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# extending the role of libraries

final report

Anne Lines  
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**Local Government** Association



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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# Executive summary

## Introduction

Public libraries have been established for over a century, providing lending and information services to library users. However, there has been an overall reduction in the number of books being borrowed in recent years, leading to speculation about the future of library services.

The decline of book borrowing has come about at a time when the public services are being urged by central government to become more socially inclusive and to reach out to people and communities and provide them with opportunities to develop economically and socially. The DCMS has published documents outlining ways that libraries can become more socially inclusive and has set up an agency (Resource – now the Museums Libraries and Archives Council), charged with helping to turn the vision into reality. This research, commissioned by the LGA and carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 2004, sought to examine the changes being made to public libraries provision in light of the guidance from DCMS and Resource.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the provision that public libraries offer communities over and above their traditional role as lending and information services.

## About the study

The study comprised:

1. A literature review carried out to investigate the ways in which public libraries were responding to government calls to play a more significant role in their communities and focusing on three areas:
  - support for learning
  - the provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and
  - promotion of social inclusion.
2. A questionnaire survey for the local authority officer with oversight of the library service in each of the 172 local authorities in England and Wales, to provide data on:
  - the range and scope of additional provision currently being made by public libraries and
  - the number and types of partnerships libraries had established with other institutions in their own and other sectors.
3. Case-study visits to ten library authorities to gather further information about projects and partnerships that were interesting and/or innovative and that were likely to be examples of good practice. The case studies were chosen to provide examples from local authorities in both urban and rural areas and to give a good geographical spread.

## Key findings

Library services across the country reported being engaged in a very wide variety of projects and initiatives to extend their role. These activities were being delivered with many different partners and funded from a range of different sources. There was a very high level of library service involvement in national initiatives and a widespread perception from respondents that these initiatives had increased library use.

Opening hours had been extended in more than half of the library services that responded to the survey. In some areas the additional hours had been confined to a minority of libraries, whilst a significant minority of services had introduced extended opening hours for most of their libraries. Whilst increased opening hours had led to greater use of ICT facilities in many services, fewer reported increased book lending.

Very high levels of ICT hardware installation and training provision were reported; free internet access was more or less universal and interactive websites were being provided by three-fifths of respondents.



Library services were also managing to make stock improvements and changes to the library environment. However, over half said they would be unable to continue with extended or additional services if their project-specific funding was withdrawn.

## Partnership working

The proportion of library services involved in partnership working with other agencies had risen from a third in 2002 to a half in 2004 and was set to increase further to 75 per cent of the services responding to the survey. There were fewer partnerships with voluntary and private agencies, although these too were increasing.

Partnerships were crucial in being able to respond to national and local government objectives and local needs, particularly in developing new initiatives. Additionally, access to different funding streams often required partnership working.

Partnerships were perceived as having many benefits, including the effective targeting of specific groups and increasing library membership, increasing the profile of the library, bringing in new funding streams and creating shared resources. Different organisations could also bring different kinds of expertise to library services and partners could learn from each other.

Partner agencies and organisations viewed libraries in a positive light, seeing them as a sustainable resource in which initiatives could be based. Libraries were also considered to be an effective outreach facility for partners where they could gain access to a wide range of target groups.

Obstacles to partnership working included competitiveness between organisations and the necessity to compromise in order to meet the needs of everyone involved.

## Funding

Partnership funding from the public sector was the most frequent source of money for extended or additional services. Funding had been much more readily available for specific projects targeting particular groups and for ICT equipment, for example, through the People's Network. The future of this project-related funding was not secure, and interviewees raised the issue of how

library services would be able to fund long-term extensions of their role.

## Targeting user groups

Library services had targeted specific groups of users. Nearly all library services had targeted children, older people and adults with basic skills needs. Three-quarters had targeted minority ethnic groups.

There was a notable increase in the provision of courses for adults with basic skills needs and in the deployment of specialist staff.

## The role of library staff

It was clear from the experience of staff in case-study areas that extending the role of libraries required a change in the role of librarians. This had not always been easy to achieve, as many library staff had worked in the service for a long time, and large-scale changes to the working environment could be threatening.

In the most successful initiatives, staff had embraced change and were vital in making new arrangements work. The challenges library staff had faced included accepting more flexible working hours; learning new skills in multi-tasking arrangements; working less behind a desk and more with target groups, such as disaffected teenagers; adapting to noisier libraries and the demands of new technology; and continuing to provide traditional services as well as new ones.

Good training opportunities were seen as important in helping staff learn new skills as well as giving them the confidence to work in new ways. In most cases there had also been a process of reorganisation and restructuring of library services in order to reflect the different ways of working and new priorities.

## National and local support

Another common theme to emerge from these case studies was the importance of the new national focus on libraries in giving clear targets and priorities to library services. The national library standards, the library plans and position statements and the DCMS publication *Framework for the Future* were all seen as

important steps by senior library managers in the process of change.

A consistent factor in the success of extending the role of libraries was the existence of a positive and supportive local political leadership. It helped to have an elected member with a clear responsibility for libraries, and a council that could see the role libraries can play in achieving their overall objectives.

Many innovative schemes were being designed and delivered but there was little information available in the public domain on their planning, setting up, staffing, funding and evaluation.

## Recommendations

The study identified a number of issues facing public library services and the following recommendations are made in response.

### For libraries

- Libraries need to identify clearly their main target audiences and promote their services appropriately to these groups.
- There are areas where libraries still have a niche market, for example, in local history and genealogy; in knowledge management – providing expert navigation of knowledge and information sources; as single and comprehensive information points; and as a place of independent learning. These areas need to be strengthened and promoted.
- Sufficient funding and appropriate training need to be put in place to ensure that staff are fully supported and equipped to deal with groups that can be challenging in their attitudes and behaviour.
- Staffing structures need to reflect the changing roles of library staff and efforts must be made to match staff skills to appropriate types and levels of work.

- Policy makers and library service senior managers need to address the issue of what kind of people, with what kind of skills the librarians of the future should be.
- Radical thinking is needed by library services to anticipate and plan even for five years, given the role of technology in changing the way libraries operate.

### For central and local government

- Current schemes to create a single ticket for local public libraries and educational institutions' libraries need to be evaluated and good practice needs to be disseminated.
- The practicality of regional or national library cards needs to be investigated.
- The role of libraries as important areas of neutral public spaces could be undermined by placing them in secondary schools, for example, or by too close a connection with social services because of the negative feelings some people have about these services.
- The speed of change is in part hampered by the difficulties of raising capital funding for substantial building projects. Can specific funds be found to finance more of these projects?
- The complexity of negotiating and sustaining partnerships is another barrier to change. In multi-tier local authorities, district and county councils need to prioritise the seeking of common ground on local objectives.
- Activities designed to promote social inclusion do not have simple quantifiable outcomes. Qualitative measures of performance that are sensitive to local circumstances need to carry weight as well as counting visits made and books lent.

# 1 Introduction

This document reports the findings from a study, commissioned by the LGA and carried out by the NFER, into the provision being made by public libraries over and above their traditional role.

## 1.1 Background

Public libraries have maintained an important central role in communities for more than a century, traditionally by providing lending and information services. However, with the ending of the Net Book Agreement in the mid-1990s, which brought about a reduction in the number of books being borrowed from libraries, there was some speculation about their future role and survival.

Early in the first term of the new Labour Government in 1997, the decision was made to set up the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in the Cabinet Office. This unit was to investigate all areas of central and local government provision and to identify ways in which they could reach out to people and communities that were excluded from opportunities to develop economically and socially. Public library services came under the spotlight because they tend to be sited at the heart of communities and also because at their inception they were given a role in which they were to be open to all and to provide learning opportunities for all.

A number of documents were issued, for example *Libraries for All* (DCMS, 1999), *ICT and the Development of MLA* (Resource, 2001b), which highlighted the potential role of libraries in combating social exclusion and suggested ways in which they could provide services that were likely to attract new users, especially those from harder-to-reach groups in the community. The government also put in place funding to provide additional ICT resources to all libraries, in order to further their aims of increasing access to ICT and creating a more computer-literate society. In 2003, DCMS published *Framework for the Future*, its vision for the future development of library services (DCMS, 2003a).

Following the publication of these reports and guidelines, local authorities and public library services have set

about implementing the recommendations, developing services that more clearly place libraries at the heart of communities. Libraries have become hubs for the communication of information and for the provision of learning opportunities, and are developing ways in which they can serve local needs and help build stronger communities. In the process, local authorities and their public library services have made changes to the way that libraries serve the public, each tailoring the services they offer to suit the needs of their communities.

## 1.2 Research purpose and aim

The main purpose of this study was to examine the provision that public libraries offer communities over and above their traditional role as lending and information services. In particular, the study aimed to examine the changes that have taken place in the provision made by libraries as a result of the publication of recent strategy documents focusing on their potential role in extending social inclusion.

More specifically, the aims of the study were:

- to ascertain the extent to which libraries were delivering other services to the community
- to highlight examples of practice where this had been done and how
- to examine the extent to which longer opening hours existed in libraries and how this was being achieved and funded.

## 1.3 Methodology

The study used quantitative research methods in order to identify and quantify the range of additional activities that are taking place within libraries, and qualitative methods to explore the ways in which additional services are being delivered and the extent to which they are meeting the needs of their communities.

A literature review was carried out to investigate the ways in which public libraries were responding to

government calls to play a more significant role in helping communities, especially those that would otherwise be disadvantaged. It examined the extent to which libraries were providing people with access to the resources, information and knowledge they needed in order to develop economically, socially and as citizens. The main thrust of the development of these additional services was expected to have been made from the year 2000 onwards and it is this period that was the focus of the review.

A questionnaire was developed and mailed to the local authority officer with oversight of the library service in each of the 172 local authorities in England and Wales. The 22 authorities in Wales were sent two copies of the questionnaire, one in Welsh and one in English. Three authorities chose to respond in Welsh. The survey provided data on the range and scope of additional provision currently being made by public libraries and of the number and types of partnerships they had established with other institutions in their own and other sectors.

Case-study visits were made to ten library authorities to gather further information about projects and partnerships that were interesting and/or innovative and that were likely to be examples of good practice. The case studies were chosen to provide examples from local authorities in both urban and rural areas and to give a good geographical spread. Four of the case studies were in areas that were mainly rural and the remaining six were in predominantly urban areas.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with seven elected members, ten heads of service, six other senior managers, 42 library staff, 16 representatives from partner organisations (including SureStart staff, information centre staff, further education (FE) tutors and two project managers from partner organisations).

## 1.4 Report structure

The structure of the report is as follows.

Chapter 2 presents the results of the literature review concerning the changing role of libraries. In Chapter 3 analysis is presented of the questionnaire survey that was sent to the heads of all library services in England and Wales.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain reports of the ten case-study visits to public library authorities (PLAs) in England and Wales. Chapter 4 concentrates on PLAs which cover areas that are mainly rural, while Chapter 5 looks at those situated in more urban settings.

Chapter 6 draws out, discusses and analyses themes from all three strands of the study and Chapter 7 presents recommendations, based on the findings, for central and local government and public library services.

Appendix 1 contains a copy of the questionnaire survey of heads of library services and Appendix 2 provides key facts and figures on the funding and use of libraries.

## 2 Literature review

A review of the available literature was carried out to inform the development of the questionnaire survey and case studies. As is apparent from the policy background (see section 2.1.1), the present emphasis on social inclusion followed the publication of various position papers by the Government between 1997 and 1999. In light of this, it was agreed that the literature review would cover publications from the year 2000 onwards.

NFER library staff obtained copies of recent reports and consultative papers concerning the future of public libraries to inform the development of the team's research proposal, and further references arising from these were pursued. Library staff also undertook a hand-search of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) journal *Update* and its predecessor the *Library Association Record* for the period being covered by the project. This identified both relevant articles and news of initiatives about which further details could be sought via the internet.

An examination of the literature indicated that it tended to fall into two main groups:

- research reports and policy documents assessing the current provision by libraries and library authorities and setting out plans and targets for the future
- articles from journals and websites describing or illustrating examples of good practice, but with little or no evaluation of procedures and outcomes.

This chapter starts by reviewing the policy and organisational contexts in which library services are working. The three principal areas of action that are outlined in *Framework for the Future*, namely supporting learning, increasing access to ICT skills and services, and tackling social exclusion, are the subjects of the three following sections. The chapter ends with a section summarising the findings from the literature review.

### 2.1 Policy context

#### 2.1.1 Policy background

In 1997 the Government announced a programme for promoting social inclusion and improving life chances for all citizens, setting up a SEU to 'help improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing joined-up solutions to joined-up problems'. Since its inception the SEU has carried out enquiries and published documents indicating the extent of social exclusion and ways in which it can be overcome.

The DCMS published a number of consultative documents to help the cultural sector (museums, archives and libraries) identify ways that they could become more inclusive, for example, *Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries* (DCMS, 1999). In a foreword the Secretary of State proposed that:

*A regenerated and proactive library section can help both individuals and communities to develop skills and confidence, and help improve social networking. It also supports community, adult and family learning.*

The document set out the response of the DCMS to the Government's agenda and discussed ways that libraries could meet their recommendations.

The DCMS document highlighted the potential for libraries to become more socially inclusive, indicating that this should become a policy priority within all library and information services. It recommended that library authorities:

- consult with and involve socially excluded groups to ascertain their needs and aspirations
- ensure that services are tailored to meet the needs of minority groups and communities through more flexible opening hours and affordable access to ICT
- improve the accessibility of library services
- consider co-locating with other services provided by the local authority, in order to provide communities with communication and information.

In order to help the cultural sector extend their services and become more socially inclusive, the DCMS set up a strategic body (Resource – now MLA) that would work with libraries, museums and archives, to tap the potential for collaboration between them. Resource was also given responsibility for managing the People's Network, a government initiative to provide opportunities for all people in the UK to access the internet in public libraries, working with the New Opportunities Fund to advise and support libraries as they received lottery funding to provide internet-ready ICT equipment for use by the public.

### 2.1.2 Publications from Resource

In 2001 Resource published two draft documents, detailing strategic plans for museums, archives and libraries and defining their priorities and actions for the sector. In both documents, reference was made to the possibilities offered by the sector for promoting learning. One document set out a learning and access strategy for museums, archives and libraries, while the other considered the role of ICT in supporting access to collections and services, in creating new learning opportunities and in providing more effective management of resources (Resource, 2001b). Comments were invited from interested parties, prior to a revised version being published.

An action plan for tackling social exclusion in libraries was also published in 2001 (Resource, 2001c), outlining the central role that museums, archives and libraries could play in sustaining and developing cultural, social, educational and economic wellbeing. It also suggested that cooperation would be an essential component of success, emphasising the importance of working in partnership with other services. The publication suggested four areas in which development was needed:

- developing and sustaining new services
- access to services
- service planning, development and quality assurance
- capacity building and cooperation.

Public libraries were identified as important agents in promoting social inclusion and the report states that:

*Public libraries are especially powerful agents for inclusiveness. They are open to all, non-threatening and non-judgemental. They are frequently the only point of*

*access to information and learning that is available to the deprived, the excluded or the disaffected. Their special qualities in opening out to people excluded from other aspects of society are precious and must be nurtured and encouraged.*

Resource (2001a, p. 12)

However, it went on to say that libraries needed to ensure that they understood the needs of their communities and that services and provision were fully inclusive. Planning and evaluation processes for public libraries had been developed and it was intended that they would lead to significant improvements in the overall level of delivery, as well as producing a comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of the service.

The report acknowledged that public libraries already had a tradition of cooperation at regional and national level. Resource would make available funding to examine greater cross-domain working between museums, archives and libraries. There would also be emphasis on providing good-quality training to existing library staff as well as developing programmes of leadership training and reviewing national training arrangements.

Following the strategic plans and action plan, in 2002 Resource published *Inspiring Learning for All* (Resource, 2002), which provided a new learning and access framework for museums, archives and libraries. The framework was to be piloted in 45 venues and was intended to create accessible and inspiring learning environments by:

- providing clients with more effective learning opportunities
- providing the venues with opportunities to build creative learning partnerships and
- placing learning at the heart of the museum, archives and libraries.

