

Empower Inform Enrich – response to consultation questions by:

Surrey County Council

ROLE FOR LIBRARIES:

The Government believes that the public library service is vital to a democratic society, which offers equality of opportunity and intellectual freedom. Each local authority has a duty to provide a user responsive library service and the variety of demand across the country is currently met with a mixture of complementary services in different areas:

Providing books, learning, information and entertainment to customers: All libraries provide a range of books and written material, often in a variety of formats, eg hard copy, audio, online and e-books. Most libraries also offer Music and Film material and provide computers with free internet access.

The library at the centre of the Community: in many areas libraries are centres of the community, facilitating community meetings such as social groups or book clubs. Often, libraries work in partnership with other public services, providing signposts to customers or integrating health, learning, skills or education provisions.

The library as an education resource and proactive provider of information and learning – In many areas libraries have a strong role in guiding customers through a morass of information, providing opportunities for education by linking to digital inclusion initiatives, improving literacy, offering reading events and providing learning opportunities within the library. However, new challenges require new responses by libraries and give us an opportunity to consider afresh the role of public libraries.

Q1. Does every library authority have to share a common purpose? Are these purposes complementary and relevant? Are some more important than others? Are there other purposes we should consider?

Answer;

- We should support a core definition of the purpose of the public library, and guidelines for the core service that citizens can expect from it.
- The Cilip Guidelines for Public Libraries are a starting point. They are the basis for a consensus nationally, though they could still be strengthened around Virtual (IT and online) provision.
- The national definition of purpose must be the common ground understanding of what a library is, what it can provide, and its place as a cultural driver, while giving headroom for local variation to meet communities' specific profiles of needs.
- The Fundamental purpose should contain reference to:
 - Support for individuals' achievement of reading and IT literacy skills (and their enjoyment)
 - Provision of materials to support individuals to learn, use, exploit and enjoy these skills
 - The Library as a place to gain access to Knowledge and Information
 - Library as a 3rd place in the community (virtual and physical), where people can partake of these benefits in a free, safe, neutral and positive/friendly environment

- There needs to be recognition of the benefits to the community of investment in the Library as a place-shaping asset. The future for the Library is as a hub, no longer standalone. The mix will vary according to the scope and scale of the location: in larger civic centres it is a vital element of a hub for the Arts and Cultural activities; in smaller residential communities, of a hub for the delivery of services with the potential for a symbiotic relationship with health, community and retail provision.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Library services are delivered by local authorities which have a large amount of flexibility around which services are delivered to the community and the allocation of funding from LA budgets. Central Government has a leadership role (the Secretary of State for Culture has a duty of oversight under the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964) and provides funding to Local Authorities (this money is distributed by the Department for Communities & Local Government). National programmes rolled out to all libraries, such as the introduction of the People's Network, are initiated by central government.

Q2. Do you think the current roles as defined for central and local government are still appropriate? Is the 1964 legislative framework still appropriate or does it need review? If so what changes would you like to see? Is there any value in central government having a more direct role in setting the vision and objectives for the library service or is the service better managed entirely at local level?

Answer:

- The 64 Act has some limitations, but contains broad principles that hold good today:
 - a core service offer free at the point of delivery
 - the concept of the statutory duty to provide a 'Comprehensive and Efficient service'
 - the provision for government intervention where a local authority is challenged to demonstrate that it is fulfilling its statutory duty.
- Its limitations stem from the fact that it describes the range of possibilities it found in 1964, and in details that can now be constraining (such as our powers to charge for some services that are defined, and its silence on others that did not exist at that time, which has led to fudging the issue, for example, in charging for A/V material, and for access to the Internet); but these are just details.
- To re-draft the Act to reflect the current landscape could be equally constraining in a few years' time. We agree that the single most effective remedy to the shortcomings of the Act would be a return to a set of standards and performance measures that will provide a benchmark of 'Comprehensive and Efficient'. These can be as nuanced as they need to be, calling on best practice in measuring public value, as well as raw use. The benchmark should be constantly under review, and should be revised as necessary.
- National Government's role. Where there is consensus that Libraries can be a key player in delivering a national vision or objective, there is a role for National Government in setting that objective and opening the way to the necessary investment. The People's Network proved the efficacy of national intervention and investment. It is still the only Government IT project that most people can name that achieved its goal and came in on time and to budget.
- There is also a successful model of a non-governmental body (for example The Reading Agency) setting a national agenda, and acting as an

intermediary with Government to gain resources and support. The best example is the Summer Reading Challenge. The advantage there is in the expertise and undivided purpose of the intermediary, that meshes accurately with what Libraries can deliver.

- If libraries are to remain equally relevant to all citizens, and consistently across the nation require a step change in modernisation to achieve this, large scale investment in upgrading the infrastructure may be needed. In this instance, national intervention can be decisive - and Libraries have a proven track record.
- As contention for budgets gets worse, it is not helpful for services to be 100% managed at local level. If Libraries are to continue to deliver nationally strategic objectives (eg the aims of Digital Britain), as they already to, there needs to be a national framework through which funding streams to meet national objectives can be accessed.
- The 64 Act provides a framework which is sufficiently generic that, if stripped of the assumptions of its time, it can continue to serve libraries well.

Q3. Could (a) central government departments, and (b) local authorities better use the public library service to communicate initiatives and contribute to other public services? Do you have any ideas on how this might work?

Answer:

- Central Government initiatives: There are many ways in which we have been supporting Central Government objectives for years in Surrey – the latest relationship is with NHS Choices. We proactively support Ukonline. Digital Britain and the BBC initiative to develop a learning programme for digital skills will be the next big campaign.
- Local authorities, and other local providers of services to the public: Libraries are already a gateway for the public to access information about services and entitlements, and to access the services themselves. This is because of their unique position in communities as a place with an open door, where questions are answered. It is therefore the place of first and last resort for enquirers who do not carry the detailed information they need when a life event intervenes.
- There is good practice to share across the Public Library sector in developing this unacknowledged role by a closer integration of the Library into the delivery strategy for the local authority and its partners. The Library is the trusted, branded highly visible presence in multiple localities for the providers of services to the public, and should be more closely involved in the design of service delivery.
- In all this, the essential values of Libraries: open, neutral, free, supportive but not directive, must not be compromised.
- To ensure success, the role in partnerships of the Library as a trusted and valued delivery channel must be overt. This is most likely to be guaranteed when the Library Service is integrated into the planning process from the outset, so that capacity and the need for resources can be factored in.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES, GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Funding for libraries is provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government and policy responsibility for public libraries rests with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. However, many other departments have an interest in ensuring that libraries continue to contribute to a number of national and local government priorities – health, literacy & learning, business support and

entrepreneurship, job hunting and employability, community cohesion, citizenship and digital inclusion.

Two DCMS public bodies – the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council or MLA (a strategic Non Departmental Public Body promoting best practice) and the Advisory Council on Libraries (providing strategic advice to the Secretary of State on public libraries) – support central government policy making.

In addition, third sector organisations like The Reading Agency and BookTrust work with central government and libraries to deliver programmes supporting literacy and learning. During the early stages of this review we spoke to the library authorities that are testing new and emerging governance models such as Trust structures and procurement to private companies, and those that are opening up new revenue streams, fund raising opportunities or radical efficiency measures. Case studies on these authorities are included in the final section of this document.

Q4. A recent report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries, Literacy and Information Management concluded that central Government structures complicate the delivery of library funding and policy. The Report also called into question the suitability of the MLA and ACL and recommended a Library Development Agency.

- *Are there benefits in changing the structures in government?*
- *Are there benefits in changing the structures or roles of the public bodies?*
- *Is there a value in a greater central function around particular issues? Eg Marketing and publicity, digital services?*
- *Do you see any benefit in establishing new national/local structures as set out in Margaret Hodge's essay?*

Answer:

- We support the following principles
 - government funding and functional responsibility for public libraries should be brought together within a single government department-
 - local authorities should continue to be responsible and carry accountability for the provision of public library services in their area;
 - the application of the PMLA 1964 should be clarified by a clear definition of the minimum level of service to be expected by customers;
 - a library development agency for England could prove valuable, under the umbrella of a powerful body providing a voice for Culture;
 - A stronger central function around particular issues could prove valuable, around marketing, advocacy, the digital world.
 - The MLA as it stands is not big enough or powerful enough to support the Public Libraries sector. We have no experience of deriving discernible benefit from the Advisory Council for Libraries, so we do not support its retention.

