
Directorate: Community Wellbeing
Acting Director: Kath Brackett

Purpose

For Council to consider endorsing the draft Library Strategy 2015-2020, at Attachment 1 to this report, for community consultation for a six (6) week period.

Report

1. Background

Council operates five (5) libraries - in Sunshine, Sydenham, St Albans, Keilor and Deer Park, an online library at www.brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au, and a home library service for residents who cannot visit a library due to illness, frailty or disability.

The Library service operates in a dynamic environment and requires a framework to prioritise service planning and delivery to meet changing community needs.

2. Consultation

Data from the 2014 Library customer survey, that had over 1,400 respondents, together with ongoing feedback from customers and Council officer consultations, informed the development of the draft Strategy.

Consultation on the draft Strategy will be advertised in the Brimbank Leader and copies will be available at libraries, customer service centres and on Council’s website. Consultation will commence in late January 2016, for a six (6) week period.

3. Analysis

The purpose of the draft Library Strategy 2015-2020 (draft Strategy) is to provide a framework for the planning and development of library collections, community engagement and online services, to meet changing community needs. The draft Strategy will support the development of the library’s annual business plans that will detail initiatives and activities to address the priority areas.

The draft Strategy outlines the Strategic Directions (including priority areas and outcomes) for Brimbank’s Library service for the next five (5) years:

Strategic Direction 1: A community of lifelong learners
- Responsive services and programs
- Welcoming and flexible library spaces
- A strong online presence.
Report 12.8 - Draft Library Strategy 2015-2020 (continued)

Strategic Direction 2: Skilled and proactive staff
The draft Strategy was developed through analysis of relevant socio-economic and service data. It aligns with industry best practice and uses the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework as a basis.

4. Resource Implications

Resource requirements for consultation on the draft Strategy can be met within Council’s 2015/2016 Annual Budget. The resources required for the implementation of the final Strategy will be referred to Council’s annual budget process for consideration.

5. Compliance Statement


6. Officer Recommendation

That Council:

a. Endorses the draft Library Strategy 2015-2020, at Attachment 1 to this report, for community consultation for a period of six (6) weeks, and invites written submissions.

b. Receives a further report detailing any submissions received during the community consultation period, and presents a final draft Library Strategy 2015-2020 for consideration.
Library Strategy
2015-2020

Brimbank Libraries
Celebrating Learning
“Going to the library is an integral part of my life. It opens up a whole new world of information”.
[Library customer, 2014]
Introduction

Libraries are a universal free service available to all Victorian community members. Libraries provide inclusive, accessible and welcoming spaces for people to learn, create, socialise and share ideas and resources. They play an important role in building social capital and enhancing community and individual wellbeing.

Brimbank City Council's libraries are highly utilised and valued by the community. With extensive collections, computer and study facilities, innovative programming and long opening hours, they foster a culture of reading and learning throughout life. Brimbank Libraries are progressive and community-focused with custom IT services, a proactive customer service model and a strategic approach to program development. They collaborate with internal and external partners to provide diverse learning opportunities. Brimbank's libraries make a significant contribution to lifelong learning, to building Brimbank as a learning community and to improving the educational, social and health outcomes of the community.

The Library Strategy 2015-2020 was developed through a consultation process with the community, local service providers and council staff. It is underpinned by Council's strategic direction of Creating a community of lifelong learners.

Brimbank City Council’s Libraries and Learning Department operates five libraries in Sunshine, Sydenham, St Albans, Keilor Village and Deer Park and an Online Library www.brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au. A home library service delivers library resources to residents who cannot visit the library due to illness, frailty or disability.

Outreach programs occur in Brimbank’s parks, shopping centres, community centres and street corners where library staff deliver storytimes, demonstrate online learning resources, consult with the community and promote reading as an important life skill.

The new Brimbank Community and Civic Centre in the Sunshine Town Centre is scheduled to open in August 2016. It will include a state of the art library and learning centre over two levels. The community will benefit from the new library’s facilities including study rooms, an outdoor recreation space, an IT training room and a spectacular reading room on the first floor.

Purpose of this Strategy

The role of public libraries continues to change. As community needs shift with social trends and rapid technological advancements, Brimbank’s libraries need to be flexible and responsive.

The Library Strategy 2015-2020 provides a framework for the planning and development of collections, community engagement and online services to meet these changing community needs. The Strategy will guide the development of the Libraries & Learning Department’s annual business plans.
A Vision for the City of Brimbank

“Brimbank will be the dynamic centre of Melbourne’s West. We will be a proud, diverse and connected community.”