A further study commissioned by MLA sought to promote good library design (MLA, 2004a). While the present research is not intended to discuss design, case studies in the report show how good design allows libraries to be used more flexibly, attract new users, provide space for learning and become focal points for communities.

### 2.1.3 Other reports

In a report entitled *Empowering the Learning Community* (Library and Information Commission, 2000), a task

group set up by the Library and Information Commission examined ways in which libraries, working in cooperation with the education sector, could improve support for lifelong learning. The report suggested that such cooperation was inadequate and recommended that public and educational libraries, the DCMS and Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, now Department for Education and Skills (DfES)) should work towards developing cross-sectoral working and funding and collaborative working.

*Co-ordination between public libraries, on the one hand, and school or academic libraries, on the other, is inadequate – with rare but important exceptions. This means we are wasting opportunities to achieve more efficient investment in acquisitions, to offer better library support to children, and to improve the material and assistance available to lifelong learners.*

Library and Information Commission (2000, p. 1)

Responding to the report the Government produced an action plan (DCMS, 2001a), in which it agreed to fund collaborative projects to improve services and establish working groups to consider funding and training.

A further study by Coalter (2001) examined the potential of libraries for promoting social inclusion. The author identified a need for libraries to prioritise more clearly the areas in which they wished to make a contribution and a requirement for robust and valid outcome performance indicators to measure their impact.

## 2.1.4 Consultation

The publication of strategic plans and action plans in 2001 and the pilot schemes initiated in 2002 were also followed by the commissioning of a consultation exercise by Resource. In this exercise, known as the 'WILIP Consultation' (Wider Libraries Programme), library and information practitioners were asked for their views on their services' main challenges, how they might be tackled and how Resource could help. Two main themes emerged from the consultation; one addressed improved user access and the second, the funding and sustainability of the initiatives (Ede, 2003).

Easier access by users to different types of libraries was strongly endorsed by practitioners as a vision of the future. It was suggested that a regional, or better still, national library card should be a key goal of any development. A role for public libraries in improving

basic skills, such as reading and numeracy, was viewed as extremely important, whilst information literacy for lifelong learners should also be included in any plans.

Whilst the practitioners expressed their agreement with extending the role of libraries, they pointed out that they were struggling with decades of under-investment in capital projects; buildings in particular were in disrepair or unsuited to the housing of modern services. They pleaded for help in rebuilding the management and funding capacity of public libraries to enable them to support collaboration and refocus services.

## 2.1.5 Current policy

The various strands of policy thinking discussed above have been brought together into *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003b), the Government's vision of how libraries should develop over the next ten years. The document aims to provide the library service with a shared sense of purpose to enable a more combined effort in 'promoting learning, literacy and access to information and combating social exclusion', and to support the development of mutual priorities between central government, local government and library authorities for public libraries. It should be noted that this policy only applies to England.

The document suggests that libraries have an opportunity to play a more central role in the future in terms of helping to promote greater equity of access to information and also competence in using information, engaging in learning and acquiring knowledge.

*Libraries have the potential to do still more. Knowledge, skills and information are becoming more important to our lives economically, socially and as citizens. Libraries have a central role to play in ensuring everyone has access to the resources, information and knowledge they need – particularly those groups in society who will otherwise be disadvantaged, including people who are less affluent and people with literacy problems.*

Framework for the Future, DCMS (2003b, p. 6)

The framework suggests that the future success of libraries is dependent on them continually renewing services and communicating with society. Many libraries are already 'renewing themselves' by devising new ideas that are tailored to local circumstances, partnerships with areas such as leisure, education and health, and more effective marketing strategies. The framework sets



out a modern mission for public libraries, at the heart of which is a focus on three main areas:

- promotion of reading and informal learning
- access to digital skills and services, including e-government
- measures to tackle social exclusion, build community identity and develop citizenship.

The mission is also based on four main factors:

- evolution – building on their strengths to develop new roles
- public value – promoting projects that deliver widespread benefits
- distinctiveness – developing partnerships that make use of their distinctive strengths
- local interpretation of national programmes – adapting them to local needs and priorities.

Steps have been taken to meet the guidelines suggested by the framework. The DCMS asked Resource to prepare a three-year plan for public library development which would include the creation of a national leadership programme, the creation of a wider workforce development plan, the future development of the People's Network and would agree common ICT standards.

## 2.2 The context within which library services operate

The publication of *Framework for the Future* (Resource, 2003) is part of a more directive and coherent approach to library policy from central government. However, the implementation of policy is not straightforward, particularly because library services operate in a complex political and organisational context. This is due to both the restructuring (the creation of unitary authorities) and reform (the new cabinet system) of local government, and a historic lack of coherence at central government level.

### 2.2.1 Political and organisational context

Leadbeater (2003) was highly critical of the effects of this complexity on library services. He claimed that there was too much diffusion over the 149<sup>1</sup> (English) authorities, and a waste of money on duplicated administration, with library services often buried in much larger departments in local authorities. Across the country library services find themselves under a wide variety of departments or directorates including leisure, education, and culture within even wider cabinet portfolios such as Quality of Life. Leadbeater (2003) also points out that at central government level the DCMS is responsible for library policy whilst the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is chiefly responsible for funding libraries.

In addition to local and central government direct involvement with library services, there is also the MLA (formerly Resource) which describes itself on its website as:

*the national development agency working for and on behalf of museums, libraries and archives and advising government on policy and priorities for the sector. MLA's roles are to provide strategic leadership, to act as a powerful advocate, to develop capacity and to promote innovation and change.*

MLA website homepage

The MLA operates on a regional basis, and the recent creation of a new London-wide organisation for museums, libraries and archives marked the completion of a network of regional agencies (nine in total), established and funded by the MLA. Mark Wood, Chair of MLA, said:

*MLA's regional policy means that museums, libraries and archives are well positioned to play a major role in the government's developing regional agenda.*

MLA (2004d)

Library services thus work with national and regional bodies as well as within a wide diversity of local structures and agendas. This complexity and diversity does not create the conditions for a straightforward implementation of library policy.

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<sup>1</sup> For this study, 150 questionnaire surveys were sent to authorities in England, including the City of London



## 2.2.2 Quality framework

Central government has in recent years sought to introduce some coherence through a common framework of standards and objectives for library services to meet. The DCMS (2001b, p.8) set out these standards in its publication: *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries – Standards and Assessment*. Annual library plans were to be judged against these standards in order to try to achieve some consistency across the country. The specific objectives in the standards are to:

- ensure that libraries are located so as to provide convenient and suitable access for users
- ensure that opening hours of libraries are adequate for users
- ensure satisfactory services for the issuing and reserving of books
- encourage the use made of the library service
- provide choice in books and materials made available to users
- provide appropriate levels of qualified staff.

In their report to the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, David Hayes Associates (2001) explained that a framework to demonstrate and measure the effective planning and delivery of services had evolved through the introduction and implementation of Best Value Reviews, Annual Library Plans and Public Library standards.

Library services, therefore, are measuring their performance against a wide range of performance indicators based on the Public Library Standards (PLS), Local Performance Indicators (LPI), Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) and Audit Commission Performance Indicators (ACPI). These are predominantly quantitative measures such as cost per visit, number of physical visits per head to libraries (BVPI) and number of issues per head (ACPI) together with customer satisfaction indicators (BVPI and PLS).

Libraries are also expected to contribute to the authority's Education Development Plan and Lifelong Learning Development Plans. In addition, the objectives of library services need to be developed within the context of the overall strategic objectives of the authority as a whole.

A recent development has seen new library position statements replacing the previous, longer, library plans. In a summary of the assessment of the statements Hammond (2004) describes how 24 authorities which had been rated excellent on the 2002 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) were exempt from submitting a plan. The remaining 125 plans were assessed by the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) team and rated weak, fair, good, or excellent.

It would appear that these quality frameworks may well contribute to ensuring standards across a diversity of providers, but the existence of a wide range of interlocking plans and frameworks does not reduce the complexity of the operational context of library services.

Having considered the policy and organisational contexts that library services are working in, the next three sections of this chapter discuss the literature concerning how library services have embraced the three strands of *Framework for the Future*.

However, it is not always possible to divide activities up into just one of the three strands of action, and in some projects all three strands are entwined. For example, one school's lifelong learning initiative has resulted in PCs with internet connection being installed in homes in an area that has low scores on most counts of social deprivation, to support ICT provision in schools and libraries. The aim of this project is to research the impact of ICT on student performance and community learning and regeneration ([www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)).

On a policy level this has been encapsulated by Resource (2001c).

*The learning agenda cannot be separated from the access agenda. People cannot engage with or use collections and resources unless they have the physical, sensory, intellectual, financial and cultural access to them.*

Resource (2001c, p. 8)

However, examples of projects that are particularly focused on social inclusion or which exclusively involve the use of ICT have been included in the relevant sections of the review.

## 2.3 Libraries supporting learning

This section includes examples of different kinds of support for learning provided by library services. *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003b) champions the role of libraries in 'promoting reading and supporting informal learning'. In addition, libraries are increasingly engaged in more formal learning provision. The rest of this section describes and analyses a range of library activities relating to learning. As an organising tool the activities have been placed on a continuum from more formal to more informal learning opportunities.

### 2.3.1 Taught courses and classes for basic skills

Whilst it is not common for libraries to run classes on their own, it is apparent that library services support formal basic skills learning in a number of ways. In many authorities, the library works with formal education providers who use library buildings to deliver courses. McNicol and Dalton (2003) give a number of examples of this kind of work, including the Norwich Millennium library which houses a learning station run by the FE college.

### 2.3.2 Learning centres

Learning centres have been established in a number of areas and include formal learning provision for basic skills. For example, in Wandsworth, piloting *Inspiring Learning for All* (MLA, 2004c) allowed the library service to raise funds for a number of projects, including the creation of a dedicated 'Life Skills Centre' in Wandsworth library where learners would have a minimum of 30 hours' learning in well-resourced centres with qualified staff (*Inspiring Learning for All* website).

The City of Sunderland website includes information on how the library service worked in partnership with the e-government unit and the City College to develop learning centres in six libraries and a family learning centre in another.

The new learning centre at Birmingham Central Library opened in April 2002. It has a wider range of resources and more plentiful ICT facilities than were available in the old learning centre; these include:

- 18 PCs
- a meeting room
- a learndirect room
- a room for formal ICT sessions such as bitesize courses and adult education service courses.

Other resources include: a self-study collection, a job library, a CV facility, skills for life materials, an ESOL (English as a Second Language) collection and college and university prospectuses. The learning centre is open 63 hours per week, until 8.00pm on weekdays, and there are Learner Support Officers (LSOs) on duty at all times (McNicol and Dalton, 2003).

### 2.3.3 Dedicated staff

In a number of areas library staff are taking on specialist roles in relation to learning.

In Birmingham, the job description of library learning centre staff includes a requirement that they act as mentors helping learners to reflect on the learning process. Locally these staff are seen as 'pioneers' as it is unusual for a mentoring role to be stated explicitly as part of a librarian's job description (McNicol and Dalton, 2003).

Bedfordshire was one of nine pilots which formed part of the national 'Vital Link' initiative. It focused its efforts on outreach in Bedford's two most deprived wards, through an outreach worker offering training for staff, improving and marking suitable reading materials for basic skills learners and running library familiarisation sessions (National Literacy Trust, 2003a). Essex Libraries' 'Quick Reads' project was another of the nine pilots of the national Vital Link initiative. This mostly involved librarians working with groups of adult basic skills learners in all the adult community colleges in the county, encouraging reading and library use (National Literacy Trust, 2003b).

Leeds Library and Information Service (Leeds City Council, 2004) have a scheme called Boox on the Move. Through this scheme mobile library and arts and literature development workers visit each care home and youth justice institution in Leeds every week. The development workers promote the value of reading and help young people to improve their basic literacy and to develop communication and ICT skills.

### 2.3.4 Homework and study support

Many libraries offer this service and examples in the literature include South Yardley children's library which runs a homework club on Thursdays and Saturdays, when a member of staff is available to help with homework queries and to assist children using the homework collection (McNicol and Dalton, 2003). Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (2004), as part of their *Beacon Award*, were commended for their work in homework and study support.

### 2.3.5 Information about learning

Libraries are also increasingly involved in supporting learning through providing information and advice about learning opportunities. For example, in Norwich, the new Millennium Library houses a learning shop where people can get advice about a range of learning opportunities. This free service is supported by the Open University, the adult education service, Norwich City College and Norwich School of Art and Design. In Birmingham all libraries are learndirect access points and the central library learning centre is the council's learndirect centre. The fact that it was chosen as a 'Fastrack Centre' to pilot learndirect was seen as 'a coup for the public library'. This has been 'incredibly successful' and is promoted as a model locally. The library service is proud of the fact that it can compete with colleges in this respect (McNicol and Dalton, 2003).

Essex libraries have subsumed their planning for 'Inspiring Learning for All' under the 'LearnEast project'. This is part of a Europe-wide initiative to tackle inequality in the labour market and is 50 per cent funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). 'Public Libraries will focus their learning and advice services for specified target groups (who need basic ICT training) to achieve positive employment impact' (MLA, 2002). This will be done by:

- training a selected group of staff
- engaging with the target groups, initially by outreach work, by visiting community centres, meeting-places, traveller sites and individual homes to make presentations, talk about learning and employment opportunities and offer taster sessions
- at community meetings, learners will be encouraged to visit local libraries where they will be assisted in the selection and use of a variety of learning

programmes – focusing on the existing Basic Skills and ICT courses (MLA and Learn East websites).

### 2.3.6 Supporting employment and business development

Foster (2002) provided a brief report on ways in which the Commercial Library in Manchester has successfully connected with new users. They have provided a proactive service for jobseekers, taking skills training out into the community and helping people to set themselves up in self-employment. The library also has a project working with HM Prison Manchester to provide information to prisoners on setting up a business, and a scheme working with targeted members of minority ethnic communities to help them achieve business success.

### 2.3.7 Joint facilities

Another area of increased activity for library services has been participation in joint facility projects. The Staffordshire Annual Library Plan (Staffordshire County Council, 2002) outlines a range of such projects in the county. For example:

- Codsall Library is now in the Civic Centre – this move led to a 60 per cent plus increase in visitors. A one stop shop is to be added
- Cheadle has a library with the district council offices, careers service and tourist information
- Stafford Library is based in an Arts complex with an art gallery and tourist information
- Glascote Library has offices for an advice shop and community services
- Wilnecote Library is to be relocated to a secondary school to be a joint use library
- Wombourne Library is to be relocated to the extended youth and community centre with shared cyber-café and learning centre.

Poole library services are involved in a partnership to develop a community learning campus in one of the most deprived local communities. It will be situated on a secondary school campus and will be made up of a public library service, a school library service and adult learning courses (MLA, 2004b).

In Oldham one project involving library services has been developed in Alt primary school, which is refurbishing the school library and opening up as a children's and parents' and community lending library. The nearest public library is a bus ride away. The venue is perceived as an attractive place for parents and the community to meet and to access 'keeping up with the kids' courses and other courses run by the Basic Skills Agency and ICT centres ([www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)).

### 2.3.8 Extended schools

Sharing their facilities and/or sites with libraries is also a feature of some extended schools projects. Extended schools were developed following the publication of the *Schools Plus* report (DfEE, 1999). The report discussed ways in which schools in disadvantaged areas could help to build learning communities by becoming more outward-looking and engaging with their local communities.

The DfES have sponsored three studies to investigate the extent and efficacy of the extended schools model in England. Following a literature search and case-study investigations of schools in England that are already delivering some aspects of the extended schools approach (Wilkin *et al.*, 2003), the DfES funded three-month demonstration projects (Dyson *et al.*, 2003). The extended schools model was then investigated more thoroughly through a one-year pathfinder study in schools in 25 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) (Cummings *et al.*, 2004). While there was little mention of community libraries in extended schools in these projects (although at least one of the schools in the pathfinder project included a community library), such partnerships have been in existence in a few schools for some years.

