borrow or renew it, straight from your mobile. **Barcode scan** - why buy when you can borrow? The app allows you to scan the barcode on any title, anywhere, then search the catalogue to see if you can borrow it. **Library information** - from events to opening hours to directions, regularly updated service information gives you all the knowledge you need.



We cannot afford to buy a computer. My husband would not have found a job without our Library and the use of its computers.

Response to staff survey

Programming relevant and innovative events

The library service aims to meet a diverse spectrum of people's needs in the areas of information, learning, culture, literacy, employment skills, business support and leisure activities. Each month a range of programmed events and activities takes place in libraries around the County, with the aim of meeting these needs. Book club meetings, author visits, creative writing sessions, genealogy workshops, language learning, business talks and history lectures are just some of the many programmed events which take place. In 2017, there were 1.14 million visits to Fingal Libraries; many of these visits were to attend one of our numerous events.

Underpinning literacy and encouraging reader development

The promotion of books and reading among very young children is underpinned by 'The Youngest Ages Can Turn Pages, Fingal County Libraries Early Years Literacy Strategy' (2013). This was the first public library literacy strategy in Ireland and was developed following consultation with community stakeholders in early education and the third level sector. The strategy aims to raise awareness of the importance of early literacy and numeracy and to provide support during the literacy process. 'The Battle of the Book' and 'The Big Sports Quiz' are programmes designed for more confident readers and digital literacy is supported through Coder Dojo and 3D printing workshops. We will also implement the Right to Read campaign at Fingal level. This campaign will provide a nationally coordinated framework for literacy support and development through all local authorities.

I have a son with dyslexia. I find the Library an integral part of our family's education.

Response to staff survey



Fingal Festival of History

The first Fingal Festival of History took place in Newbridge House, Donabate, from Friday 29th September to Sunday 1st October, 2017. History-lovers enjoyed fascinating talks, including a talk to mark the centenary of the death of Thomas Ashe, a tour of Newbridge House and much more. This was such a success that Fingal libraries plan to replicate it in 2018.

Reinforcing a sense of place through history and culture

Fingal Libraries supports and facilitates the development of the memory bank of Fingal via collection development, community engagement, the digitisation of local historical resources, and the delivery of collaborative commemorative events and programmes. Fingal Libraries played a significant role in the 1916 Commemorative Programme with a series of lectures, an exhibition, an information pack for schools, and three memorabilia days. Libraries will make a similar contribution to the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022.

Supporting Economic development

The Work Matters service is available at Blanchardstown and Balbriggan Libraries to support business, enterprise and employment. Staff from these Libraries engage with local agencies such as Chambers of Commerce and Intreo Offices to run events for budding entrepreneurs and job seekers. Free digital resources including business databases are available, as are pre-bookable meeting rooms in both Libraries. Work Matters underpins Fingal Libraries commitment to support business, enterprise and employment throughout Fingal. This service will be extended to more branch libraries from the end of 2017, with funding made available from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The Europe Direct Centre at Blanchardstown Library is the local link to Europe for the citizens of Fingal and a forum for engagement on European issues. The Centre hosts European-themed events and provides information on EU rights and funding opportunities via information and networking activities. Blanchardstown Library also hosts 'Eurodesk' to support those working with young people in Europe.

Enabling Wellbeing

Fingal Libraries promotes health and lifestyle through a range of materials and initiatives such as 'The Healthy Reading Scheme': a range of self-help materials to support emotional well-being. Fingal is one of six local authorities participating in a new 'HEAL – Health Education and Literacy' pilot project. We will also be involved in the "Healthy Ireland at your library" initiative and the "Read your Mind" project in partnership with Jigsaw, which places an emphasis on mental health issues in young people. Our aim is to address the critical issue of Health Literacy among the public, with a focus on online health literacy.

E-services

Download our App, audiobooks, eBooks, magazines and newspapers from a wide range on offer. We also offer hundreds of courses free of charge to all Fingal library members. Choose from our extensive range of ebooks and audiobooks, comicplus, mango language learning, proquest online newspapers, digital magazines and newspapers and much more.