Q5. In 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government published Developing the Local Government Services Market: New ways of working and new models of provision within the public library service but only a handful of local authorities currently deliver libraries through a trust or private company. The case studies show that alternative delivery models can be effective so how might we best encourage Local Authorities to explore the opportunities they offer? What other governance models might be suitable for library services or are there

barriers to introducing these models? For instance:

- *What could libraries learn from other sectors including the private sector?*
- *Would other models of delivery and funding – eg the academy model for schools, social enterprise models or Foundation Trusts for hospitals – be appropriate for library services?*

Answer:

- The report referred to was produced in 2006, and library authorities have developed, far more than is implied here, an increasing range of alternative forms of service delivery using technology - online enquiry and contact centre services, stock procurement and management processes, e-books, use of mobile libraries to take technology and a wide range of service to rural and deprived areas - increased use of service delivery via third parties, partnerships, voluntary agencies and volunteers, and these activities continue to increase.
- In principle, changes in forms of service delivery, e.g. partnerships and contracting to the private sector, should be positive, Up to now however there has been a history, outside the library world, of poor specification and tendering and failed contracts for a wide range of other services, which causes caution and concern.
- Additionally, while libraries may wish for example to market test their property management and asset strategy for example, for this and a range of other possibilities - eg transport contracts, IT contracts - they are tied into their wider local authority contracts and do not have freedom of choice and movement.
- At the moment, even with budget reductions, economic drivers have not been sufficiently strong to force libraries to look at core services, but this may be starting as within two tier authorities questions around changing to a commissioning role are starting to be asked.
- To encourage local authorities to explore new ways of working there needs to be a stronger government lead through to library authorities, including
 - More comprehensive and unbiased research and information available, possibly by seminars as well as publications, on the schemes in place and how they are performing;
 - Some pump priming resources to create capacity within authorities to model costing and specifications for commissioning of alternative delivery relationships, or procure expert guidance;
 - Availability of specific training in commissioning for library services
 - Pathfinding activity in promoting the development of a library market by a lead body perhaps concentrating on one or two specific initial services, which could be cross cutting (eg rural services).
- Other governance models: Again it is likely that the economic downturn will turn more attention to governance than before, and it will be a shame if economics is the only driver in looking at the issue, which should also be looking at a form of governance which provides services best matched to local needs and is flexible and responsive. The concern regarding specification and external contracts limiting change and flexibility has to be taken on board. At the moment there is lack of a critical mass of real effective working models, which does not encourage confidence.

Q6. How can we prioritise investment in libraries, especially at a time of financial constraints? You may like to consider:

- *How we might ensure that all libraries are able to develop successful funding models which are based on a diversity of funding streams.*
- *How could we help open new and more revenue streams for libraries,*
- *What could libraries learn from other sectors?*
- *How do we effectively spread best practice?*

Answer:

- New models of governance are purported to enable access to funding streams currently not open to us (charitable trust funds, private donations, legacies, gift aid).
- We need to identify where the leverage is with large public funding bodies, and seek support in challenging them where public libraries are precluded from being beneficiaries.
- Public Libraries need to better publicize our value and use to communities/society – we need to brag more.
- Look for ways to pool our needs for investment with other partners, public and commercial.
- Ensure that Libraries are funded through Local Strategic Partnerships and the LAA where they deliver outcomes on behalf of the Sustainable Communities Plan; ensure that Libraries contribution to the plan is explicit, and that the sector is represented on LSPs.
- Be clearer with politicians about the value of what we are delivering, for instance, the support and informal learning that builds the skills that will be required for adults to bridge the Digital Divide, so that the aspirations of Digital Britain can be delivered.
- Ensure that the Library is recognised as a potential keystone development in Town Centre regeneration plans.
- New revenue streams from property developments: where a library occupies a valuable site, it could be redeveloped as a library, but as part of a mixed development, with residential/retail/commercial elements providing an income stream to support the service.
- We do not see why we cannot start accepting legacies and financial donations. If the legal position needs clarifying, this should be done by regulation.
- Look at our services and be more pragmatic and realistic about where we can achieve cost recovery (eg printing and photocopying charges and use of peripherals on PN terminals; charges for processing and packaging substantial results from online resources);
- Use IT advertising, and revenue sharing via 'pay per click' models such as *Anywhere.me*;
- Take our approach to sponsorship to new levels and places, nationally and locally;
- Best practice - who decides best practice and from whose perspective?

DIGITAL

For libraries to remain useful and usable they must be responsive to changing circumstances. The Internet revolutionises the opportunities for how libraries make their content available to the public and there is now a growing demand for 24/7 access to libraries with people wanting to access what they want, when and where they want it. The popularity of the download shows how libraries will have to adapt and the arrival of e-book readers will no doubt stimulate a market for books in new formats which libraries will have to embrace. The case study on

Essex library service shows that this is already happening, that in a digital age libraries can capitalise on the opportunities available.

Q7. Digital Services: What is the future of library services in a digital environment? What changes do you envisage as a result of changes in technology over the next 5-10 years? You might like to consider –

- *How can we use the digital revolution to extend access to library resources?*
- *Should virtual lending (ie lending downloads to the home via the internet) be the future of the public library service either generally or in some areas? What challenges would virtual lending present?*
- *What digital content should libraries provide? For example should all libraries make subscription online services available to users? Should this be a free service?*
- *Web 2.0 enables people and communities to contribute web content? Do you think that there is a role for libraries in Web 2.0? If so, what?*
- *Is there other content or technology which you think should be guaranteed to users?*
- *How can libraries support the Digital Inclusion agenda? What are some of the potential obstacles to greater digital engagement within libraries, and how might these be overcome?*
- *What other opportunities does new technology present for libraries? Do you have ideas for innovative ways in which new technology could be applied in local libraries?*

Answer:

- Foremost in the future strategy of digital services in libraries is the recognition that our primary purpose is to deliver CONTENT. Where this is now available in digital formats, in some cases (such as reference works and directories) digital content is replacing paper. In other instances, it provides an alternative, broadens choice, and enables Libraries to extend their reach.
- At the same time, Social Media and Interactive technologies enable Libraries to engage with their users in a more direct and personalised way. We can have relevant conversations with our users, and help them to enrich their experience of using the Library by giving them targeted information, tuned to their interests and needs, and enabling them to set up mechanisms to receive personalised recommendations and alerts.
- Libraries are now able to deliver the same content, services and media as they always have, but now through the development of 24/7 Virtual Library Services:
 - Books, reading, music and speech, listening, film and drama, viewing;
 - informal learning;
 - skills development;
 - bridging the digital divide for those who are not online at home, school or work;
 - enriching the core library experience of books and reading, and information, through online access to interactive services and social media.
- Digital content we should provide:
 - Mediated and supported access to what is best on the Web – guaranteed;
 - Online electronic information and data resources products – guaranteed;
 - E-books – guaranteed;

