

# Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee



Neighbourhood Services Performance Update  
Lee Warner, Head of Neighbourhood Services

# Neighbourhood Services Overview

The Council's Neighbourhood Services section delivers community and library services to people who live and work in Leicester City.

- A network of 27 facilities, including 9 Multi-Service centres:
- 16 library service points
- 15 community centres offering room hire
- Ward & Community Engagement Team



# Neighbourhood Services: strategic context

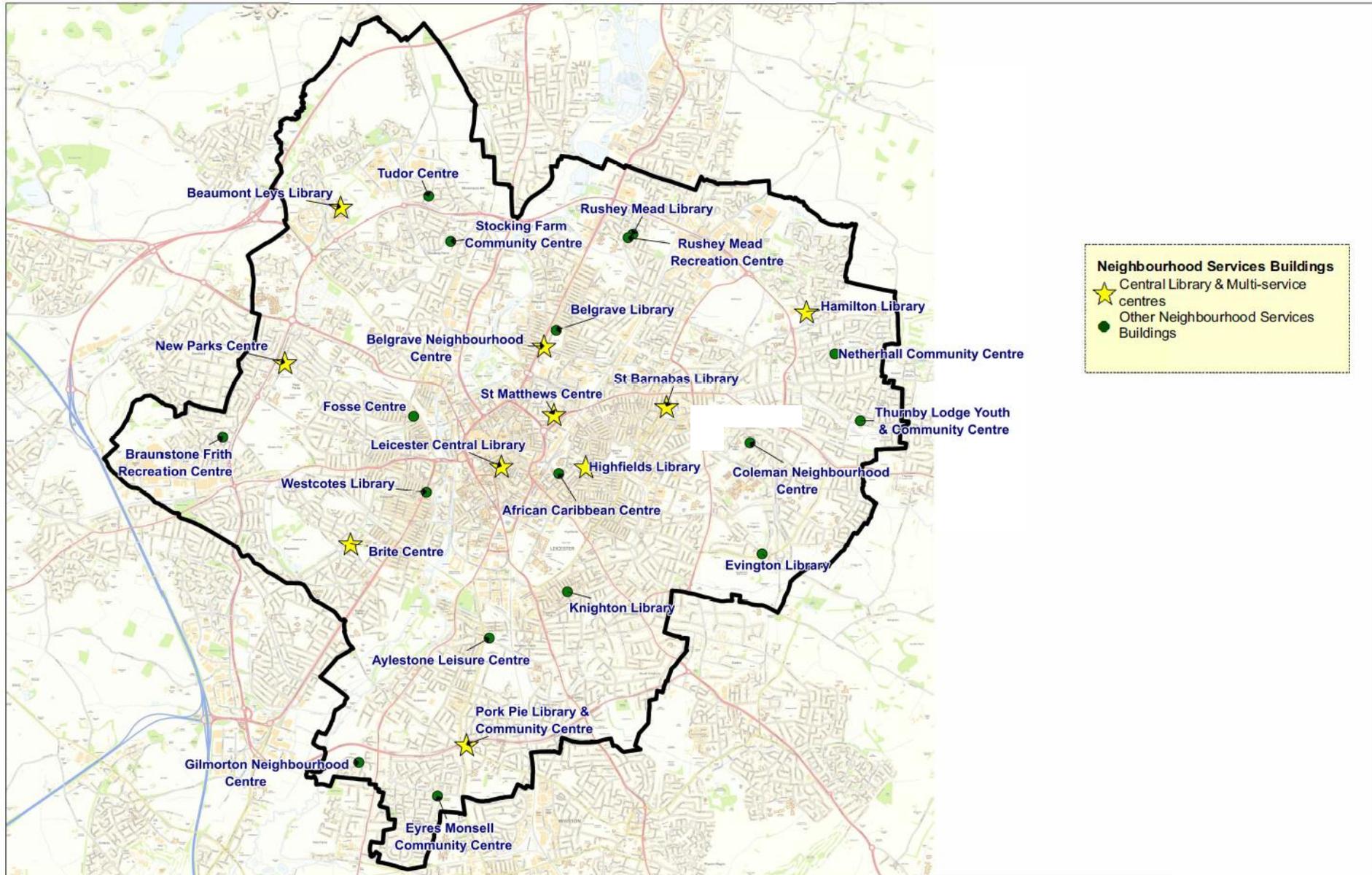
Neighbourhood Services are committed to the Universal Offers developed by Libraries Connected and supported by Arts Council England:

- **Health & Wellbeing** – Goal: “To offer a range of creative and social activities which engage and connect individuals and communities, combat loneliness and improve wellbeing.”
- **Information & Digital** – Goal: “To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online”
- **Culture & Creativity** – Goal: “To enable new creative skills to flourish and enrich the lives of children and adults by providing arts and cultural experiences in local settings. To celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, value identity and contribute to an active local cultural economy.”
- **Reading** - Goal: “To encourage individuals of all ages to read for pleasure and purpose to increase their understanding of the world, stretch their imaginations and think differently.”

