

Future libraries

Change, options and how to get there

Learning from the Future Libraries Programme Phase 1





Memories

g back of when we were ma
n Joe in his billet. When we
re greeted by a **small** fat lad
She greeted me with "What

Escape Caps Lock Backspace Delete
., ? ! ← ↑ →
a b c d e f g h
i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z
Shift Enter Space

Contents

Preface	2
Executive summary	4
Introduction	5
The reform and change model	6
Part One: Four models of reform	9
Service location and distribution	9
New provider models	10
Shared services across council boundaries	12
Empowering communities to do things their way	13
Part Two: The ingredients for generating change	16
Political and managerial leadership	16
Governance arrangements	17
Positioning library service to priority outcomes	19
Internal capacity to support change	20
Digital opportunities	22
External support and challenge	23
Analysis of need	24
Understanding current and cost performance	25
User and community engagement	26
Partner and stakeholder engagement	27
Future libraries	31
Further information	32
Appendix: The pilot change projects	33

Preface

When we launched the Future Libraries Programme in August last year, it was in recognition of our shared belief that innovation, led by the energy and experience of local authorities themselves, was going to provide the best recipe for modernising libraries.

There was an exceptional level of interest in the programme – 51 projects submitted expressions of interest with the participation of over 100 local authorities. Ten were taken forward involving 36 councils. This publication brings the learning so far to the attention of a wider audience.

The Future Libraries Programme is a partnership between the Local Government Group (LG Group) and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), and is driven by local authorities themselves. It is about sharing good practice. It is about library sector professionals increasingly looking to each other, and beyond their own service, to share and capture knowledge and to develop imaginative solutions that can save money and improve outcomes for communities. And, crucially, it is about harnessing local political leadership and professional expertise in the same direction.

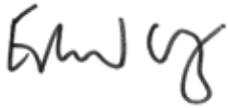
We have been hugely encouraged by the progress so far and with the partnerships that have developed. The ten phase one projects have commissioned practical support and advice to develop a wide range of options and ideas to save money while minimising the need for cuts to front line services and meeting communities' needs. These include new collaborations across council and organisational boundaries, the use of digital opportunities and closer engagement with communities.

We have widely shared the learning so far with councillors and senior managers responsible for library services through events, online case studies and regular communications. But the vivid examples given in this document resonate far beyond library services. The best libraries are at the heart of the council's approach to everything from lifelong learning to wellbeing, job seeking, volunteering, education and encouraging more people to get online.

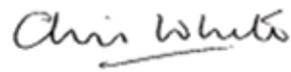
We hope that the early ideas presented here will add to those you are exploring locally with your communities, partners and neighbouring authorities. We are extremely grateful to the participating local authorities for their commitment to this project.

We would be very interested in receiving your comments on this document.

Please email feedback to museums.libraries@artscouncil.org.uk and we look forward to keeping you updated on progress.



Ed Vaizey
Minister for Culture, Communications
and Creative Industries



Councillor Chris White
Chair, LG Group Culture, Tourism and
Sport Programme Board



Executive summary

Big challenges demand big solutions. Innovative approaches are opening up through the need to address the complex challenges faced by communities and their councils. Library services can become more effective and sustainable in the future by working with key partners, for example communities, neighbouring councils and creative partnerships.

The Future Libraries Programme has distilled some of the headline approaches that councils are pursuing and the essential success factors in developing, planning and implementing change.

The emerging delivery models are frequently hybrid – a combination of approaches to meet local political priorities, community needs and aspirations and the ambitions of other partners. The models in summary are:

- delivering the service network in different ways through co-location or new, non-traditional outlets and service points
- using external providers such as Trusts and charitable companies, other councils or through the private sector
- sharing services with other councils to varying degrees of integration
- empowering communities to do things in their own way.

In order to identify and secure sustainable efficiencies and serve communities, the journey requires:

- time to deliver the change before savings begin to kick in (12 to 18 months), with more time needed as partnerships get more complex (Tendering services out also takes time and needs to be planned into timelines)
- commitment and appropriate engagement on key issues from council leadership (political and officer)
- good quality management capacity
- strategic needs analysis that drives changes in provision
- effective engagement and communications with communities and the media
- open encouragement of external challenge and support
- ability to clearly and fairly apportion costs and benefits from new arrangements between participants.

Investment in a good process will achieve the best outcomes both in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for local residents and communities. The publication sets out the main ingredients of the process, which aims to open up the possibilities and harness the ideas of communities and partners.

Change will only happen if political leadership and professional expertise are harnessed in the same direction. Hence this publication is aimed at those leaders who will drive the change.

Introduction

This publication is for leading members and chief officers and charts a route along a change process for public libraries towards a choice of destinations.

All public services face continual challenges of improved efficiency and effectiveness. More than ever, the current financial environment is testing and challenging the ability of political and managerial leadership to deliver change, meet community needs and save money.

Public library services are one of the most highly valued local authority elective services. They attract a wide spectrum of the community, from young to old and from all backgrounds. They are valued not just for the range of services they provide but also for the shared public spaces and focal points they provide in communities – from town and city centres to urban neighbourhoods and rural villages. As a result, any proposed changes to library services can spark voluble campaigns and legal challenges, as has been the case over recent months.

This publication is for leaders of councils, elected members, chief executives, corporate directors and senior managers who are reviewing their approach to the public library service. It sets out the learning from the 'Future Libraries Programme' which supported 10 change projects involving 36 councils, helping them to innovate and develop robust solutions to the challenges they face.

It also includes learning from other councils developing innovative approaches.

The Future Libraries Programme is still 'work in progress' and does not purport to have all the answers. However it has invested time and effort and generated enough learning to be worthy of sharing at this stage, so that councils considering the future shape of their library services can benefit from the knowledge, experiences and emerging solutions.

This publication does not aim to be a technical 'step by step guide' to follow sequentially or to a specific blueprint. There are other documents produced by MLA and LG Group and available through their websites which address specific aspects of library service provision in more detail. Rather, it distils some of the potential delivery models for future libraries and the key ingredients in a change process to determine the best options for your council and communities.