- Downloads of all other cultural content – audiobooks, aural and visual media – as currently when we lend physical media, we expect to provide this content on a cost recovery basis, if we can devise a robust model for applying charges.
- Supporting the Digital inclusion agenda: through the People's Network, we have been doing this since 2001, and through our upgrading of the network, and our planning ahead for our IT needs in the next 5-10 years, we are tuning this support to the current digital environment and appropriate skills and content
- There are many existing examples of innovation in libraries and we expect successful ideas to enter the mainstream. For example:
 - Social media allows libraries to engage better with parts of its market, promote services in new ways, and explore the ways local communities can gain more say in library services.
 - Web 2.0 and social media allow library members to become an integral part of the service. For example, recommending books, compiling specialist reading lists, tagging, reviewing, recommending purchases for the library, becoming advocates for the service. In the same way, it's becoming easier for partner organisations to play a greater role in library services, such as Adult Education or the BBC or the various health services, which can now recommend stock or create reading lists for very small groups of people and make them universally accessible.
 - Radio Frequency Identification allows efficiencies in managing stock, and opens the way for novel ways for library members to engage with physical items: for example, interactive maps with GPS guiding people to stock, or sound chips which describe the item to the borrower – hugely important when the borrower is unable to read blurb on an item's case.
 - Mobile technology and the rise of the "app" culture will allow us to make our libraries more accessible than ever before. Members of the public will be able to access services from anywhere, anytime. They will be able to create their own mini library catalogues which they can carry around with them, and their own mini libraries, created out of downloads of books, music, snippets of information, sound clips...
 - Chat, instant messaging, global co-operation, and new initiatives like Google Wave will allow us to extend librarian expertise outside our buildings. You can now chat live to a librarian 24/7: this relationship will expand as librarians extend their role into Q&A forums and wikis, as is happening now with Enquire.
 - Learning software and VLEs such as Moodle allow library services to create environments for informal learning. Learners can support each other – as happens now with computer buddies – in a virtual environment, supported by a full range of virtual library services.
 - New hardware is springing up to support library services: "vending" machines and intelligent drop boxes, interactive shelving, wifi, download kiosks, display equipment, mobile devices such as the iPhone and Kindle: as all of these become mainstream, they will massively improve the accessibility of the service.

Q8. Digital technology is already helping with the back office and administrative functions of many libraries

- *How can we spread best practice and maximise those opportunities?*

- *Self service and return technology is intended to free up library staff to deal with more complex customer enquiries. Should this technology be available in all libraries?*

Answer:

- Surrey CC has introduced Self-service borrowing and return into 26 of its 53 libraries, concentrating on the busiest initially. The intention was to modernise our libraries, and to release capacity that can translate into additional service offered to the public. The dividend from this modernisation programme has been
 - An additional 11.4% weekly opening hours across the Library network of 53 libraries (17.8% in the 25 biggest and busiest libraries);
 - Creation of a consistent Core Service offer, scaled to three family groups of libraries according to size
 - Rationalisation of staffing levels and timetables to achieve consistency across the library network
 - The opportunity to revise the roles of front-line staff to provide a service to users better aligned with the current range of library activities and library users' needs.
- We do not fully agree that self-service releases capacity for staff to deal with more complex enquiries; that is too simplistic. Our perception is that this released capacity can be used in more transformational ways: improving stock management and display to maximise visibility of premium stock and encourage borrowing; staff enabled to build a more flexible and fruitful relationship with users, supporting them in using the library as they wish, finding what they want and need, and taking advantage of new facilities and activities.
- The further down the scale of library size, the less scope there is from introducing Self-service technology to release capacity for longer opening hours and additional activities. Self-service might be part of a modernising agenda, to make best use of space, but in terms of delivering efficiency and capacity, there is a point at which we are into diminishing returns. However, self-service technology may be key to extending opening hours, or even scoping a new library provision, in a shared location where staff are multi-tasking.
- Nevertheless, automation of business processes can yet deliver more efficiency, in particular in terms of the acquisitions supply chain, stock management, stock promotion and stock offer.
- There are options to use emerging technology for alternative service delivery, unstaffed service points in shared locations, book ATMs etc. These tools can extend our reach into locations where a dedicated building and staff is uneconomic and there are no options to co-locate a full library provision; they may even provide an enhanced alternative to a mobile library stop.
- Social and interactive technologies can improve internal working practice and intelligence handling; can improve relationships with partners such as reading groups, volunteers.

Q9. Do Local Authority IT strategies support or impede libraries' digital innovation? Should libraries have a national web presence?

- *Would a national online catalogue covering all public libraries be beneficial?*

Answer:

- Always a dilemma for libraries and the local authorities that deliver the service. Business and internal security requirements can lead to a risk

averse culture that can stifle innovation. There is a deep-rooted nervousness around the risks of opening a service to direct use to members of the public on the authority's equipment and network (as opposed to via the website). This is not entirely ill-founded, as this authority has recently had to resist a concerted Denial of Service attack, originating on the public network. It will be important to exploit current networking options to integrate operations where possible, and to isolate secure from unsecured network operations where, and only where, required.

- The Government Connect agenda and the cost and technical implications of completely isolating the secure from the less secure network have not proved helpful. What would be valuable is nationally consistent guidance on the application of the Government Code of Connection to Libraries. We are aware that in different library authorities a local approach to risk assessment has led to serious restrictions on the library service's ability to offer a full service to the public (not an issue, however, in Surrey CC).
- Surrey CC's solution for the past 20 years has been a segregation of Library IT from corporate IT. This has benefited service delivery, and public access, but caused obstacles to Libraries' efficient use of corporate systems and staff participation in the corporate IT community; however, in terms of developing a relevant service to the public and the innovation required to keep it fresh, it has been a far-sighted approach.
- Convergence is in prospect in Surrey CC, through a forthcoming tender process for Libraries' IT requirements, and alignment with future corporate IT investment.
- There is always a problem for a two tier authority in working with partners where IT standards and systems not shared. We cannot readily become partners in Leisure or Transport smart cards unless we are in at the beginning of the development. Again, however, work in hand to plan the future for Surrey CC IT in terms of whole Surrey public services providers as single network should make joint planning, joint delivery and creation of multi-partner community hubs far easier in future.
- Libraries national web presence: it all depends on identifying an appropriate umbrella body. None springs to mind at present. The questions remain: how is it to be achieved, designed and managed by whom, and with what resources? How will it be branded, and how will the branding link to other national marketing options requiring branding? Surrey CC is proud of its Library Service and of its vibrant contribution to its web presence. Local branding is bound to take priority. Attempts at creating national content have not come through with an attractive or sustainable offer so far.
- National online catalogue – again, funded how, provided how, and by whom? Would the intention be that it is a live interlending service? That would be a massive investment in reinventing the Inter-library lending landscape that is currently fragmented and (nationally) rudderless; to this could be added the postal national online lending service, although in our opinion there is no justification for the substantial investment it will require to test the viability of the idea. If the national online catalogue is just a super look-up tool – why not just buy OCLC Worldcat for the public good, as an international resource, and enable all libraries to add it to their websites?
- The alternative is a considerable investment in a national agency to pull all interlending capacity and networks together, and develop a fully functional end-user inter-library lending service. It could be done, but it would require massive initial investment, and a large, open-ended pooling of resources to keep it running. How would this be achieved? Would it be opt-in or opt-out, or mandatory? We have no answers to these questions.

- Currently the choice of LMS is a free market choice in the hands of 151 library authorities. Many are looking at partnerships and consortia, but how is this sort of national service to be made mandatory, standardised, and who is going to resource the changes and manage the transition?

WHAT SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO USERS?

The Government believes that the public library service should continue to be a local service which is shaped by the characteristics of its community. We know that the services libraries offer vary across the country from opening hours to e-books to other community services. We know that there is a striking variation in the use of libraries across authorities. This must be linked to the services on offer and the responsiveness to customer demand.

If we want the library service to flourish in the future we need to reverse the established downward trend in usage and ensure that libraries are relevant, popular and used by local communities. So we need to think about what libraries offer to their communities and what is effective in growing the demand by customers for libraries.

Contributors to the library review discussed whether a clear national 'offer to consumers' of the library in the 21st century needs to be articulated or whether the service content should be entirely locally led. A national offer would have the benefit of enabling coherent national marketing.

Q10. Are there any services which you consider should be prescribed across all library services or should services be entirely determined at local level? Is there any value in having a clear national 'offer to consumers of the library in the 21st century'. If so which elements would be vital components? Besides hard copy books do you think there are other services which should be free at the point of delivery on a national basis?