Brimbank Libraries Vision
Connect Learn Grow

Learning is a recognised driver for social and economic change...

Brimbank Community Learning Strategy 2014-2017

Brimbank City Council’s recognition of the central role of learning in life led to the development of the Brimbank Community Learning Strategy. Council, through its Community Learning Strategy and with its partner organisations, encourages and supports residents to participate in learning on a daily basis over their lifetime. Council’s Libraries and Learning Department oversees the implementation of the Community Learning Strategy.

Community Learning Strategy Vision:

To foster a community of lifelong learners by working with partner organisations to empower people to take control of their lives, build aspirations, enhance employability and build active citizenship and quality of life in Brimbank.

Linked Plans:

- Brimbank Community Plan (2009-2030, updated 2014)
- Brimbank Community Strengthening Policy (2014)
- Library Policy (2014)
Our community

- Brimbank has over 195,000 residents and a projected population of 206,753 in 2024
- Brimbank is socially and economically diverse with some pockets of disadvantage and other, more affluent suburbs.
- 56% speak a language other than English at home, with more than 160 languages spoken in Brimbank.
- The top five countries of birth are Vietnam, India, Malta, the Philippines and Italy
- 3,000 babies are born each year. By 2024, the number of children aged 0-4 in Brimbank is expected to increase to approximately 13,400
- Young people 0-24 years make up 34% of the population, which is higher than the Metropolitan average
- Between 2014 and 2024, the fastest growing population age group will be residents aged 65 years and over
- In 2015 the unemployment rate in Brimbank was 9.93% as compared to 6.48% for Greater Melbourne
- The proportion of residents who completed secondary school and go on to tertiary education is increasing. Of those completing school, 41% go on to university (Melbourne average is 40%)

Library services in Brimbank date back to 1908 when the first library in Sunshine was established as part of the Mechanics Institute in Corio Street. Keilor and St Albans libraries date back to the 1960s, while a mobile library operated in Deer Park from the 1970s until a much needed purpose built library opened in 1993. Brimbank’s newest library in Sydenham opened in 2006 as part of the Watergardens Town Centre, servicing residents in the north of the municipality.

Brimbank Libraries was formed in 1994 following the amalgamation of the former cities of Sunshine and Keilor.
A day in the life of Brimbank Libraries

3.30am Thanh, a shift worker logs onto the Online Library to renew his children's library books. He also downloads an e-book to his mobile device to read during his meal break.

7.00am Chi is at home in Albion and has just finished her research paper due that day. She does not have a printer, so she emails the document to the library's Mobile Print service. Thi will collect her printed document from Sunshine Library at 9:30am when the library opens.

9.30am Customers are already gathered outside when St Albans library opens its doors. They come to read the newspapers in English and community languages, to use the computers and wifi, to return and borrow books through the self-service kiosks and to ask staff to recommend a good book to read.

10.00am At Keilor Village library a Council volunteer selects books to deliver to Mary, an 89 year old Keilor resident who is too frail to visit the library.

10.30am A group of eager children and their parents are seated and ready for toddler storytime at Sydenham Library. The stories, songs and rhymes will help their language and literacy development. Library staff model to parents how to share books with their children.

10.35am At the Sunshine Marketplace Shopping Centre, storytime is underway at the monthly outreach program. Staff use these sessions to promote Council's libraries and the importance of parents reading to their children every day.

10.45am Kim and her four year old son Ethan love borrowing toys from the Toy Library at Deer Park library. Ethan learns through playing with educational toys.

10.55am In Sunshine, Nasiri and Hadi love going to their local library because it has bilingual picture books in their native language of Farsi. Frances visits the library to borrow Maltese DVDs and books.

11.00am A Basic Computer Skills class is underway at Sydenham library. This group of older adults are learning how to use a mouse and keyboard for the first time. They will continue learning at their own pace through the library's online video tutorial program Lynda.com

11.15am Amal is a 19 year old TAFE student looking for part time work. She uses one of the self-service kiosks at the Deer Park library to book a computer to work on her resume.

12.00pm Ryan is planning a holiday to Vietnam and wants to learn some key words and phrases. He downloads the Mango Languages app from the Online Library to his ipad. He also visits his local library in Sunshine to borrow travel guides.
12.15 pm Local workers from the Watergardens Shopping Centre go to the Sydenham library during their lunch break to relax and read digital magazines on a library iPad. Many will borrow from the eye-catching displays of new books, CDs and DVDs.

