BETTER PUBLIC LIBRARIES
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Public libraries are being reinvented. They are increasingly seen as the shared ground in an increasingly diverse society, a place where the whole community can feel a connection. They also provide the vital link to our digital future.

However, we have seen a period where the use of libraries has been in decline. For many potential users the outmoded design and poor location of some library buildings is a deterrent in itself. We need innovative solutions to make them relevant again.

I am pleased to support the publication of this report. It shows that there is already a host of good practice across the country. Library services need to be seen as an integral part of the local authorities’ wider social agenda, delivering lifelong learning, tackling social exclusion and providing the spaces local communities need.

Earlier this year we published Framework for the Future, the Government’s 10 year vision for the public library service. This demonstrates our commitment to helping local government deliver an excellent library service. I hope that Better Public Libraries will help to promote the type of places we need to deliver these quality services.

Rt. Hon Lord McIntosh
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Public libraries are a vital part of a civilised society, as beacons of learning they act as hubs for their community. However libraries face real challenges in meeting the rapid social and technical changes of the twenty first century. The quality of the environment from which libraries deliver their services will have a major impact on how well we meet these challenges. Quality design will have a major role in delivering a twenty first century library service; drawing in the diverse communities they serve.

Design quality need not cost more money, and often it is the appliance of higher aspirations, more thought and greater skills that delivers the better project. Design quality will however add real whole life values, reducing running costs, but more importantly providing a better and more popular library service.

Design is not just about the big iconic building, it is also about the small branch libraries and thoughtful refurbishments and conversions. Design is about the functionality of the building, as well as how it looks. This report outlines current thinking about what a twenty first century library is; it then considers how we deliver these quality environments.

The report does not aim to supply a single solution for library design, or the type of services we should be delivering. It presents, via a series of examples, the diverse range of best practice that is already happening across the public library sector.

The design ideas for the twenty first century library will come from those on the ground delivering the services. We hope that this report will be helpful in coming up with these solutions.

Mark Wood
Resource

Martin Molloy
Society of Chief Librarians

Sir Stuart Lipton
CABE – Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment

Lyn Brown
LGA – Local Government Association

Bob McKee
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

Bill Macnaught
Advisory Council on Libraries

Design is not just about the big iconic building, it is also about the small branch libraries and thoughtful refurbishments and conversions.
The location, design and services offered by public libraries are changing in unprecedented ways, and will continue to do so in the future. After decades of gradualism and small-scale adaptation, the UK is now witnessing a radical step-change in thinking about public libraries, and how they are re-positioning themselves in the expanding educational and cultural networks of villages, towns and cities throughout the UK.

Libraries today are having to face enormous challenges, as the population and demographic mix changes more rapidly than ever before, as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) reconfigures the very nature of physical space, communications and movement in both the village and the city, as education moves out of the institutions to inflect the whole of society, and as leisure, recreation and personal development increasingly fuse in a more individualistic culture. Libraries are now responding to these changes, recognising that while the buildings themselves may change in their external appearance and in their internal design, along with the services offered, there is nevertheless a core library service and culture which has proven to be highly resilient through many decades, and is likely to continue to be so. The library as a special place in the life of the community, a window onto the world of the imagination and of raised intellectual horizons, for young and old, is not likely to diminish.

The implications for the design of libraries are thus even more significant, and can be represented schematically as follows:

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The following trends may therefore become more evident, and their delivery implications more urgent, in the near future:

1. Each library will develop its own bespoke programme and service priorities
2. Future libraries will be developed in partnership with other services
3. Adaptability of internal design, circulation, access and hours of services will be a key factor in building layout and design
4. Reading development and literacy are likely to become even more central to what libraries offer communities
5. Libraries will become key communications centres for mobile populations
6. Long stay use of libraries for study purposes requires friendly and efficient support services such as toilets, catering and recreational quiet zones
7. Electronic links between homes and libraries will increase
8. Children’s services will grow in importance as the library becomes a secure, electronic safe haven in the city
9. Virtual library services will be provided 24 hours a day
10. Librarians will change their role from custodians of culture to knowledge navigators
NEW LIBRARY TRENDS

Each library will develop its own bespoke programme and service priorities

The traditional pattern of formal provision offered by library providers, notably in having one large scale central lending and reference library, surrounded by a series of branch or neighbourhood libraries, is being reconsidered. New library developments are starting with an understanding of the services needing to be offered rather than being designed according to traditional hierarchies of scale and function.