It invites political and managerial leaders to invest in a change process that will have the greatest potential to deliver the statutory requirements for a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' which not only saves money but serves communities in a twenty first century context in terms of demographic and social trends and digital opportunities.

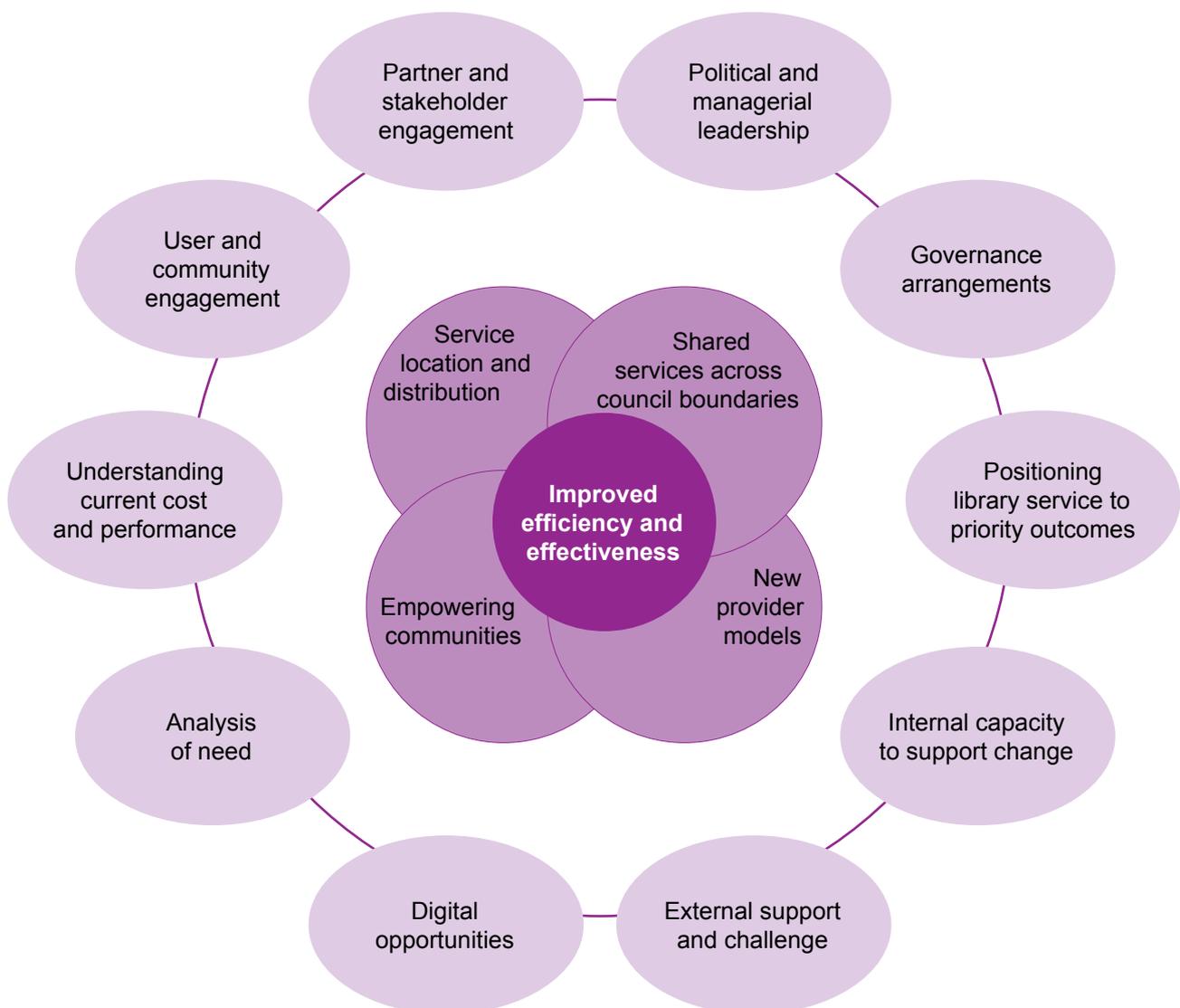
The reform and change model

The learning from the Future Libraries Programme has enabled us to develop a powerful model to support councils who want to reform and change their library services.

The publication is organised around the 'Library reform and change model' which has emerged through the Future Libraries Programme.

At the heart of the model is 'improved efficiency and effectiveness', in which, simply put:

- Efficiency = 'doing things in the right way' – being cost effective and providing value for money.
- Effectiveness = 'doing the right thing' – setting the right targets and outcomes to meet the needs and aspirations of communities.



Part One of the document describes the four inner circles which are delivery options for public libraries, some already existing and others emerging. These are not single models – they contain variables within them – nor are they mutually exclusive – they overlap and can be explored and developed together.

Part Two of the document sets out ten ingredients of change indicated in the outer circle. These can be pursued concurrently and built into a project plan. They were all identified as important success factors in developing, planning and implementing change.





Part One: Four models of reform

Library services can be delivered in new and creative ways which engage and serve communities. This change process should be led by the energy and expertise of councils themselves. The solutions will reflect local needs and aspiration and use aspects of several delivery models.

The four models outlined in part one are:

- service location and distribution
- new provider models
- shared services across council boundaries
- empowering communities to do things their way.

Service location and distribution

By breaking down the barriers of tradition, councils are bringing libraries into the 21st century and meeting the needs of a new generation of library users. Co-location provides opportunities for increased access and reduced costs.

For many councils, the starting point for change has stemmed from the need to rationalise often outdated and inefficient building stock. In other cases councils have looked at rationalisation options for libraries with lower usage, such as reduced hours. Customer expectations are also changing in terms of the kinds of information and services people want and how they want to access them.

'Rationalisation' must be underpinned by a thorough analysis of people's needs and councils must be able to demonstrate that those needs will continue to be met from the rationalised service. In terms of defining need, it is both the needs of the population as a whole and the specific needs of particular groups such as children, older people, and those experiencing social and economic deprivation that need to be analysed and addressed. This approach requires a strong commitment to collecting data and evidencing the required patterns of service provision that best meets these needs within the context of the overall envelope of resources available.