Answer:

- The core offer of services should reflect the commonly held sense of the purpose of the public library, and what users are guaranteed by way of the library experience.
- There needs to be a consensus that libraries provide a commonly understood offer of resources, services and activities that defines the Library. Common ground should include:
 - Free access to information and the written word through all media, print and digital;
 - Free access to the Library as a building and a location in the community;
 - Library services and resources available outside the library building, online and through mobile, local and home delivery arrangements
 - Knowledgeable, helpful and well-trained staff both on the frontline and in support and development roles.
- Services free at the point of delivery, apart from the loan of books should be
 - Access to the building and its facilities to sit, read and study
 - Access to online information resources, and to the Internet
 - Support and assistance from knowledgeable, helpful and well-trained library staff

Q11. How can we widen usage and make libraries more accessible to the public? For instance:

- *On what basis should library leaders make decisions about opening hours and location?*
- *Should library joining and membership arrangements be simplified across all libraries? Indeed should library membership be national so that citizens can use any library and borrow and return material anywhere.*
- *Do you think there are particular services which would encourage more library use? You might wish to consider a universal home delivery service (in addition to the scheme for housebound people), and enabling people to request a book online.*
- *Only a third of 16-24 year olds now visit public libraries. How can we ensure that young people who leave full time education remain library users?*
- *How can we improve our understanding of the people who use libraries – and of the people who do not – in order to improve services to them?*
- *How might library users have a greater voice in decision making?*

Answer:

- Decisions on opening hours: where co-located with retail and other services, Libraries should take their cue from them; in smaller communities, work out times when footfall most likely to be shared with other activities. Co-location: improvements and efficiencies can be achieved on the back of other services' presence in a shared building. Libraries in locations that are retail, transport and business hubs serve populations other than residents: shoppers, workers, students, tourists, and their needs should be taken into account
- Should library joining be simplified? Yes – though there are risks that need to be accepted or managed, including the risk of loss of resources bought with public funding. Library membership could be regarded as a right that comes with citizenship, with membership automatically triggered by registration of birth or a citizenship ceremony.
- Particular services to encourage use - national postal library service. This could only succeed if it became a chargeable premium service. We have no evidence of demand for this, or that it will fulfill an unmet need. It would require massive investment, and the identification of a lead body that currently does not exist. How does all library stock nationally become searchable? Who is going to be the focus for the necessary investment? Lovefilm is a commercial model – they probably have one big warehouse, closely located to a hub on the motorway network – we have 150 library authorities and several thousand return addresses. A logistical nightmare.
- 16-24 year olds: along with other services and activities, perhaps it is necessary to accept a certain demographic gap, recognize that people come back to libraries at certain times in their lives. Meanwhile, we should do everything we can keep in touch with them, via channels frequented by that age group, and continue to promote the service to them. Strengthen all online services to keep this age group engaged. Continue to develop and deliver improved buildings with Wifi environment, especially in retail and business centres where this age group is active. Consider not deactivating their membership after 2 years inactivity – this makes it more difficult to start again. Idea: send a new and attractive membership card and letter of invitation through the post every 2 years. This needs to be costed, but could be focus for national marketing initiative, rather than done 150 times over?
- Improve understanding of users and non-users: Become adept at exploiting Mosaic, and targeting marketing efforts more accurately. Market research undertaken for Surrey CC by MORI came through with evidence that misunderstanding can cut both ways – we need to make sure non-users (and

to an extent users) get a chance to understand our 21st century Libraries, how they have been modernised and what they are like these days, and why.

- How might library users have a greater voice in decision-making: the technology is now available to support massively increased engagement with library users:
 - Informing people – websites and social networks allow us to spread our message more widely than has ever been possible before.
 - Consulting people – email, online survey software, and consultative websites allow us to measure the opinion of both users and non-users.
 - Involving people – We have the software and the data, within the provisions of the Data Protection Act, to approach and involve very specific groups of people, either according to interest or by geography, to work with us on particular projects.
 - Collaborating with people – We can use social media and Web 2.0 technology to invite involvement in key decisions.
 - Empowering people – the software and channels exist to create citizen panels, allowing us to delegate decisions about libraries or stock or changes to interested groups.
 - Like most library services, Surrey provides a great deal of information to both users and non-users. It is using SurveyMonkey to invite people to comment and suggest changes to the service. Embryonic citizen panels exist in the shape of its reading groups and Friends groups, and these can be massively expanded by capitalising on the library's membership database, and online social networks which are starting to appear in Surrey.
 - It is also important to highlight that the library service is supporting people to engage more widely with other services, both inside and outside the Council, by providing access to computers and giving people informal training and support in the use of new technologies.

Q12. Do we do enough to market library services? If not, what more could/should be done to promote or explain the benefits of libraries?

Answer:

- Whilst some services have taken great steps forward in advertising and giving information about their services, few we think have mastered marketing. Services like ours are so under-marketed and starting so far back that almost anything would improve the situation.
- We are doubtful that any national initiative would provide a workable solution, as the essence of marketing is to know one's audience(s), and that takes the issue back into the local arena.
- National profile raising might be of value where it provides resources not made available to the service internally.
- MORI research conducted for Surrey CC Cultural Services in 2009 summed up the two key marketing gaps: getting across what Libraries do and how wonderful they are to people who do not know anything about them and feel neutral towards us; and changing the perceptions of people who think they do know what libraries are like and have a negative image of them.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

Research shows that over 80% of library services already operate a procurement partnership; over 60% are co-located with another service and over 30% have developed shared services. While there are excellent examples across the

country of partnership working – as illustrated by our case studies – sometimes library services remain risk averse and unwilling to drive change.

Q13. Commercial partnerships through libraries are not common. How might we bring more private funding into the public library service?

- *What commercial activities should we encourage libraries to operate? (Examples of commercial activities or partnerships might be book selling or partnerships with bookshops, provision of coffee shops, rental of certain materials, contracts with local business, national partnerships with private companies?)*
- *What benefits do you think these might bring to the library service?*
- *Are there any commercial activities which you think are not appropriate for libraries to undertake?*

Answer:

- Coffee shops, bookshops, other shops - yes, if we can accommodate it. Premises have to be a credible location, and fit for purpose. Where there are franchising opportunities, or partnerships with multi-site businesses, the market will decide whether there is a strong commercial potential.
- We already are part of the Amazon Associates programme and have no intention of leaving it. It brings in a trickle of income, but for no input, and we do not promote it – more to be had if we did. It is part of the ‘pay-per-click’ revenue stream model that we should be embracing. Amazon is not the only online bookseller offering associate status – Book Depository and Abebooks do too, so there is no need to be exclusive. LMS suppliers offer the functionality for catalogue searchers to click through to buy the item they have traced as an alternative to borrowing. For out-of-print works, Amazon resellers and Abebooks can in some cases offer a cheaper, or better value alternative to the interlibrary loan additional request fee that we charge, and it is a service we ought to promote to library users.
- Other potentially fruitful and mutually beneficial commercial activities could be: providing information and selling travel tickets for public transport operators (we have past experience with National Express and with local bus service provider Arriva); in small communities, hot-desk opportunities for Banks and Financial Services providers; Post Office; income-raising hot-desk sessions offered to a range of local businesses.
- It is not a given that the commercial sector can provide us with a successful model. There have been recent failures in the business of selling books and coffee, so there might not be so many lessons to learn from the private sector.
- Revenue-sharing of online advertising is a way forward that some library authorities, including Surrey CC, are actively exploring. ‘Anywhere.me’ offers development of a customized People’s Network terminal start page with a revenue sharing opportunity with Google. Some libraries are already embracing context-sensitive Googleads, though there is criticism from library users of this commercial approach. There needs to be a ‘hearts and minds’ exercise in pointing out the financial benefits of this low-impact commercial partnership.
- Inappropriate commercial activities for libraries - local small businesses can be rightly disturbed if we look as though we are eroding their competitive advantage - the death of the Internet Cafe as a result of the introduction of the People’s Network in libraries is an example – and we need to beware of

selling and promoting goods and services that have no remote link with our core purpose or values.

Q14. Where can libraries learn from the commercial sector and what private partnerships can you think of which have been useful for library services?

• How can we better spread good practice here?