Results of the three studies indicated that extended schools could provide benefits for pupils and communities and that their activities could have an impact on:

- pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance
- families' involvement in their children's learning, and on family learning
- communities' pride and involvement (Cummings *et al.*, 2004).

The researchers found the following key factors were important in establishing extended schools:

- careful and sustained trust-building between partners in developing partnerships
- involvement of the LEA in planning provision, encouraging schools to participate and providing specialist guidance
- schools gaining the consent of their local community, rather than imposing what they think is required
- sufficient lead-in time for schools to negotiate with partners and to carefully plan provision.

While some successful partnerships were found, all three research studies highlighted the difficulty of fully evaluating extended schools projects over a short time-period, indicating that preliminary results may only measure limited outcomes. Such projects take some time to set up and even longer to establish successfully; only then can they be fully evaluated. There was also discussion about whether partners in extended schools were 'co-located' or 'integrated' (Wilkin *et al.*, 2003). While both arrangements were identified, integrated services were seen to be more effective.

Partners planning extended schools sometimes encountered barriers in their negotiations. For example, communities may be uncomfortable with partnerships between schools and other LEA or central government services. Cummings *et al.* reported that in one area local residents did not want to have social services personnel within their school, because there is a stigma associated with being a client of social services. There were also difficulties in persuading some agencies to move out of their existing accommodation onto school sites and especially in persuading them to share their premises and funding.

The DfES views extended or 'full service' schools as important elements in the Government's attempts to increase family and community involvement and understanding of schools' roles. In a document discussing extended schools and their benefits (DfES, 2002), they indicated their desire to increase the number of extended schools and suggested that partnerships could be built with a range of other agencies, including libraries, museums and galleries. Indeed, encouraging public agencies to work in partnership is a key feature of most recent DfES publications. However, some librarians are worried about libraries losing their status as neutral environments if located on school sites. For example, in the evaluation

report of the Vital Link project, a member of library staff remarked that:

*I thought one of the things was, you were catching perhaps long-term truants or ...non-attenders, who were disenchanted with the whole education thing, and the idea was that a library was different.*

Train *et al.* (2003, p.49)

In two recent news items there is evidence that new schools have taken up the challenge and are incorporating community libraries (BBC, 2004; Gloucestershire County Council, 2004).

### 2.3.9 Web-based learning

Although there is a separate section on ICT, one project is included in this section because it is using ICT to support learning in a very wide sense. This project is in Gateshead, called the ASAP and funded by the People's Network Excellence Fund. It was launched early in 2003 and is trying to redefine the nature of the library website. It will use interactive communication channels, message boards, chat rooms and web casts to create a 'virtual learning environment'. ASAP Live is a real-time information service and Et cetera is a library web log (Bolger, 2003).

### 2.3.10 Supporting learning through strategic planning

There were examples in the literature of projects aimed at opening up a range of libraries, not just public libraries, to support adult learning. Libraries and Learners in London seeks to build a series of referred access agreements between library sectors in London – to ensure that the potential use of the resources of the British Library, higher education, FE library services and public library services is clear to learners in London (Baker and Hiscoe, 2004).

The WELCOME! Scheme (funded by Resource through Yorkshire MLA) provides adult learners with access to any of the libraries in the local network through a multi-tier approach system (that is, some libraries require users to produce an ID card, or to make an appointment). Participating libraries were visited to carry out an 'educational audit' of the currency and presentation of educational materials, following which recommendations were made to library managers on updating and presentation. The network includes

university, FE college and public libraries. Provision is facilitated by the publication of a website and newsletter, and tours of the participating libraries are arranged (Kilburn and Stokes, 2004).

### 2.3.11 Evaluative studies

The available literature is mostly descriptive and as such can do no more than give a sense of the range of learning support activities that library services are involved in. There are two evaluative studies relevant to this section. One, *Collaboration between Libraries and Education: Supporting the Learner* (McNicol *et al.*, 2002) set out to:

- investigate the impact of existing collaborative arrangements between libraries and education
- identify good practice and examples of successful working in collaboration to support learners
- recommend ways of establishing cross-sectoral collaborative arrangements.

The detailed report focuses on factors contributing to the success of collaboration. It recommends that all those involved in collaboration to support the learner should:

- ensure that the development of collaboration and the aims of partnership are built around a detailed understanding of the needs of learners and potential learners
- investigate ways to measure the impact of collaboration on learners, for example, using Resource's Inspiring *Learning for All* framework
- identify opportunities for both sector-specific and cross-sectoral collaboration
- investigate ways in which collaboration can provide direct, as well as indirect, benefits for learners
- be aware of different models of collaboration
- work together to tackle long-standing issues which hinder the progress of cross-sectoral collaboration.

The other relevant evaluation is that of The Vital Link (Train *et al.*, 2003) scheme which was a programme to link adult literacy and libraries by developing a partnership between the basic skills sector and libraries involved in supporting adults trying to improve their literacy skills.

The study evaluated the implementation of the scheme and found varying levels of success in different places. The report concluded that success depended on a number of factors::

- commitment of the partners
- ensuring that the librarians viewed their role as facilitating readers, not trying to become basic skills tutors
- identification of enough participants to form a study group
- identification of participants whose skill level was such that they could usefully be introduced to reading for pleasure and choosing their own reading materials (from selected and appropriate lists)
- communications between partners and with project managers.

These studies highlight the strategic and practical issues that emerge from collaborative work. Current projects where libraries are supporting learning will need more time and further evaluative studies before much is known about the impact of this work.

## 2.4 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

As a result of modernisation and the expansion of technologies the profile of libraries is being increasingly valued as a means of access to ICT.

According to Garrod (2004), universal access to ICT and web-based services are a fundamental tenet of current government policy. In the document *Framework for the Future* (2003a) the DCMS outlined the vital role to be played by libraries in delivering this commitment: 'Public libraries are at the forefront of devising ways to use digital technologies to promote community and learning' (p. 34).

### 2.4.1 Why libraries?

The strengths of libraries are well documented. The DCMS (2003b) suggested that libraries have a significant role in helping to enable everyone to access, navigate and enjoy the wealth of material available on the internet because they are open to all, offer a welcoming

space and support active citizenship. Access to digital skills and services, including e-government would also be provided through libraries' ICT resources.

The benefits of providing ICT to individuals and communities are emphasised in policy documents. For example, Brophy (2002) suggested that such technologies help to build the capacity of individuals, groups and communities to make decisions on matters that affect them, assist the re-skilling of the UK population, connect people through modern communication facilities and simply encourage people to enjoy using ICT. Additionally, access to ICT through public libraries addresses and supports three primary government policies.

- lifelong learning
- social inclusion
- digital citizenship (CILIP, 2002).

### 2.4.2 Lifelong learning

*[Libraries have] an integral role in underpinning education and lifelong learning... At their best they can be a focal point for the community, improving individual self confidence and stimulating learning at all levels.*

David Hayes Associates (2001, p. 1)

Libraries are one of the first learning agencies children encounter, they often have close connections with schools and have a role in self-directed learning facilitated through ICT, thus acting as 'portals to learning opportunities' (David Hayes Associates, 2001, p. 6).

### 2.4.3 Social inclusion

Libraries can play a key role in combating social exclusion. There has been interest in education and how it links with the social inclusion agenda at central and local government level because of the association between educational attainment and more positive life chances. Those with poor levels of literacy and numeracy are identified as being at a higher risk of social exclusion.

Dutch and Muddiman (2001) suggest that the degree to which exclusion has an 'informational dimension' has become an important focus of debate in the UK library and information community. ICT is perceived as a catalyst for addressing social exclusion through the creation of IT-literate and employable individuals. The development of



ICT projects through collaboration between libraries and education, and using ICT in innovative ways, have become approaches libraries have taken in order to reach socially excluded groups (David Hayes Associates, 2001; Brophy, 2002).

Libraries also play an important role in government policy which aims to make sure no one is excluded from accessing ICT facilities due to personal or social circumstances (Garrod, 2004). Work sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2004) highlighted that investment in technology has enabled libraries to become 'synonymous with public access'. Public library computers reach disadvantaged groups identified as lacking both access to information technology and the ability to use it.

#### **2.4.4 Digital citizenship**

The 'informational dimension' of social exclusion highlighted by Dutch and Muddiman (2001) also features in the concept of digital citizenship, or enabling informed citizenship. A report undertaken by David Hayes Associates (2001) indicated that public libraries have a role in helping to establish and sustain the flow of information to citizens. Developments in ICT have enhanced the ability of libraries to act as an 'interface' between citizens, regional and national governments and to ensure that services can be delivered to all users in the community. For example, government departments and agencies have been charged with making available on-line services that can be offered electronically by 2005.

The public library, through providing access to ICT, therefore both enables and supports individuals, communities and wider policies. It has become 'a multi-purpose agency with roles covering information, lifelong learning, recreation, leisure, culture and research' (David Hayes Associates, 2001, p. 2).

#### **2.4.5 People's Network**

The People's Network is a government-led initiative which had, by 2002, equipped every public library in the UK with computers, offering internet access, email activities, e-services and online resources (Garrod, 2004). Sommerlad *et al.* (2003) maintain that the People's Network had several aims, including achieving ICT-related public policy goals and objectives and modernising and revitalising the library service.

Evaluations of the People's Network have produced mixed findings. Sommerlad *et al.* (2003) found that the Network had uncovered a huge latent demand for public access internet services which had attracted new library users and was successfully reaching out to users from socially excluded sectors of the population. Focus groups with users of the Network indicated overwhelmingly positive opinions about ICT in libraries and suggested that they catered for people who varied widely in competence and confidence. However, less favourable findings were also discovered. Some library users resented the displacement of book stocks to make way for ICT equipment, and felt uncomfortable with the changing library atmosphere. The introduction of ICT-based services also impacted on library staff, involving changes in roles and the need for new skills to be learnt and constantly updated in order to help users (Brophy, 2002). Sommerlad *et al.* (2003) found a wide disparity between the experiences of staff, and although there were positive approaches towards ICT in libraries, there were also negative reactions. Staff were often uncertain about the changing nature of the librarian's work and the new demands being made on them.

Inconsistencies regarding the quality of access to computers, between well-funded and poorer libraries, in terms of equipment, software, training and resources have also been highlighted (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2004).

#### **2.4.6 Initiatives**

As a result of the increasing emphasis on ICT, libraries have developed a variety of initiatives enabling access and encouraging use. For example, Knowsley Council (2004a) has ensured that ICT services and facilities are accessible by offering a range of software such as texthelp software, touch screen monitors and Braille-maker software (*Improvement and Development Agency website*).

Libraries are involved in partnerships between councils, agencies and institutions with similar aims. For example, Cambridgeshire County, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire district councils are working together to address the infrastructure deficit in broadband services in rural areas, to increase skills competencies to improve employability, self-esteem and opportunity and to develop online content that is relevant to the local community. The Network is a broadband communication system linking more than 400 council offices, schools,

libraries and community access points (*Improvement and Development Agency* website).

Libraries are also using ICT to focus on disadvantaged groups within their communities. For example, the library service in Knowsley has a particular focus on helping young people back into employment and also offers a crèche service to lone parents who want to use the services to improve their ICT skills (*Improvement and Development Agency* website); Leeds library's Boox on the Move project combines basic literacy, communication and ICT skills (Leeds City Council, 2004). Libraries in Liverpool house an ICT learning centre which offers an opportunity for asylum seekers and travellers to use the service to keep in touch with relatives via email (*Improvement and Development Agency* website).

Improving access to ICT remains a priority, and further developments are being made. A People's Network press release (2004) has recently publicised a pilot project that will introduce wireless access to the internet for rural areas, developed by the MLA, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Countryside Agency.

## 2.5 Libraries and social inclusion

The foregoing discussions on policy and current practice have made several references to social inclusion and, indeed, it can be regarded as the core purpose for reviewing the provision made by the public library service.

Social exclusion has been defined in various ways in the last ten years (Vincent, 2003). The paper points out that different government departments have refined and changed their views on what constitutes social exclusion, leading to the publication by the SEU in 2001, which broadened previous definitions considerably:

*Social exclusion is something that can happen to anyone. But some people are significantly more at risk than others. Research has found that people with certain backgrounds and experiences are disproportionately likely to suffer social exclusion. The key risk-factors include: low income; family conflict; being in care; school problems; being an ex-prisoner; being from an ethnic minority; living in a deprived neighbourhood in urban and rural areas; mental health problems, age and disability.*

SEU (2001, p. 11)

An early study commissioned by the Library and Information Commission and later funded by Resource, explored public libraries' provision for people who were socially excluded (Muddiman *et al.*, 2000). The study, which included a survey of all UK public library authorities and in-depth case studies in eight authorities, was largely critical of the provision that was being made at that time, indicating that 'attempts to target services towards excluded people remain patchy, uneven and are often time-limited' (p. viii). Whilst a few authorities had strategies that placed excluded people at the heart of their provision, most were found to be 'inclusive institutions in a limited sense only' (p. viii).

The researchers found that only a third of the PLAs targeted disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and that many marginal and excluded groups, including refugees, homeless people and travellers, were not considered to be priority targets. Barriers to more responsive activity were found to include a lack of money and equipment, and the cultures, traditions and internal procedures of library services. The report indicated that 'public libraries have the potential to play a key role in tackling social exclusion, but in order to make a real difference they will need to undergo rapid transformation and change' (Muddiman *et al.*, 2000, p. xi).

Raven (2001) described a number of successful projects that had been run under the social inclusion banner. However, she pointed out that most were 'destined to shine brightly for a short while and then disappear'. Her criticism of socially inclusive practice in public libraries at that time was that it was project-based, not mainstreamed. Quoting the Muddiman *et al.* (2000) report, and based partly on interviews with two of the consultants involved in preparing it, Raven suggests that the government's target groups for social inclusion in fact excluded large numbers of vulnerable people.

The definition which Muddiman *et al.* (2000) propose is broader than that reflected in the SEU document. PLAs may choose to use either definition, but there is a danger that those that choose the former find a larger, more needy target population that is not well-resourced through government funding.

### 2.5.1 Making libraries more socially inclusive

Criticism of the ways in which libraries tackled social inclusion led to the publication of documents examining



public libraries' role and responsibility in dealing with various excluded groups. These included:

- Parker *et al.* (2002), who aimed to identify and document the role of museums, archives and libraries in neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion
- Pateman (2003), who looked critically at the provision made by libraries and discussed their role in social inclusion
- a report on library provision for children and young people (CILIP, 2002), based on an exploration of children's needs
- a study by the Library and Information Statistics Unit of Loughborough University (Kinnell and Creaser, 2001), looking at library provision for those suffering from visual impairment.

These studies, whilst addressing the needs of different groups, had a great deal in common. Their findings resembled or built on the various papers issued by DCMS and Resource (see section 2.1), stressing that libraries should be at the heart of communities and make provision for each community's needs. They pointed out that in order for this to happen, the services would need to have policies and structures in place which put social inclusion and needs-based provision at the heart of their practice. Indeed, some argued that provision for socially excluded individuals and groups should be mainstreamed, and that library services should be integrated within a wider local authority strategy for improving social inclusion, including the use of outreach activities to create sustainable communities.

In order to make libraries accessible to excluded groups, the following suggestions for provision were made in the documents:

- making them attractive spaces, accessible to all, informal, non-threatening and welcoming
- well-trained staff and suitable resources provided to meet the individual needs of library users
- opportunities available to users to access local and national information, ICT equipment and internet access and learning relevant to their requirements
- co-location with other public, community or voluntary services so that customers can find a range of provision to meet their immediate needs

- extended and flexible opening times for libraries
- flexibility in documentation needed for library membership
- marketing of services and the provision of events and activities aimed at bringing in new users
- a range and breadth of materials, resources and support, particularly for those individuals and groups that tend to be excluded from mainstream provision
- adequate funding and provision made from funds to meet the needs of excluded groups
- collaboration between library services and a range of individuals and organisations that can improve the provision made for excluded groups. These other individuals and organisations could provide, in addition to possible economies of scale, expertise and access to the targeted customers.