A number of the pilot projects have developed comprehensive approaches to needs analysis and assessment in the general and specific context, more sophisticated than perhaps in the past. There is more about this in Part Two.

Many councils have already used the 'service location' approach to co-locate a range of other council and public services in one building.

Some councils are putting existing libraries at the heart of their communities by opening up council customer service points and using them as a venue for police surgeries, health centres and volunteer groups.

Others are co-locating libraries in shops, sports centres, village halls and children's centres, enabling services to share costs, extend opening hours and provide a more accessible service.

The Bradford pilot is developing 'Library Link points' in shops across the city. This will require an initial investment in self-service hardware and shelving, which will be offset by future savings.

The key support required is needs and usage data identification, service planning tools and external consultant or peer support and challenge to the service planning process.

“The focus for the service will be to extend access to the service involving partner organisations and commercial outlets and use self-service, digital access and outreach services to bring the service to a wider community than is currently served by the network of static libraries and mobile library provision.”

(Bradford Council)

When services are co-located it becomes easier to create community hubs that offer a range of services from the library. For example, Essex County Council's library staff provided customers of Braintree District Council with a front office service that includes giving advice and recording details. This includes a range of services from waste and recycling to parking and council tax advice.

New provider models

A new delivery partner as an alternative to in-house provision requires a thorough options appraisal prior to procurement.

A number of councils are investigating delivering library services with new partners or in different arrangements such as trusts, private sector providers or other council partners – as in the case of Essex County Council working with Slough Borough Council. Some are including their library services within wider delivery arrangements by including sport, leisure and/or arts to serve wider community needs in one place.

This approach, above all, requires a thorough options appraisal ahead of taking procurement decisions.

In some cases, where councils have existing leisure trusts, they are looking to them to deliver library services. Wigan, Rochdale and Salford and others amongst the pilots have already implemented this.

A private sector provider now operates in Hounslow and other new providers are entering the market opening choices and comparators for financial and service performance.

Following a competitive dialogue tendering process, Slough Borough Council has entered into a strategic delivery partnership with Essex County Council who will deliver Slough Borough Council's library service under contract for the next five to eight years to share expertise and reduce costs.

Perhaps because library service managers have not had the experience of compulsory competitive tendering and externalisation, some library professionals are now only going through for the first time the professional challenges that sport and leisure and parks managers went through in the 1980s and as a result it is taking time to develop the skills and experience required to manage options appraisal and procurement processes.

Such approaches require careful consideration to separate the commissioning and provider functions and the location of the professional service advice required to ensure statutory requirements are met.

Conducting an options appraisal is a thorough process which takes time and often leads to implementing changes which do not deliver savings for a few years. However, it is often possible to start making smaller scale savings within the first year or two of a change programme.

The key support required includes front end advice on the process of option appraisal and on the different delivery models currently available, access to examples of where these models are now working and legal support through the process where this is not available in house, or even in some instances where it is. The experience of the Future Libraries Programme projects highlights the importance of independent support and challenge to the process of managing complex change.

Library managers should seek advice and support corporately, especially from those services in the council or in neighbouring councils with a track record of delivery through different models.

“A review of the library service was completed in September 2009. At the time the council’s cabinet decided to seek another partner, from the private or public sector, to help improve libraries and help reduce the cost of administration. Since January 2011 Essex County Council has been running our libraries. Slough Borough Council is pleased to have made major improvements to libraries over the past two years, including increasing opening hours over 25 per cent, self service and three new self service satellite libraries, and these are being sustained and embedded most effectively with support from Essex County Council. The new management arrangement has secured 15 per cent efficiency savings through economies of scale and delivered real improvement to customers through importing expertise and good practice from our partner.”

(Slough Borough Council)

Shared services across council boundaries

A growing number of councils are exploring joining forces with neighbouring authorities to make stretched resources go further.

Eight out of the ten pilots in the Future Libraries Programme involved two or more councils, with ten councils involved in one case. Their experience shows that a 'convenor' needs to be identified to lead the process.

Levels of sharing can range from:

- mergers of specific functions such as bibliographic services
- remodelling and sharing specific services such as mobile or home library
- back office mergers, including shared library management systems
- shared specialist and professional services
- joint strategic management structures
- fully merged services.

Emerging evidence suggests that back office mergers alone may save 5 to 10 per cent whilst full service merger across a number of councils could achieve savings in the order 10 to 25 per cent depending on the number of councils involved, locality (rural or urban) and current practice.

This approach requires strong political engagement from the outset to negotiate and agree the optimum relationship between the level of achievable savings and maintaining acceptable levels of local accountability for the service.

This process must be underpinned from the outset by a consistent and transparent way of measuring and comparing service costs in the different councils, particularly where some library services may have already identified and made substantial interim savings. Long term partner relationships will depend on achieving fairness in the identification of savings generated through new opportunities for shared services. There are further implications of employment legislation and human resource policies, for example, in relation to TUPE.

In addition, this approach needs to recognise and manage the implications of merging sometimes very different organisational cultures. Managing the data, the political negotiations and cultural change suggests this is a long term option for achieving change. There is thinking that suggests that shared services should be undertaken as the last stage of an efficiencies programme because of the complications in aligning all parties to the same position to benefit from the consequential savings.

The key support required includes financial expertise to develop transparent costing models, officer and member peer brokerage skills and support for organisational culture change.

“The aim of the south west consortium was to design a single entity to be able to deliver the ‘library technical’ elements of library provision – particularly systems and processes relating to stock procurement and management. Through this collaborative approach it was estimated that savings between 4 per cent and 15 per cent could be achieved.”

(South West Peninsula)

“Our pilot involved the preparation of a feasibility business case for a combined library service. We believe that the proposal to operate as a combined service is a significant step change in service delivery; one that has potential to enable existing vulnerable specialist services thrive whilst offering users access to a much larger and deeper collection across a significantly larger geographical area.”

(Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster councils)

Empowering communities to do things their way

In some areas local people want to play a more active role in running libraries, and councils are working through the implications of this for their statutory duty under the Public Libraries & Museum Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

There are a range of approaches already underway or being explored. These include:

- transfer of the library asset to an existing established community development trust, voluntary body or social enterprise
- transfer of the library asset to a newly formed community organisation or social enterprise
- transfer of library management to an existing or new community organisation
- new arrangements with town or parish councils
- increased use of volunteers to run libraries or to work alongside professionals to support opening hours and services.