The main reason for developing new forms of library provision on the basis of detailed profiles of local need, is because of rapidly changing demographics and patterns of population growth and settlement. The libraries of the future will be much more sensitive to demographic and cultural change, rather than offering a standardised service. Libraries in areas of high unemployment are likely to focus on IT skills training, working in partnership with careers services, while libraries in new suburban residential areas are more likely to concentrate on providing services for parents with young children such as storytelling sessions and homework clubs. Libraries in urban areas with a growing proportion of single person households (an international demographic trend), are likely to be designed to act as meeting places and club rooms as well as providing library services. The library of the future – and its partners – will add a key element of local distinctiveness to an increasingly global, corporate high street culture.

Future libraries will be developed in partnership with other services

A key factor in determining the range of services offered by the libraries of the future will be the partnerships undertaken in order to spread the costs of capital investment and maintaining the programme which needs based assessment requires. So, for example, the new library at March in Cambridgeshire, as with the new Idea Store in Bow, East London, are both joint ventures undertaken with further education services: their principal ethos is that of lifelong learning. Furthermore, the March library also houses the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, incorporates a new Marriage Suite and has established itself as one of the most accessible and elegant modern buildings in the town.

Other new libraries, such as the one now being built at Hetton-le-Hole in Sunderland, incorporate nursery facilities, housing association offices, careers and youth services, and even administrative offices for the local police. All these other service providers were involved in the planning and funding of the new building – though it is the public library which is the anchor tenant, and which takes up the single largest area of floor space at ground floor level. In Bishop Auckland, the refurbished town library now houses a fine new art gallery and theatre, and in Sunderland city itself, the library building is also the home of the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art.

Adaptability of internal design, circulation, access and hours of services is a key factor in building layout and design

As the services which libraries provide expand and change, from book lending to computer training, from providing seminar and meeting rooms to the provision of publishing and reprographic suites, the design of libraries is much more likely to take the form of freestyle floor plans, and adaptable internal configurations of space. With an increasing number of different functions and services being offered or organised, and at different times of the day and night, issues of public access and circulation need to be more carefully thought through and programmed. Core service functions such as the provision of toilets, catering facilities, entrances and exits, need to be designed to be accessible to all users, when other parts of the building need to be made secure, or are closed.

Reading development and literacy are likely to become even more central to what libraries offer communities

Far from electronic and media communications dispensing with the need for literacy, they require greater reading and communications skills. Those without adequate literacy skills will be doubly disadvantaged in the digital age. Yet reading is not simply an instrumental skill, and the enormous growth in reading groups in libraries, bookshops and self organised informal settings in recent years, attests to the desire to read and share the experience of reading (and interpretation) with others. If they are to be effective, and hold their own with bookshops, libraries will need to become more engaged with the whole literary and literacy process: the need is clearly there.

Libraries will become key communications centres for mobile populations

The library of the future is also likely to take on the role of the ‘poste restante’ or home from home, where those without computers of their own, along with business travellers, tourists, refugees and asylum seekers, will send and pick up emails. It is estimated that 90% of those using computers in Peckham library are sending and receiving emails as part of their use. The library thus allows mobile individuals to plug into online services and networks wherever they happen to be. The large banks of computer monitors now seen in libraries will become even more streamlined and smaller in size. Some library users will bring their own laptop computers and plug them in to library provided networks, and as a result there will be much more ‘hot desking’ in libraries, as users call in to access services for short periods of time. The growing convergence between personal computer technology and mobile phone telephony will mean that libraries will increasingly simply be providing the connectivity and even wire free environments for information communications, not necessarily the equipment itself.
Long stay use of libraries for study purposes requires friendly and efficient support services including toilets, catering and recreational quiet zones.

