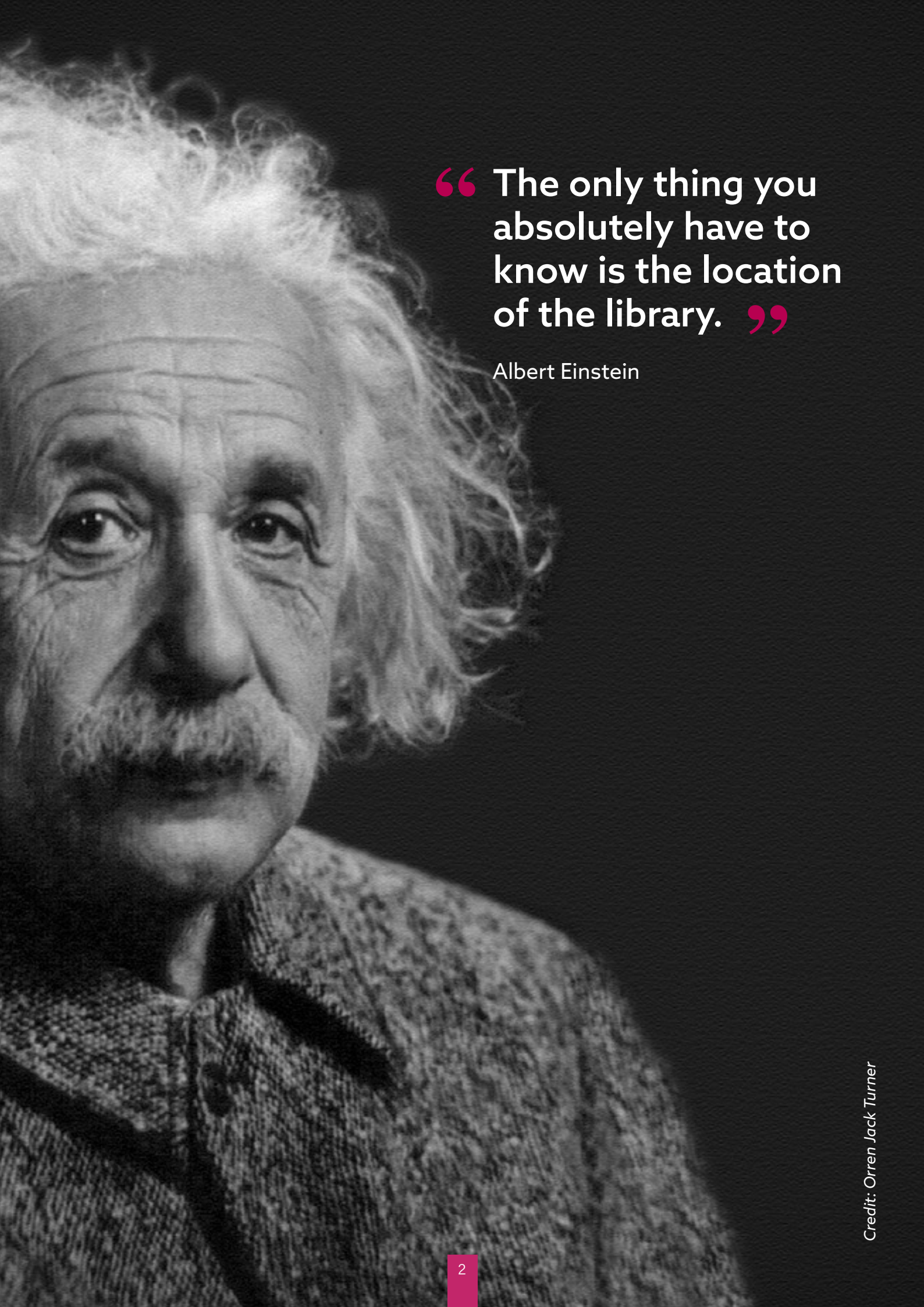


Wrexham County Borough Council
**Wrexham Library and
Information Service Strategy
2024-2029**



This document is also available in Welsh





“ The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library. ”

Albert Einstein

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Introduction

Public libraries are safe spaces, free to enter and open to all, and are gateways to information, knowledge and opportunities. Public libraries play a key role in ensuring the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities.