## 2.5.2 Social inclusion for specific groups

As described above, the core needs for all the excluded groups were basically similar although there were also differing needs identified by the literature.

### *Provision for visually impaired people*

A study by the Library and Information Statistics Unit of Loughborough University (Kinnell and Creaser, 2001), found that libraries were not catering adequately for visually impaired people and that there was little consistency of approach. They suggested there was a need for a common high standard of provision for visually impaired people and greater equity of provision. To achieve this, they suggested it would be necessary for all annual public library plans to provide clear policy statements and plans for the provision of services. They also called for national guidelines which would form the basis for evaluating services for visually impaired people.

Library plans would need to be specific about the needs of visually impaired users in the community. For example, the researchers called for an agreed proportion of specialist staff to meet the needs of visually impaired people, indicating that this would also require additional training and targets in basic awareness for staff. Mechanisms were also called for to improve collaboration with relevant organisations, and a survey of both users and non-users to identify their library needs.

### *Children and young people*

CILIP (2002) reported that children and young people need a safe and welcoming environment with spaces that support diverse activities and provide a haven for learners of different ages. They recommended that all government initiatives aimed at developing literacy and reading opportunities or other services for young children and young people should involve the library service. The initiatives would need investment to fund reading and study support and to provide safe and welcoming environments and high-quality services. Involving children in the design of the services would help ensure they fitted their requirements. Staff training would also be a priority, to ensure that they could recognise children's and young people's needs. Cross-sectoral working could provide further benefits to children, whilst opening times might focus on after-school hours and weekends.

No discussion of the role of libraries in combating the social exclusion of children could be complete without a reference to SureStart. This multi-million pound government initiative aims to improve the life chances of young children under the age of four in disadvantaged areas by working with parents and children to promote children's physical, intellectual and social development. SureStart projects involve a number of providers working in partnership to make children's services available. For example, in Enfield, which was one of 60 districts selected by the government for the first wave of funding, 25 organisations, including the local authority, the local health authority and trust, the library service and the voluntary sector were involved in delivery (Love, 2001).

Libraries are involved in SureStart because of the emphasis on intellectual development. Through a range of schemes, Enfield Libraries are providing:

- access to books and toys for parents and young children
- advice and training on choosing and sharing books for parents and carers
- opportunities to develop the storytelling skills of parents and carers
- story-time sessions (at one of their libraries).

Another example of inclusive practice is in Oldham local authority which puts community cohesion at the heart of its policies, plans and programmes (*IDEA Knowledge*,

2004). Schools are viewed as a key resource for providing inclusive services because they are at the centre of communities and easily accessible and this is the reason for setting up a children's and parents' and community lending library.

Newbury Public Library has recruited many new readers through schemes aimed at engaging them within their own community (Redwood, 2004). On an estate where library membership was particularly low, a mobile library bus was parked outside a primary school once a week, and mothers and children invited on board. Books selected by children were unobtrusively marked with stickers so that staff could identify them on return and waive any fines.

A similar arrangement for waiving fines was also organised for looked-after children. The children's librarian had found that these children tended to move often, and foster parents were sometimes reluctant to act as a guarantor for book loans. The librarian visited looked-after children in their homes, taking a box of the library's 'very best new books' for them to borrow, and even arranged, through a scheme linked with social services, to present a £5 voucher to any of these children who read four books.

## **2.6 Summary**

While there is a wide range of literature on the provision of learning opportunities and ICT use in public libraries, there was sparse information on the many projects that reach out to particular groups of excluded people, those suffering physical disabilities, ethnic minorities, and travellers. In all three areas the available literature is mostly descriptive in nature. The only development projects that had been fully evaluated were those that had been put in place by government departments or charitable foundations.

Many innovative schemes are being designed and delivered but with little information on their planning, set up, staffing and funding and with no formal evaluation, it would be difficult for other authorities to learn from the examples. It is unlikely that funders such as local authorities would allow schemes to be run without any evaluation or assessment of usefulness and it is suggested that a forum might be promoted through which they could make available the internal reports that have been commissioned.

The review of the literature did, however, reveal that library services across the country are engaged in a very wide variety of projects and initiatives to extend their role. These activities are being delivered with many different partners and are being funded from a range of different sources.

The review informed the questionnaire for the survey discussed in Chapter 3 and enabled the research team to ask relevant questions about the types of schemes that libraries are involved in. In addition, the review helped the research team formulate interview schedules for the case-study visits described in Chapters 4 and 5.

## 3 Survey of library services

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was sent out to the heads of all 172 library services in England and Wales in May 2004. In all, 109 completed questionnaires were returned by the end of June 2004 and included in the analysis. This gave a 63 per cent completion rate for the questionnaire. Respondents in Wales were sent two copies of the questionnaire, one in Welsh and one in English, and three out of the 12 returned were completed in Welsh.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information on:

- the scope and focus of the extension of traditional library services
- the scope and range of partnership working in extending the role of libraries
- the funding of new initiatives
- the impact of extending opening hours.

The questions were essentially straightforward factual requests and were mostly of a closed type. Attitudes and opinions were only sought in the final open question which asked for 'any other comments'. This meant that only a basic statistical analysis was necessary. The results of this statistical analysis were then studied closely for patterns of response, unexpected results and points of interest. This interpretative process was made in the light of the findings of the literature review. The findings are presented below on a thematic basis, rather than question by question, in order to draw out the significant findings from the survey.

The chapter starts by looking at the survey evidence concerning the three areas of action covered in the literature review: ICT, social inclusion and supporting learning. Subsequent sections cover the extent of engagement in national and local initiatives, partnerships, funding and opening hours.

### 3.1 The extent of ICT provision and usage

As was described in the previous chapter, universal access to ICT and web-based services are a fundamental tenet of current government policy, and libraries play a vital role in delivering this commitment. It is clear from the responses to a number of questions in this survey that the provision and use of ICT-based services has indeed reached very high levels.

Question 1b asked about the provision of web-based services; responses showed that 91 per cent of library services provided web-based information services relating to the local area, and 56 per cent provided web-based information services relating to a wider area. Additionally, 49 per cent provided web-based archives.

From question 3, concerning national initiatives, it was found that all 109 respondents were involved in the People's Network and 97 per cent thought that this initiative had increased the use of library services.

Question 6 asked about new services being introduced by library services. Tables 1 and 2 include the responses to this question that concerned ICT.

**Table 1** New ICT services provided by libraries

	Before 2002 %	After 2002 %
ICT hardware installed	80	87
ICT training provided	52	89
Free internet access	49	90
Charged-for internet access	31	10
Interactive website	21	56
Mobile ICT services	6	27

**N=109**

*More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

As Table 1 shows, free internet access is now more or less universal and charged-for access has declined to around ten per cent of services introduced. The influence of the People's Network initiative can be seen in the very

high levels of ICT hardware installation and training provision reported, 87 and 89 per cent respectively since January 2002.

**Table 2 New ICT services planned for future introduction by libraries**

	Planned for the future %
ICT training provided	70
ICT hardware installed	64
Free internet access	61
Interactive website	60
Mobile ICT services	48
Charged-for internet access	11

**N=109**

*More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

In terms of innovative provision, interactive websites are being provided by three-fifths of respondents, with just under half planning mobile ICT resources for the future (see Table 2). These initiatives both extend the role of libraries by not being dependent on a library building. Interactive websites can involve people in using library services without having to leave home, and the mobile ICT provision is a way of reaching out to hard-to-reach groups and including them in the information society.

### 3.2 The targeting of specific groups of people

As discussed in the previous chapter, public libraries have been identified by the Government as powerful agents of inclusiveness, since they are open to all and provide a service that is non-threatening and non-judgemental. As part of this mission to promote social inclusion, library services have tried to target particular groups in encouraging more use of libraries and the services they offer. Question 2 asked which groups had been targeted by library services since January 2002.

**Table 3 The targeting of specific groups to encourage library use**

	%
Pre-school children and their parents	94
School children	91
Older people	88
Adults with basic skills needs	86
Members of minority ethnic groups	75
Children in care	67
Young disaffected people	56
Unemployed people	52
Prisoners	39
Other target groups	38
Gypsies/Travellers	33

**N =109**

*More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100  
All 109 respondents gave at least one response to this question.  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

As seen in Table 3 (based on question 2), since January 2002 around 90 per cent of library services responding to the survey had targeted children, older people and adults with basic skills needs. Three-quarters had targeted minority ethnic groups. Other target groups reported included refugees and asylum seekers (14 responses) disabled people (11 responses) and visually impaired people (ten responses).

Responses to parts of question 5 (see Table 4) showed that 88 per cent of library services were improving resources or access for disabled users in order to encourage library use, compared to 69 per cent prior to 2002. There was also an increase in this period in the number of libraries improving their resources in other languages for minority ethnic groups (from 63 to 73 per cent).

It is notable that children and older people are already core library user groups but are still being heavily targeted by library services. Responses to question 12, an open-ended question about developing the role of the library service in social inclusion, revealed a wide range of plans (28 distinct categories of initiative) for further promoting social inclusion, including further targeting of excluded groups. The groups most frequently mentioned for future targeting were refugees and asylum seekers (ten responses).

### 3.2.1 Promotion and outreach

As well as targeting specific groups of people, library services are engaged in specific outreach initiatives and general promotion of library services. As can be seen from Table 4, responses to part of question 5 showed an increase in both these areas since 2002, with 89 per cent of library services being currently involved in promoting themselves with a view to increasing the use of traditional library services.

**Table 4 Initiatives to extend the use of traditional library services**

	Did before Jan 2002 %	Done since Jan 2002 %	Planned for the future %
Reading groups	49	93	84
Stock improvements	52	90	75
Promotion of library services	78	89	91
Resources/access for disabled users	69	88	83
Changing the library environment	43	86	85
Staff training/employing specialist staff	75	84	77
Specific outreach initiatives	63	83	75
Changes to opening hours	42	76	68
Resources in other languages for minority ethnic groups	63	73	77
Taking library resources to non-traditional locations	31	58	60
Combining libraries with other public services	34	50	75
Transport initiative	17	16	14
Combining libraries with private sector services	7	14	24
Other	6	11	9

**N = 109**

*More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100  
All 109 respondents gave at least one response to this question.  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

### 3.3 Supporting learning

As was discussed in the previous chapter, *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003a) champions the role of libraries in 'promoting reading and supporting informal learning'. As well as this, libraries are increasingly engaged in more formal learning provision. The survey (from question 6) provided evidence of libraries supporting learning in a variety of ways in addition to the high level of targeting of adults with basic skills needs referred to in section 3.2.

**Table 5 New library services to support learning**

	Before 2002 %	After 2002 %	In the Future %
Homework resources	62	67	64
Learning Centres in libraries	49	61	49
Business advice and help	48	39	32
Job search facilities	37	47	40
Courses for adults with basic skills needs	25	60	59
Stock improvement for adults with basic skills needs	25	53	51
Specialist staff (basic skills staff and learning mentors)	20	46	38

**N=109**

*More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

Table 5 shows a notable increase in the provision of courses for adults with basic skills needs (up from 25 per cent to 60 per cent since Jan 2002) and the deployment of specialist staff (up from 20 per cent to 46 per cent since Jan 2002). These figures suggest a greater formal involvement of libraries in learning as staff work directly with user groups to encourage learning. The extent to which libraries are responding to this changing role of their staff is reflected in responses to question 5 (see Table 4) which reveal that 84 per cent of library services are using staff training and the provision of specialist staff in order to encourage greater use of their traditional services.

### 3.4 National initiatives

Question 3 was in two parts and asked about library service involvement in national initiatives and whether these initiatives had led to increased use of library services.

**Table 6 Library service involvement in national initiatives and their impact on library usage**

	Involved in initiative %	Has increased use of library services % (of those involved)
People's Network	100	97
Bookstart	96	85
SureStart	87	89
LearnDirect	61	73
Extended Schools	16	41
Other	14	73
No response	1	—

**N=109**

*More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

Table 6 shows a very high level of library service involvement in the national initiatives and a widespread perception from respondents that these initiatives have increased library use. The extended schools initiative is an exception both in total numbers and in that where they are in place, only a minority of heads of service think they have increased library use.

#### 3.4.1 The breadth of local initiatives

As well as these important national initiatives, library services across the country are engaged in many different local initiatives to extend the role of libraries. In question 4, respondents were asked to list any local or regional initiatives that they had been involved in since January 2002 to extend the roles of libraries, and to state the aims of those initiatives. Not surprisingly there was a wide range of initiatives with different aims. The aims that were being pursued by more than ten different library services were to:

- extend the use of libraries for specific groups (33 responses)
- extend learning opportunities for specific groups (24)
- promote the enjoyment of reading, poetry etc. (22)

- make libraries a point of contact for local council services (16)
- extend the availability of existing services (15)
- improve basic skills, including reading (12)
- improve ICT skills generally (12).

Some of these initiatives were specifically referred to in question 5 (see Table 4) and responses revealed that 93 per cent of library services had reading groups since 2002, 58 per cent had been taking library resources to non-traditional locations and 16 per cent had been involved in transport initiatives designed to enable greater access to libraries.

#### 3.4.2 Identifying the needs of local people

Question 9 asked what steps library services had taken since Jan 2002 to identify the needs of local people in order to get an idea of how libraries might know whether or not their initiatives were focusing on what local people want. Surveys were the most commonly used method of canvassing public opinion, mentioned by 70 respondents and 'plus' surveys were also reported by 37 respondents. General public consultations were carried out by 25 library services and consultations with specific groups were mentioned 17 times. The only other activities which were reported by more than ten respondents were focus groups (14) and citizens' panels (12).

### 3.5 Partnerships

The literature review revealed in both the policy documents and in the examples of innovative practice that partnership building is an essential component of the delivery of public services like libraries.

#### 3.5.1 Public sector partnerships

The importance of library service partnership with other local and central government departments and agencies became very clear from the case studies which are described and analysed in Chapters 4 and 5. Responses to question 5 (see Table 4) revealed a sharp increase in the combining of libraries with other public services from 34 per cent before 2002 to 50 per cent since the start of 2002 with 75 per cent planned for the future. The survey (from question 8) also gave an idea of the



scope of these partnerships and who the partners are (see Table 7).

**Table 7 Library service partnerships with the public sector to deliver new initiatives**

	%
Education	94
Social Services	65
Leisure	54
Other county/Unitary councils	46
NHS	39
Others in local authority	38
Employment	26
Other	22
District councils	21
Justice system	17
Parish councils	15

**N =109**

*More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

The near universal partnership with education services shown in Table 7 is perhaps not surprising but still notable, as is the high level of partnerships with social services (65 per cent) and the NHS (39 per cent). The large number of 'other' partners that 22 per cent of respondents reported working with, demonstrates the wide range of partner organisations (37 different ones) reported by libraries across the country. Most of these 37 were mentioned by only one respondent, but eight had partnerships with the youth service, seven with housing departments and five each with FE colleges, corporate services and ICT departments.

### 3.5.2 The role of the private and voluntary sectors

The findings from the survey show a high level of library service involvement with voluntary sector organisations and a smaller but growing involvement with the private sector.

In response to question 8 which asked about the partnerships in which library services were involved, 84 per cent said that they were involved in partnerships with voluntary and community sector organisations. Answers to question 10 concerning sources of funding revealed that 39 per cent of library services had used

partnership funding from the voluntary sector for extended or additional services (see Table 8).

Numbers involved in private sector partnerships were much lower (30 per cent of respondents) although a quarter had used partnership funding from the private sector for extended or additional services. However, responses to question 5 (see Table 4) about the ways of extending traditional library services suggest an increase in the combining of libraries with private sector services. Seven per cent of respondents were doing this prior to 2002, 14 per cent since Jan 2002 and 24 per cent were planning to do so in the future.

## 3.6 Funding extended and additional services

Question 10 asked how extended or additional services had been funded. Most respondents included more than one source of funding, with the most frequent category (81 per cent) being partnership funding from the public sector, as can be seen in Table 8 below. The only source of other funding that was reported more than once was lottery funding which had been used by 9 per cent of respondents.