These approaches could vary from library to library with bespoke arrangements appropriate to local capacity and circumstances. In some communities there may be a well established community trust or voluntary body which has the necessary skills and experience and is readily able to take on new services. Other areas may require a programme to build capacity and skills which may take time.

The pilot with Suffolk County Council is focused on community governance. Giving local people a bigger role in running library services is an opportunity to strengthen local civic society but it poses challenges too. In particular, how does a community governance model reflect the fact that the statutory requirement to provide a library service rests with the council? What is a core library service? How will the council guard against, and respond to, service failure, or if local people decide they no longer want to run the library?

The early learning from the Future Libraries Programme suggests that councils who follow this path need to develop a strong commissioning model that provides a clear framework setting out how the council is discharging its statutory functions and giving clarity about what services the council provides and what services the council has commissioned local people to deliver.

Many councils will observe progress in places like Suffolk County Council before moving ahead in this direction in a 'wholesale' manner. However, many are exploring and implementing aspects of this approach where there is local community readiness around individual libraries.

The key support required for this approach appears to be legal. The Suffolk County Council project is clear that having the external legal support has been extremely beneficial. Going forward, as councils try to judge what they wish to achieve against the statutory requirement, this sort of support will continue to be needed. Sophisticated community engagement skills are also essential to encourage creative solutions but also to connect with the most disadvantaged and disempowered communities.

“The main objective is to implement Suffolk County Council’s new strategic direction in a library context. This includes investigating options for community governance of libraries, along with other council services. Communities will be given more say and choice over services so that library services can be delivered through, for example, town or parish councils or other community organisations.”

(Suffolk County Council)

“Staff and councillors have been meeting with people and organisations expressing an interest in taking on their library and attending parish council meetings. They have also taken part in technical meetings organised by SALC (Suffolk Association of Local Councils) with representatives from other council services preparing for divestment.”

(Suffolk County Council)



ask here

Library charges

Item	Charge
Overdue fines	10p per book per week
Lost books	£10 per book
Replacement books	£10 per book
Replacement CDs/DVDs	£10 per item
Replacement audiobooks	£10 per item
Replacement e-books	£10 per item
Replacement e-audiobooks	£10 per item
Replacement e-DVDs	£10 per item
Replacement e-CDs	£10 per item
Replacement e-books (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-books (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-audiobooks (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-audiobooks (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-DVDs (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-DVDs (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-CDs (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-CDs (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-books (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-books (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-audiobooks (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-audiobooks (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-DVDs (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-DVDs (fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-CDs (non-fiction)	£10 per item
Replacement e-CDs (fiction)	£10 per item



Part Two: The ingredients for generating change

In distilling the learning from the ten pilots, 10 key ingredients for generating significant change were identified. They are all important and can be pursued concurrently, through a project management approach.

The ingredients of change described in this section are:

- political and managerial leadership
- governance arrangements
- positioning library service to priority outcomes
- internal capacity to support change
- digital opportunities
- external support and challenge
- analysis of need
- understanding current and cost performance
- user and community engagement
- partner and stakeholder engagement.

Political and managerial leadership

Change will only happen if political leadership and professional expertise are harnessed in the same direction.

Public libraries have a strong brand and are valued as a community service even for people who don't regularly use them. As we have seen already there is a high level of public interest in any process of change to the service.

We need to make our libraries work for the local priorities that local, democratically elected politicians have identified in consultation with residents. Political leaders need to be involved from the outset in the process to define need, understand what the community wants from its library service and to balance this with economic and legal constraints on the level of change required. It is important to ensure members understand the statutory and legal requirements and the risks of both action and inaction and that these are clear early in the process.

The delivery models outlined in part one have very clear political implications for the future delivery of services – whether they are retained in-house, delivered through a partner, trust or private contractor, co-located with other public or commercial services, shared with neighbouring authorities or delivered by communities. These are important political choices with short and long term implications.

Managerial leadership is equally important, not only at a library head of service level but also at corporately at chief executive and director levels to secure corporate input and maximise cross-service opportunities. A ‘champion’ at executive director level is essential.

“Through the member based sessions, the programme has enabled the political process, which will lead to key decisions being better informed around the needs, aspirations and challenges facing the library service.”

(Herefordshire and Shropshire councils)

“The local political desire to share more services across three areas served to ensure that savings should be identified as part of this process. A specific, facilitated session was held with senior officers and finance specialists from each borough and savings identified, initially by proposing to rationalise management costs.”

(Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster councils)

“The main objective is to implement Suffolk County Council’s new strategic direction in a library context. This includes investigating options for community governance of libraries, along with other council services. Communities will be given more say and choice over services so that library services can be delivered through, for example, town or parish councils or other community organisations.”

(Suffolk County Council)

Governance arrangements

There is a balance to be struck between how radical the change should be, the future governance and accountability arrangements for the council and the level of savings that can be achieved.

Whichever delivery model is adopted, the council retains statutory accountability for the library service within its boundaries.

Where working across boundaries or with communities, mechanisms need to be identified and put in place to ensure good governance and clear accountability and some councils are negotiating ‘sovereignty guarantees’. Potentially greater levels of savings can be achieved through greater levels of merger. However this needs to be balanced with responsibilities and political will and direction.

In the models that move away from in-house direct provision a commissioning model is emerging. Here, the council defines the needs and priority outcomes, appraises the options and procures a provider. It is important to retain professional expertise in house to specify, select, monitor and review the contractual arrangements with the provider, be they a trust, private contractor or a series of community organisations.

The 'Lincolnshire group' of councils combined working across boundaries and commissioning through developing a 'memorandum of understanding' between the councils, a commissioning framework, and outcomes based specification and are in the process of options appraisal.

"Each borough has committed to a 'sovereignty guarantee' whereby the distinct nature of each borough's services should be protected whilst seeking to share services between the three. All three councils are committed to continuing to represent the needs, priorities and ambitions of local people in their neighbourhoods via this guarantee. The project specifically avoided proposing changes to front-line delivery until a stable rationalised management structure is in place."

(Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster councils)

"A broad commissioning framework can be used to engage any supplier (commercial operation, community group, local authority, third sector/volunteers) in the delivery of library services. An outcomes-based specification, rather than a service-based 'shopping list' gives suppliers more scope and flexibility, whilst ensuring that libraries continue to provide quality, vital services that make a difference to local people and communities and meet their needs."

(Beyond Boundaries – Lincolnshire, Rutland, Cambridgeshire, North East Lincolnshire and Peterborough councils)

"We plan to establish a library services partnership board across Hereford and Shropshire to provide strategic leadership and oversee the implementation of the future service framework."

(Herefordshire and Shropshire councils)

Positioning library services to help achieve priority outcomes

The best libraries are showing they can provide a wide range of services, from helping people to find a job, to applying to be a volunteer for the 2012 Games, and being a meeting place for reading clubs and homework groups.

Libraries can contribute to a wide range of better outcomes for communities – from children and young people to older people, health and wellbeing and stronger communities to access to education, skills and employment. In the current economic climate it is even more essential that library services have a clear strategic vision and purpose that powerfully demonstrates how access to public information helps the council to achieve its wider political and corporate objectives.

For many decades, libraries have developed good practice across a range of outcomes and demonstrated innovation in partnerships and programmes to meet the needs of new communities or changing customer circumstances and choices.

However this has not always been reflected in strong corporate buy-in at the level of the council executive and corporate management team. One of the key lessons from the Future Libraries Programme pilots is the need to position modernising libraries within and alongside wider transformation programmes taking place in the council. This opens up other opportunities, including the opportunity to access other funding streams, co-location and shared services within council boundaries, new ways of delivering services and making savings.

The alignment can operate at a number of levels, from how libraries contribute towards high level outcomes for individuals and communities to how the council and its partners aspire to deliver services and ‘do business’. Libraries can be positioned in the following ways:

- helping to achieve outcome areas which are challenging for the council such as reading levels, access to job seeking support and information, promoting independence for older people
- providing service access points in neighbourhoods and rural communities
- providing a focus for community engagement activity through meeting space, volunteering, community activities, particularly in areas of deprivation or with low car ownership, limited public transport and low computer ownership
- empowering communities, including asset transfer and community management.

“The key alignment to council priority outcomes is the outcomes based specification which now includes performance indicators that are linked to key outputs. This is the building block for the future – whoever runs the service. A common set of outcomes and performance indicators across a boundary region will deliver greater accountability, comparability and transparency, and lead to more efficient and effective performance management.”

Beyond Boundaries – see Appendix)

“The project linked into the ‘Changing our Council’ (CoC) programme underway across Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council. This seeks to improve the business processes of the council. The work streams for the CoC programme include customer and citizen services, delivery, commissioning, procurement and contract management, strategic support services and transactional support services, leadership of place and community. There are also a number of cross-cutting, enabling workstreams including employer of choice, property, ICT and sustainability. This project links through to the customer and citizen services work stream(s).”

(Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council)



Internal capacity to support change

Project management capacity and financial, legal, HR and procurement support is essential. Pilots also valued additional support in needs analysis, options appraisal, community engagement and member and partner engagement.

The scale of the financial challenges means that this is not a simple budget efficiency exercise. Most of the pilots were looking at how to achieve savings of up to 30 per cent, something which required significant scrutiny of their existing service and the search for new and different solutions to deliver the service in the future. They were seeking transformation as opposed to incremental change.

So, in keeping with political and managerial leadership, development of appropriate governance and alignment with corporate priorities, there is a need to allocate resources to manage the process – both in terms of planning and implementing the change process.

Legal advice was key in all the pilots but particularly in those looking at divesting to communities and shared services across council boundaries. Commissioning and procurement support is essential for those looking to new providers and ICT and property support is also essential in all the models.

Human resource support is also vital, especially to support regular engagement of staff and trades unions and to keep everyone informed of the personnel implications and regulations. This clearly increases as the models develop and move towards consultation and decision making, prior to implementation, but early involvement of staff and trades union is essential to the success of the process.

“Day to day management of the project was through a joint project team convened with senior membership. This was key to the success of the project. The joint Northumberland and Durham council project team met weekly throughout the project in person or by conference call. It was co-chaired by the heads of libraries and culture in Northumberland and Durham and also included senior library service managers, senior ICT officers, other services as required and the MLA. Northumberland also assigned a project co-ordinator to support the project team”.

(Northumberland and Durham councils)

“We had the support of a member of the council’s legal team to assist us in our meetings with our external consultancy support, Bevan Brittan, to get the most from our time with them and who also found their advice helpful. Similarly the ‘in-house’ finance team were able to analyse and represent budgetary information to provide ourselves and our communities with indicative costings and comparative unit costs. Our key learning from the project is around understanding our statutory responsibilities under the Public Libraries and Museums Act and how they could be discharged through a delegated service model. We have also worked up a core service offer. This has resulted in a devolved governance model with a light touch service description which we feel will work in Suffolk with its emphasis on communities, but could be used elsewhere. We have learned that the model we are following is far more complex to achieve than we originally thought, and things we thought were straight forward such as TUPE and asset transfer are not that clear cut.”

(Suffolk County Council)

Digital opportunities

The digital revolution presents a huge opportunity for library services to broaden their appeal and improve at doing what they do best.

Research undertaken for the Future Libraries Programme considered how digital technologies could support the future of public libraries in delivering more efficient and effective services. This research considered the experience of the pilots, best practice in the sector and innovative ideas from other sectors.

Broadly, there are digital opportunities in four spheres:

- Engaging users and communities – using digital technology and insight to connect with users and communities in a new way. These include the use of customer insight, using SMS, email and social media communications and exploration of a single library card and related marketing opportunities across a number of authorities.
- Combining and consolidation – combining existing library services, in whole or in part, to achieve scale and reduce costs. Initiatives include developing a single service business case, shared service plans, commissioning frameworks and single back offices, streamlined catalogues and enquiries and other joint service models.
- Reconfiguring services – changing the way that library services are delivered: new locations, new models of delivery, new services and new partnerships.