As increasing numbers of public libraries are being used for study purposes – the new Library and Learning Centre in Norwich has 220 study places for example – users who may be spending many hours a day in them will expect the kind of related comfort services not traditionally associated with libraries (though increasingly associated with modern bookshop chains) such as cafés, toilets, and even lounge areas with armchairs for browsing and relaxing.

The new library at Stratford in East London, has a meeting area and chill out lounge at ground floor level, where young people and students can watch MTV, read magazines and listen to CD selections on listening posts, in between lounge at ground floor level, where young people and students can watch MTV, read magazines and listen to CD selections on listening posts, in between.

In turn, library architecture and design is adopting a more domestic or its own right.

(though increasingly associated with modern bookshop chains) such as caf

The kind of related comfort services not traditionally associated with libraries the book

The new Libraries at Stratford and Peckham, have their own specially designed children spaces, where storytelling, talks, games and presentations can happen without disturbing other library users. Children’s libraries will also offer computer games and online services for study, though these will be subject to agreed forms of control over access to unsuitable material. The libraries of the future have much to gain by promoting themselves as safe havens for children in both the physical as well as the electronic public domain.

Electronic links between homes and libraries will increase

There will be a growing convergence between the home and the library environment, notably in matters of decor, style, and interconnectivity of technology. Already a number of library authorities in the UK offer their stock catalogue online, so that library members can browse, reserve and renew books, CDs and other stock from home at any time, day or night. They can also join library information networks and newsletters announcing new titles, book promotions, author talks, and reading groups. Public libraries may choose to act as portals for community websites, and there is no doubt that libraries will play an increasingly important role in local internet networks. Libraries will also be able to offer materials under licence which bona fide library members can directly download at home such as journals, online subscription services, music, film and video. The library may act as a licensed provider for other commercial services which can be downloaded free to library members in their own homes.

Children’s services will grow in importance, as the library becomes a secure, electronic safe haven in the city

The public library has always paid particular concern to the needs of children. It is one of the few spaces in the town or city where children are not only welcomed, but are treated as people and citizens in their own right. The book market for children and young people continues to attract some of the best writers and publishers in the UK. The child’s induction into the pleasures and rewards of reading is even more necessary now than ever before, since reading more than any other skill provides the gateway into the digital world. The new libraries at Stratford and Peckham, have their own specially designed children’s spaces, where storytelling, talks, games and presentations can happen without disturbing other library users. Children’s libraries will also offer computer games and online services for study, though these will be subject to agreed forms of control over access to unsuitable material. The libraries of the future have much to gain by promoting themselves as safe havens for children in both the physical as well as the electronic public domain.

Virtual library services will be provided 24 hours a day

Libraries will need to be more flexible in their opening times. Sunday opening is now gathering momentum, and has proved popular. The use of self-issue terminals, robots for book sorting and reshelving, will free some staff to be more directly engaged with users, as reading advisers, course advisers or educational mentors. It is already the case that some university libraries are open 24 hours a day, and even though this is not likely to happen with public libraries, some electronic and online services will be provided by libraries even when the buildings themselves are closed. Already some public library authorities in the UK use call centres to answer or filter public enquiries, leaving library staff to deal with more substantive library matters. As forms of political participation and information become more embedded in electronic networks – e-government – library services have an invaluable role to play in ensuring political fair play and impartiality, while ensuring that the public are able to access all the information they need to make considered and informed political choices.