Answer:

- Some commercial partnerships have had promise (eg Sainsbury's and Bookstart) but how many prove sustainable, and how do we protect ourselves from being suddenly dropped? In the case of Bookstart, the Book Trust picked up the project and secured public funding, but this is exceptional.
- In Surrey, we intend to tap into the skills that elected member bring into the Council. We have a members' working group on income-raising, where elected members will bring their business acumen to bear on the challenge of raising more income across Cultural Services

LOCATION AND BUILDINGS

In 2006 estimates prepared for MLA identified a need for £760m to make the library estate fit for purpose and Disability Discrimination Act compliant. But how many buildings and in which locations are needed to deliver a modern public library service?

Q15. What are the circumstances in which a Local Authority would be justified in closing a library?

Answer:

- In principle, all Libraries should be kept under review to ensure that they remain economically viable and financially efficient; however, a proposal to close a library must take into account the assessed needs of the community.
- The authority can set indicative thresholds of everyday use as measured by footfall, cost per user, cost per visit. The viability of a library can be tested against these. There may be a trend indicator to monitor too: where use is dropping by a certain percentage year on year in excess of the norm, there may be a threshold set at a number of years of declining use.
- A Library may drop below a threshold of viability through:
 - Demographic change
 - The development of an alternative bigger, better or more attractive service point within the easy access of the community
 - Changes to travel and access routes, that make an alternative service point more accessible
 - Changes to shopping patterns and access routes to services that remove passing trade and dual shopping/work/study use
 - The building is no longer fit for purpose and falls outside economic repair or conversion
 - Any of these factors, or a combination, may cause use to drop below an economically viable limit.
- In all these cases, if closure is the decision, there needs to be alternative provision in place that demonstrably meets the needs of the community, and that the community recognises and knows how to access. It must be noted that in town centres, the community is not made up just of residents, but of those who shop, work and study there.
- It is possible that the range of alternatives to a dedicated, staffed library building can make the replacement of a library with another model of delivery

more financially efficient; but it must still be provision that meets the needs of, and is scaled to the community. These might be a community management model; a library service point in another community building; a mobile library stop; or an innovative 'hole-in-the-wall' self-service unit.

- The short, single lesson from the Wirral Public Enquiry report is: closure can only take place within the framework of statutory duty, where a library can be demonstrated to be no longer required after a consultative assessment of local needs.
- Dropping below an indicative threshold of viability should trigger a research and consultation exercise to determine the reasons why the Library is no longer effective in attracting use by the community. This will inform the decision whether to explore the option to close the library, or take some other remedial action, such as an improvement programme, co-location, seeking partnership provision, or one of the innovative remedies listed above.

Q16. Co-location of libraries with other public services, schools and colleges or business is becoming increasingly prevalent. When is co-location successful and what factors should LAs consider in making co-location decisions?

Answer:

- Key principles are:
 - The model must be a true co-location, ie the building is used holistically by all the services involved.
 - This can only be achieved if all objectives are aligned and service philosophies understood BEFORE the design process starts.
 - Co-location should have measures of success which include increased footfall and use of services overall, including converting non-users to users.
 - There must be identifiable synergies within the outcomes of the services being co-located.
 - When bringing services together the outcome for the user should be a different and better service - not just services in one place.
 - "Forced marriages" of services in buildings where there is misunderstanding or antipathy between client groups, or territoriality by client groups must be avoided.
 - Issues to do with protection of the vulnerable, and with public confidence as users in using a building where vulnerable people are also present, have to be worked through and this is best done, particularly in the case of co-location of schools and public libraries, where a new building with a "from scratch" design is most likely to produce a successful result for all client groups, and enables the building to be sold locally as a good place to go.

Q17. There is a mixed economy of library buildings including large central libraries, smaller local libraries and mobile libraries. What should library leaders consider in making decisions about the make-up of their library service? For instance:

- *What kind of customer information should library leaders have in deciding where to locate libraries?*
- *How should Library leaders make decisions about library buildings' accessibility and fitness for purpose?*
- *How should the library service be provided in small rural communities?*
- *Are there benefits from unstaffed mini-libraries, library machines and self service check out of books?*

- *How important is it that libraries should be housed in dedicated buildings?*

Answer:

- Most authorities have a random and inherited set of library buildings.
- A strategy for service delivery buildings in communities needs to be built on relevant over-arching strategies: the local Strategic Plan for Sustainable Communities, LDFs, identified Areas of high need and the assessment of their needs
- It needs to be underpinned by intelligence from (eg) MOSAIC, GIS
- This needs to feed an agreed set of standards on building size, location and 'look and feel' appropriate to each community, to use in moving the service forward by a continuous improvement plan.
- Also, a specification for each level of service (Surrey CC's service offer has three levels, to correspond to three families ('Groups') of libraries, based on the Surrey Sustainable Communities plan).
- Customer information: demographics; needs analysis; market segmentation; travel distances, times and options.
- Customer opinion: how do we respond where local opinion favours retaining small, shabby but local provision over 'fewer, better libraries'?
- Accessibility and fitness for purpose: this must form part of the property strategy and standards outlined above, underpinned by local, live Equalities Impact Assessments.
- Main town libraries:
 - central location linked to retail is key
 - libraries need to have weapons to fight for premium space in terms of market intelligence - footfall, research into links between library use and shopping etc.
- Small rural communities:
 - Virtual services may revolutionise provision to isolated communities and locations, making mobile libraries redundant.
 - Shared use of community buildings and facilities preferable to (a more constant presence than) mobile libraries.
 - Unstaffed mini-libraries, library 'ATM' style machines and unstaffed self-service: these are not beneficial as such, but can be tools in a mixed economy of provision to be assessed against local need and affordability
- Dedicated buildings: not an essential, depending on space available and accessibility (it must be noted that space devoted to a library brings with it certain requirements to house plant and resources); libraries can occupy space in other buildings; Surrey CC has a successful example (Addlestone) of a library in a civic centre building.

TRAINING, LEADERSHIP AND SERVICES FOR STAFF

Library services need a flexible and user responsive workforce to offer the level of customer experience that the public expects, but while we have discovered excellent best practice while preparing this paper, we know that many services remain unable to meet this challenge.

Traditional information skills – such as good understanding of information resources – remain important to the delivery of library services, but other skills are becoming increasingly critical for their future success.

Q18. How could we encourage a greater skill mix beyond traditional librarianship in the library service?

- *Do you think library courses have the relevant content and teach the right skills to equip the library workforce?*
- *How can we ensure that the library service attracts and nurtures leaders with the ability to drive improvement, engage in partnerships and innovate services?*
- *What other skills and/ or qualifications are required to staff a modern library?*

Answer:

- A wider skills mix is required now. We are focusing on better job design, and a constant review to keep job roles evolving to fit an evolving environment.
- If a role requires skills other than librarianship, it should not be ring-fenced for qualified librarians. Equally, librarians need to be encouraged and supported to extend their range of skills, providing opportunities and rewards for them to develop their roles. This reflects what has been Surrey CC's practice for about 30 years, but not yet universally adopted.
- To develop leaders, there will be the need for greater recognition of the role and value of libraries to society; better career structure; better pay; earlier and more demanding development opportunities. These may be encouraged the more the Authority as a whole recognises the contribution of Libraries to its wider agenda, and integrates the service more closely into the delivery of its services and wider objectives.
- Our perception is that university departments providing library and information higher education, and Cilip as the professional body accrediting library qualifications, do not (on the whole – there are some exceptions) prioritise the needs of public libraries, but follow the market. The more lucrative job opportunities for graduates in this field are in commerce and academe in its widest sense, in research and knowledge management.
- The needs of the rank and file library worker are in the hands of the national training organisation LLUK, which is moving with glacial slowness to upgrade and modernise the current occupational standards for the sector.
- We currently rely on NVQ programmes to enable us to 'grow our own' developed staff, using standards drawn from a range of relevant sectors (management, customer service, training and development and information and library work) but out of these, the information and library standards are rapidly aging and will soon no longer be fit for purpose
- In the meantime, in-house development of learning programmes is the route we are taking to equip staff with the online/digital skills and literacy they will need to function professionally, and to support library users now and in the future.