This strategy outlines our vision for Wrexham Library and Information Service in Wrexham County Borough to ensure it reflects community needs, targeting our resources to promote and protect wellbeing for all.

The COVID pandemic has opened up some inequalities that this strategy seeks to address. We are proud of our library service and this strategy demonstrates our commitment to delivering a modern and sustainable service.



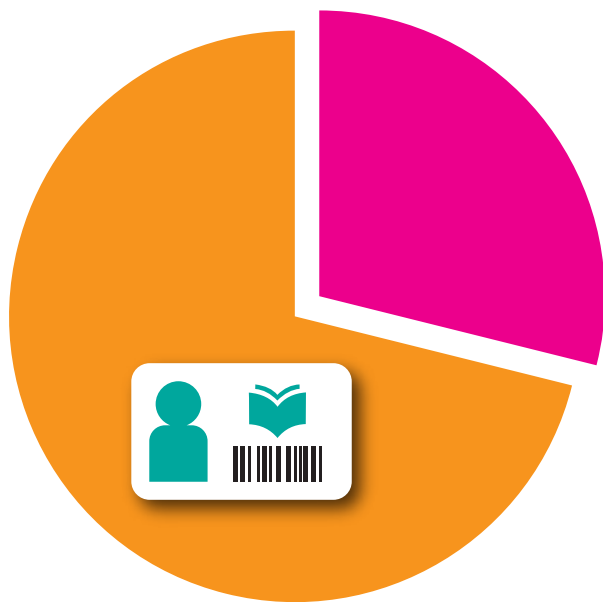
Context

Wrexham Library and Information Service is a statutory service funded through local government. Services are determined at a local level within the statutory framework of the 1964 Public Libraries Act. Under the act the duty of the local authority is to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons,' to promote this service, and to lend books and other materials free of charge.

Wrexham Library and Information Service contributes to key local, regional and national policies and plans including:

- The Council Plan 2023-2028
- The seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020 (under review)





Did you know 71% of the population of Wrexham County Borough have a library card?

If you're one of the 29% who don't why not visit your local library today and become a member? It will open a whole new world for you! We will need to see I.D. with your name and address on it.



30,000 plus attendees at events and activities organised by the library



250,000 plus annual issues

[Data 2022-2023]

Budgetary Pressures

Libraries across the United Kingdom are facing increasing budgetary pressures. Wrexham Library and Information Service is not unique and is expected to invest and increase digital services for all customers and residents, whilst maintaining and modernising the core physical and virtual library offer.

This strategy sets out how the service can respond to the on-going challenges we face and seeks to give clear options that Wrexham Library and Information Service can investigate to make the service sustainable to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

We consider:

- The statutory obligations of the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964)
- The annual assessment through the Welsh Public Library Standards
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Council Plan 2023-2028
- Feedback from public consultation
- On-going annual budgetary pressures
- The role of communities, volunteers, partners and other organisations in providing value-added services

Delivery Model

Wrexham city is the fourth largest urban area in Wales, and Wrexham Library is the largest public library in North Wales. The county borough consists of nine branch libraries which are located in Brynteg, Cefn Mawr, Chirk, Coedpoeth, Gwersyllt, Llay, Overton, Rhos and Ruabon.

During the pandemic we established a COVID-safe library service from all library buildings. In addition the Homelink Library provides a bespoke service to people who are unable to access their local branch library due to ill-health, disability or caring responsibility. A Pop-Up Library Service has been introduced for residents who are unable to access their local library due to limited or poor public transport.

Wrexham Library and Information Service provides online access to information, e-books, audio books, magazines, newspapers and our social media platforms. Wrexham Library and Information Service in partnership with local and national organisations delivers services for residents in their local libraries.

Our Vision

A bilingual service that:

- Provides equal access for all
- Offers safe and inclusive space
- Provides reading, digital, learning and cultural opportunities
- Promotes health and wellbeing by reducing loneliness and social isolation and encourages personal development and community participation
- Works with partners to support learning, creativity and employability



Our Priorities

A set of four key priorities underpin our strategy. These are designed to ensure a modern and sustainable library service. We will work with partners e.g. health, youth, education, culture, and the third sector. Our aim is to ensure the service reflects and meets the needs of current and future customers and communities.

Priority One - Reading

We will deliver resources and activities to build literacy skills at all levels and ages and promote a love of reading within libraries, community settings and via online platforms.