- New technology and innovation – understanding how new technology might transform services in the future. This includes eBooks, digital access, fundraising on-line and APIs and Mash-ups (ways of combining and presenting information in new ways).

Some digital initiatives may require investment up front in order to realise savings. Others may generate savings or be additional services which open up new opportunities for users without necessarily reducing costs.

“Library Lookup is a way of checking whether books on Amazon are available in your local library. Library Lookup is released under ‘creative commons’, so can be implemented for free. It uses two accessible datasets (the Amazon catalogue and the library catalogue) and compares ISBN numbers. This ‘mashup’ creates a new service that wasn’t available before”.

(Future Libraries Programme digital research project)

“Age UK and Sure Start centres are involved in the e-Reader pilot so that outcomes for older people and children and young people can be evaluated”.

(Northumberland and Durham councils)

External support and challenge

Specialist advice can help unlock some difficult challenges, avoid pitfalls and open up new opportunities. Challenge sessions can assist members and senior teams to clarify their thinking and direction.

Each of the pilots in the Future Libraries Programme was allocated £10,000 to meet the cost of external support. Initially, each project had access to MLA support to enable them to put together a bespoke and appropriate support package to help them meet their individual challenges. Councils could commission support from specialist advisers appointed by MLA or LG Group or they could commission their own support from other providers.

The advisors provided a range of support including specialist knowledge and expertise in library services, specific disciplines such as legal advice, knowledge from around the country, facilitation of learning and development sessions with project teams, members, staff, partners and communities and brokerage of cross-boundary relationships. They also added capacity by writing up reports and distilling the key issues.

The pilots also had access to appropriately qualified and experienced member and officer peers to help build capacity, confidence and sustainability by sharing knowledge and experience and providing challenge within the process. The Future Libraries Programme found member peers to be of particular value and they are a resource that councils can potentially make more use of in their change process.

The programme nationally invited partners to offer expertise, knowledge and challenge – partners included the Reading Agency, Audiences UK, Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), and the Development Trusts Association. At a local level, a number of the pilots similarly involved external partners on their boards.

This range of external support is a key ingredient to help councils learn from the experiences of others and to provide a check and challenge to their emerging approach.

“The support provided was initially used to facilitate meetings and discussions between senior officers from the three boroughs to identify the preconditions of success for this proposal (eg identifying a common core libraries offer and identifying material considerations such as buildings and technology). Views of local lead members were also captured via this support package. Further support was provided to undertake business analysis (user data, staffing rates and structures) on behalf of the three boroughs. In the latter stages, the consultancy support pulled together the information gathered from the above activities into a draft report for officers in each of the boroughs to consider.”

(Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster councils)

“We had the input of a peer who challenged and stimulated the pilot.”

(South East group)

Analysis of need

Planning future library services requires a sophisticated understanding of local needs.

An effective service can only be achieved by understanding community needs in general and specifically in relation to particular sections of the community.

Joint strategic needs assessments are already a rich data source in relation to demographic trends and social, economic, health and wellbeing measures. A number of the pilots supplemented this with data from regional observatories.

In terms of the needs of particular sections of the community, again, a number of pilots supplemented ward profiles and deprivation indices with commercial data sets relating to shopping patterns, travel maps and other demographic information mapping.

Needs assessment must take account of trends and future projections and particularly the needs of the most disadvantaged communities. Equality analyses (which have replaced equality impact assessments) should be applied through the process.

“Audiences UK (through &Co) were commissioned to carry out geographical data assessment (including mapping) of service usage, need and demand in the boundary zones. The partners asked for intelligence on the crossover of catchments of libraries on the borders of councils, the variations and themes in levels of provision (including socio-demographic information, travel/drive times, multi-service point usage and over/under provision) and for Audiences UK to make recommendations for a standard approach to analysing library data across council boundaries.”

(Beyond Boundaries)



“The main objective of our project was to understand better user and non-user needs and behaviours. We are using the analytical tool that we have developed to progress this work further in a number of areas. These include: Examining how stakeholders travel about the county, showing how users make use of multiple service points, assessing how catchment areas for libraries either overlap or are distinct, pinpointing clusters of need across our authorities, identifying precisely the number of stakeholders in categories of need that may be affected by different models of library provision, targeting our consultation with stakeholders to particular groups or communities. These insights have allowed us to progress to the next stage of identifying proposals of how to satisfy that need. The intelligence we gained through this tool is enabling us not only to address the very local and specific needs of library users in individual communities, but also the more general needs of all our customers”.

(Oxfordshire and Kent councils)

“The programme has allowed us to refine and target our community needs analysis work – harnessing a range of datasets from the Bradford Observatory and also from our library management system to identify community needs in relation to access to library services across the district”.

(Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council)

Understanding current and cost performance

A solid baseline of actual costs and comparators with other councils is crucial at the start of the change process.

For many of the pilots, a solid baseline wasn't straightforward as they often lacked good cost data and were already implementing in-year budget reductions which affected their 'bottom line'. So, new opportunities often needed to be realised in addition to savings already proposed. The projected savings listed in this section reflect work undertaken up until May 2011.

For those exploring shared services across council boundaries it was necessary to develop an agreed financial analysis model so that true comparisons could be made and financial benefits of sharing identified. In this model some of the participating authorities were already pursuing new models of service delivery but still engaging in the wider collaboration. For example, the London borough of Lewisham is planning asset transfer of five buildings to local community groups, Herefordshire is exploring positioning libraries in a wider cultural trust and in Shropshire libraries will be strongly linked with customer service centres.

At this point in the Future Libraries Programme most of the pilots have identified the level of potential savings but as these are not yet implemented actual savings will need to be measured at a later juncture.

Northumberland and Durham councils used a simple but effective measure in their engagement and development process – the ‘£2 for £3’ test. They developed ‘prototypes’ for different parts of the service and these were required to provide an alternative means of delivering some element of the library service, and achieve for £2, what currently costs £3 to achieve.