**Table 8 Sources of funding for new or extended library services**

	%
Partnership funding from the public sector	81
Increased annual library budget	69
Central government	66
Other departments within your local authority	58
Reallocation of resources within library service	57
Partnership funding with voluntary and community sector	39
Partnership funding from the private sector	27
Other	20

**N =109**

*More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100  
All 109 respondents gave at least one response to this question.  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

The importance of extra funding for extended and additional services was illustrated by answers to question 11 which asked whether or not these services could be continued if funding was withdrawn. Over 60 per cent of library services said they could not continue with the extended or additional services in these circumstances. This concern about funding also came out as the most



frequently mentioned issue in response to question 18, which was an open question asking for any further comments. There were nine written comments that expressed a common concern that sustaining new initiatives was much harder than introducing them. One Head of Service wrote:

*It is easy to take on many new initiatives, often a pilot introduced in a few services and then to find difficulty in maintaining or extending them as staff and funding are stretched.*

### 3.6.1 Improving existing services

As well as finding funds for initiatives that extend the role of libraries, the survey provided some evidence (from question 5, see Table 4) that library services were also managing to make stock improvements (90 per cent of library services since Jan 2002) and changes to the library environment (86 per cent since Jan 2002). These findings were reflected in the case-study visits discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, where most of the library managers were keen to stress that new services were not being funded by taking money away from traditional services and provision.

## 3.7 Increasing opening hours

From question 1 it was found that half of the library services had a quarter or more of their libraries open for more than 45 hours a week. Another measure of extended opening was found from question 13. Library services had on average (mean) 27 per cent of their opening hours outside of normal office hours. Responses to question 14 revealed that 57 per cent of library services had increased the proportion of opening hours outside of normal office hours since 2002. Question 15 sought more detailed information on the proportion of libraries within these services that had extended opening hours.

**Table 9      The proportion of libraries within library services that have increased the total time they are open**

	Number of library services
Up to 25%	21
26-50 %	9
51-75%	8
76-100%	16
No response	8
<b>N =62</b>	

*A single response item  
All those that had increased their proportion of non-traditional opening hours  
54 respondents answered this question  
Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

Table 9 shows that of the 62 library services that had extended opening hours, 16 had increased the total opening times of more than three-quarters of their libraries, whilst 21 had done so for less than a quarter of their libraries.

There has been an extension of opening hours by more than half of the library services responding to the survey. In some areas the additional hours have been confined to a minority of libraries, whilst a significant minority of services have introduced extended opening for most of their libraries.

There was an even spread between extended evening, Saturday and Sunday opening to achieve these increases (question 15). Responses to question 17d revealed that families (24 responses) and working people/commuters (16 responses) were the only groups to be frequently targeted by library services through the extended opening.

Forty-three library services had at least partially funded the increases through new sources of funding from their council, and 28 services had at least partially funded the increases through reallocating resources within the service (question 16).

### 3.7.1 The impact of increasing opening hours

Questions 17a and 17b sought to discover the impact of increased opening hours on a range of measurable outcomes.

**Table 10 Outcomes observed since increase in non-traditional opening hours**

	Number of Library Services
More use of ICT facilities	51
More visits in total	43
More visits from target groups	22
More books lent	19
Other	4
<b>N =62</b>	

*A multiple response item*

*All those who had increased their proportion of non-traditional opening hours*  
*Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

**Table 11 The extent to which these outcomes can be attributed to the increased hours**

	In all cases	In some cases	Not at all	Don't know	No reply
More use of ICT facilities	17	31	1	0	13
More visits in total	10	35	2	0	15
More books lent	5	21	3	1	32
More visits from target groups	2	21	2	5	32
Other	2	0	0	0	60
None of these	1	1	0	1	59
<b>N =62</b>					

*All those who had increased their proportion of non-traditional opening hours*  
*Source: Heads of Library Services survey 2004*

Tables 10 and 11 seem to indicate an important difference between the impact of increased non-traditional opening hours on the use of ICT compared to book lending. Whilst increased opening hours have led to more use of ICT facilities in about 50 of the 62 services, increased book lending was reported in about 20. The discrepancy between the answers to question 17a and the answers to 17b (reflected in Tables 10 and 11 respectively) means that it is not possible to report exact numbers (for example, in Table 10, 19 respondents claim an increase in books lent, but in Table 11, 26 report at least some increase in books lent). However, it is clear that extended opening has predominantly allowed greater use of ICT facilities in libraries.

### 3.8 Summary

The responses to this survey from 63 per cent of English and Welsh library services provide clear evidence of a high level of library service involvement in a wide range of initiatives designed to extend the use and role of their libraries. A high level of partnership, particularly within the public sector, was in place to implement these initiatives. The survey showed the importance of national initiatives as well as the breadth and variety of local ones. However, a survey is limited in the detail it can gather on particular projects, and so ten case studies were carried out in order to provide more in-depth information. The next two chapters are based on these case studies and will, among other things, illustrate the trends identified in the survey.

## 4 Case studies: rural counties

This chapter, and the next, provide brief case studies of ten local authority public library areas. Case-study areas were selected for a number of reasons. The first limiting factor was that of consent. Only library services that had completed the questionnaire reported in the previous chapter and who had indicated a willingness to be a case-study area were considered. A good geographical spread was sought, since different issues might arise across the country, and both county and unitary authorities were chosen as, again, the difference in size and population could be an important factor in the provision of services. Finally, whilst library services that were running particularly interesting projects were given a high priority, the research team did try to avoid those that had already received extensive coverage in the media.

The ten case studies have been divided into two groups. This chapter concentrates on the relatively rural counties visited, while Chapter 5 looks at provision in unitary authorities in predominantly urban areas. Two of the ten areas visited do not fit as well as the other eight into the chosen categories. Included in this chapter is Caerphilly, which is a Welsh county borough. As such it is a unitary authority and not as large geographically as the three English counties considered. It does however include a reasonably large rural area as well as urban centres. Blackburn with Darwen is included in Chapter 5 because it is a unitary authority with a large urban area, although it does also include a rural hinterland.

During the case-study visits researchers carried out interviews with the head(s) of service, elected members, library managers and library staff and representatives from other organisations that were working in partnership with libraries. In most cases visits were made to a range of libraries in the area. Altogether interviews were carried out with seven elected members, ten heads of service, six other senior managers, 42 library staff, 16 representatives from partner organisations (including SureStart staff, information centre staff, FE tutors) and two project managers from partner organisations.

This chapter describes four case studies: three English county councils and one Welsh county borough. All contain some relatively large rural areas as well as a mix of towns and cities, and three of the cases include some areas of rural deprivation. The English counties in particular have relatively large numbers of libraries compared to the smaller unitary authorities discussed in the next chapter. These three counties also have to work in a two- or three-tier system of local government with district and town or parish councils. The populations of these areas are generally more diverse than the more urban unitary authorities which tend to have higher concentrations of particular groups of people. These complexities have perhaps contributed to a slower pace of change in these more rural counties.

The case studies are presented in alphabetical order and follow a similar format, with a scene-setting background section followed by a description and analysis of the most innovative local projects and they conclude with a short future developments section. The overarching themes of partnership working and funding are considered separately in the summary at the end of the chapter.

### 4.1 Caerphilly – responding to economic decline and promoting good health

#### Background

Caerphilly is a relatively new authority and was created as the result of a merger between two borough authorities and two county councils in 1996. Consequently, the library service is in its infancy in organisational terms. However, the council has already placed significant emphasis on responding to local needs. The Welsh library service did not have an equivalent of the document *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003a), but Caerphilly did suggest that they followed the guidance in spirit. It has been recognised that libraries have a role to play in responding to issues arising from the area being a South Wales valley community with a history of involvement in traditional

heavy industries such as coal and steel, now in almost complete decline. These include health issues, which are being pursued in a number of projects described below.

## Health net

The People's Network was considered by librarians to have had an important impact in Caerphilly. One of the positive outcomes of the initiative has been the wider use of ICT in other projects that the libraries are involved in. One of the more ambitious of these projects is Health Net. Health Net aims to provide health information predominantly through ICT. The initiative operates in the Lansbury Park area and the upper Rhymney valleys. ICT is perceived as a gateway to attract people's interest whilst developing their ICT skills and exposing them to health information. Health Net is available in healthy-living centres and libraries. The sessions are run by trainers who support people in using the ICT equipment and extracting information about health-related issues. Health Net is part of a much larger healthy e-service project involving a number of partners such as the local authority, GPs and the police.

## Other initiatives

The library service had developed a number of non-ICT related initiatives through partnerships in order to meet corporate objectives and local needs and attract new users. Many of these initiatives have a health dimension, including:

- *Free swim* The library service has entered into a partnership with leisure centres which uses library cards and management systems to issue swims in order to promote the library, as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's free swim initiative for children. The card can be used to swim, take out books, use the internet and take part in the Reading Roller Coaster (a national reading programme).
- *The Basement project* in Blackwood Library is a dedicated youth service providing information and advice to young people and a health-check clinic. A sexual health clinic operates every Saturday at the location. Youth information sections are available in all libraries.
- *The library in New Tredegar* is in the process of being relocated to one wing of a new community development which also houses the local school. A healthy living centre, childcare centre, a presence from the local health board and a learning zone with

a cyber café are also to be included to create an integrated partnership approach to responding to community needs. The development is to be run by the community.

## Future developments

Future developments for the library service were predicted as being extensive. One member of staff stated: 'At the moment we have more questions than answers'. However, the service is committed to responding to the changing needs of the community by, for example, extending opening hours, delivering a wide range of services in a number of different ways and encouraging those who are sceptical of learning into lifelong learning. According to one member of staff: 'The future is one of change because of central government, local government, user expectation and the social inclusion agenda'.

## 4.2 Hampshire – discovery centres

### Background

The Best Value Review of the library service conducted five years ago reported that it was a good service, but unlikely to improve. The elected members did not want to accept this verdict and wanted to find ways to improve the service. One result of this has been organisational change that has led to the merging of existing departments into a new Recreation and Heritage department. This reorganisation has brought together libraries, museums, archives, arts, sport, tourism, countryside, outdoor activities and community support. For the library service this has created new opportunities for joint action with other parts of the council.

### A vision for the future

The senior management team in charge of the library service in Hampshire has a clear view of the impact of external influences on the role of libraries and the need for change in order to survive:

*We have taken the view that we were not prepared to sit back and see libraries marginalized. What was needed was diversification. It is time for a radical rethink. It is not enough to follow Tim Coates' [Coates,*

2004] *prescription to be more like bookshops – as you could improve this part of your business, but it would only serve the 20 per cent of the population who use the service. Libraries need to reach out to the people who don't currently use libraries.*

Director of Recreation and Heritage

In Hampshire, discovery centres are part of the response needed to arrest the decline of libraries, but are also designed to act as incubators for future changes. It is hoped that ideas can be tried and either developed or terminated depending on their success.

### Discovery centres

These are libraries that are combined with other services to provide a focal point for the exploration of ideas, to satisfy curiosity and provide information. The main focus in Hampshire is connected to a sense of place involving, in particular, museums, archives, local history collections and centres for lifelong learning. There is still a long way to go in creating operational discovery centres, but there is a clear commitment to providing different areas in the county with something to fit local circumstances and meet local needs.

*We have to work in a three-tier local authority structure, and we work in partnership with all three levels in different parts of the county. We want to create a discovery centre in all 12 of the substantial population centres in the county over the next 5-10 years.*

Head of Libraries and Information

### Gosport

This is going to be the first major discovery centre to open in Hampshire. Building started in February 2004 and the centre will be ready to open early in 2005. Matching the overall generic blueprint of a discovery centre to local conditions is an important part of the strategy. For example, the Gosport centre is combining a maritime museum with an important maritime collection in the library. The building is being transformed from a very traditional library with large shelves of underused books into a flexible space with shelving on wheels that can be cleared in 20 minutes to create two large performance or lecture spaces for 150 people. A café is being put in to encourage people to stay in the centre for longer. A wide range of advice and information services will be part of the project too.

### Basingstoke

In Basingstoke there will be considerable involvement from the district council as well as local businesses. The councils are trying to get ten major companies on board, particularly in relation to the planned exhibition hall, which will be a significant performance space.

### Winchester

At present the reference and lending libraries are on separate sites. The reference library is housed in a building that is literally falling down. So they are going to expand the lending library site which is housed in a fine 19th-century building. The building size will be doubled and will include a substantial art gallery, a quick access library, an improved library, museum, multi-use performance/exhibition space, café, and so on. It is planned to open in 2007. It is a partnership with the district council which is giving £1 million, and the car park on which to build the extension.

### Odiham

The discovery centre project leader viewed this as a very good partnership scheme in a relatively small settlement (c.6000–8000 people) which is near completion. Local people came to the council and said that they wanted some more facilities and services. The previously unused downstairs area has been converted to an information centre. The upstairs of the building will be used for adult education, and the historical society is involved in mounting exhibitions there. The town manager and possibly the town clerk will be based in the centre and it will be run by paid staff, with additional activities organised by volunteers.

### Future developments

Four more discovery centres are being developed as part of the first phase with a further four making up phase 2. The library service sees these centres as the starting points for more innovation in the future, rather than as the end of the process.

## 4.3 Lincolnshire – remodelling for the future

### Background

The library service has developed a strategy for extending their user base that fits with the recently-developed County Council ambitions and objectives and will give them more focus. In order to achieve their objectives, the library service is embarking on a remodelling programme designed to create a more flexible and collaborative organisational structure that can respond more successfully to change.

### Reorganisation for change

The libraries had been grouped in five tiers which governed resource allocation. The arrangement is now viewed as 'too hierarchical' and future resources will follow needs. Library managers and staff will be asked to identify needs and their requests for resources will have to be evidence-based.

Leaders and managers have also undertaken training. In the past, libraries' management team or senior managers had operational responsibility for libraries in part of the county, as well as individual key result areas, which they worked on alone rather than cooperating, since networking was difficult due to the size and rural nature of the county. However, they have now been set some generic targets that require them to work together to achieve them. This strategy is already providing opportunities for managers to discuss developments more freely.

There has also been extensive staff training with all staff gaining National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and the service gaining Investors in People (IIP) status and, more recently, the new IIP Award for Leadership and Management.

### Projects for social inclusion

There are already a number of projects up and running in Lincolnshire that extend the traditional roles of the library service. These include several initiatives targeting social inclusion.

- Inclusion projects for minority ethnic groups are run at Branston Library which is part of a community college a few miles outside of Lincoln. The project,

developed in partnership with adult education, provides native speakers of Arabic and Russian who can work with minority communities and identify suitable texts for library loans.

- A partnership between Spalding Library and the Traveller Community Development Officer has been successful in engaging traveller children, in the age group 5-13, through arts, crafts and science projects.
- Birchwood Library is located in seven-year-old purpose-built accommodation in the suburbs of Lincoln and shares a school site with a youth centre. The site is close to the Birchwood Access and Training Centre (a community centre run by and for local people and funded by the European Social Fund, Learndirect and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)). The library and the Access and Training Centre jointly run SureStart-funded sessions for parents and children twice a week in the library. These sessions provide opportunities to reach people who might otherwise never enter a library, while the Access and Training Centre have been able to provide learning opportunities to parents, some of whom have basic skills needs.

### Funding

Funding for additional services comes from the normal library budget, although external funding is applied for in order to fund specific projects. An example has been the multi-cultural service, which was funded for one year by the Children's Fund (for £60,000), but (according to the head of service) there was no exit strategy and no sustainability built in. However, needs were identified through research and outreach and the service has now been mainstreamed, at a cost of £100,000 and with increased staffing, although the development is still in its infancy.

### Future plans

The cultural services management team has been discussing common issues, and emerging from these discussions are plans to integrate libraries and adult education so they share buildings, strategy and staffing structures. The heritage service and youth service will be included later. The service is aiming for 'a shared strategy where the boundaries cannot be seen', similar to that found in the ideas store in Tower Hamlets.