We know that poor literacy skills can hold a person back at every stage of their life, and we want our service to support children, young people and adults to develop reading skills for school, leisure and work.

Research has shown that reading for pleasure improves mental health and wellbeing for all. Children, young people and adults who read are healthier, happier and more confident than those who do not. Reading for pleasure has been found to be important for children's development.

Objectives:

- Offer people of all ages an opportunity to read and discover.
- Provide engaging resources and activities to promote and celebrate reading for pleasure.
- Provide an engaging and diverse book stock in a range of languages and formats for all ages and abilities.

Achieved through:

- Reading groups and shared reading
- Summer Reading Challenge
- Book promotions
- Author events
- Children's activities
- College, school and playgroup visits
- Adapting our stock to reflect customer enquiries, requests and trends
- Book boxes to residential care homes and other organisations
- Support to vulnerable groups and families

Teithio Newydd
New Travel

Llyfrau Plant Newydd
New Children's Books



“Reading for pleasure is the single most important thing a child can do that will have a positive impact on their future, even more so than socio-economic background.”

UCL Institute of Education Research; Reading Outweighs Economic Background for Pupil's Success; 2021

Priority Two – Information and Digital

We support learning to develop digital skills and resources to ensure all residents have access to quality information and online services.

Objectives:

- Provide a range of activities that promote digital inclusion and support customers and residents with their digital skills
- Provide access to quality information resources and online services

Achieved through:

- Trained, knowledgeable and helpful staff
- Free access to Wi-Fi and computer use
- Responding to customer enquiries
- Online resources and services
- Photocopying and printing
- Access to community information
- Training sessions provided by ourselves and our partners
- Local newspapers and e-newspapers / e-magazines





“ A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead. ”

Caitlin Moran columnist and author

Priority Three - Health and Wellbeing

Proven Power of reading, studies have shown that those who read for pleasure have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with difficult situations. Reading for pleasure was also associated with better sleeping patterns.¹

We provide access to trusted health information, resources, and health and wellbeing collections.

Objectives:

- Promote access to trusted information on a range of health issues, and medical conditions and work with medical and third sector partners to provide self-management support.
- Provide a range of reading opportunities and social activities which engage with and connect communities, to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing

Achieved through:

- Customer engagement with library staff
- Health and Wellbeing collections e.g. Books on Prescription, Parenting, Bereavement, Reading Well.
- Registered as part of national 'Safe Places Scheme' and 'Libraries of Sanctuary'
- Outreach visits to mental health organisations and health and wellbeing events
- Organised library activities e.g. story time, learning at lunchtime, craft activities
- Meeting places for community groups
- Reading groups and shared reading
- Autism and Dementia aware library staff
- Assistance dog friendly

1. Billington, J, (2015) Reading between the Lines:
The Benefits of Reading for Pleasure Quick Reads; University of Liverpool



“ Libraries were my band’s lifeline. We must fight for them. ”

Nicky Wire
Manic Street Preachers

Credit: Tim Sheerman-Chase

Priority Four - Heritage, Culture and the Welsh Language

We support artistic and creative experiences for communities and inspire residents to connect with heritage, culture and the Welsh language.

Objectives:

- To provide residents with the opportunity to learn about their heritage and the local area.
- To encourage the growth of local cultural groups and events to further enhance the use of library space for cultural and creative activities

Achieved through:

- Provision of Welsh language materials
- Activities and events around heritage, culture and the Welsh language for example, Wrexham Carnival of Words, Family and Local History Sessions
- Welsh speaking staff



The future and how we'll know we're getting it right

We propose to work in partnership with individuals, communities and other organisations to realise shared outcomes and improve library provision to customers and residents.

We will explore:

- New ways to engage with customers, residents, stakeholders and volunteers.
- Opportunities to provide new services as demand and opportunities arise.
- Continue to explore options for co-location and relocation of services into our library buildings.
- Develop services for communities which are remote from library buildings through the use of Outreach Library Services.

We will report annually on our performance against [Welsh Public Library Standards](#) to the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Library Division (MALD).

- Customer feedback.
- Library user surveys.

We are happy to provide this document in large print, audio and braille.

Please contact your local library or:

Email: library@wrexham.gov.uk

Tel: 01978 292090

www.wrexham.gov.uk/library