Librarians will change their role from custodians of culture to knowledge navigators

The skills needed by those staffing libraries in future will be different. Not only will staff need to be computer literate and at home with continuing changes in technology, they will need to be able to communicate and transfer these skills to library users as a matter of course. At management level library professionals will increasingly be engaging in partnership programmes and projects with other public, private and voluntary sector agencies, particularly in the development of the idea that the public library is a key institution in the culture of lifelong learning and individual self development. In the same way, library staff are likely to be expected to be more fully acquainted and engaged with the range and quality of the library’s stock holding, as they become reading advisers or knowledge navigators’ rather than just processing staff. At the Idea Store in Bow, staff are required to adopt a ‘meet and greet’ approach to users, offering to help them find what they want, even suggesting educational courses they might wish to take if it seems appropriate. The professional ethos of libraries is likely to become much more proactive and entrepreneurial, rather than custodial and self effacing.
This section outlines how we can deliver public libraries whose designs meet the demands of the twenty first century. It considers where we are starting from and what we should be aiming for; what is good design; and what action needs to be taken to deliver better design.
3.1 THE STARTING POINT

National Framework

Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade

Framework for the Future is the Government’s 10-year vision for the public library service. This was the first national library strategy, developed after extensive consultation. It paints an ambitious future for our libraries services…

“Imagine a place through which every newborn baby is given a package as a birthright, which gives them access, for life, to an endless supply of books, music and films as well as the World Wide Web. Tens of millions of books, videos and CDs at your fingertips, ready available for life.

Imagine a place you can walk into, without anyone asking you a question, sit down at a computer, find and order almost any book ever published, which you can take home for free.

This is not a shop but it offers people as much choice as a department store, to find just the course, information, film or music that they want. This place is a treasure trove of information: staff are on hand to make it easy for you to discover your family history or uncover the story of the house you live in, for example.

Here you can get advice about careers or look for job opportunities online. You can pay your bills and fill in government forms with the help of staff.

This is not a college but it’s a place where you can ask to learn any skill you like, in almost any way you like, from joining a picture framing group to enrolling on an online course to learn to write complex software programmes.

And if you cannot get to these places, because you are housebound, staff or volunteers will come to you, to bring you the books, films, newspapers, tapes, even free laptops, you’ve asked for.

And much of this is free at the point of delivery.

There are places like this all over the country: public libraries.

All of the above are examples drawn from what libraries are doing right now.”

BUILDING BETTER LIBRARY SERVICES: THE BASE LINE

In 2002 the Audit Commission published a major report on the state of our libraries. In summary the report, Building Better Library Services, stated:

Councils across England and Wales operate around:

- 1,800 full time libraries (open 30 or more hours per week)
- 1,600 part time libraries
- 530 mobile libraries
- as well as 17,000 library facilities in institutions such as hospitals, prisons and schools

Councils spent around £770 million in 2000/1 on library services, excluding funding from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) for the People’s Network and ICT-related training – equivalent to almost £40 per household.

Libraries are a very important, valued council service, with the potential to contribute to priorities for learning, inclusion and e-government.

- There were 290 million visits to libraries in 2000/1
- Almost 30% of the population use libraries for borrowing books or other items
- Many more people visit libraries to study, use PCs and the internet, make enquiries or for community activities

But there is good progress in many areas with, for example, all libraries are now being linked to the internet via the People’s Network. By the end of 2002 over 30,000 terminals had been installed, offering over 60 million hours of free internet access.

However there are still problems…

- Since 1992/3 visits have fallen by 17%, and loans by almost one-quarter
- 23% fewer people are using libraries for borrowing than just three years ago
Meeting the challenge

MORI research indicates that the principal reasons for not using libraries are to do with lifestyle issues. Current designs can create barriers, intimidating for some and simply off putting for others, with dull official looking facades, imposing issue desks, formal layouts and uncomfortable furniture.

A particularly important message from the consultation was that non users are comparing libraries with their experiences of bookshops – and bookshops are coming out better. People say that they want libraries to be modern and welcoming.