The county council plans to work more closely with district councils and the city council in future and this fits well with library service strategy. A mapping exercise has already been carried out in which the library service identified districts whose community plans include regeneration and social inclusion. These districts will be approached and asked to participate in joint working.

The head of service thinks that public libraries will have to accept that they have to change, not necessarily modernisation but transformation. They need to identify and prioritise and meet local needs: 'The main drives will come from Central Government – we were left alone for far too long....We now have a clear steer from Government'.

## 4.4 Suffolk – wholesale Sunday opening

### Background

Publication of the Audit Commission (2002) report *Building Better Library Services*, has led to the library service identifying several areas in need of improvement, including opening hours, buildings, book displays and customer service, in order to be able to attract new customers and win back those who may have lost the library habit.

The main thrust of improvement, from the summer of 2003, has been Sunday opening in all 44 libraries, accompanied by an ongoing marketing campaign. Sunday opening was aimed particularly at people under 40 including families with children, school and college students, ethnic minorities, and the 20 to 30 year-olds who increasingly are using bookshops.

### Lowestoft library – a case study of Sunday opening

Only one award-winning refurbishment has been undertaken so far, at Lowestoft, resulting in a library that is more appealing to most people and especially to younger people because of its stylish design and layout. Teenagers were invited to participate in planning the 'teen' area. The young people have also been provided with ICT equipment dedicated for their use. The library also houses the 'Navigator Centre', an information point for all local services, a SureStart library, 'LearnEast' (see

below), a café and the public record office, which has joined the library in opening on Sundays.

Staff have worked hard to create a different atmosphere in the library on Sundays with coffee, music and a variety of cultural and community activities; customers use the self-service check-out machines so that staff can be freed to organise activities for family groups and other visitors.

Sunday opening has led to some difficulties with anti-social behaviour from young people. Librarians discovered that parents were leaving their children in the library all day long and the children were becoming hungry and bored. Staff have met with other agencies (for example, the district council, community education and the police) to try to help the situation, but finding a solution has been difficult because many service providers do not work at weekends.

### LearnEast

Lowestoft Library is also involved in the LearnEast project. This is a partnership with other library authorities in the European Union to provide people with the skills they need to make them more employable, by improving their ICT skills. The project is staffed by ICT-literate people who are seconded from the library service, and target groups including those who are unemployed, have basic skills needs, are from ethnic minorities or are living in rural and isolated communities. While some training is carried out in the library, a proportion is through outreach work.

The team has worked with more than double the numbers originally anticipated and results have been 'better than expected'. For example:

- a group of mothers has created a website for their children's SureStart group
- travellers have created a website about their history and produced a brochure about their caravan site
- a lone parents' group has been helped in producing individual CVs and posters to advertise their group's activities.

There have been good partnerships with a variety of agencies; the LearnEast team remarked that, 'everyone wants to make it work'. For example, the Waveney Community Forum has provided access to members of an ESOL group. Group members who have a

reasonable command of English have been able to visit the library and access websites that have provided opportunities to improve their conversational English and their basic skills. The group includes skilled workers who are presently employed in factories; they want to learn ICT skills to help them back into other types of work. LearnEast has also helped them to write job applications and there has been support from local Jobcentre Plus staff.

### Future developments

The head of service said that co-location with other services is a crucial aspect of future planning. Local authorities are trying to make the best use of their property and this suits the library service as co-location and better take-up of self-service loans will help them move 'closer to 24/7 opening'.

*[libraries] provide a brilliant space for other agencies to come to and interact with their target customers. So often the other agencies don't work Saturdays or Sundays or sometimes even school holidays – leading to them under using the library resource.*

A Senior Manager

A partnership with BT has been negotiated that will enable Suffolk libraries to become public access points for an enquiry service that will deal with 80 per cent of enquiries made to the county council. The aim is to develop staff-assisted public kiosks in libraries and other community-based access points through which local people will be able to find all the information they need.

## 4.5 Summary

The various projects and initiatives in the four case-study areas have been reported in some detail because one of the aims of this research is to disseminate innovative practice to policy-makers and practitioners. There are also some common themes that have emerged from these case-study visits, which are discussed below.

### Partnerships

In all four areas it was agreed that partnerships were crucial in being able to respond to national and local government objectives and local needs, particularly in developing new initiatives. Additionally, access to different funding streams often required partnership

working. All four authorities were engaged in a range of partnerships, some of which have been highlighted in the case studies. Partnership working was perceived to have many benefits, but was not always straightforward.

In Caerphilly for example, the library service highlighted a number of benefits relating to working in partnership, such as the ability to share expertise, raising the profile of the service, an understanding of how other services are working towards the same objectives and the creation of support mechanisms. From one partner's point of view (the lifelong learning department), libraries were considered to be a community access point for council services because of their presence in every community and because so many services could be channelled through them. Obstacles to partnership working included competitiveness between organisations and the necessity to compromise in order to meet the needs of everyone involved.

In Suffolk partnerships with parish councils are considered by the library service managers to be working well, but links with district councils are less well-developed. In Hampshire the relationship between the county council and district and town councils varied from area to area and depended on the enthusiasm of other councils to provide any money or resources for joint ventures. An insight into the difficulties of partnership working for large-scale projects came from the head of libraries and information: 'These partnerships rely on elected members and officers from both councils working together, and when things go wrong it is usually down to personality clashes'.

In Lincolnshire the library service has established links with other local government services and voluntary organisations in order to improve delivery to excluded groups. However, the head of service cautioned that library services seeking partnerships need to transform themselves first; otherwise potential partners will not show interest in developing links.

### Funding

One of the contrasts between the three large county councils discussed in this chapter and the unitary authorities discussed in the next is the larger number of library buildings, including many serving small communities, that they are responsible for. In Suffolk the planned strategy for refurbishment of library buildings was being facilitated by a track record of successful bids



to the council's Single Capital Pot. Hampshire is also embarking on large-scale capital expenditure to provide the new discovery centres. However, the pace of change is much slower than the senior management would like because the funds for building are mostly coming from the county council's capital programme and have to be bid for against other services. Shared-use projects can free up capital funds and save on staff costs, but these

initiatives are more complicated to set up in a multi-tier local authority structure. Funding has been much more readily available for specific projects targeting particular groups and for ICT equipment, for example, through the People's Network. The future of this project-related funding is not secure and raises the issue of how library services will be able to fund long-term extensions of their role.

## 5 Case studies: urban areas

The six English unitary authorities that were visited are predominantly urban and all contain some relatively large areas of socio-economic deprivation. They have small numbers of libraries compared to the larger counties and often have access to a wider range of funds due to the government targeting of areas of deprivation. It is perhaps this combination of factors that has encouraged library authorities in these types of areas to be particularly innovative.

The case studies in this chapter concentrate on describing the innovations that have a distinctive local flavour and are not simply interesting examples of national initiatives applied locally. This is not to underplay the importance of the latter, which was highlighted in Chapter 3, but the widespread nature of schemes like SureStart, the People's Network and homework clubs diminishes the need to disseminate these findings. Suffice to say that in all six of the authorities described in this chapter there were examples to be found of good practice in all these areas of work. Some local initiatives have also been omitted in order to focus more clearly on a particular theme in each authority.

The case studies are presented in alphabetical order and follow a similar format, with a scene-setting background section followed by a description and analysis of the most innovative local projects and a short future developments section to conclude. The overarching themes of staffing changes, partnership working and leadership are considered separately at the end of the chapter.

### 5.1 Blackburn with Darwen – partnerships for learning

#### Background

Blackburn with Darwen became a unitary authority in 1999, having previously been part of Lancashire. Library managers thought that this change had been very influential in the development of the library service, due to the 'culture shock' of moving away from a situation, where change was often slow, into a fast-changing environment.

The library service was considered to be dynamic and innovative by those working in it because changes were made locally to the service before similar developments were encouraged nationally by the Government. For example, through the Single Regeneration Budget a learning centre had been developed in one library before such centres were advocated.

Developments within the library service have been influenced by the priorities of central government. One staff member stated: 'Our evolution as an authority has paralleled a change in approach nationally to library work'. The local government community plan, which corresponded with national objectives, also has had an effect on the direction of the service. The council has a clear strategic vision that addresses issues such as inclusive communities, health and learning. All services, including the library service, are linked to the community plan. Services have also been developed to respond to the composition of the borough. Blackburn, for example, has large ethnic minority and child populations and a large basic skills deficit. The library service has two main targets, young people and reader development focusing on literacy and numeracy. Libraries are considered to have a vital role in supporting the learning agenda, and the library service is keen to develop services and activities for all.

#### Partnerships for learning

In order to achieve its objectives the library service has worked with a number of partners. There have been some difficulties with partnership working but library managers thought that the acquisition of Beacon status for the service had helped encourage partners to work with them. Some of the more innovative initiatives in Blackburn have been developed in partnership in order to respond to the learning agenda. These include:

- *Learning courses* – In a three-way partnership with the public, private and academic sectors, a range of courses was provided. The local college and a private company 'Training 2000' provided training, support and mentoring and the library service contributed venues and resources.

- *Joint membership* – Students that joined the college library were provided with membership to the central library at the same time. The public library cards were used for both. A joint induction to both libraries was also provided. The initiative aimed to encourage greater use of the library by 16 to 24 year-olds.
- *Books on the Edge* – Through partnerships with drug rehabilitation and care in the community organisations such as Those on the Margins of Society (THOMAS), a project worker visited residential children's homes and ran sessions and activities for the residents. A collection of books was also provided which were kept on site. The focus was to work with groups of vulnerable young people with poor literacy skills and remove barriers to using the library service.
- *New Start* – The service provided all year 6 pupils with fast-track membership. Year 6 were chosen because they were due to start secondary school and the library wanted to highlight the services they could offer the children in their new phase of education. Follow-up activities were also provided so that year 6 pupils could return independently to try out new skills.
- *Cotton Town* – Through New Opportunities Funding, in partnership with the museum, a project collecting and digitising community history was undertaken. In partnership with other library authorities, the local material collected by a range of different projects was put into the National Grid for Learning and was made available to all schools.
- *Inventors' Point* – In partnership with the Regeneration Department, the Business Enterprise Trust and Technet North-West, a collection of books and a searchable database has been provided for all those interested in inventions. There are also staff who can advise and refer clients and a patents lawyer is also available to offer advice on potential inventions.

### Future developments

Those interviewed envisaged the library service developing in a variety of ways. There was to be a continuation of much of the work already undertaken by the library, such as targeting 'hard-to-reach groups' and increasing regional organisation and collaboration. However it was also suggested that in the future, there would be a greater focus on libraries being jointly run, giving users a greater choice of services.

## 5.2 Enfield – wide ranging social inclusion

### Background

The London Borough of Enfield has 14 libraries plus a mobile library. Each of these libraries has a unique character, reflecting the fact that Enfield has a diverse population ranging from affluent parts to some of the most deprived areas in the UK.

Enfield recognised some years ago that the use of libraries was declining and so set about reversing that decline and increasing usage by improving services and reaching out to minority groups. About a year ago Enfield's libraries moved from being a division of leisure to being part of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Department.

Area library managers and members of the development team were positive about the position of libraries in Enfield; a development team member remarked that, 'councillors are very supportive of libraries', and an area branch manager mentioned the fact that, 'a lot of time and money is invested in training'.

Enfield has put in place an innovative range of initiatives designed to attract potentially excluded groups. Some of these initiatives are described below.

### The Jules Thorn Centre for people with sensory impairments

It was established that Enfield Libraries were not adequately serving people with sensory impairment, and so consultation between the library services, Enfield Vision and the Deaf Image Group culminated in the Jules Thorn Centre. It was set up in 1999 by a private charitable donation of £200,000. The money funded the set-up, the refurbishment of the library and the running costs for three years. Since then the part-time specialist member of staff has been financed through mainstream sources. A specially trained member of staff runs 12-week ICT courses for six to nine people.

### 'It's my life'

'It's my life' is a partnership between Enfield libraries and Enfield Disability Action as well as involving some cross-sector working with social services. The library development team identified that people with learning

difficulties did not use the libraries, so they set up a partnership with Enfield Disability Action in order to encourage more visits and usage of the libraries and to raise the skills and self-confidence of disabled people. The project encourages people with learning difficulties to make use of computers in compiling their life stories in the form of mini-biographies.

### **Read Plus!**

Another recent scheme, where the library service is working in partnership with education and social services, is Read Plus!, a project to extend benefits of books and reading for looked-after children. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation provides funding and the enterprise has two main strands. The first element is providing a welcome pack for every child in foster care. The second has been to set up a library in the only residential home in the borough.

### **The roll-on reading scheme**

This was extended in March 2003 with finance from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The scheme is based in Palmers Green Library, which is one of the three main libraries in the borough, but focuses on the five most deprived wards. Children aged between three and eight years old from the Bengali, Turkish and Somali communities are targeted. Specially trained library staff, who speak the relevant languages, now visit 18 schools (compared with 12 previously) and take in mother-tongue books to work with the children in small groups. As a direct result of the scheme more children from the ethnic minorities have joined the library and many of their parents have attended talks in a library. An additional service, which has been made available through the extension of the project, is the bulk loan of mother-tongue books to schools.

### **First steps**

This project, which is LSC-funded, recognises that adults can learn alongside their children. The aim of the programme is to help parents to effectively assist their children to learn to read. Workshops take place in the public libraries and interpreters and childcare are available on demand; it is this unique combination that makes the service so popular with parents.

### **Future developments**

There was a general feeling that libraries have already changed significantly and that they will continue to do so at pace. As one area branch manager enthused,

*Never has a Government shown so much interest in libraries. We always used to be the Cinderella, but now we have been brought into sharp focus and there will be more changes, for example 'ideas stores' rebranding.*

It was considered to be important to safeguard the neutral position that libraries have in society as safe non-threatening places, even if the source of information moves from hard copy to virtual.

## **5.3 Hull – flexible and creative partnerships**

### **Background**

Two outside influences have encouraged the library service in Hull to look more critically at its own performance and have helped it to start to address problems of libraries that were experiencing a decline in usage. Firstly, the city's libraries had been under the control of Humberside Council in their leisure services section until 1996, when that council was disbanded and Hull City Council was created as a unitary authority. The libraries continued under the control of leisure services in Hull, but it was soon realised that they ought to be with education, especially as there was a national focus on the educational role of libraries. Secondly, the Labour Government put libraries on the agenda and introduced library standards.

It became apparent that the traditional structure of a central library and 16 branches that replicated the central library services but in a reduced way was not a viable arrangement. So now they have looked at the city as a whole and tried to meet the needs of each area/community through a flexible approach.

### **Flexible and creative partnerships**

What is really innovative and successful in Hull is the sheer range and diversity of partnerships that the library service has entered into to meet particular needs and to take particular opportunities for different areas of the city. Many of their projects are trying to keep people coming

to the library after childhood – many children come, but then there is a falling away until retirement. So they are trying to make the libraries appeal to teenagers and to get adults back in and help them to realise how good libraries are. However, the book fund has not been 'robbed' to pay for refurbishments; new sources of funding have been found, and partnership working has actually created savings through sharing staff.

These new partnerships include: those with health centres that have been planned but not yet realised; a multi-purpose village centre with a library being built as a New Deal for the community project; one library in which European funding has been used to create a multi-purpose community centre and where they are now signing a service-level agreement with the centre for them to run the library for the city; and the two case studies which are described in some detail below.

### **Hull KC stadium case study - the learning zone**

The new, council-built, KC stadium in Hull provides a home for two professional sports teams, Hull City (soccer) and Hull FC (rugby league). Hull College came up with the idea of the learning zone, as sports studies were popular at the college, and now the whole sports and dance faculty is based at the stadium (over 300 students).

A new library opened in the stadium, as part of the learning zone sharing a building with a café, a gym and dance studio (open to the public as well as the students), and classrooms. Everyone who comes to the college, gym or café comes through the library first.

The key to the successful staffing is that there is a joint reception shared between the college, the gym and the library. The staff have become multi-tasking and all must be able to issue books, enrol students and enrol new gym members, for example. The library is therefore open from 8.45am to 8.45 pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 3.45pm at the weekend.