Q19. Do you think that volunteering is a useful component of the library workforce? How can we ensure that volunteering arrangements are used to best effect?

Answer:

- Volunteers already play vital roles within the service, notably in delivery of a Books on Wheels service; delivering activities for children and young people (storytimes, rhymetimes); and in development of Local History Centres in our libraries that network with Surrey History Centre, foster local history research, and offer a high-level enquiry and support service to local history enquirers and researchers.
- SCC is examining a wider range of roles for volunteers in libraries, all designed to complement the library service core offer with value added activities. These will include events stewards to enable a richer programme

of varied events, and computer buddies to support people of all ages acquiring digital skills.

- Whereas volunteering is often associated with people who are perceived to have time on their hands, such as the active retired, we see it as important to offer opportunities to potential volunteers of all ages and at all stages of their lives.

HOW SHOULD WE MONITOR LIBRARY PERFORMANCE AND WHAT SHOULD WE ASPIRE TO?

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the 1964 Act and the Secretary of State has a power to intervene if a Local Authority is in breach of that responsibility but 'comprehensive & efficient' is not defined in statute or guidance. Contributors to the initial stages of this review questioned whether introducing such a definition would discourage excellence by incentivising library services to work to the definition and provide the 'minimum required.'

Q20. Is it important that libraries remain a statutory obligation for local authorities?

- *What might be the advantages and disadvantages?*
- *For instance, would the removal of statute allow greater flexibility for fundraising or different modes of operation currently off limits?*

Answer:

- It continues to be important that Libraries have statutory protection, given their proven value to, and the extent to which they continue to be valued by the communities they serve.
- There is nothing inherent in the Act that prevents a local authority from shaping access to library services best to meet the needs of its residents and communities. The Wirral Inquiry report strongly associates the definition of a 'Comprehensive and Efficient' service with the local authority striving to assess the needs of communities and to plan its library services to meet them.
- If we take the Act to have at its heart provision of access to the written word, and to Information, the emergence of new media and modes of service delivery is not a barrier to continuing to apply it. An underpinning benchmark will indicate if a service is modernising itself effectively enough to continue to meet the needs of the communities it serves.
- The advantages of statutory status are: the platform on which minimum standards of provision can be raised; an expression and guarantee of shared recognition of the value that public libraries continue to have for individuals and communities; of shared recognition of their unique role in providing opportunities for people to gain skills, information, cultural enrichment and opportunities to continue to learn through life; of shared recognition of the place that libraries have in the civic and cultural landscape of Britain, as an open, free and neutral place where people can freely consume information, knowledge and the literary heritage of the world; of shared recognition that citizens and residents have a universal equal right of access to the full range of benefits that the public library can bring.
- Without a statutory framework, local decisions over time would lead to divergence from core values of public libraries and core provision, and remove the equal right of access to the benefits of the public library; core funding could potentially be diverted from, or removed altogether from the service; there would be no guarantee that a library authority had to rationalise

its decision and state what equivalent provision it proposed in the place of public libraries.

- The removal of statute per se would not allow greater flexibility of fundraising or different modes of operation. The removal of the statute as currently expressed might have that effect superficially, but would take away with it the advantages outlined above. The certainty of their removal outweighs the probability of some financial or organisational flexibility.
- The question as phrased only posits a straight choice; there is at least one other option, which is to amend the statute, or clarify it through statutory instrument, in order to facilitate a measure of flexibility in operational and governance models, and access to alternative funding streams not currently available to public libraries.

Q21. Is the obligation to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service the correct one?

- *Does it need further definition or guidance around what that means or should the interpretation be left to local authorities?*
- *For instance, should there be more prescription around opening hours, web presence, service provision, staff skill mix?*

Answer:

- Yes: it was carefully phrased in 1964 to be sufficiently generic to be future-proofed. As for providing a disincentive to excel, the risk of Library Authorities dropping below an acceptable standard of service or equal access to service is a greater cause for concern.
- Yes: to guarantee equality of access to a comprehensive and efficient service based on a nationally shared understanding of what that is, it needs definition and guidance, and should be underpinned by high-level standards. These all need to be kept under constant review, so that they continue to reflect the potential for public good that libraries provide as society, access to resources, user expectations and potential to change to meet them develop over time.
- Prescription around opening hours, web presence, service provision, skills mix: high level standards might usefully contain a suite of characteristics for a library service that fulfils statutory duty, but PIs should be kept to a minimum and major on impact as well as quantity.

Q22. How should we measure performance?

- *You might like to consider:*
 - *Is there a need for less, more or different local or national monitoring?*
 - *Are visits and books borrowed still relevant?*
- *What else should we consider and measure when determining the efficiency and effectiveness of our libraries?*
 - *Would an accreditation scheme for libraries be beneficial or are there other systems which might incentivise libraries to deliver more effectively?*
 - *Is the Secretary of State's power to intervene still appropriate?*

Answer:

- Less, more or different local or national monitoring: it would be hard for there to be less than there is now. The falling away of targets and indicators has weakened our position. To underpin equality of access and inform

assessment of local need, some of the former measures such as households served and distance from the library could usefully be reinstated.

- Current collection method for the sole indicator NI9 (the Active People Survey): the sampling is too small and too infrequent, and provides too little intelligence on which to base a focused improvement plan.
- As a matter of course, the library service need to demonstrate the public value that it is providing for the expenditure on it. It would be of universal value to work nationally on a model of demonstrating public value, using tools and techniques that have not typically been at the disposal of the service.
- Visits and (not just books but) items borrowed are still entirely relevant, as a raw measure of the impact of the library in the community.
- These measures should no longer have primacy, though, but form part of a whole basket of measures, with online and Virtual Services uses taking an equal emphasis, along with activities, and measures of satisfaction, impact and outcomes, to form a whole service picture of its effectiveness, value and impact.
- We cannot see any advantage in an accreditation scheme that would outweigh the costs and effort of designing and setting it up.
- The Secretary of State's power to intervene is still entirely appropriate as a guarantee to library users that the statutory duty will be enforced in a situation where equal access to the whole core service has been withdrawn without attention to a consultative assessment of local needs.

Q23. What research do we need to do to best demonstrate the benefits of the library service to local and national leaders? Who would be best placed to initiate this research?

Answer:

- GSOs and GLOs formed a very promising way forward to measure and to demonstrate the impact of public libraries on the wider skills, learning, economic development and well-being agenda. Research into definition and measurement, and the environment required for their wider reception, would be a great step forward in ensuring that Libraries' impact on broader strategic and public service objectives is recorded and recognised.
- Research into comparative ways that LAs calculate the costs of the service would assist with productive benchmarking.
- In the wake of the report of the Public Enquiry into Wirral Libraries, there is a need for research into an effective model of local engagement in assessing need.
- Research is needed into the contemporary and future skills and training needs of library workers, and into new delivery models and media, and into pragmatic models of accreditation and qualification.
- Research is needed into best practice and future potential for libraries' role in local engagement with the democratic process and with service delivery.
- Best placed to initiate the research: if the ambition is to have a single strong government department responsible for all aspects of the provision of public libraries, that would be a good starting place for commissioning the necessary research.

Peter Milton – Head of Cultural Services
Hilary Ely – Library Virtual Services Manager
Rose Wilson – Library Operations Manager
Surrey County Council 25th January 2010

Surrey County Council Modernisation Case Studies 2004-2010

To amplify some of the answers in Surrey County Council's response to the consultation questions in the DCMS consultation document, we present a series of case studies in modernising Surrey's libraries:

1. Realising the 'Self Service Dividend': the Libraries Staffing Review and review of library opening hours 2006-8
2. Transforming Surrey's Libraries: Library refurbishment programme 2004-10
3. Developing the Virtual Library 2009-11
4. Developing The Programme – the unique contribution of Libraries to achievement and belonging.