Design can play a significant role in meeting this challenge. However the Audit Commission found that over half of library services used buildings that are poorly located or in poor condition.

In October 2000 the Prime Minister launched the Better Public Buildings Initiative. The objective of the initiative is to deliver a step change in the quality of all new public buildings. The initiative has the support of all Government departments. The Government sets out in Framework for the Future the importance of public libraries as central to delivering an inclusive learning society. This framework builds on traditional core skills and libraries’ open, neutral and self help culture. It focuses on areas where intervention will deliver the largest benefits to society, raising the profile of the service and adapting programmes to meet local needs.

**Better Public Buildings**

Rt. Hon Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister

“T am determined that good design should not be confined to high profile buildings in the big cities: all of the users of public services, wherever they are, should be able to benefit from better design.”

**DCMS’s Better Public Buildings Report**

“Supporting good design is at the heart of what DCMS does and our action plan for the future is based on our commitment to uphold and develop this core DCMS principle.”

**Better Civic Buildings and Spaces**

This document provides advice on how local government can tackle their design responsibilities.

**The Prime Minister’s Better Public Building Award**

The Prime Minister’s Better Public Building Award rewards excellence both in design and procurement and is sponsored jointly by CABE and HM Treasury. It is open to projects of any size, commissioned by or on behalf of the public sector.

These reports and details of the award can be found at www.betterpublicbuildings.gov.uk

**Public Library Building Awards**

Every two years the Public Libraries Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals runs the Public Library Building Awards. The awards cover new buildings, conversions and refurbishments. The criteria are: the appearance and design of the library, both inside and out; its impact on the community; the quality of its services; and its capacity for development.

http://www.cilip.org.uk/groups/plg/plg.html
“The new public library works best when it is supported and even driven by the overall strategic agenda of the local authority. The political climate of the twenty first century is one that is aware of the benefits of an information literate citizenry. Libraries are traditionally well positioned to adopt a leading role in the provision of information resources, and through partnering with training services, educational, and other organisations, they are able to multiply their benefits to even larger numbers than were previously possible.”

Libraries must also be buildings? New Library impact study, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, 2002

**Best Value**

Best Value is an important means of improving the design quality of work within local authorities’ responsibility, removing the straitjacket of Compulsory Competitive Tendering. The need under Best Value to define and measure whole life values and design quality ensures a process not narrowly focused on cost cutting. The demand for proper consultation, pulling together the views of all stakeholders, should give further momentum towards longer term considerations and a balanced solution combining function, visual delight and a contribution to the wider sustainability. A clear project brief and a shared commitment to delivering quality is fundamental.

When setting a brief and a budget for a capital project we need to consider how a commitment to design quality will impact on whole life values such as:

- Reduced running costs
- Increased visitors
- Attracting hard to reach and key customers
- A better, more customer focused, service
- Promoting social objectives, such as increased literacy and ICT skills
- Enhancing the local environment and promoting regeneration

The Audit Commission report Building Better Library Services gives a series of examples of where Best Value reviews have helped local authorities improve their library services.

The report also stated that councils need to make effective use of best value reviews and library plans to fundamentally challenge why and how they provide library services:

- Agreeing a clear vision for the future of library services – explicitly outlining the services that people can expect
- Challenging working practices to increase efficiency and improve services
- Building their understanding of what users and non-users want and need
- Building ownership and commitment from staff and members to delivering user focused services
- Holding managers to account for the resources they use and for delivering local and national standards

Best Value reviews are also critical in including both librarians, other staff and elected members in the decision making process.

**Design equals value for money**

Libraries have a real challenge to reach out to potential users who would not normally consider using them. Design can play a significant role in rebranding library services into something more attractive to the wider community. This report provides a range of examples of where the redesign of a library has had a major positive impact in how the community use it.

