

Making life better

The new normal

WHERE I BELONG

There's no doubt that the world around us locally, nationally and internationally has changed as a result of the pandemic. At the time of writing we cannot say exactly what the 'new normal' will look like, only that some ways of life will transition back over time, whilst others may have changed forever.

What does this mean for Suffolk Libraries?

Firstly, our underlying vision remains relevant and even more important:

Making life better

Suffolk Libraries aims to provide safe, fun and inspiring places that:



EXPAND KNOWLEDGE



CONNECT PEOPLE



STIMULATE CREATIVITY



FOSTER A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Our vision is to enrich everyone's quality of life by...

1

Delivering the core offer to everyone

2

Developing new partnerships and personalised services to attract new customers and increase income

3

Inspiring existing stakeholders and promoting our brand and services to more people

4

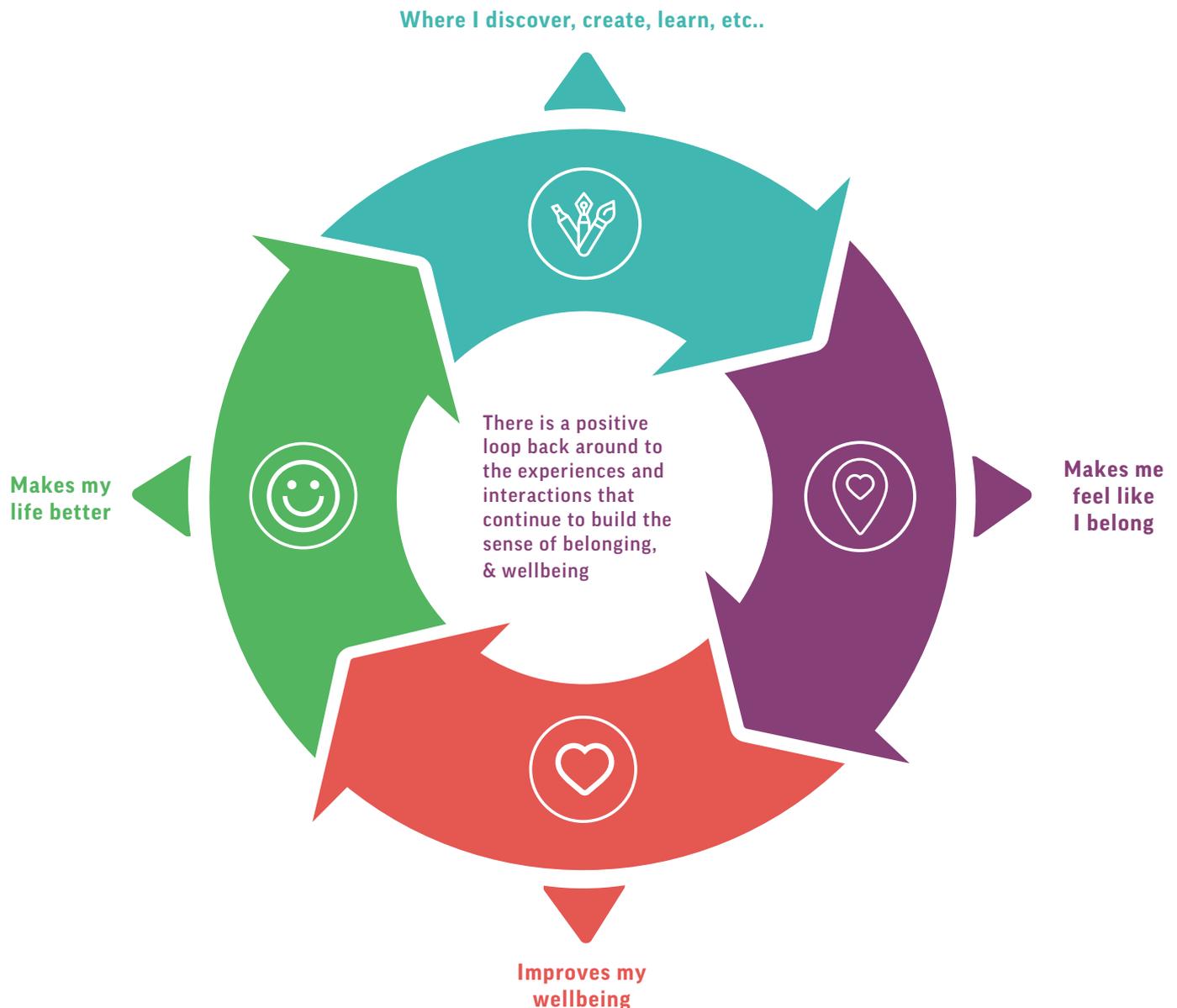
Establishing, measuring and monitoring our social impact