The South East Libraries Performance Improvement Group of seven councils identified short term savings from some remodelling and sharing of specific services in the first year, medium term savings from shared professional services and strategic management over two years and longer-term projections of up to £7 million for one service across all seven councils. The Kensington and Chelsea ‘group’ identified potential savings of between £1.5 million and £1.8 million per annum by 2014/15 from a combined service.

Obviously, factoring the additional costs of change is essential, including changes to IT systems, refitting of new service outlets in different premises and the resources necessary to support the change process especially legal, financial, human resource, procurement, property, consultation and communications costs. In the financial modelling, it is important to consider investing to save over a five, ten or even fifteen year period.

“The aim was to drive out costs in the library back office functions and to encourage channel migration and e-enabled usage of the service, and to increase access and usage. Through this collaborative approach it was estimated that savings between 4 per cent and 15 per cent could be achieved through the four library authorities working together”.

(South West Peninsula)

User and community engagement

It is never too early to engage the community in the process.

Some suggest that engagement too early can generate fears and that engagement too late results in people feeling decisions are already made. But for a meaningful process, generally the earlier the better is the maxim.

There is a huge difference between engaging with communities on the future delivery of services and consulting with them on a set of proposals. The dynamics of the processes are entirely different and produce significantly different outcomes.

The process adopted in Northumberland and Durham councils gave communities and other stakeholders as much information as possible about the challenges and left the debate on solutions completely open.

They were open about the '£2 for £3' challenge. This enabled solutions to be developed together and enabled innovation and bespoke arrangements to emerge. This engagement will be continuous as the change process is implemented.

So, a good communications plan is essential and information about the change process must be managed well. There needs to be confidence from the community that the process is an open and transparent one, that options can be explored before a preferred option is identified and that there will be no decisions until after effective consultation. New ideas should be piloted transparently to test if they can work, focusing on identifying the "bottom up benefits" to users and communities before top down benefits in terms of savings, so generating greater "buy in".

"The solution is likely to be different in each community. Through the continued support of and communication with community groups, the 'prototypes' that have emerged through the pilot could achieve real 'bottom up' benefits to both councils. Delivering prototypes is actually a form of action research where communities are fully engaged in the trial and its evaluation, to help identify the benefits and disadvantages of the scheme. This will enable any subsequent roll out to be based on sound and robust information and experience. It will increase the chance of obtaining widespread community support".

(Northumberland and Durham councils)

"The engagement and consultation has had a significant impact on the recommendation of the report. This will inform the future community engagement activity, including service level agreements with voluntary organisations and development of community libraries in community shops and post offices to enable access to stock. However, the engagement also highlighted the need to have 'professional' support and backing through the local authority".

(Herefordshire and Shropshire councils)

Partner and stakeholder engagement

Collaboration opens more doors more widely.

Library staff are key stakeholders. They have the knowledge, skills and experience of working with communities and the technical and operational know-how which needs to be harnessed and their input ensured. These are difficult times for staff, but, as with communities, the earlier the engagement and the better the communication, the better the outcomes overall.

The benefits of partnership are well documented and those pilots that invested time with stakeholders found real benefits and value to the process and the long term sustainability of the service.

“We have had three workshops with staff. The first two were intended to get staff thinking on the library offer and to look at the proposed governance model in a way that would challenge our initial ideas. The third was for mainly frontline staff who had been less involved in the project, to review the final documentation and how it would work in practice.

We found the sessions challenging and interesting. They have definitely helped to engage staff in the process.

We had a representative from SAVO (Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations) on the project board who was looking at the process from the potential provider standpoint which was helpful when we came to produce the service description. This in turn helped them gain an insight into the potential help community groups might need to undertake running a library.

Stradbroke Parish Council reviewed the documentation and gave us feedback on its helpfulness.

The Suffolk Association of Local Councils has been very supportive, circulating information, giving feedback and facilitating events for town and parish councils to discuss the issues with Suffolk County Council representatives.”

(Suffolk County Council)

“What has been striking about the project is the extent that other partners and stakeholders have been willing to help us as library managers confront the challenges we face, solve problems, and seek innovative new service models. The project has received direct support from individuals in over 50 partner organisations who attended the 2 cross authority prototype development workshops. Those who contributed to the process have come from other teams in the two local authorities (eg Sure Start and Connexions); other public agencies including colleges and universities; local community organisations, village halls, charities and development trusts; and businesses including the Post Office. The workshops were then followed up with individual meetings to develop viable prototypes for trial.

The key point is that willingness to help has not been confined to contributing to discussions – but has extended to taking practical action. As a result, prototypes being taken forward in 2011, Community Book Points and the e-Book Reader trial will be delivered in partnership with community organisations and other statutory agencies. Partners (including community and village halls, Age UK and Sure Start) have agreed to take on practical roles in the day-to-day delivery of the prototypes.”

(Northumberland and Durham councils)





Future libraries

The best solutions come from the best processes.

This is the learning so far from the Future Libraries Programme.

It must be recognised that the pilot projects now have to be implemented. Many of the councils are only just embarking on consultation ahead of taking final decisions on the future shape of services. It may be that as a result of consultation proposals change. It will also be important to track implementation in these projects if we are to confirm that the proposals work and actually improve efficiency and effectiveness and it could be a number of years before a final judgement can be made on this.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient emerging thinking and learning from the process so far for this to be shared, particularly as time is pressing in many authorities to address this.

In summary, the four delivery models are not single simple arrangements – there are alternative options within them and evidence of ‘mix and match’ arrangements being adopted across councils.

The ten key ingredients for planning for change are not sequential but broadly fall into four groups. First is the strategic framework – leadership, governance and corporate priorities. Secondly are the capacity issues – internal capacity to support change, external support and challenge and the opportunities to exploit digital solutions. Thirdly is the technical information basis – specifically community needs analysis and understanding current cost and performance. Fourthly, are the essential relationships with communities, staff and stakeholders.

There is other documentation coming from this project, other sources of information and a community of practice to share learning and experiences as authorities take their plans forward. Some of these are listed on the ‘Further information’ page at the end of this publication. Phase two of the Future Libraries Programme is also being scoped, to ensure that innovation is encouraged, lessons learned and achievements celebrated.