**Improving Standards of Design in the Procurement of Public Buildings**

This joint CABE/HM Treasury report outlines why design quality is central to the delivery of whole life value for money.

“This report underlines the Government’s repeated message that sound, creative design is an essential ingredient if we are to achieve value for money. Value for money does not end when construction is complete, but continues throughout the lifetime of the building.”

Rt. Hon. Paul Boateng MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

“It is a great mistake to equate value for money with lowest cost, especially when we look at buildings and public space. Innovative and creative design adds real value.”

James Strachan, Chairman, Audit Commission

“Good design is essential for achieving value for money in construction. But this is not just about buildings being completed on time and within budget; it is also concerned with ensuring that the costs of operating buildings over their whole life are optimised and that those who use and work in public buildings gain real value from them.”

Sir John Bourn KCB, Controller and Auditor General, National Audit Office
The Better Public Buildings report includes a checklist of do’s and don’ts for ensuring quality buildings, which will be helpful to those investing in new library services.

Stop:
- Regarding good design as an optional extra
- Treating lowest cost as best value
- Valuing initial capital cost as more important than whole life cost
- Treating buildings as purely functional plant without civic significance
- Imagining that effectiveness and efficiency are divorced from design
- Being frightened to take calculated risks
- Assuming that the public does not care

Start:
- Identifying the high level post which should incorporate the role of ‘design champion’
- Insisting that measures to ensure the appointment of good designers are reviewed by the design champion
- Insisting on appropriately high design standards for all projects—regardless of the procurement route
- Allowing enough design time for projects of real quality to emerge
- Measuring efficiency and waste in construction
- Appointing integrated teams focusing on the whole life impact and performance of a development
- Encouraging longer-term relationships with integrated project teams as part of long-term programmes, always subject to rigorous performance review
- Using whole life costing in the value for money assessment of buildings
- Ensuring there is a single point client responsibility for any given project, with authority
Getting the brief right

Central to the success of any procurement project is a robust and thorough brief that fully outlines the client’s needs, sets clear benchmarks of quality but allows scope for private sector innovation.

Research by the University of Sheffield showed “that a thorough consultation process before the brief takes irreversible physical form can give the client and design team critical insights from a wide range of stakeholders”. They cite a host of methodologies available to develop a strong brief:

- Exploration of existing literature and standards of library planning and design
- Discussion with the current staff, other professional librarians, architects and planners
- Consideration of existing libraries, including international examples, taking into account, what works and what does not – elements of style as well as practical service can be addressed
- Demographic profile of library catchment area supplied by library user statistics and local authority data including census materials
- Focus groups with a variety of appropriate stakeholders: user and non user categories including ethnic minority groups, disabled groups including the visually impaired, children, teens, adults, elders, parents, business leaders, the staff of the library including branch services and potential partners
- GIS (Geographic Information System) analysis of catchment area
- Roadshows and public meetings that take place around the area to be served by the library
- Postal and/or telephone surveys contacting every household within an authority or, in some cases, through a consultant polling organisation, a statistically significant sample of the authority’s population
- Public planning hearings, which can entail architectural site plans being displayed in prominent public places
- Where a new build is replacing an older library suggestion boxes have been placed within the old library or interim building that specifically ask for input capturing the views of library users

Creating Excellent Buildings – A Guide for Clients

Published in the Autumn of 2003

This CABE publication provides a step-by-step guide to procuring buildings and achieving design quality throughout the process. The document describes how to set up your client team, develop a design brief, select a design team and make decisions about the right form of procurement for your project.

Effective procurement

Quality design is not the enemy of an effective procurement. HM Treasury’s procurement arm, the Office of Government Commerce and the DTI sponsored Constructing Excellence initiative provide advice and good practice to ensure a cost effective construction process, minimising waste and time overruns.

www.ogc.gov.uk

www.rethinkingconstruction.org

Championing quality

For design quality to be delivered it needs leadership and championing. A local authority design champion may be the means of delivering this leadership. The champion should be a senior councillor supported by skilled officers.