The key difference is that the mechanisms and tools we use to deliver the vision through the 4 pillars will change in emphasis and new ones will be introduced.

The idea of **PLACES** takes on a new meaning as the importance of Digital and Virtual space will be significant in the short term and probably in the long term too.

How Suffolk Libraries makes life better

WHERE I
BELONG



The diagram above outlines the personal journey that many customers experience.

Pre-pandemic this journey was almost exclusively undertaken within a physical space and often as the result of an event, activity, or experience with like-minded individuals in a shared location.

During and after the pandemic Suffolk Libraries faces the challenge of how to continue to deliver the most powerful elements of its service in a way that is tailored to the needs of each individual customer.

To do this our offer must be flexible, multi-layered and in many cases personalised at the point of delivery. We also recognise that how it is delivered in the next 3-6 months may change as Government guidelines are updated.

The Plan

**WHERE I
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With this key principle in mind, Suffolk Libraries will create a multi-layered service designed to meet the ever shifting pandemic and post-pandemic world.

These layers will be designed to meet the needs of different customers as the outside world changes.

The layers will be designed to create the same sense of belonging that traditional services once did with physical spaces acting as one of a menu of options for customers once they are able to reopen. The layers will seek to meet basic human needs and continue to support a sense of belonging that leads to enhanced wellbeing and ultimately a better life.

Many of the new ways of working developed during the first few weeks of lockdown will be retained as the starting point of developing these layers. To help you understand what we mean by the new layers they can be loosely broken down as follows:



SUFFOLK LIBRARIES SPACES

Any physical service that is directly delivered via one of our spaces i.e. physical book loans, public access PC's etc.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES HELP & ADVICE

Information and advice that is delivered via our physical sites, the website and elsewhere i.e. help with Universal Credit, food vouchers etc.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES HOME

Any physical service that is directly delivered to the home to meet a community need i.e. Home Library Service, Lifeline Telephone Service etc.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES INTERACTIVE

Any live event, activity or experience delivered physically in one of our spaces or virtually via social media or the website i.e. Top Time, Wordplay, BLOC etc.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES DIGITAL

Any content available to view or borrow from the website i.e. BorrowBox, Freegal, PressReader, podcasts etc.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES COMMUNITY CONNECT

Any outreach service designed to be accessible to several users on any one day i.e. Locals, Mobile Libraries etc.

The Plan (continued)