Neighbourhood Services also commit to:

- **The Children’s Promise**

# Neighbourhood Services Facilities



Context – service closure  
during pandemic

# Context – Service Closure during pandemic

- Libraries, Multi-Service Centres & Community Centres close March 2020 under lockdown regulations
- e-Services significantly expanded; library click and collect service introduced in summer 2020; Home Library Service by bike
- NS staff redeployed Dec 2020 – June 2021 to support Council's testing effort; 6 NS sites converted to test centres
- Opening hours and services limited upon reopening under Covid risk assessments
- Most restrictions lifted by April 2022, with full services resuming
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre final test centre to reopen to community use in late May (Platinum Jubilee)

# Recovery priorities

- **Health & wellbeing** – overcoming social isolation and loneliness
  - “Lets Get Together” action plan with Public Health
  - Mental Health First Aid sessions for staff
  - Recommence and promote community events
  - Growing projects
  - Walking groups
  - Reading Friends project
  - Volunteering
- **Digital inclusion**
  - eBooks & eAudio library
  - “Learn my way” IT beginner courses
  - Laptop loaning pilot

# Recovery priorities

- **Supporting children's learning**
  - Library Bookbus
  - Summer Reading Challenge
  - Our Best Book (now online)
  - Class visits
  - Toddler Time sessions (including online storytelling)
  - Amongst Ideal Friends live theatre (with Spark Arts)
  - Study Support after school sessions
- **Employment and careers**
  - Job Shops at 8 libraries in partnership with DWP
  - IT, Wi-Fi and Printing facilities
  - Advice partnership sessions eg MoneywisePlus

# Performance – Customer Survey

## February 2022

- Survey undertaken 7 – 20 February 2022
- A snapshot in time – local restrictions still in place due to COVID variant
- Paper/online survey available at all libraries and community centres (Fosse and Belgrave Centres remained closed)
- Previously undertaken annually in November
- Aimed at 16yrs+ (but open to all)
- Number of responses differed from site to site

# Customer Survey - Results

- 1,512 customers responded
- Most popular reasons for visiting:
  - 51% Borrow a book
  - 23% Use a computer
  - 20% Take part in a group or activity
  - 18% Study or learning
  - 11% Socialising
  - 11% Join a Toddler Time session

# Customer Survey - Satisfaction

- 91% Overall satisfaction with services (Good/Very Good, of those who responded)
- 89% Overall satisfaction with layout/appearance
- 87% Overall satisfaction with information/advice
- 97% Overall satisfaction with computer facilities (98% satisfaction with printing service)
- 93% Overall satisfaction with service from staff

# Customer Survey - Benefits

“How has your visit helped you?” Of those who responded to this question:

- 35% Study and learning
- 33% Socialising
- 31% Leisure
- 21% Answered a query
- 19% Getting online
- 15% Health and wellbeing benefits
- 6% Helped with job / career

# Customer Survey – sample comments

- Happy with Covid hygiene measures and cleanliness of community facilities
- More study tables please (restricted in February)
- Plug in points at study tables requested
- Toddler Time sessions in high demand
- Support for expanded eBooks service
- Suggestions for new book stock
- More activities/events please (still being reintroduced in February)

The background features a light teal gradient with several large, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of teal and grey. These shapes are curved and organic, creating a modern, abstract design.

# Performance – Platinum Jubilee Programme May 2022

# Neighbourhood Services Platinum Jubilee Programme

- 14 events held in Neighbourhood Services facilities during Jubilee week 30 May – 5 June
- Key programme to help reconnect local communities and re-engage community centre and library customers
- Events grant funded through Samworth Foundation and Ward Community Funding
- Family shows commissioned from Spark Arts funded by Arts Council England
- Ward funded community jubilee events supported

# Platinum Jubilee Programme



African Caribbean Centre celebration event Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June  
Crafts, activities, dance and performance – 380 attendees during the day

# Platinum Jubilee Programme



Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre celebration event Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June  
Fully booked event

# Platinum Jubilee – Evaluation

- Events were fully attended (around 3,500 attendees over 14 sites)
- An evaluation was undertaken in partnership with Public Health who analysed the returns
- Participants were asked to score confidence attending public venues before and after the events
- Of the 379 replies from people attending events there was an improved sense of confidence on a self-score from an average of 2.2/5 to 4.1/5

# Performance - Overview

**Active Library Users** (used library in last 12 months)

March 2020 - 63,504 (pre-pandemic)

March 2021 - 23,334 (closed or restricted & online)

March 2022 – 37,834 (closed or restricted & online)

June 2022 – 46,711 (new users increasing monthly)

# Performance - Overview

## Community Centre visits (monthly footfall)

- Varies from Centre to Centre
- Monthly footfall for reopened centres is currently at 77% of pre-pandemic levels (May 2022)

# Performance – Trends

- The Platinum Jubilee evaluation shows there is still a hesitancy but also a strong desire to return and reconnect (particularly amongst older and more vulnerable customers)
- The majority of hiring community groups have returned, however:
  - Some groups have decided not to continue
  - A few groups have decided to continue meeting online
  - New groups have started at a number of centres

# Performance - trends

- The large increase in e-Book borrowing has continued after reopening
- There is good and continued take-up of the new DWP job coach sessions at 8 libraries
- There is a renewed appetite for community events as evidenced by the Platinum Jubilee programme, and by responses to the Customer Survey
- There has been a strong return to libraries by children and young families. This year's summer reading challenge has already attracted high take up.
- Schools very keen to engage with reading programmes
- Levels of return differ from area to area but are increasing on a monthly basis

**Any Questions?**