7. Collaboration and Partnership



7. Collaboration and Partnership

Collaboration and partnership is important for Fingal Libraries in delivering a quality service. We recognise that it is by working together, collaborating across publicly funded agencies, civil society and with other stakeholders that we can coordinate the resources available to us most effectively and efficiently to enhance quality of life and community wellbeing. Through partnership Fingal Libraries can provide a range of library and information services to meet the varied and changing needs of the community. This engagement facilitates extension of the library's role as intermediary in the lifelong learning process, from early childhood through to adult life. Below is a flavour of events Fingal Libraries has run with different partners to enhance its services:

Children's Literacy Services

Fingal Libraries provides a wide range of initiatives which support children's literacy and it has developed an Early Years Literacy Strategy for the County. From story-telling on a steam train with the Laureate na nÓg to author visits and the Battle of the Book, a diverse range of novel and creative approaches is used to develop literacy skills and promote a love of reading among our children and young people. In relation to children's literacy services, we have collaborated with local schools, ITB in Blanchardstown and Sofia Housing in Donabate, amongst others, on a range of projects.

Right to Read

The Right to Read Campaign is being developed to provide a nationally coordinated framework for literacy support and development through all local authorities in line with the Programme for Government. The public library service is crucial to delivering the Right to Read Campaign. Today's public libraries provide a wide range of services in information, learning, creativity, culture and community activity, with reading and reader development remaining the fundamental objectives, delivered through the libraries' skilled workforce.



Read Your Mind

The Read Your Mind project in collaboration with Jigsaw Blanchardstown and Jigsaw North Fingal will provide support for young people experiencing mental health difficulties. Read Your Mind brings together an invaluable collection of over 113 books on mental health that are available for free to young people, their parents and friends at libraries across Fingal.

Lifelong Learning

The public library has a key role in supporting lifelong learning and Fingal Libraries' approach is based on an understanding that learning does not start or end with formal education. Learning can relate to people's employment and daily life and, for most people, is a lifelong activity. In an increasingly complex society people need to acquire new skills, including those relating to IT and new technologies, at various stages of life. We support the community in lifelong learning through various events and activities in each of the library branches throughout Fingal. Lifelong learning is delivered in partnership with local community groups such as historical societies, Education and Training Boards, Age Action, Digitize the Nation, the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), University of the Third Age and businesses such as the daa as part of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

Libraries' STEAM programme

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) are increasingly important for understanding and engaging in emergent technologies and opportunities.

Fingal libraries successfully runs engaging and fun STEAM-based activities for children across the network of libraries. The aim is to develop skills and knowledge which will inspire early scientific exploration, discovery and learning. Some of the events are run in collaboration with organisations such as Bricks 4 Kidz and the Rediscovery Centre, as well as other events organised in-house. The events are a great way to get children in the community excited about these areas as they help to develop their creative potential and critical thinking skills.



Economic development support

Fingal Libraries participated in a national pilot with the Local Government Management Agency to identify local stakeholders, form partnerships and develop sustainable and mutually beneficial co-operation mechanisms. We work to complement the work of the bodies listed below, involved in leading the delivery of business and employment support services locally and this has culminated in the establishment of Work Matters areas in Fingal Libraries.

- Local Enterprise Office (LEO)
- Fingal Chambers of Commerce
- Local Employment Service
- Education Training Board (ETB)
- INTREO
- IE Network
- Irish Patents Office
- Fingal County Council Departments
- European Commission (through Europe Direct)



Work Matters at Fingal Libraries

Be it an idea for a start-up or a business in growth, we offer a free workspace that perfectly fits the requirements of our digital age. Work Matters provides business, job seeking and career advancement information, books and reference materials, newspapers, journals and online resources. You can also avail of networking events and various workshops.



8. Funding

8. Funding

Fingal's library service is funded from the Council's annual budget, the adoption of which is a reserved function of the elected members. The budget covers the operational cost of the Library Service, including the Archives Section, and service support costs.

