

<b>Meeting:</b>	Executive
<b>Meeting date:</b>	15/07/2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Pauline Stuchfield - Director of Housing & Communities
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Cllr Pete Kilbane – Executive Member for Economy and Culture

## Annex A

### Success of Haxby & Wigginton Gateway Library and Clifton Library Learning Centre investments.

**Haxby and Wigginton Gateway Library** opened its door in January 2023, co-located with Oaken Grove Community Centre.



Haxby and Wigginton Library closed under safety grounds in July 2016 and between August that year right through to opening on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023, operated variously from, a mobile library and one small room within Oaken Grove Community Centre. The capital investment enabled the securing of a permanent home for Haxby & Wigginton Library and a full library service for the community.

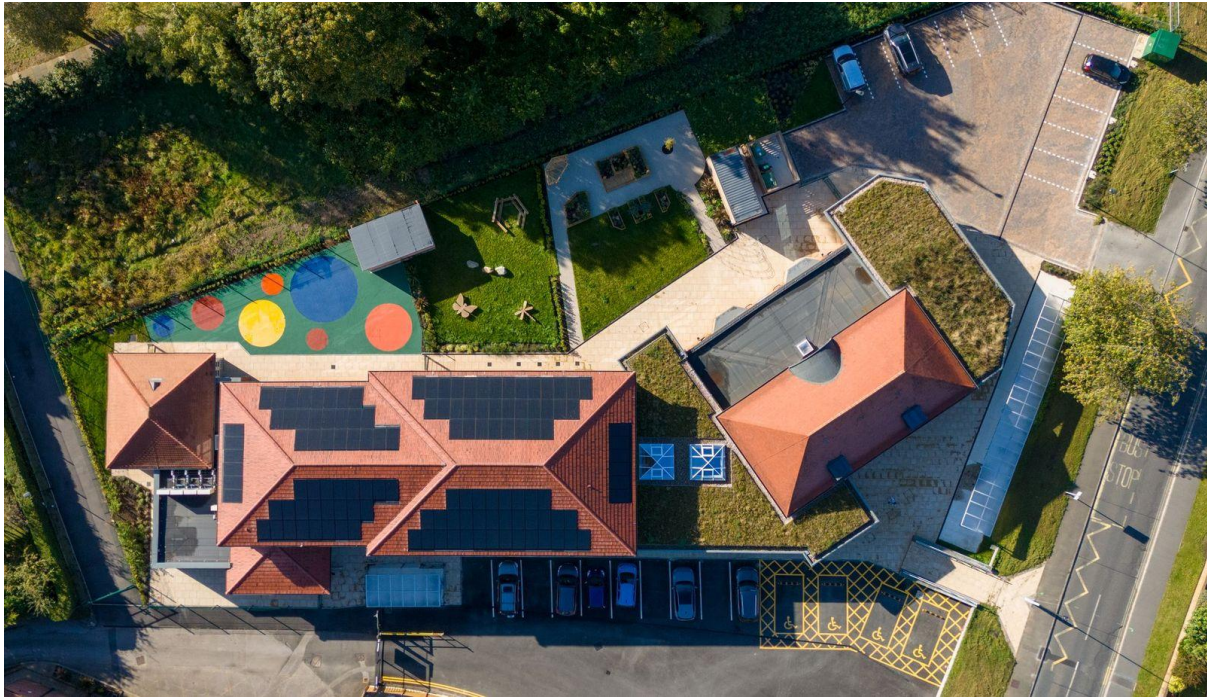
Since opening on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023, library usage has increased consistently over that period and far exceeds the visitor figures of the last full year of opening of the previous library. Total visits for performance year 2023/24 was 45,377, with 2024/25 increasing to 60,170. The last full year of opening of the old Haxby & Wigginton Library had 43,818 visits.

The reading café offer has greatly enhanced the offer to the community, as has the now embedded regular programme of events and activities including under 5s rhymetimes, readers groups, craft clubs and lego clubs. The programme of activity variously supports the improvement of early years literacy and provide a strong start for young babies, while craft clubs, readers groups and the café provide opportunities to bring the community together, tackling isolation. The programme of volunteering opportunities also enables improved wellbeing and resilience, with volunteers regularly in contact with other people within the local community, fostering stronger relationships. The partnership with Oaken Grove also improves the customer experience, with Explore being able to deliver more and bigger in larger spaces.

Shortly after opening, we conducted a survey of customers using the library. 99.1% satisfaction rate, compared to the previous survey in 2021 of 65%. Feedback from the community included comments such as the below:

*Excellent library, very helpful staff. It is vital for children to have access to free library facilities including the stimulating rhymetime. The library is a central community facility and should be supported and strengthened in every possible way. I firmly believe it plays an extremely positive role in supporting the mental health and welfare of all in the community, regardless of age.*

**Clifton Library Learning Centre** opened its doors in September 2024, relocated 5 minutes walk from the old Clifton library to Rawcliffe Drive, next to the Vale of York Academy School.



Similarly, the opening of Clifton Explore in September 2024 saw a strengthening and a further embedding of the Explore Centre as a key community anchor. Library use, book loans and volunteer support soared as we welcomed the community into the new centre. Again, visitor figures doubled from the previous Library to the new location with the opening first 10 days in September seeing more visits than a typical month in its previous location. Visitor figures Sept 24 -31<sup>st</sup> March 25 were 37,977, compared with 16,101 in the first 6 months of the same year, based in the previous Library. A reading café brought a new focus for the community and is now a meeting place for parents and children, particularly after storytimes, a space for the students from nearby Vale of York Academy school to do homework and a drop-in space for local microbusiness to access emails. A suite of meeting rooms has enabled the working with new partners, including Accessible Arts and Media, York Music Hub and Medical Needs Tuition Service, as well as a regular stream of bookings from organisation such as Andy's Mans Club. The Explore Centre has also been inundated with other partners including Yormind and HealthWatch who hold regular drop in sessions providing access to City Centre provision within the local community. As detailed above, Explore is supporting the development of stronger communities and improved life chances through opportunities to improve health and wellbeing and decrease the feeling of social isolation.

Comments and feedback from the local community include the following

*"Absolutely brilliant library. Library staff are very helpful and friendly. Food in the café is delicious. So very lucky to have this wonderful library here."*

*"Absolutely fantastic! What an upgrade. The space, choice of books and staff are all fantastic. Can't wait to come back. Thank you."*