1.00 pm Six pre-service teachers from Victorian University are ready to run their weekly Kinda Kinder program at the Deer Park library. The students get valuable experience working with families and the program forms part of their assessment. Local families participate in the unique program that promotes learning through play.

2.00 pm Keilor Library is hosting its monthly book group. Ada, a stay at home mum and avid reader, enjoys the social aspect of the program where she discusses new books and old favourites over coffee.

2.30 pm The private study rooms at Deer Park library are all in use. Customers scan their VISA immigration documents using the library pc scanners.

3.00 pm English language students are at St Albans Library using the Rosetta Stone Learn English software on the library computers. When their English classes end, they will continue to learn English at the library through the online learning programs.

4.00 pm The Children’s Corner after school program at Sunshine Library is in full swing with children working together to solve fun puzzles that test their numeracy and problem solving skills. Older students are busy studying at every available table.

4.15 pm Young people from all backgrounds are playing a game of FIFA16 on the X-box at Deer Park library while nearby, pre-schoolers play educational games on the children’s touchscreen computers.

4.30 pm The St Albans library is buzzing and at capacity with every table and chair occupied by students studying and using the wifi. Younger children are on the floor playing chess and every public access computer is booked out until closing time.

6.30 pm The weekly Practise your English program at St Albans brings people together to practise their conversation and listening skills. After the session, they borrow books and DVDs from the English as a Second Language collection.

8.05 pm Brimbank’s physical libraries have closed for the day, so customers visit the Online library to renew their library items, to book in for a library program, to access online learning programs, post a review on the Brimbank Bookshelf blog, request a book for the library to purchase, ‘like’ the library facebook page, download an e-book...
Looking ahead

Libraries will continue to face new challenges as technology and social trends rapidly change. In order to meet the changing needs of the community, Brimbank Libraries will continue to be responsive, flexible and innovative through addressing the following challenges:

Access to libraries
A substantial number of Brimbank residents who are not library members are socially isolated or unemployed. Improving library access for our most vulnerable community members will continue to be a priority. To support this priority, libraries need to remain free, be well resourced and accessible to all community members through day, evening and weekend opening hours.

English Literacy
English proficiency is crucial for employment and citizenship. Supporting the significant number of Brimbank residents who have little or no English language skills creates both opportunities and challenges for our community engagement, programming and collections.

Digital Literacy
As more information and services go online, digital literacy is increasingly necessary for communication, social connection and access to consumer services. Libraries provide a unique environment for the public to use computers and seek assistance doing so. As Federal and State governments shift services online, the demand for staff support by customers to navigate these services is increasing significantly. For people experiencing disadvantage libraries are often the only place to access technology and to get help.
Space
Limited space presents challenges for programming, access to collections and independent study, often creating a compression of activities into one communal area.
The St Albans Library is at capacity and is unable to meet customer demand for seating, computer access or study space. Investigating options to increase library capacity in St Albans is ongoing.

Collections
Our libraries celebrate the rich cultural life of Brimbank through collections in English and fifteen community languages. Libraries will need to maintain their physical collections while building digital collections into the future as customers enjoy using both formats.

Promoting Reading
Reading is fundamental to all learning and integral to economic, civic and social participation. Libraries have an important role in promoting a culture of reading for pleasure and in supporting literacy development in a changing environment.

Making digital content available
This requires adequate bandwidth to deliver more media-rich content to meet community demand.

Connecting to the past
The library service can help new generations discover Brimbank’s rich past. However, digitisation of collections requires significant resourcing.

Library staff
To meet changing community needs the library workforce needs to be flexible, collaborative, have exceptional digital literacy skills and embrace new opportunities.

“\textit{The library provides a different environment than home. Home has distractions, limitations, etc, so I often find my time on the library internet more productive. Also, if I don’t understand how to do something, there is someone in person whom I can ask for assistance.”} [Library customer, 2014]
Strategic Directions

The Strategic Directions will address the challenges facing libraries and inform the development of the Libraries and Learning Department’s annual business plans over the next five years. The annual business plans will detail activities and initiatives to address the priority areas.

Library staff will work collaboratively with community, industry and Council partners to achieve the outcomes in the Strategy. Implementation of the Strategy will have no additional financial impact for Council.