A significant aspect of the libraries' budget is the book fund which will increase by 6.6% in 2018 to €800,000. A national procurement process put in place by the LGMA in 2016 ensures good value for money in the purchasing of books, CDs and DVDs. In November 2017, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced an investment package of €3.75m for public libraries, to enhance services and to pave the way for the launch of the new national Public Library Strategy in 2018. Fingal Libraries will get just over €100,000 of this funding to continue the roll out of self-service technology in our libraries, to extend the Work Matters business and employment initiative to more branches, and to supplement the book stock on the new mobile library vans.

Sources of funding:

Department of Community and Rural Affairs grant	Other grants & subsidies	Library fees & fines
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Capital Programme

Fingal County Council Capital Programme⁴ sets out proposed major infrastructural projects for the Fingal area, which include housing construction, roads, community and recreational facilities. The Capital programme is a rolling three-year programme which is reviewed and updated annually. The delivery of the Capital programme is subject to funding being available and on the planning and tendering processes. The Capital programme for 2017-2019 includes funding for the refurbishment of Skerries Library and the development of the new County Library in the Swords Cultural Quarter.

Sources of funding for the Capital Programme:

Exchequer/EU Funding	Loans	Development levies	Council resources
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⁴ Fingal County Council Capital Programme
<http://www.fingal.ie/your-council/budgets-expenditure-and-financial-statements/capital-programme/>

9. Fingal Libraries Strategic Goals and Objectives 2018-2023



Vision

Fingal Libraries will be a dynamic and inclusive space supporting culture, recreation, literacy, education and economic development in the County

Objective 1: Workforce

To ensure that libraries are staffed with well trained, informed and customer focussed staff.

Fingal Libraries and the Council’s HR Department have developed and are currently implementing a workforce plan, as determined in the report ‘Managing the Delivery of Effective Library Services’. Recent recruitment at all levels, of both professional and non-professional staff, has brought current staffing levels in Fingal Libraries to 131.

Actions

1.1	Maintain staff numbers as determined by the current workforce plan. Seek additional staffing resources as the population of the County increases and new services are developed.
1.2	Ensure staff receive the appropriate training and acquire the necessary skills to enable them to carry out their work.
1.3	Provide opportunities for staff to engage in continuing professional development through the Council’s scheme of Assistance and within the PMDS and competency framework.
1.4	Ensure relevant child protection, health and safety, and other statutory requirements are adhered to in compliance with national legislation and the Council’s policies.



Makerspace in public libraries can open more participatory access for digital workshops, arts and crafts, group study, and promotional areas for libraries.

Response to staff survey

Objective 2: Capital and Infrastructure

To provide high-quality, welcoming, accessible spaces which meet the needs of library users.

Public libraries today are not only defined by their print and digital resources but also by the high quality spaces they provide for individuals and groups. The Library has become the 'community living room' or that 'third space' between home and work where people are welcome to engage, create and learn.

Actions

2.1

Provide a County Library as part of the Swords Civic and Cultural Centre. This new library will replace the existing branch library in Swords and will also house local studies and archival collections.

2.2

Refurbish Skerries Library to create an enhanced facility for the area.

2.3

Develop and maintain library infrastructure so that it continues to serve the needs of the community and meets health and safety standards.

2.4

Consider the development of new library branches in areas with growing populations.

...I would like to see the Library Service adapting and catering to a diverse population: Continuing with its ethos of accessibility to all and supporting the educational and recreational needs of our youngest users through all the stages of their lives.

Response to staff survey



Objective 3: Collections and Resources

To endeavour to both recognise and meet the changing needs of our borrowers, in accordance with our recently reviewed Collection Development Policy.

An appreciation of ever-evolving technology will enable us to remain relevant in the resources we offer. We appreciate the degree to which an innovative approach to collection management will enable provision of state-of-the-art electronic services in conjunction with more traditional formats.

Fingal Libraries will continue to recognise that collections and resources must reflect the increasingly diverse needs of our borrowers. Collections will, as far as is practical, meet distinct demographic, linguistic and cultural requirements.