The design champion would:

- Provide a symbol of commitment to good design
- Create leadership to generate enthusiasm and commitment for design quality and provide a point of contact for external bodies
- Coordinate effort across the authority, joining up the different departments and combating organisational ghettos
- Promote the benefits of good design and ensure every new investment in the built environment, from a building to a road crossing is of a high quality
- Ensure all investment is seen as a piece of urban or rural design, rather than in isolation

Brixworth Library and Community Centre

Client: Northamptonshire District Council
Design: D5 Architects

Brixworth Library and Community Centre was built in partnership with the Home Foundation, a local charity. The building was designed to be a focus for the whole community and the brief was developed during a series of public meetings including representatives from the Parish Council, disabled groups and from the adjacent elderly persons home. The building houses a number of community based activities involving both voluntary and statutory organisations including a community hall, meeting room and coffee shop managed by the Parish Council and Brixworth Christian Fellowship. A partnership has also been established with Brixworth Primary School for joint provision of ICT equipment in the homework centre, including regular school-time use of the facility. This commitment to access for all was rewarded in 2001 by the building winning the Libraries Section of ADAPT Trust Award for joint provision of ICT equipment in the homework centre, including regular school-time use of the facility.

Bridport Library

Client: Dorset County Council
Designer: Dorset Property Management

With a traditional urban pattern and large conservation area containing many listed buildings, Bridport presented Dorset County Council with a challenging project when they decided to convert a nineteenth century fire station, the last use of the building was as the town’s fire station, into a sensitively restored façade which sells itself, with the need to be sympathetic to the character of the building, street and surrounding urban form.
3.3 DEFINING DESIGN QUALITY

What is a well designed building?
Design is more than just beauty; it is an integral part of the success of any project. The key facets of building design quality are:

Appearance
The building should be excellent in itself and appropriate to its surroundings, attracting a favourable response from users, customers and the wider public.

Context
The project is seen as a place, not an isolated building, including creation of public space, contribution to the neighbourhood and its environment, and effects on transport patterns.

Buildability
Including ease of construction, materials from sustainable sources, prefabrication, use of standard components.

Maintenance
Including energy use, cleaning, repair costs, all estimated over the life of the building.

Operation
Including use of space, navigation around the building, comfort of users and staff, flexibility, effectiveness of the service, accessibility, storage.

The design aspirations should consider more than just the building, seeing as integral the interior design, furniture and the incorporation of artwork.

Bournemouth Library
Client: Bournemouth Borough Council
Designer: BDP

Replacing a library that, 60 years ago, was said to be the second worst in England, this new ‘public living room’ for the residents of Bournemouth has been a catalyst for the upgrading of the public realm in that area of Bournemouth.

Funded via the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), this project is formed as a horseshoe on two open, informally arranged levels, with reader areas overlooking the central exhibition space and enjoying views over Bournemouth Gardens. The glazed north side provides a window to the town, visually connecting all the people in the building with their local surroundings and vice versa.

Durham library
Client: Durham County Council
Designer: MacCormac Jamieson Petticrew Architects

The Durham Millennium City Project occupies a prominent location at the edge of a World Heritage Site. The complex comprises Durham Clayport Library, 550 seat Gala Theatre, visitor centre and two community resource centres and Millennium Place – a public space which links the above facilities and provides an outdoor area for performances and relaxation. The development responds to the challenge with strong contemporary design that respects its surroundings.

A new public square will be created in front of the library, funded by the South West Regional Development Agency. The freeholder of the library has also contributed because the improvements will build upon the economic revival experienced in the locality since the opening of the library, increasing the value of his investment in the library site.