**Strategic Direction 1:**
A community of lifelong learners
- Responsive services and programs
- Welcoming and flexible library spaces
- A strong online presence

**Strategic Direction 2:**
Skilled and proactive staff
Strategic Direction 1:
A community of lifelong learners

Responsive services, collections and programs

Priority areas

- Plan and develop library collections, programs and services that are customer directed and evidence based
- Programs, collections and services support the learning needs of the community and have a strong focus on English literacy and digital literacy skills
- Work in collaboration with community and Council partners to increase the capacity for more learning programs and services to be delivered
- Provide customers with the best physical and digital collections to support their learning and leisure needs
- Provide customers with access to accurate information in a timely manner
- Review and assess emerging technologies that can provide the community with innovative services, collections and programs

Outcomes

- Collections, services and programs are relevant, responsive, community directed and delivered in a timely manner
- Strong and sustainable partnerships with internal and external partners deliver programs to the community that support their learning needs
- Community members can access quality resources, services and programs to help them learn English, to gain digital literacy skills and to continue learning throughout their lives
- New technology benefits customers and provides efficiencies for Council

“I come here to use the internet for job search because I love the environment around the library, because not only can you stay focussed but you can also stay motivated and stay on track without getting distracted”. [Library customer, 2014]
Welcoming and flexible library spaces

Priority areas

- Deliver proactive customer support
- Support library customers to become independent learners
- Provide spaces for people to meet, read, create and study
- Support students of all ages
- Provide and support customers with access to technology that supports their learning and leisure needs
- Library interiors are flexible, fit for purpose and adapt to changing customer need and usage patterns
- Explore opportunities for customer facing Council services to share space or co-locate in libraries.
- Continually review library infrastructure based on customer use and feedback
- Investigate options to increase the capacity of the St Albans library to meet community need.

Outcomes

- Customers are independent users of library technology, systems and collections
- Staff support is available to customers using library collections, services and facilities.
- Shared library spaces enjoyed by all community members for recreation, study or program attendance.
- Library technology is easy to use, facilitates self-service and meets community needs and expectations
- Improved community access to Council services delivered through shared spaces in libraries
- A business case for the expansion of library services in St Albans is developed. External funding opportunities are sought
A strong online presence

Priority areas

• Maintain a vibrant and relevant online presence through ongoing improvements
• Community members have opportunities to create and post digital content to library social media
• Promote awareness of the local historical societies through the Local History portal
• Make available and promote quality online learning opportunities.

Outcomes

• The library’s website has increased usage
• Customers can easily access quality online library resources and services
• Library social media tools provide customers with timely information and a space to connect to staff and other community members
• Local historical societies promote their work, collections and services through the Local History portal
Strategic Direction 2: Highly skilled and proactive staff

Priority areas

• Staff skills and behaviours match service delivery requirements, standards and Council’s values
• Library teams and individuals lead the ongoing improvement of services and programs through community consultation, innovation and best practice
• Promote the benefit of library membership to non-members
• Communication between staff and the community is clear, proactive, timely and provided through different channels
• Back of house processes and systems support excellent customer service
• Participate in state-wide industry networks and collaborations to build staff knowledge, improve customer service and explore opportunities for resource and systems sharing

Outcomes:

• The library workforce is community focussed, skilled and diverse
• Library services continue to evolve through community consultation, innovation and ongoing review
• The provision of library collections, services, systems and technology to customers is seamless, timely and meets their needs
• Community members are informed and provide feedback to staff through multiple channels
• The library service actively participates in industry collaborative projects that provide benefits to customers and efficiencies to Council
In 2014-15 Brimbank Libraries had:

- 81,194 library members
- 1,098,897 visits to the five physical library branches
- 838,014 visits to the Online Library
- 1,434,977 physical and electronic loans
- 270,586 computer bookings; 460,991 wifi sessions
- 130,420 information requests satisfied
- 3,333 programs held with 66,951 people attending
- 226,191 physical and electronic collection items including resources in 15 community languages

Council’s libraries are the most family friendly service in Brimbank (2014 Communities for Children survey)
brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au

Visit our website to:
- Get the latest news on programs and events.
- Access reference information with eBooks and databases.
- Get ideas for your next read.

Find us on social media, now on Instagram

Brimbank City Council

Customer Service Centres
Sunshine: 6-18 Alexandra Avenue, Sunshine
Keilor: 704B Old Calder Highway, Keilor
Sydenham: Station Street, Taylors Lakes

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