Actions

3.1	Continue to provide library stock in a variety of formats that reflect borrower needs.
3.2	Continue to build e-service resources such as downloadable books, audiobooks, newspapers, magazines and learning courses.
3.3	Continue to assess online database provision and special collections with a view to providing the most relevant information resources to service users.
3.4	Scan Local Studies and Archives material with a view to digitisation and increased accessibility beyond the physical environment.
3.5	Continue to review the Collection Development Policy to ensure it allows Fingal Libraries to offer the most relevant collection and resource materials possible, within given parameters.



...Fingal libraries cater for a diverse population and play an important role in integration...

Response to staff survey

Objective 4: Programming of events and activities

To encourage the community to reach its full potential and engage all citizens through an innovative programme of events and activities.

Fingal Libraries' programming will reflect national programmes around themes such as culture, creativity, heritage and science and will be reflective of the diverse and specific needs of our citizenry across Fingal. It will reach audiences across all ages, cultures and ethnicities and create an inclusive platform for collaboration, development, participation and engagement.

Lifelong learning will be a key aspect of Fingal Libraries with opportunities to engage in informal learning at all life stages in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Actions

4.1	Take a key role in delivering Creative Ireland projects within our library network.
4.2	Continue to provide an employment and business information service to our citizens through the Work Matters programme.
4.3	Ensure links to European information by continued hosting of the Europe Direct Information Centre in Blanchardstown Library.
4.4	Ensure that our citizens have access to emerging technologies by offering STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) based activities for all ages.
4.5	Programme annual national events such as Bealtaine, Science Week, Heritage Week and Seachtain na Gaeilge amongst others.
4.6	Connect with communities and schools through activities and services provided by our mobile library service.
4.7	Develop the Right to Read action plan in line with national guidelines.
4.8	Develop a program of activities for the Healthy Ireland initiative at your library.
4.9	Continue to provide age-friendly services in line with Fingal County Council policies.



Objective 5: Technology

To reinforce the position of Libraries in the community as key points of access to information technology and digital services

We will endeavour to continuously enhance our library service via emerging information and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), reflective of societal trends in general and specifically to improve channels for communication with all stakeholders. We will develop, promote and enhance access to our digital collections, including archival and local history material and provide training opportunities to bridge the digital divide.

We are committed to providing an innovative and technology-rich service that will meet the present and future needs of our communities.

Actions

5.1	Maintain and upgrade internet and Wi-Fi services.
5.2	Empower citizens by providing a unique free training space and offering learning opportunities.
5.3	Enhance public access to digital collections and services.
5.4	Recognise potential emerging technologies.
5.5	Complete the roll out of self-service/RFID technology in branches by installing it at Baldoyle, Garristown, Howth and Skerries Libraries.

Libraries should be promoted as think tanks/idea stores for the community: A meeting and gathering space for members of the community to exchange ideas.

Response to staff survey

Objective 6: Marketing and Communications

Fingal Libraries will market itself as a democratic, inclusive and dynamic space freely open to all who live and work in the County. The need to address users and non-users alike will be embedded in our marketing and communications strategy and we will continue to be responsive to changing information and community needs.

Fingal Libraries will engage with all key stakeholders including elected representatives, citizens, staff, other departments in the Council and local and national organisations to ensure that we understand what is required of our library service during the lifetime of this plan and beyond.

We are aligned to the corporate and strategic goals of the Council and we will communicate these goals through our activities, branch network and multiple marketing channels.

Actions

6.1	Engage with Strategic Policy Committees, the Public Participation Network, the Local Community Development Committee, internal and external stakeholders and relevant local and national agencies and organisations.
6.2	Review the information needs of stakeholders on a regular basis as we respond to changing demographics.
6.3	Engage citizens using all forms of communication and social media platforms.
6.4	Explore new and emerging methods of marketing and communication and continue to be early adopters of new communication technologies.
6.6	Foster and strengthen links with local and national media channels.

Other Council Departments should be encouraged to view libraries as an outreach post - we have the space within the community that they could use for public consultations etc.

Response to staff survey

Objective 7: Collaboration and Partnerships

Ensure that Fingal Libraries continues to remain visible and relevant in the community through collaborations and partnerships. Network building and collaboration will allow us to share resources, develop new programmes, gain new expertise and reach new audiences.