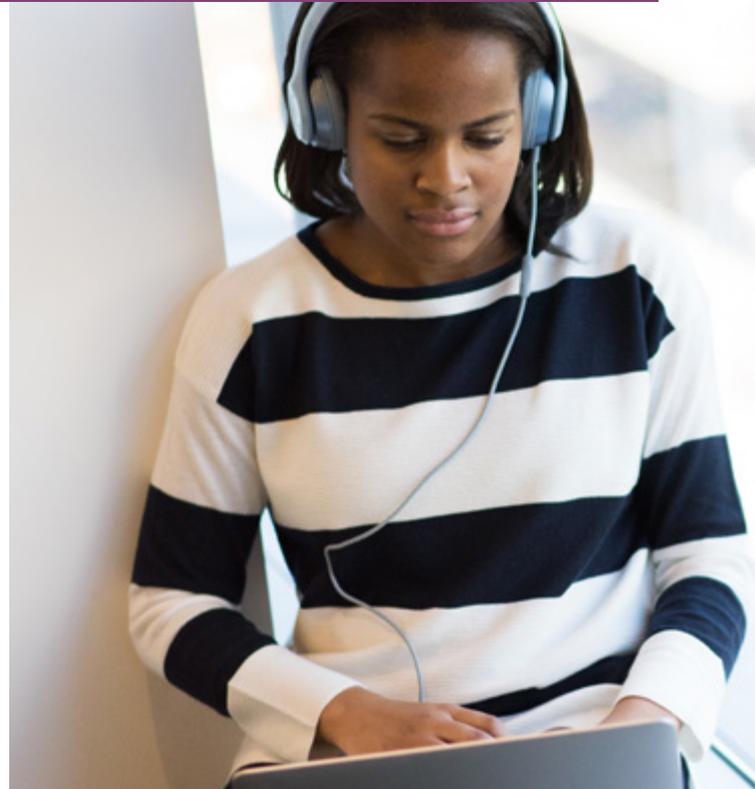
WHERE I BELONG

It is important that the customer understands how they can access the service in the future. The pandemic has changed the way people live their lives. For example, a long-standing customer with an underlying health issue may no longer feel able to come into a physical space but instead could take up one of the services available from the Home layer. Equally they could also choose to engage with one of the virtual groups as part of the Interactive layer. This approach will soon become the **'new normal'** for customers in the shorter term and potentially in the long term too.

By adopting this approach new audiences can be reached, and the depth and breadth of the offer can be expanded to meet the challenges we face.

Where Do the Four Key Pillars fit in?

The new normal means delivering the same service but in many different layers. Our four key pillars are still a vital point of focus and clarity:



Delivering the core offer to everyone:

By delivering the service in different ways we will continue to deliver the core offer and meet the terms of our contract with Suffolk County Council

Developing new partnerships and personalised services to attract new customers and increase income:

The new layers naturally require us to create a more personalised service by offering more ways for customers to access our service. Some of these will also offer the opportunity to generate income

Inspiring existing stakeholders and promoting our brand and services to more people

We will need to ensure existing and new customers are aware of our new layered offer and this will require clear and consistent communication with audiences across the county. Our digital presence will play a key role in driving customer engagement

Establishing, measuring and monitoring our social impact:

It has never been more important to highlight the impact of our new ways of working. New services like the 'Lifeline' are already having a huge impact on people's lives. We will devise ways to measure the impact of the new layers we have created

What's next?

**WHERE I
BELONG**

This is less of a shift in what Suffolk Libraries does but more a **shift in how it is delivered** and often where a service is accessed. To communicate and successfully integrate the layered approach above the following principles need to be clear:



- Each layer needs to be easily described and accompanied by **clear icons** that describe how it can be accessed
- Some services may exist in more than one layer i.e. the same book could be available through Spaces, Home, Digital and Community Connect – **the book doesn't change – just the way it is accessed**
- The website and social media are **pivotal** to the future of the service and are the gateways to retaining customer loyalty and generating new customers
- Every layer (outside of the virtual ones) should be able to be **switched off and on** as required to enable the service to operate whatever the external environment
- **New services** like 'click and collect' and home delivery may need to be developed to meet customer demand and need

To help existing and new customers re-imagine how the service will now operate we will be undertaking a public awareness campaign to showcase what's on offer and how they can now access it. This campaign will also be supported by our new website which will be in place from mid-June. Although these are challenging times, they also offer us a huge opportunity to have an even greater impact on even more people's lives. Together, despite the coronavirus, we really can **make life better for more people in Suffolk.**

Bruce Leeke
Chief Executive
Suffolk Libraries