The benefit of this partnership is that the library has attracted new users (particularly young people and families) whilst retaining their traditional users, mainly older people, many of whom really like having the café to use. From the college point of view: 'The students have raised their attainment enormously since being based at the stadium and use of the library amongst

students is up too' (Head of Faculty). The overall verdict of the work at the stadium is that 'partnership working has been so positive' (Stadium Education Projects Manager).

### **Ings Library – Customer Service Centre pilot project**

This project is a joint venture with housing services who occupy buildings next door to the library. It allows them to offer both library and housing services in the same building – but in addition, through computer and phone links, the customers can access all the other council help and advice services as well as be directly connected to other council departments.

The new scheme has enabled the library to extend its opening hours quite considerably into lunchtimes, evenings and weekends (to 60 hours a week now, nearly double previous levels). This has been made possible, according to the head of service 'by a great can-do attitude from staff', who have embraced it wholeheartedly. As with the stadium project, the longer opening hours are made possible by staff from previously separate organisations who now multi-task. 'The corporate directors have called this scheme "the jewel in the crown" of the council services' (Customer Service Centre Manager).

### **Future developments**

The librarians in Hull were sure that the current range of innovative partnerships was only the beginning of an exciting future for the city's library service:

*I see the future role of the library to be the focal point of partnership building – to be a hub for activity – we are a connector – between individuals and organisations.*

Area Librarian – Bransholme

*Once you have embraced the idea that libraries don't have to be what they always have been, anything becomes possible.*

Area Librarian – Ings

## 5.4 Liverpool – working with young people and reducing disaffection

### Background

Five years ago Liverpool library service was seen as a failing service, but more recently it has, in the words of the librarian,

*.... been able to demonstrate [to the public] that there has been a big change in the library service because there are new buildings, they are open longer hours, they have ICT and more books.*

This transformation has been officially recognised with the award of Charter Mark accreditation and Beacon status. There is a particular focus in the city on engaging disaffected young people and the library service is fully involved in this work.

### Targeting children and young people

The library service has been increasingly looking at engaging children, especially those who would not normally use the service. In order to do this the service has become involved in a Splash programme that has developed over the last three years. This started as a summer programme, but has been extended to all holidays and 'mischief nights' such as Halloween and bonfire night.

The programme has involved a number of statutory and voluntary partner organisations and aims to provide a range of activities to attract new users to the library, give existing users more reason to visit more regularly and keep young people occupied. A member of staff explained: 'In Liverpool there is a political will to seek programmes like Splash because they provide the diversionary activities to keep children off the streets and getting into mischief'.

The library has been a venue for a number of activities such as drama, creative writing and camera work. Activities were held in all 24 libraries across the city. A member of staff said:

*We want to encourage children to read and use computers, but we're also very relaxed. Part of our philosophy is that if they are with us and are enjoying themselves, it is a great starting point because they are*

*safe and they are not taking part in any mischief in the community.*

### Events and activities

A significant emphasis has been placed in Liverpool on events and activities. For example, the central library has held three Harry Potter days which capitalise on the success of the books and include live owls and bats, potion workshops, magicians and face painters. These types of activities are seen as being paramount to attracting new types of users. A member of library staff stated:

*It is about generating things people don't expect and targeting provision so that people who are not in your user base are drawn in by something that appeals to them and is not a traditional library thing.*

### Future developments

The increase of the library service's role as a learning provider was envisaged, with more multi-service centres and a decrease of libraries as a stand-alone service. In particular, the library service was responding to the changing education system in Liverpool. Schools were being clustered into eight learning networks. The service already had six libraries offering study support out-of-hours and was looking to develop a further two and strengthen the support to all networks.

Emphasis was also placed on the library service being more innovative and taking greater risks in order to meet their targets and priorities.

## 5.5 Sandwell – promoting lifelong learning

### Background

Sandwell is a local authority consisting of six towns and much service delivery is based on a six-towns approach. This is reflected in the structure of the library service with six community library managers [one per town] who concentrate on identifying local needs and developing services according to these needs.

Recent re-structuring of cabinet members' portfolios has strengthened the political and structural position of libraries. Previously the elected member had had a very wide portfolio including education, lifelong learning and

leisure. There is now a cabinet member with responsibilities for lifelong learning, leisure and culture which includes libraries and is a more manageable brief.

The library service aims to fulfil the priorities identified by *Framework for the Future* and the relevant council priorities for improvement. As a result a primary aim of the library service is to support lifelong learning which is a key central and local government priority, but also reflects local needs as nearly half of Sandwell's adults have no formal qualifications. Specifically the service targeted two groups: under five year-olds, and adult learners with basic skills needs.

### **Learning centre**

One library had developed a learning centre with new opportunities funding. Traditional library services and drop-in ICT use were available on the ground floor of the building, and a learning centre was housed on the second floor, working in partnership with adult learning and colleges to deliver a range of courses supporting both informal and formal learning opportunities.

### **Membership**

Making the process of joining the library easier was considered vital to increasing membership and reaching excluded groups. For example, the library service was working with the New Deal Partnership and in one area all year 3 pupils had been provided with automatic membership.

### **Laptop libraries**

An example of the outreach work in Sandwell is the initiative called 'laptop libraries'. The service has employed ICT-trained librarians to take laptops and book stocks out into the community. The laptop libraries can be run from any locations including play groups and clinics. As well as meeting the needs of the community, the initiative aimed to make people aware of the services the library offered. According to the project manager, laptop libraries were successful in raising literacy levels but less so in increasing library membership.

### **Future developments**

Outreach work is seen as a key activity in continuing to expand membership and use of the library service. There

are 79 neighbourhoods within the six towns, some of which are very deprived. The library service had undertaken an analysis to identify the extent of library use in each area and the contribution it could make to meeting the needs identified through other research. This is beginning to feed into a new programme of initiatives and extended services for the future.

## **5.6 Sunderland – integrated public services**

### **Background**

Sunderland has been going through a sustained period of regeneration over the last 15 years. With the decline of traditional industries such as shipbuilding and coalmining, the area has received regeneration funding that the library service, among others, has been able to take advantage of. The city's 21 libraries fall under the auspice of culture and tourism, having previously been part of the Education Department. The management structure of the library service has recently changed, with four people appointed to take lead roles in developing certain aspects of the service. One of these roles specifically includes, for the first time, responsibility for looking at social inclusion.

### **Peoplefirst**

High on the social agenda of Sunderland Council is the development of Peoplefirst. This is a four-year investment programme to develop public services for the people of Sunderland. After widespread consultation with local communities, it was clear that they wanted more localised and accessible public services. Essentially the Peoplefirst programme will bring public services together under one roof, placing them in centres across the region and making them accessible to everybody, rather than having individual but centralised services.

As part of this development, the library service has already moved two libraries from ageing buildings into new community developments (see below under Sandhill and Hetton-le-hole). However, it is unlikely that all libraries will be able to move into community facilities and some may become information points providing information about other council services. Four of the most innovative initiatives in Sunderland are described below.



## **Sandhill Centre Library and Electronic Village Hall**

The objectives of Peoplefirst are already being put into practice. Through a private finance initiative scheme, centralised, modern facilities have been built at Sandhill. Occupying one location now are a secondary school with sporting facilities, a swimming pool open to the public, a local theatre, community policing, community meeting rooms, an electronic village hall<sup>2</sup> and a brand new library. The manager of this library reported 'a real sense of community ownership. They think this is "our place, our facilities"'. The manager spends a lot of time on outreach work, to try to bring different community groups into the library, and the appointment of an assistant manager has helped her in this. She commented that the new library had given her a 'clean slate' to draw in people, without the preconceptions of the old library. She concluded that the 'future is very, very exciting'.

## **Hetton Centre**

The Hetton Centre is a multi-purpose facility opened in 2003 that encapsulates the vision of Peoplefirst. The centre contains a library with computer facilities, a community hall with a bar, offices for the Housing Group, Age Concern, community policing, a small doctor's surgery used twice a week, the welfare rights service and a café. This new facility has provided much more space for the library including a teaching room in which there are sessions for adult and community learning.

## **Houghton Library**

Opened in 2001, Houghton Library has some elements of Peoplefirst. Although not strictly all under one roof, the library is in the same parade as Connexions, Job Linkage and the Housing Group. The library is involved in an interesting partnership with the local college, which makes use of the teaching room and the ICT facilities. This follows on from a partnership that exists across Sunderland, between the libraries, Sunderland College and the University of Sunderland, through which facilities are shared.

## **LIAZE bus**

The LIAZE project (Libraries and Information Action Zone) began in 1999 and was funded by the single

regeneration budget for the first four years. Since then it has been funded by the Coalfields Area Committee. The LIAZE bus travels around the former coalfield and shipbuilding areas of Sunderland and provides a taster of ICT to anyone in the community. Alongside the expansion of ICT facilities in libraries through the People's Network and the development of Electronic Village Halls the project continues to work with community groups and organisations to develop ICT confidence and skills.

## **Future developments**

'Sunderland is in a period of transition and transformation' according to the Assistant Head of culture and tourism, and it would appear that this is also the case for the library service. The libraries have been included in a number of projects where local services have been centralised, and appear to be at the heart of the proposed Peoplefirst scheme. Rather than move away from the more traditional service of the library it is felt that library services have evolved, 'a natural evolution', though it is also stressed that 'there is always going to be a role for the book'.

## **5.7 Summary**

There are some common themes that have emerged from the case studies, which are discussed below.

### **The transformation of the role of library staff**

It is clear from the experience in these case-study areas that the extension of the role of libraries requires a change in the role of librarians. This has not always been easy to achieve, as many library staff have worked in the service for a long time, and large-scale changes to the working environment can be threatening. However, in the most successful initiatives staff had embraced change and were vital in making new arrangements work. The challenges library staff have faced include:

- accepting more flexible working hours
- learning new skills in multi-tasking arrangements
- working less behind a desk and more with target groups, including, for example, disaffected teenagers
- adapting to noisier libraries and the demands of new technology

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<sup>2</sup> Electronic Village Halls provide free access to the internet and deliver informal technology familiarisation and training.

- continuing to provide traditional services as well as providing new ones.

Good training opportunities were seen as important in helping staff learn new skills as well as giving them the confidence to work in new ways. In most cases there has also been a process of reorganisation and restructuring of library services in order to reflect the different ways of working and new priorities.

## Partnership

At the heart of the success of these varied projects across the six authorities was a willingness to work together with a wide range of partners to create new forms of service for the public. The survey results in Chapter 3 showed the scope of partnership across the country, and these case studies reinforce this and show the particular importance of public sector partnerships in delivering the public services that people want.

The librarians interviewed in the six areas covered in this chapter were generally very positive about the benefits of partnership. Partnerships were perceived as having many benefits, including the effective targeting of specific groups and increasing library membership, increasing the profile of the library, bringing in new funding streams and creating shared resources. Different organisations can also bring different kinds of expertise to library services and partners can learn from one other.

Libraries were also viewed in a positive light by partner agencies and organisations that often saw libraries as a sustainable resource in which initiatives could be based. Libraries were also considered to be an effective outreach facility for partners where they could gain access to a wide range of target groups.

Most of the comments made about partnership were positive, but there were some difficulties encountered. Often partner departments and organisations had different and incompatible indicators for evaluating services and sometimes differing agendas among partners caused conflict. Another area of concern was around the sustainability of initiatives developed in partnership. For example, some of the projects developed in partnership are short-term and when the funding ends the projects end too.

## National focus and local leadership

Another common theme to emerge from these case studies is the importance of the new national focus on libraries in giving clear targets and priorities to library services. The national library standards, the library plans and position statement and *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003a) were all seen as important steps by senior library managers in the process of change. There was a consensus that these processes and documents had sharpened people's minds in relation to the future direction of libraries. National initiatives such as the People's Network and SureStart had also made a major impact on the extension of the traditional roles of libraries. In addition to this national focus, it became clear from the case studies that a consistent factor in the success of extending the role of libraries was positive and supportive local political leadership. It helped to have an elected member with a clear responsibility for libraries and a council that could see the role libraries can play in achieving their overall objectives. The restructuring of library services was referred to in the section above on staffing, but should be mentioned again in the context of the importance of effective management and leadership in securing change.

## 6 Conclusions

This chapter draws together the findings from the literature review, questionnaire survey and case-study visits, and discusses their implications for creating an expansive library service that is responsive to the needs of the whole community. The chapter starts by looking at the factors driving and enabling change and moves on to discuss the range and scope of current activity, and the general issues that have emerged from the research.

### 6.1 Driving and enabling change

#### 6.1.1 Central government influence

The literature review revealed a number of documents published by the Government and its agencies, identifying the potential of public libraries to become more inclusive and to extend the provision of non-threatening and non-judgmental services to all members of the communities they serve. Ideally, library provision would focus on three main areas:

- promotion of reading and informal learning
- access to digital skills and services, including e-government
- measures to tackle social exclusion, build community identity and develop citizenship.

Situated at the heart of communities and with enhanced ICT resources provided through the People's Network, libraries were considered ideal locations for accessing information on all local services, as well as that more generally available through free internet links. Their potential to promote and accommodate learning provision, including through e-learning, was also recognised. Library premises were viewed as easily accessible spaces which could be used for meetings or clinics with local and central government agencies, voluntary agencies and community groups.

The literature review also clearly shows the strong central government policy steer for libraries through library standards and position statements as well as *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003a). The survey revealed a very

high level of library service involvement in national initiatives such as the People's Network, SureStart, Bookstart and Learndirect. The case studies reveal the importance of these initiatives in opening up the possibility of partnerships and new ways of working, as well as making more innovation possible through the use of the ICT resources provided by the People's Network, for example. There was also evidence from the case studies that underlined the importance of the stronger central policy steer.

In particular, the library standards were intended to introduce coherence into public library provision, and detailed objectives for accessibility (including location and opening hours), usage, staffing, resourcing and customer satisfaction. Evidence from both the questionnaire survey and the case studies showed the drive that the PLAs had made towards meeting these standards; indeed the national focus on libraries appears to have given legitimacy to these authorities to push through changes.

#### 6.1.2 Local needs and structures

The section above shows that a major influence for change for library services can be attributed to central government policy. However, there was also plenty of evidence from all three strands of the project that illustrated the diversity of local innovation and initiatives. Meeting local needs was a major motivator for both elected members and council employees. So part of the drive for change can be attributed to a positive desire to meet the needs of local people, and part of the challenge for councils and their library services is to be able to respond and deliver solutions.

Case-study visits provided insight into the ways in which local structures can assist library services in widening their range of services. Local authorities were most effective when they had a set of clear overall objectives for their services and were able to provide supportive political leadership. It was also evident that councils who recognised the role their library services could play in reaching their objectives, and those that had an elected member with responsibility for the library service, were viewed as offering positive support.

Within the library services themselves, management structures needed to be reviewed in light of the changing role of the service. A number of the library services visited had made changes to their management structures. In some cases they had strengthened their strategic management in order to ensure that appropriate services were delivered across the PLA, rather than leaving project development to individual operational management teams that targeted specific areas and populations.

### **6.1.3 The decline of book borrowing**

The third driver for change is a more negative one. As the literature review revealed, there have been some recent high profile reports concerning the shortcomings of the public library service, and resultant media speculation about the possible demise of the public library. The case-study visits provided an opportunity for heads of services and other senior managers to give their views on the future of libraries. In one case there was a general feeling amongst staff that the problems were being overstated, and in some cases little direct reference was made to the situation. However, there were other case-study areas where the problems of declining book borrowing were being taken very seriously and were considered to be a major reason for embracing change.

Whatever the relative importance of the above factors influencing change, both the questionnaire survey and the case studies highlighted the willingness of PLAs to try to widen access to their services, as well as providing a wealth of information on the ways that they had gone about this challenge. In fact one of the encouraging aspects of the research findings is the sheer scale and diversity of PLAs' responses to the widening of the roles of libraries, and the following section summarises this activity.