In making connections and developing partnerships with stakeholders including other Council departments, national and local groups and the business and education sector, Fingal Libraries can provide a range of library and information services to meet the varied and changing needs of the community.

Fingal Libraries will engage in dialogue with partners in the community to extend our role as intermediaries in the lifelong learning process, from early childhood through to adult life.

Actions

7.1	Work with the Libraries Development Unit of the LGMA on the development and implementation of national programmes.
7.2	Collaborate with local service providers in the voluntary and community sectors to ensure maximum relevance of programming and reach to the community.
7.3	Continue to engage with the Fingal Public Participation Network and the Local Community Development Committee.
7.4	Continue to foster meaningful engagement with pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and with third level institutions.
7.5	Deliver enhanced family literacy and reader supports as outlined in our Right to Read and Literacy Action Plan.
7.6	Deliver collaborative programmes with other Council Departments such as Arts, Community and Sports.
7.7	Engage with Jigsaw to deliver initiatives relating to information on mental health for young people.



Implementation and Monitoring

During the lifetime of the Fingal Library Development Plan (2018-2023) we will continually monitor, respond to and anticipate the changing needs of the diverse and rapidly expanding community of Fingal. The Plan will be regularly reviewed and contextualised by Fingal County's Corporate Plan and other relevant policies and plans.

In relation to implementation we will engage staff through regular team meetings where feedback about progress will be encouraged and staff suggestions actively sought.

Effective engagement with our borrowers through provision of high levels of customer service will enable a rapid response to changing community needs.

Our dialogue with the community through our collaborations and partnerships will continue to inform the development of the library service in Fingal.

Continuous feedback will be sought and evaluation of events and programmes will continue. Staff performance will be enhanced through training and continuous professional development, which will be assessed as part of our performance management system.

Engagement at national level will also ensure that high level goals will be achieved.

Fingal Libraries will report on progress and implementation of the Plan to the Art, Cultural, Heritage and Community Strategic Policy Committee and will continue to be represented on interdepartmental committees and working groups within the Council.

...a place where you can sit down and get lost in an adventure for a while or borrow books and bring them home...

Comment from participant in consultation



Healthy Ireland at your library

Healthy Ireland is a government initiative which aims to create a society where everyone can enjoy mental and physical health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported. Healthy Ireland at your Library is an exciting new service which has developed from the Healthy Ireland initiative and is available free of charge in Fingal County Libraries.

Appendix 1: Service points, budget and stock

Service Points

Balbriggan Library

George's Square, Balbriggan,
Co. Dublin, K32 TW27

Email: balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie

Baldoyle Library

The Mall (Off Strand Road),
Baldoyle, Dublin 13, D13 Y304

Email: baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie

Blanchardstown Library

The Civic Centre, Blanchardstown Centre,
Dublin 15, D15 RY73

Email: blanchlib@fingal.ie

Email: blanchref@fingal.ie

Donabate Portrane Community Library

Donabate Portrane Community Leisure Centre,
Portrane Road, Donabate, Co. Dublin, K36 F598

Email: donabate.library@fingal.ie

Garristown Library

Main Street, Garristown,
County Dublin, A42 Y437

Email: garristownlibrary@fingal.ie

Howth Library

Main Street, Howth,
Dublin 13, D13 VY50

Email: howthlibrary@fingal.ie

Malahide Library

The Mall, Malahide,
Co Dublin, K36 EW63

Email: malahidelibrary@fingal.ie

Rush Library

Chapel Green, Rush,
County Dublin, K56 ED95

Email: rushlibrary@fingal.ie

Skerries Library

Strand Street, Skerries,
Co Dublin, K34 FT61

Email: skerrieslibrary@fingal.ie

Swords Library

Rathbeale Road, Swords,
Co. Dublin, K67 YP79

Email: swordslibrary@fingal.ie

Mobile Library

Unit 34, Coolmine Industrial Estate,
Dublin 15, D15 Y271

Email: mobilelibraries@fingal.ie

Housebound Service

Email: houseboundlibrary@fingal.ie

Local Studies Library and Archives

Access to our collections is available in the
Reading Room of Fingal Local Studies Library and Archives,
Clonmel House, Forster Way, Swords, Co. Dublin