This project has been shortlisted for the 2003 Prime Minister’s Better Public Building Award www.betterpublicbuildings.gov.uk
Design quality is as important in a rural as an urban setting. Cambridgeshire County Council has delivered a number of well-designed new libraries that demonstrate this. The new libraries at Papworth Everard and March offer library service provision, as well as a range of other services including a registrar’s office. In March the design has had a major impact on attendance, with the new library exceeding its attendance figures by 150%.

In Papworth Everard the library has been designed to act as a teaching library for disabled people, giving them an opportunity to gain experience and qualifications in library work.

By Design: objectives of urban design
A building should not be seen as an isolated object, but as something that respects and responds to its surroundings. The joint DTLR/CABE publication, By Design, promotes higher standards of urban design, it states the objectives of urban design as being:

Character
To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture

Continuity and Enclosure
To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas

Quality of the Public Realm
To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people

Ease of Movement
To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport

Legibility
To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks that help people find their way around

Adaptability
To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions

Diversity
To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs
Balancing conflicting demands

One of the major challenges in designing a library is handling the conflicting demands – solitude versus interaction, quiet versus noise, order versus mess, openness versus security and limited hours versus ‘24/7’ expectations.

One solution is the concept of zones and libraries within libraries. This provides a specific area for special types of users, for example children, teenagers study areas and quiet areas.

Design Quality Indicators

The Design Quality Indicator is an assessment methodology to evaluate the design quality of buildings. It can be used at various stages of the procurement process:

- Developing the brief – helping define what we mean by design quality
- Evaluating the bids – how do they measure up to the brief?
- Evaluating the final building – does it meet expectations, can it be improved?

It aims to remove professional jargon from the process and can be used by staff, end users and property professionals.

The DQIs have been trialed on a number of projects, including the proposals for Brighton’s new library.

www.dqi.org.uk
3.4 CONCLUSION

We hope that this report demonstrates how thoughtful design has had a major impact in making public libraries important again. We need to stop seeing libraries as dusty repositories of books and start seeing them as part of the glue that holds society together. We believe that it is within everyone\'s grasp to rediscover the excitement and importance of libraries and put them back into the heart of our communities.

Art from the outset
Folkestone Library
Client: Kent County Council
Designer: Adjaye Associates

The Gate
Client: London Borough of Newham
Designer: FaulknerBrowns

Art is best seen as an integral element of a new building rather than an add on extra. Chris Ghi and David Adjaye worked together to create a user-friendly reception area for Folkestone library, incorporating a translucent screen which spans the reception. The project was supported by the RSA Art for Architecture programme. www.rsa.org.uk/afa

Located in Forest Gate in the east end of London, The Gate reflects the diversity and energy of the area. Newham Council\'s first one stop shop combining leisure, cultural and community advice is the social heart of the high street, a catalyst for urban regeneration and promoter of life long learning.

From the high street, visitors are struck by the 28-metre glass elevation displaying the seasonal changes of a birch forest, creating a powerful local presence and stimulating curiosity to explore the interior.

FURTHER INFORMATION
CABE
www.cabe.org.uk

Resource
www.resource.gov.uk

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
www.cilip.org.uk

Department for Culture Media and Sport
www.culture.gov.uk

SCALA
www.scala.org.uk

Local Government Association
www.lga.gov.uk

Society of Chief Librarians:
www.chieflib.org.uk

Photography credits:

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FURTHER READING

Lead partners
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CABE is the Government\'s champion for design quality in the built environment and helps to coordinate the Prime Minister\'s Better Public Building Initiative. CABE offers a range of advice and services including the design review programme, a free service that appraises the quality of projects before a planning decision is made.

Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries
Resource\'s mission is to enable collections and services of the museums, archives and libraries sector to touch the lives of everyone. Resource was launched in 2000 as the strategic body working with and for museums, archives and libraries, tapping the potential for collaboration between them. Resource delivers this mission through its core roles:
• providing strategic leadership
• acting as a powerful advocate
• developing capacity within the sector
• promoting innovation and change

The Gate, Forest Gate,
London Borough of Newham,