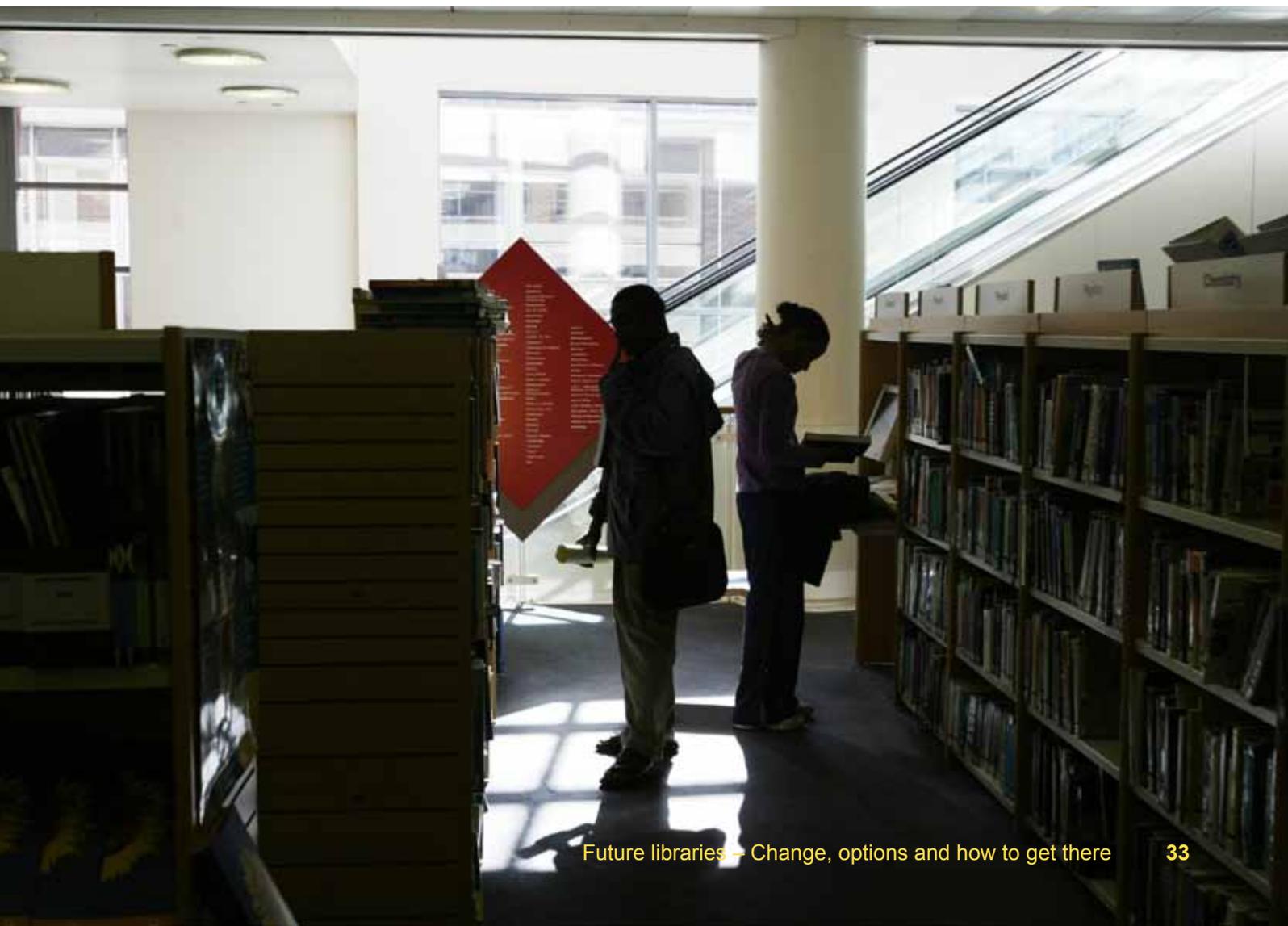
What is already clear, as ever, is that investment in a good process will achieve the best outcomes both in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for local residents and communities.

Further information

- Future Libraries Programme: Final Reports from Pilots, March 2011
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/the_future_libraries_programme/~media/Files/pdf/2011/libraries/Appendix_2_Future_Libraries_Programme_Final_Reports_from_Pilots_March_2011.ashx
- Future Libraries Programme: Final Report to Governance Board
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/the_future_libraries_programme/~media/Files/pdf/2011/libraries/Future_Libraries_Programme_Final_Report_to_Governance_Board.ashx
- Future Libraries Programme: Thinking about Digital initiatives
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/~media/Files/pdf/2011/libraries/FLP_Thinking_about_Digital_Initiatives
- Community Managed Libraries
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/policy_development/communities/~media/0FA94424234F4EEBA40866BCB5C6F840.ashx
- What do the public want from libraries: A practitioner guide
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/~media/Files/pdf/2010/libraries/What_do_the_public_want_from_libraries
- A Local Inquiry into the public library service provided by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, September 2009
http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/SoS_report_on_library_functions_in_2009_10.rtf
- Advice and guidance on engaging and consulting with communities during change
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/policy_development/communities
- The Shared Services Architect's Toolbox, Shared Services Architects Ltd 2009
www.sharedservicearchitects.co.uk/images/SSAToolbox-SeeInsideExampleChaptersandTools.pdf
- Community of Practice.
<http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/comm/landing-home.do?id=8069545>

Appendix: The pilot change projects

- Northumberland with Durham councils
- Greater Manchester – Bolton, with Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan councils
- Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council
- ‘Beyond Boundaries’ – Lincolnshire, with Rutland, Cambridgeshire, North East Lincolnshire, Peterborough councils
- Suffolk County Council
- Oxfordshire with Kent councils
- Herefordshire with Shropshire councils
- Cornwall with Devon, Plymouth, Torbay councils
- South East London Libraries Performance Improvement Group – Lewisham with Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Lambeth and Southwark councils
- Kensington and Chelsea with Hammersmith and Fulham (subsequently joined by the City of Westminster) councils.





Local Government Group

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

© Local Government Group, August 2011

For a copy in Braille, Welsh, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000. We consider requests on an individual basis.