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### **1. Realising the 'Self-service Dividend: the Libraries Staffing Review and review of library opening hours 2006-8**

In 2006, Surrey CC's Library Management Team undertook a comprehensive review of staff levels in libraries to identify capacity that could be redeployed into service improvement and extended opening hours.

The drivers for change were:

- o Lifestyle changes
- o A shift in the balance of traditional measures of use, with borrowing and visits declining and 'virtual' visits increasing
- o Feedback from users and lapsed users – lowest levels of satisfaction with the service were with opening hours
- o Historic imbalance of capacity between libraries, leading to
- o Inconsistent delivery of service across the network
- o The need to demonstrate efficiency gains from investment in the Transformation of Libraries programme of refurbishment and self-service installation

The service had already embarked upon an investment programme, and in a pilot library had demonstrated that opening hours could be extended by 10% as a result of the introduction of self-service technology.

The project was led by a team of experienced front-line and development team staff, who brought experience and pragmatism to a theoretical exercise, and subsequently became advocates for change with their teams and peers. The process of collecting evidence, modelling change and testing the financial and operational assumptions took a year. Another 6 months was devoted to elected member and staff consultation, and the new patterns of opening hours were introduced in May 2008.

- o Increased opening hours - 11.4% across network - open an extra 198 hours per week
- o 17.8% increase in the 25 biggest/busiest libraries
- o Standard opening times in these 25 libraries (mostly located in main town and retail/business centres)
- o Consistent public facing service offer
- o Greater capacity to deliver a full range of existing & new services
- o Staff: a changing role for front-line staff, with improved customer focus, motivation, flexible approach, consistent strategic direction / management

Having achieved this degree of change and efficiency in the front-line service, in 2008, we took the decision to restructure the management, professional, specialist and development staff.

In attempting to deploy professional and specialist staff capacity to meet modernisation agenda, we devised a structure of two halves:

- Library Operations, consisting of three teams:
  - Sectors: covering the operational aspects of frontline service delivery – libraries, mobile libraries, home delivery, use of volunteers
  - Property, Environment and Stock: covering and co-ordinating the Transformation programme of library refurbishment projects; selection of stock and modernisation of the supply chain; the ‘look and feel’ of the library environment; the totality of the library experience, covering stock display, promotion and choice, and management and life-cycle.
  - Programme: developing a consistent offer of activities inside and outside libraries; extending the Libraries’ reach beyond the building and into hard-to-reach communities; focused on the following themes:
    - Children and Young People
    - Health and Well-being
    - Safer and Stronger Communities.
- Virtual Services, consisting of three teams:
  - Information Services: covering the development of Information and Inter-library Lending services, through development of a high level online and telephone Enquiry service for individual enquirers and to support colleagues in Libraries with their high-level information needs; developing online information resources, in libraries and as part of a 24/7 service; managing specialist information resources such as official publications
  - Virtual Content: developing the Library website and the Library Catalogue as a 24/7 Virtual Library service; developing Web 2.0 and interactive technologies to engage more fully with library users and enrich their experience of using the library.
  - IT Service Enabling: liaising with Surrey CC’s internal IT service and with the Library Service’s specialist contractor to ensure that Libraries IT is fully effective and evolving to meet current and future service needs.

This new management structure was introduced in November 2008. The three further case studies give an indication of what Surrey CC’s Library Service has been able to achieve with this fresh approach to professional, development and management roles.

The new opening hours, staffing structure and approach to design and delivery of service has had encouraging results: virtual visits continue to grow rapidly; book issues and active borrowers have both arrested in their decline and begun to show a slight up-turn; and Surrey County Council finds itself in the top quartile for N19: Use of Public Libraries at the end of 2009.

## **2. Transforming Surrey's Libraries: Library refurbishment programme 2004-10**

The refurbishment programme, begun in 2004 has been a key driver in the modernisation of Surrey's libraries. It has enabled the service to create modern, dynamic public spaces in keeping with user's needs and compares favourably with any modern bookstore outlet or major new build library projects. During the last 6 years, Surrey County Council has completed refurbishments and self-service at 30 libraries. This includes a new build at Walton Library, located in a high profile shopping centre and Addlestone Library co-located within new civic offices.

The aim of the refurbishment programme was to improve the look and feel of our library buildings, increase book issues, library use and membership and the image and profile of the library service. Surrey libraries has also been a great champion of reader development principles and the refurbishments gave us an opportunity to embed these principles within the service, creating reader centred spaces, placing our core product, books, at the centre of what we do. We also took the opportunity to develop our self-service offer in the majority of the refurbished libraries, enabling us to increase library opening times and allow library staff to use their skills and knowledge to help our customers in new and innovative ways, acting as personal shoppers and guides to our services.

As a result of the refurbishment programme we have improved the public image of libraries and therefore the public face of Surrey County Council. In many communities the library service is the most visible presence of the Council.

It has raised the profile of the library service within the local community, and created attractive and welcoming community services for the public to use and own.

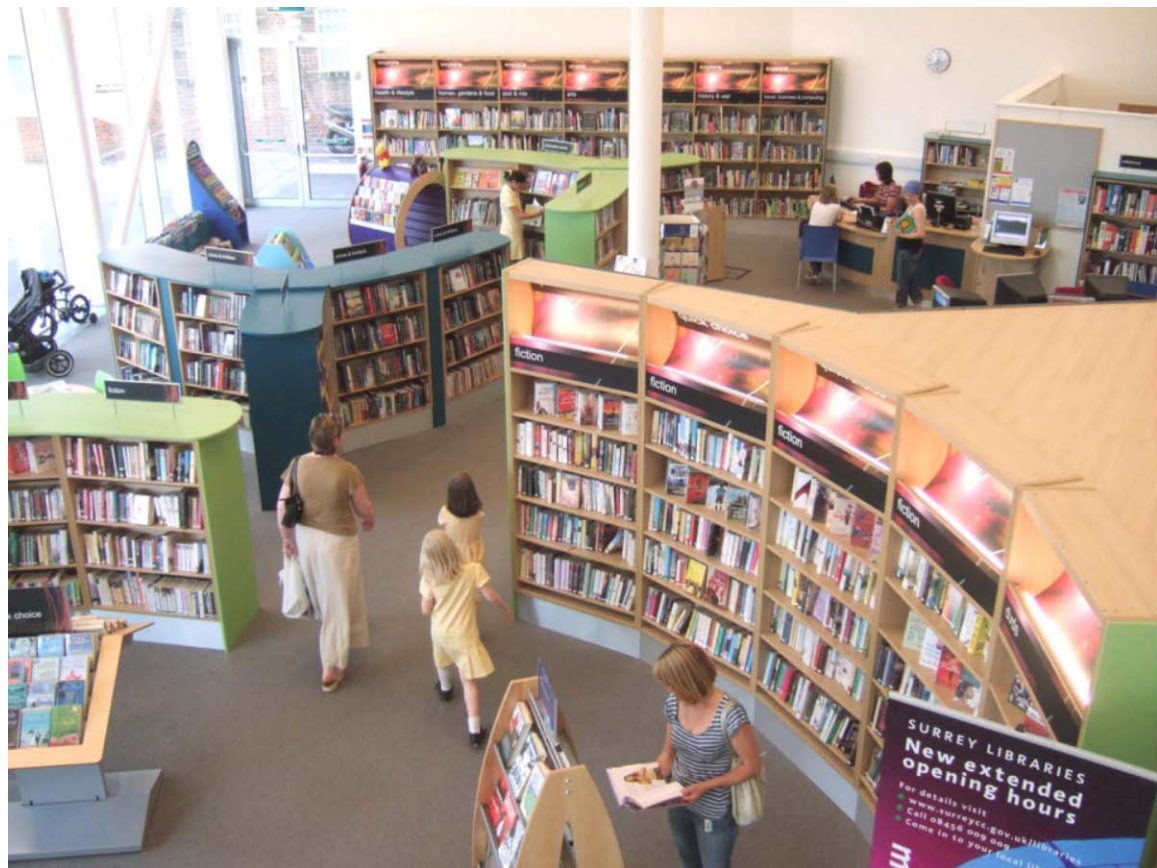
The refurbishment programme has substantially increased customer satisfaction as evidenced from the Public Library User Survey and customer feedback. Libraries such as Ashford and Camberley, which have been involved in the Public Library User Survey programme before and after refurbishment have shown a marked increase in all public satisfaction indicators for library environment. Satisfaction rates with libraries in surveys such as the Joint Neighbourhood survey have risen from 65% to 80%.

