

## Library Services

# Redesigning Library Services— Partnership, Community Engagement and Channel Shift North Ayrshire Council

### Contact for Enquiries

Rhona Arthur  
rhona.arthur@north-ayrshire.  
gov.uk

North Ayrshire council incorporated early interventions against challenges of poverty and attainment in the transformation of their library services. The initiative has gone on to win several awards and praise from the community with a customer satisfaction for library services of 15 percentage points above the national average in 2015/16.

## Background

North Ayrshire Council is facing considerable challenges of deprivation with the highest levels of youth employment in Scotland. It was a council-wide priority to increase employment and reduce inequalities within the area. The council set out to develop services within libraries as an early intervention against these challenges. Further drivers for transformation of the library service was increased saving targets as well as a need to increase footfall and new audiences to the libraries. Saving targets were set at £456k for 2016 -18 which was revised to £717k at the end of 2016.

## Key Activities

North Ayrshire initially focused on:

- Engaging staff in the development of library services
- Increasing community engagement through social media
- Channel shift and the development of online services that makes it possible to reserve and renew items through mobile phone apps and web services.

Reorganisation of library services and partnership working:

- A merged museum/library/customer services facility
- A merged registration services/library facility
- Two merged employment hub/libraries
- Joint MacMillan Cancer information service/library
- Two employability hubs and three job clubs in libraries
- 93% of digital learning in libraries is led by development tutors
- Social enterprise support

Introduction of technology integration projects including Appiness, Appitude and Digidabble:

- Appiness is an app that brings together library resources and families using educational apps to help parents/carers to support their child's learning and to develop digital skills.
- Programmes such as reader development, homework clubs and the development of IT skills.
- Awarded £20,500 through the public library improvement fund to purchase a range of devices, laptops and educational apps.
- Over 100 apps were identified at the first stage, ranked by popularity and tested by the staff for user-friendliness and functionality.

Appitude – The next stage of Appiness

- This stage invested in skills development with upper primary pupils and adult learners building digital literacy skills.
- Awarded £9,482 through the public library improvement fund to purchase a range of Android tablets and educational apps.
- Training in new technologies

Digidabble

- Digidabble includes a variety of digital learning tools, including robots, coding, digital animation, 3D printing, gaming and virtual reality that is available to families as a pop up library on Saturdays.
- Digidabble was a response to reduced opening hours on Saturdays.
- A chance for families to engage with technology otherwise not available in the home. Used SIMD to identify priority areas.
- Partnership working with Youth services and local gamers/ Scratch group.
- Staff to work together with families to learn new skills.

Developed a rural online archive:

- Historical photographs from the authorities Heritage Centre were downloaded onto a Flickr website along with detailed information about the history portrayed in each image.
- The digitisation project was designed to build a legacy of accessible digitised resources for rural communities to access from a range of locations.
- Initially the Rural Online Archive was funded through the Scottish Government's public library funding (£26,250) and during 2011 the project attracted further funding through

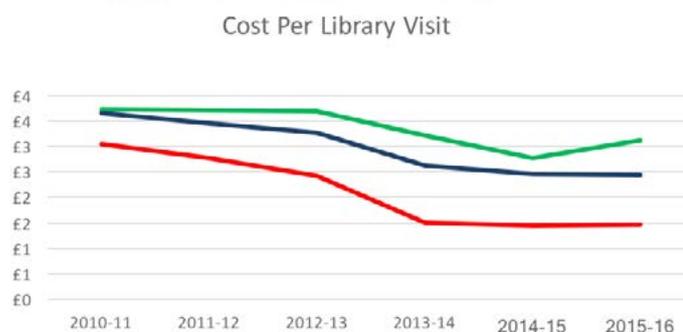
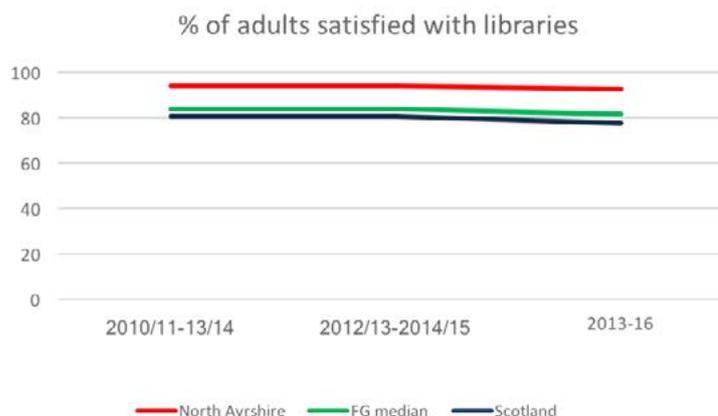
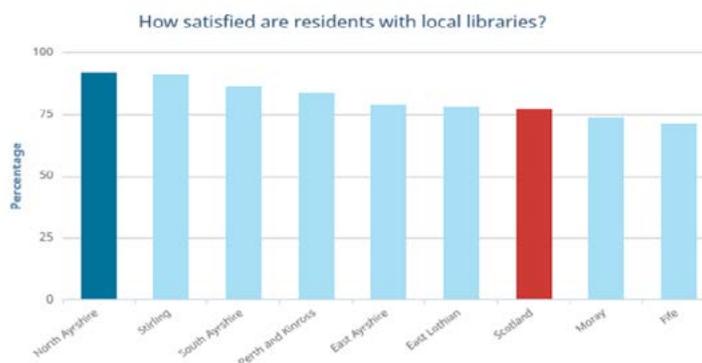
LEADER (£29, 000) to further develop the project in rural areas in North Ayrshire.

Further developments:

- North Ayrshire partnered with Inverclyde to develop and implement an online training programme for library staff to enable them to build confidence in using mobile technologies and consequently support library users. 30 staff participated in this programme and has been rolled out nationally.
- Development of the LMS Consortium, a partnership bringing benefits around costs and workforce capacity.

## Benefits and Impact

Customer satisfaction for library services in North Ayrshire council remained stable between 2010/11 and 2015/16 disregarding heavy budget constraints and a steady decrease in satisfaction across Scotland. In 2015/16 North Ayrshire had the second highest satisfaction for library services overall, and the highest satisfaction among similar councils.



Virtual visits increased from 390,884 13/14 to 1,100,243 in 14/15. Memberships of 0-9 year olds increase from 5790 to 6338 between 12/13 and 14/15. There has also been a substantial uptake in the social media initiatives. Over 3 million views and 1000 people taking part.

The impact of the interactive technological services has been extensive. 100% of respondents taking part in the Appiness project reported that their participation had benefitted them and their children. A total of 495 children and 382 adults attended the Digidabble events. One library saw an increase of 197% in attendance from the previous weeks. Digidabble was also the winner of the 2017 edge digital award and now continue to work with primary schools and conduct special sessions for groups of autistic youngsters.

---

## Learning

- Use partnership working to establish partnerships between libraries and other services.
- Introduce and develop Digital services
- Use social media for communication and marketing
- Workforce development is important
- Transforming library services is about social return on investment, increasing digital skills and community engagement.