Email: local.studies@fingal.ie

Revenue Budget for Libraries and Archives 2015-2017

	2017	2016	2015
	€	€	€
Library Service Operations	6,270,600	6,102,700	5,755,800
Archive Service	107,400	103,700	115,700
Book Fund	750,000	750,000	750,000
Service Support Costs	5,045,600	4,910,100	4,912,300
Total	12,173,600	11,866,500	11,533,800

Stock 2017

Library Branches and Items in Stock			
Balbriggan 65,798	Bookstore 15,944	Local Studies 18,166	Malahide 71,314
Baldoyle 30,750	Staff Library 10,236	Mobiles 71,889	Rush 36,432
Blanchardstown 149,981	Housebound 15,712	Garristown 13,851	Skerries 20,975
Donabate 15,699	Headquarters 1,303	Howth 22,118	Swords 57,352
TOTAL 617,520			

Appendix 2: Membership and activities

Membership

Registered membership	Active membership
119,277 40.3% of the population	90,144 30.4% of the population

Activities

Public access PC sessions 2017	eService transactions 2017
148,399	78,539

Social media

www.facebook.com/FingalLibraries

www.twitter.com/fingallibraries

<https://www.instagram.com/librariesfingal/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/fingallibraries/pins/>

<http://www.yourlibraryapp.co.uk/fingallibraries/>

Fingal Libraries are on Social Media!



Appendix 3: PESTLE Analysis

The Library Development Plan Working Group conducted a PESTLE Analysis to build a picture of the external factors which impact on the operating context for Fingal Libraries. The outcome of the process is summarised below.

Political

International

- Alignment with IFLA Guidelines, UNESCO Manifesto; a framework for best practice
- Delivery of EU funded programmes e.g. Work Matters
- Implications of Brexit e.g. migration, exchange rates

National

- Opportunities for All, the National Strategy for Public Libraries (currently being reviewed)
- Putting People First, the Government's Action Programme for Effective Local Government
- A range of other Government policies on the Digital Divide, mental health promotion, literacy and numeracy, enterprise and entrepreneurship, the National Arts Plan for Children and Culture 2025

Local

- Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023
- Fingal Corporate Plan 2015-2019
- Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2020
- Library Service's position within the Council; Housing and Community Directorate
- Working with Councillors
- Allocation of funding to libraries

Economic

- National recovery from recession
- Planned capital projects; Swords Cultural Quarter and Civic Centre, Skerries Library; upgrade of Mobile Service fleet
- Demographics; a well-educated population and skilled workforce, a diverse socio-economic profile with pockets of disadvantage
- Libraries role in tourism promotion in Fingal, a county with rich and diverse natural, cultural and built heritage

Social

- Demographic profile of the community; ethnically diverse, fast growing, relatively young
- Demographics differ between Electoral Districts with ageing populations in areas
- Libraries serve both urban and rural communities
- Access to transport influences access to service
- Libraries role in supporting digital literacy
- Libraries role in social inclusion and culture
- Organisational culture

Technological

- The electronic revolution requires early adopting of technology coupled with sustaining and supporting use
- Striking a balance between traditional formats and digital resources, providing choice
- ICT support requirements
- Social Media
- Research; databases, open-access resources
- Centralised procurement of stock vs. meeting needs at local level
- Staff require continuous professional development

Legal

- LGMA policy, centralised public procurement
- Local Government Acts
- Data protection and freedom of information legislation
- Public sector pay agreements; extension of the Lansdowne Road Agreement
- Corporate governance e.g. health and safety, auditing, procurement, Garda-vetting for suppliers
- Internal and external auditing of finances and procedures
- Risk assessment