The Self-service programme has enabled the library to increase its opening hours in order to meet public demand with an 11.4% increase in opening hours across the service as a whole. 25 of the largest libraries have received Self Service facilities.

We have also seen an increase in library use – Book issues are up 3.9%, reversing a decline, and active borrowers are up 3.8%, of which over 21% are children.

We have been successful in obtaining significant capital funding for our refurbishments over the last 6 years and our aim is to continue to develop the look, feel and services we offer, integrating new developments in IT and the virtual library, to create a dynamic and relevant user experience.

Addlestone Library 2008. This library is part of Runnymede Borough Council's new Civic Centre, where the Library is co-located with the Borough Council's front-line enquiry service and the Police.



### **3. Developing the Virtual Library 2009 - 11**

Surrey has a population of 1.1 million. This year, Surrey Library Service is expecting a record 3 million online transactions and half-a-million visits to its website. (Compare this to an expected physical footfall of just under 5 million.)

It has a well-established suite of online services: joining, renewing, reserving items online, subscription databases, an enquiry service (using Enquire), book reviews. Over the course of the last year it has started using Twitter as a new way of promoting services, and currently has 265 followers. It also uses Flickr and Youtube. Within the next six months it expects to be offering e-books. It generates a small income from directing people to Amazon, and is investigating pay-per-click income through Anywhere.me.com.

However its website, while successful, is flat html and the service has carried out a recent Surveymonkey survey which shows that the public expect far greater interactivity and engagement. The service plans to look for Web 2.0 interactivity through its upcoming change of IT contract in 2011, and its plans for the near future include:

- Making use of new technologies to open up communication between service and customer, customer and customer, and service and stakeholder
- Working to make its services more interoperable with neighbouring authorities and partners
- Investigating how virtual services can support the localism agenda by increasing the services and transactions available online
- Developing staff to support digital citizenship
- Investigating volunteering as a means to add value to virtual services.

#### **4. Developing 'the Programme': the unique contribution of Libraries to people's sense of achievement and belonging. 2009 – the future.**

The Programme Team has been very successful in its first year of operation in reaching out to groups of users we wish to welcome into the Library. The case studies below cover our achievements in providing services suited to the needs of people in supported learning, and people with mental health issues.

##### **Living Library:**

On Saturday 3 October 2009 Epsom Library and the Ebbisham Centre hosted Surrey's first Living Library event. As part of Epsom's second Mental Health Week the theme of the event was mental health. Borrowers were able to "borrow" a person with experience of mental health issues for a twenty minute chat within the confines of the Ebbisham Centre. The aim of the event was to try to break down some of the stigma attached to mental illness by encouraging people to talk in a relaxed atmosphere.

*Feedback from the Living Library training session on Monday 7 September 2009:-*

*Allen who has suffered from depression since being a teenager, has had a breakdown and been a patient in a secure unit said that the Living Library gave him a chance to "share my story with someone else. When I heard about the Living Library it made sense straight away. It is completely different from anything I have ever heard of. It's more interesting than usual."*

*Sue Bond, Chief executive of the Mary Frances Trust based at the Leatherhead Clubhouse, hopes that being "books" at the Living Library event will give her two clients increased confidence. She said it is very important to both Gillian and Louise that people's awareness of mental health issues is increased. Louise in particular, is keen to get across the message that people need a sense of belonging and community and should not be judged. She sees her involvement in the Living Library as an opportunity to do this. Gillian, when asked if she was looking forward to the Living Library event said she was a bit nervous and is a bit worried about what to answer if the question is too personal but she is willing to give the day a go. Gillian and Louise are probably best described as having learning difficulties.*

*Linda, a recovering alcoholic, thinks the Living Library is a brilliant idea. She is aware that she has had a lot of help from a lot of different sources in facing up to her addiction and says the event will give her a chance to give something back*

*Adam is autistic and feels he doesn't fit in anywhere. He is very wary of strangers and does not like to speak to them. He attended the training session with a support worker from Pitstop in Leatherhead and will be attending the Living Library day with his support worker from Brooklands College. His support workers are keen for Adam to take part because they feel he will benefit from talking to strangers in a protected environment. It will help to bring him out of himself and "be fantastic for his development" (Paul – support worker). At the training afternoon he introduced himself to the group, talked to other books and library staff in smaller groups and wrote a little piece about himself, giving his book title as "Where Do I Fit In". He was fully involved in all aspects of the training and ate a hearty lunch! His support worker was very pleased with the way he coped with the afternoon and said "he was chatting away like a good 'un".*

### **The Library's role in Supported Learning:**

A 12 week supported learning course by East Surrey College is held every Tuesday 10.30am-12.00pm at Ewell library. Based on the "Library Licence Course" pioneered by Southampton City Council ACL department, it aims to help students with learning disabilities access and use library resources while providing a safe learning space in a library environment. Each student completes a "my learning, my choices, my life" pack discussing with the tutor what they would like to achieve during the course. This is incorporated into their work scheme and activities. Each student has individual goals for his/her learning plan using the Adult Pre-entry Curriculum framework, e.g. to write two sentences using a computer keyboard with verbal support on three separate occasions or to recognise the name of a favourite pop group in the library CDs section, with verbal support on three separate occasions. These targets are tracked weekly and every term a progress report is produced and goals are evaluated every three months.

#### *Student A*

*Hobbies: Show business, dancing the stage.*

*Ambition: work in a theatre and perform in the community in hospitals, care homes and special schools*

*Aged 53 and living at home in Epsom with his parents, he is a very quiet and timid man who was born with Down's syndrome, and now diagnosed with early on-set dementia. Able to communicate verbally, but has a stammer which can make interaction difficult. He can recognise shapes and coins. When encouraged to stay focussed he is very capable of producing a good standard of work. He loves TV drama as his parents are involved in the theatre. He was nominated by the local provider for the student who has made the most progress over the course award. He can now type more than 20 words on a computer with verbal support and is currently participating in a dance and drama course at a local day centre.*

*His comments at the end of the course:*

*"I like to guide my own learning"*

*"I'm really good at using the computer now"*

### **The Book Club at the Brickfield Centre**

The Brickfield Centre offers a wide range of mental health services for people within the area such as depression support groups, anxiety management, craft, drama and music workshops. Clients must be referred by a GP, Community Psychiatric Nurse etc.

We approached the Centre Manager to start up a reading group in July 2009. Now part of their programme of groups and activities, the Book Club has been warmly received with numbers attending gradually increasing and members responding very positively.

The Senior Mental Health worker involved feels "This type of initiative is fully in keeping with our philosophy which is based on the principles of normalisation and social inclusion."

*The group member view:*

*“Being a long-term client/user of mental health services I was delighted to be offered a place in the new book reading group run by the Brickfield Centre; delighted primarily because having participated in a vast array of group therapies since my initial diagnosis in 1994 I feel that I am especially qualified to report that groups of this nature in a mental health program are so rare as to be non-existent. During the short time the group has been running I have benefited greatly from (amongst other things) the discussion and the social interaction it provides. At once challenging (but not demanding), informative and entertaining it provides a much needed distraction from my day to day mental health problems.*

*The fact that the group is run by a professional librarian whose vocation does not lie in mental health care and that the group itself does not focus directly or dwell on mental health issues provides a therapeutic benefit in itself and gives one a link with the “outside world” - invaluable to those of us who suffer with mental illness.”*

Another member did something which some while back she wouldn't have been able to contemplate due to a nervous breakdown. Previously unable to concentrate sufficiently to read a whole book, her latest read was Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns": not an easy book but she found it engrossing and felt that it took her away from her "own world of problems". She attributes this new-found interest in reading to her membership of the group.

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