Environmental

- Fingal is a high amenity area, with rich cultural and natural heritage and tourism value
- Some Library branches are in protected buildings
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; increasing access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by ICT, supports sustainable development and improves people's lives
- Meeting public sector obligations on energy efficiency and waste management
- Environmental impact of new developments
- Libraries role in environmental awareness and education

Appendix 4: SWOT analysis

SWOT Analysis

Library staff participated in workshops to identify Fingal Libraries strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The key points are summarised in the table below:

Strengths

- Highly motivated and trained staff
- Continued Innovation e.g. 3D printing and Fingal Library App
- Good customer service
- Large network of well-maintained libraries (as well as mobile and housebound service) with capital projects to enhance facilities further
- Free service
- Comprehensive opening hours
- Good book fund and strong stock collections
- Open and inclusive; welcoming spaces
- Democratic, equitable and neutral meeting space for community and cultural groups
- Strong community engagement through an extensive programme of events
- Libraries are a valuable community service provider e.g. early years literacy, Work Matters, lifelong learning, children's service
- Positive public perception and continued good will
- Technology services available include public PCs, Wi-Fi, printing, scanning
- RFID in larger branches provides a self-service option
- Innovative e-services such as online books, audiobooks, comics, magazines, newspapers, courses and language learning.

Weaknesses

- Loss of staff during the recession
- Availability of quiet space in branches
- Consistency of services across branches
- Need for regular needs analysis to inform planning
- Ability to meet needs of young population in absence of dedicated schools service
- Opening hours
- ICT, for example upgrades, maintenance and support.
- Continued reliance on Galaxy system after changeover to Sierra
- Need for greater marketing of library services, both within the Council and among the wider public

Opportunities

- Demographics; Fingal is the youngest and fastest growing county in Ireland, which will provide a large community for libraries to serve
- Develop creative and flexible spaces e.g. maker spaces projects
- Enhance links with schools, particularly post primary, to engage young people
- Increased availability of stock through the National Distribution System
- Develop the Housebound service as demographic demand grows
- Expansion of 'Work Matters' to other libraries
- Libraries potential as sources of local history information
- Continued introduction of innovative technology to enhance services
- Potential to use the new mobile fleet for outreach events
- Enhance collaboration with Fingal Arts Office, Tourism and Economic Development Departments to promote services
- Collaborative partnerships with third level institutions, businesses, community and voluntary organisations

Threats

- Degree of broad policy consultation
- Challenges of centralised procurement
- Future availability of funding for new libraries and services
- Impact of Open Libraries policy on service delivery
- Impact of national courier/reservation system on stock and revenue
- Public perception of libraries' relevance going forward
- Impact of technology on future policies

Staff Consultation

The staff survey's findings tallied consistently with the findings of the SWOT analysis workshops and reflected a strong customer focus. Respondents gave detailed answers and suggestions, which have helped develop individual strands of the strategic plan.

Values and vision

Overall, staff views reflect the high value placed on customer service and the need to provide an inclusive, accessible and relevant service. Feedback reflects an awareness of issues that will influence future service provision such as the diverse demographics in Fingal and the changing role of technology.

Staff members' vision for Fingal Libraries is one that positions the service at the heart of Fingal's diverse community and offers high-quality information, education and cultural services through both print and digital formats. Staff will be supported in delivering the service through training and development opportunities and libraries will be welcoming, comfortable, safe spaces.

While views on some topics are influenced to a degree by facilities and other variables at branches, some key points emerge:

Current services

- Services for teens, disadvantaged groups and people with literacy needs, special needs or language needs were most frequently identified as needing improvement. Suggestions were made on collections, programming, facilities, staff training, promotion and collaboration with regard to these issues.
- While customer service was rated highly, the availability of quiet space in which to read or study was raised as a concern.
- Feedback in relation to ICT focussed on the need for upgrades, maintenance and consistent internet connectivity in all branches, as well as staff who are IT proficient. The need for continued ICT innovation was outlined, particularly in relation to assistive technology. Staff also noted that while technology is a key tool for service delivery, it is only one aspect of service provision. Staff also made suggestions for updating the Libraries website.
- Researching, understanding and responding to user needs consistently will allow us to keep up with technological advances while still meeting more traditional needs. Core services and personal service are seen as vital to remaining relevant to users.
- Public perception and marketing of libraries services are seen as key factors.
- On-going review and evaluation of services through surveys, user groups, suggestion boxes or needs analysis will be important aspects of remaining relevant.

Future services

- Staff will need to maintain a broad range of skills in order to future-proof the service. Such skills relate to customer service, technology, information literacy, communication, events, promotion, leadership and management. Furthermore, ensuring specific staff skills are optimised was highlighted as important.
- More effective service promotion and marketing will be key to positioning the library service both nationally and locally. Respondents' suggestions regarding promotion included national and local advertising, improved signage, and promotion through other organisations. Concern was expressed by some at a possible lack of awareness of the extensive range of services available. Comments also reflect the need to ensure marketing also reaches those who do not use social media or are not IT literate.
- There is potential for enhanced interdepartmental collaboration within Fingal County Council. There is a willingness to share information on programmes, enhance services and maximise service visibility. There is also potential for partnership with external stakeholders in the arts, social, community, education and business sectors.
- Respondents had suggestions about research, innovation and the importance of keeping abreast of innovation in the Library sector, both nationally and internationally. Innovation should focus on user needs and will involve collaboration with the IT Department. Research into those user needs, as well as on-going review and evaluation of services were also mentioned.
- The Local Studies and Archives Service will benefit from the planned integration within the new County library in Swords as it will give more capacity for retrievals and a supervised reading room. This would also facilitate more of a 'drop-in' than 'by appointment only' model of service. The key suggestion from staff was to ensure early collaboration between architects and library staff in order to ensure optimum design of lighting, seating, storage, tables and displays.

Appendix 5: Public Consultation

The majority of those involved in consultation are service users, although some non-users were involved in focus groups. The findings of the public consultation reflect the value that service users place on Fingal Libraries, both individually and as a community resource. Feedback reflects a very positive perception of libraries especially in regard to range of services, atmosphere, personal response, staff members, and as a community space.

Feedback reflects the importance of inclusiveness and access for all. In terms of customer satisfaction, responses to the survey indicate that overall, people appear to feel their needs are being met.

While views can be influenced by variations in local branches and services, some key points emerge. These comments and suggestions were considered when devising the Library Strategy:

- Feedback from young people reflects a more mixed perception of libraries. This is consistent with staff views about the need to focus on young adult services. Both staff and those young people consulted had suggestions relating to provision of stock, targeted events for teens, schools outreach, as well as more study and leisure space. The post primary school that made a submission to the consultation had suggestions in this regard, for example, Mobile Library visits. Consideration could also be given to collaborating with Foróige and Comhairle na nÓg on an ongoing basis.
- Mobile Library users' comments reflect the value they place on the service's convenience and customer service. Suggestions relate mainly to frequency of service and additional school services for schools and events.
- Equally, the Housebound Service's convenience and personal service were valued by users. There were suggestions for service promotion. It emerged many users rely on the Housebound Service rather than using e-services because of visual impairment, lack of IT skills and the cost of buying equipment.
- Service users place high importance on the availability of quality stock, both print and digital. They rank literacy resources and initiatives highly and this is an area identified by staff as having potential for development.
- Good customer service by helpful and knowledgeable staff emerges as of particular importance to service users. Concerns regarding staffless libraries were identified, particularly by focus groups.
- Availability of quiet, comfortable or differentiated space in libraries was an issue consistently raised across a range of cohorts of users.
- There were differing views on opening hours; 50% of survey respondents thought libraries should be open longer, while 20% disagreed.
- The most common suggestions regarding facility improvement related to the provision of coffee shops, comfortable seating, improved signage, meeting rooms, or general buildings upgrades.
- Increased marketing of the Libraries extensive range of services would be beneficial. For example, only 12% of respondents to the survey use the Library App while 38% use an e-reader or device for reading.
- Feedback about library events highlights the value of the Library as a community space as well as a place to access services. Book clubs for all ages and musical instrument loans were among the suggestions for future services.

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**Comhairle Contae
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Fingal County
Council