## **6.2 Participation in initiatives to extend the role of libraries**

Responses to the questionnaire survey provided clear evidence of the high level of involvement of libraries in a wide range of additional services designed to extend their role and use. Many of these services were provided through national or local initiatives. Respondents viewed national initiatives, such as the People's Network, SureStart, Extended Schools and

Bookstart, as contributors to the increased use of libraries, while the case studies provided information on the way that services had built on these schemes to further links and projects with partner organisations. Library services also reported a wide variety of local and regional initiatives. These too were aimed at extending the use of libraries or services, either by the community in general or by specific groups. They included:

- providing more learning opportunities in libraries
- promoting the enjoyment of reading or poetry
- making libraries points of contact for local council services
- improving basic skills, including reading
- improving ICT skills generally.

### **6.2.1 Sharing buildings and service delivery**

Although the initiatives to extend the role of libraries were many and varied, it is possible to group together the major types. The case studies revealed far-reaching developments in terms of sharing buildings and service delivery between libraries and other agencies and organisations. The advantages of sharing buildings and service delivery are widely accepted. They include cost savings, job enrichment for staff, increased footfall, reaching target groups, sharing expertise as well as convenient and coherent service delivery. The barriers to the introduction of these kind of schemes include a narrow concept of what libraries should be, a shortage of capital funding for new, adapted or refurbished buildings and in some cases the relationship between county and district councils.

### **6.2.2 Lifelong learning**

The evidence in this report has shown that libraries are engaged in many initiatives to encourage learning. The case studies revealed the very prominent position that some authorities give to the creation of partnerships for learning. Libraries can be said to be genuinely engaged in lifelong learning. Starting with books for babies and toddlers, through SureStart, homework support, work with excluded and looked-after children through to adult education and special projects for older people, libraries are engaged with every age group in informal and, increasingly, formal learning provision.

### 6.2.3 ICT provision

The People's Network had vastly increased the provision of ICT equipment, providing access to local information in almost all of the libraries. Many library services are also engaged with a wide range of ICT-based initiatives which include information services, archives, history projects, health promotion, and e-learning. The extension of ICT provision in libraries has caused some tension between new users and traditional users who want books and quiet in their libraries. There is also some concern that as computer ownership and internet access spread to most homes, libraries will have to think again about how best to encourage people to come to libraries. Interactive websites and mobile ICT services are two of the innovative answers to this question. In respect of the former, case-study interviews provided evidence that mobile services were particularly useful for negotiating access to 'hard-to-reach' groups and including them in the information society.

### 6.2.4 Targeting specific groups

Many of the initiatives found in the literature and reported in the survey and case studies concerned the targeting of specific groups. Nearly all had targeted children, older people, and adults with basic skills needs, and three-quarters had targeted minority ethnic groups. Providing for the disabled and harder to reach groups was done particularly well in one case-study area, but remains more ad hoc in many areas.

The challenge for libraries in the future appears to be to draw in those harder-to-reach groups who do not identify themselves as having learning needs, or whose reading or language skills are such that they have not become aware of the opportunities that are available to them in a library. These groups, which may include travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and migrant workers, may only be reached by more radical provision.

### 6.2.5 Extended opening hours

Extended opening hours had been strongly recommended by the Government and its agencies, in order to make libraries accessible to a larger proportion of the communities which they served. PLAs had responded in a number of ways, including increasing opening hours in all of their libraries, increasing opening in selected libraries and opening on additional days or parts of days, including Saturdays and Sundays.

Interviewees reported varying levels of success for the extended opening. In some libraries response had been poor or limited while, in others, librarians considered the additional hours a success and reported that new groups of readers had attended and joined the library. The extended hours had led to some issues about staffing and staff training, particularly in view of the increase in anti-social behaviour by young people reported by one PLA.

## 6.3 Overarching issues

### 6.3.1 Partnerships

Both the questionnaire survey and case studies showed that, in order to deliver the new initiatives mentioned above, PLAs had become involved in high levels of partnership, particularly with other local and central government departments and agencies. Library service involvement with voluntary sector organisations was also widely reported, along with a smaller but growing involvement with the private sector.

The case-study visits highlighted the important role that partnerships played in securing the success of projects. Working with a range of agencies has enabled libraries to tap into expertise that has provided them with access to specific groups of users, including those that had not made use of library services in the past. Users have benefited from the provision of a variety of information and learning opportunities, along with library membership. Representatives of other agencies involved in these partnerships have emphasised the positive relationships that have been established.

However, building partnerships was not an easy process and staff from libraries and other partner organisations mentioned difficulties they had encountered. Different agendas could occasionally cause conflict as could personality clashes and different funding priorities.

### 6.3.2 Funding

Providing extended and additional services has cost implications and the questionnaire survey revealed how these had been funded. A proportion of the funds for additional services came through increases in library budgets, while other sources included the re-allocation of resources, as well as funding from central government and from partnerships with the public sector, other local

authority departments, the voluntary sector and the private sector. When asked whether these services could be continued if funding was withdrawn, more than half of those surveyed said they could not. However, the case studies revealed that some projects that were viewed as being particularly successful had been secured for the future by the allocation of funding from the general library budget. Not surprisingly, the large amount of capital funding needed for major building works was hard to find and in many areas this was slowing the pace of change.

### **6.3.3 Staffing and staff training**

The literature suggested that library services should look at their staffing profiles and ensure that their staff fit the needs of a modern, inclusive service. Survey respondents reported that, since 2002, there has been an increase in staff with specialist skills working within the library environment. There was also evidence of library services employing people from minority ethnic groups, in order to make and maintain communication with these hard-to-reach communities.

More generally, the extension of the role of libraries is in some cases radically changing the role of library staff as they are being encouraged to get out from behind their desks and work with different groups of people both inside and outside the library. Training was an ongoing need for the library staff who were facing these changes and extensions to their roles.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

The main thrust of this research has been to ascertain the extent to which libraries were delivering extended services to the community. The libraries responding to the survey, and those visited for the case studies, were all able to provide information on a range of ways that additional services were being delivered and non-traditional users were being targeted. Most respondents acknowledged that there is a great deal more scope for development and that they were planning new services in the future. Nevertheless, many new and innovative services were identified.

## 7 Recommendations

This chapter moves beyond the presentation and analysis of evidence to consider future issues and make recommendations for action. The chapter starts with issues for individual library services and moves on to issues for local and central government.

The evidence presented in this report indicates that library services are actively engaged in a very wide range of initiatives designed to extend their role in the community. However, the research indicated that there are innovative projects being developed by individual library authorities that are not being disseminated to other library services. It is suggested that:

- A forum needs to be made available through which libraries could disseminate information about new and innovative schemes they have implemented successfully. This would provide a larger pool of well-tried ideas that library services could trial and adapt to suit their local circumstances.

There also emerged an undercurrent of concern about sustainability of a strong public library service in the future. Opinions of library managers were divided over what the future priorities for their services should be, but strong voices emerged to caution against attempting to achieve too many diverse objectives. Specifically, although libraries do have many different services to offer to different groups, they cannot be all things to all people. Libraries, as well as engaging with innovation, must focus on their strengths.

- Libraries need to identify clearly their main target audiences and promote their services appropriately to these groups.
- There are areas where libraries still have a niche market, for example, in local history and genealogy; in knowledge management – providing expert navigation of knowledge and information sources; as single and comprehensive information points; and as a place of independent learning. These areas need to be strengthened and promoted.

The changing role of staff in libraries is taking them out from behind desks and away from books to deal directly

with a wide variety of user groups. This has considerable implications, not just for the training and development of existing staff but for the recruitment of future staff and the structuring and deployment of the workforce.

- Sufficient funding and appropriate training need to be put in place to ensure that staff are fully supported and equipped to deal with groups that can be challenging in their attitudes and behaviour.
- Staffing structures need to reflect the changing roles of library staff and efforts must be made to match staff skills to appropriate types and levels of work.
- Policy makers and library service senior managers need to address the issue of what kind of people, with what kind of skills, the librarians of the future should be?

Embracing new technology to attract more visitors to libraries has been successful in recent years. The availability of ICT and extensive audio-visual collections have made important contributions to offsetting the decline in book borrowing. However, the spread of private ownership of computers and the emergence of easily downloadable music and films could mean that this effect is relatively short-lived. The rapid pace of technological change is always going to make it difficult for public sector service providers to keep up-to-date.

- Radical thinking is needed by library services to anticipate and plan for even five years' time in terms of the role of technology in changing the way libraries operate.

A different aspect of technological advance concerns the opening up of possibilities for increasing public access to libraries. The current separation of most school, college and university libraries from the public library system and the essentially local organisation of public libraries, does limit public access to public resources.

- Current schemes to create a single ticket for local public libraries and educational institutions' libraries need to be evaluated and good practice needs to be disseminated.



- The practicality of regional or national library cards needs to be investigated.

Multi-use buildings in which libraries share space and customers with a variety of public, voluntary and private service providers are clearly successful in a number of areas. There are, however, some issues that need to be addressed by government.

- The role of libraries as important areas of neutral public spaces could be undermined by placing them in secondary schools, for example, or by too close a connection with social services because of the negative feelings some people have about these institutions.
- The speed of change is in part hampered by the difficulties of raising capital funding for substantial building projects. Can specific funds be found to finance more of these projects?
- The complexity of negotiating and sustaining partnerships is another barrier to change. In multi-tier local authorities, district and county councils need to prioritise the seeking of common ground.

The complex roles that libraries fulfil need to be openly acknowledged by policy makers, particularly at national level, and supported by other public sector providers. This is especially important if libraries are expected to continue developing their role in social inclusion and community building.

- These kinds of activities do not have simple quantifiable outcomes and it is not helpful to reduce the judgement of the performance of libraries to crude measures of the numbers of books lent or visits made. Qualitative measures of performance that are sensitive to local circumstances need to carry weight.
- Other local authority departments and services need to recognise that library services can play a role in most projects concerned with building communities and promoting social inclusion and citizenship, and should be proactive in enlisting library involvement from the start of projects.



## Extending the Role of Libraries - Increasing the Role of Libraries within our Communities

### Heads of Library Services

The potential role of libraries in promoting social inclusion is now widely recognised. In recent years many libraries have broadened the range of services they offer, and partnerships with other agencies have been established. This was acknowledged in the DCMS publication *Framework for the Future* which sets out the government's vision for the public library service. The Local Government Association has now commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out a study of the provision that public libraries make for the community, in addition to their traditional lending and information services.

This questionnaire is being sent to all Heads of Library Services in local authorities in England and Wales. We would be very grateful if you could fill it in and return it to NFER in the prepaid envelope provided. Your cooperation will enable us to compile an accurate picture of the range and extent of services currently being offered. Please return this questionnaire to the NFER by 4th June 2004.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mark Bailey (telephone 01753 637335) if you would like to know more about the research.

### About the Library Service

**1a.** We would like to know about the scope of the public library service provided by your authority

*Please tell us how many of the following you are responsible for:*

Type of provision made	How many?
<b>Public/community libraries</b>	
Libraries open more than 45 hours per week	<input type="text"/>
Libraries open 30-45 hours per week	<input type="text"/>
Libraries open 10-29 hours per week	<input type="text"/>
Libraries open less than ten hours per week	<input type="text"/>
Mobile libraries	<input type="text"/>
<b>Other libraries</b>	
Schools library services	<input type="text"/>
Libraries in schools	<input type="text"/>
Prison libraries	<input type="text"/>
NHS/Hospital libraries	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

**1b.** Do you have any of the following web-based services?

*(Please tick all boxes that apply)*

Information relating to the local area

☐

Information relating to a wider area

☐

Archives

☐

Other

☐

## Extending the Role of the Library

**2.** Since January 2002, have you targeted any of the following groups, encouraging them to make more use of the library services?

**Groups**

**Please tick all groups targeted**

Adults with basic skills needs

☐

1

Members of minority ethnic groups

☐

2

Gypsies/Travellers

☐

3

Prisoners

☐

4

Older people

☐

5

Unemployed people

☐

6

Children in care

☐

7

Young disaffected people

☐

8

Pre-school children and their parents

☐

9

School children

☐

10

Other target groups *(please specify)*

☐

11

**3.** Please tell us if your library service has been involved in the following initiatives and which, in your opinion, have led to an increase in community use of library services.

**National initiative**

**Tick if involved**

**Tick if initiative has increased  
use of library services**

People's Network

☐

1

☐

1

Learndirect

☐

2

☐

2

Sure Start

☐

3

☐

3

Extended Schools

☐

4

☐

4

Bookstart

☐

5

☐

5

Other *(please specify)*

☐

6

☐

6

4. Since January 2002 has your library service been involved in any local or regional initiatives to extend the role of libraries?

*(Please list title and main aim of programme, use a separate sheet if necessary)*

**Title of Programme**

**Main Aim of Programme**

**Title**

**Aim**

5. What have you done to extend the use of traditional library services (lending, reference and information) by new users or lapsed users and what have you planned for the future?

*(Please tick all boxes that apply)*

	did before Jan 2002	done since Jan 2002	planned for the future
Changes to opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Stock improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Changing the library environment	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Combining libraries with other public services	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Combining libraries with private sector services	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Specific outreach initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Promotion of library services	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Staff training/employing specialist staff	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Resources/access for disabled users	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Resources in other languages for minority ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Transport initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
Taking library resources to non-traditional locations	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Reading groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14

*(Additional documents outlining specific developments may be attached if desired)*



- 6.** Have new services been introduced in order to attract new users or to target particular groups of users? Are any new services planned for the future?  
(Please tick all boxes that apply)

Service	did before 2002	since Jan 2002	planned for the future
Learning Centres in libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Courses for adults with basic skills needs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Stock improvement/labelling for adults with basic skills needs	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
ICT hardware installed	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
ICT training provided	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Free internet access	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Charged-for internet access	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Interactive web site	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Mobile ICT services	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Homework resources	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Job search facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
Business advice and help	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Specialist staff - basic skills, job search, business advice, learning mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
Other services (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14

(Additional documents outlining specific developments  
may be attached if desired)

- 7a.** How many libraries in your local authority have adapted or extended services to provide for new users?

- 7b.** Does this include the central library? Yes ☐ No ☐

- 7c.** Does this include the smaller community libraries? Yes ☐ No ☐

- 8.** Has your library service been involved with other partners in order to deliver these initiatives?  
(Please tick all boxes that apply)

**Partners**

**Tick those that apply**

Other parts of your local authority:

Education

☐

1

Leisure

☐

2

Social Services

☐

3

Others (please specify)

☐

4

Other County/Unitary councils

☐

5

District councils

☐

6

Parish councils

☐

7

Central Government agencies:

Justice System

☐

8

Employment

☐

9

NHS

☐

10

Other (please specify)

☐

11

Voluntary and community sector organisations

☐

12

Private sector companies

☐

13

Other (please specify)

☐

14

- 9.** Since January 2002 what steps (if any) have you taken to identify the needs of local people?

- 10.** Which of the following sources of funding have been used to pay for the extended or additional services/initiatives?  
(Please tick all boxes that apply)

Increased annual library budget

☐ 1

The reallocation of resources within the library service  
(e.g. from closing branch libraries)

☐ 2

Other departments within your local authority

☐ 3

Partnership funding from the public sector

☐ 4

Partnership funding from the private sector

☐ 5

Partnership funding with voluntary and community sector

☐ 6

Central government

☐ 7

Other (please specify)

☐ 8

- 11.** If this funding was withdrawn, would you be able to continue to provide the extended and additional services?

Yes

☐

No

☐

- 12.** What further plans do you have for developing the role of the library service in social inclusion?

## Opening Hours

- 13.** What proportion of opening hours across your static libraries are outside traditional (Mon-Fri) office hours?

%

- 14.** Has this proportion increased since 2002?

Yes

☐

No

☐

If no go to Question 18

- 15.** What proportion of your libraries have increased non-traditional opening times through:  
(Please tick all boxes that apply)

Increasing the total time that libraries are open

up to  
25%

☐

26-  
50%

☐

51-  
75%

☐

76-  
100%

☐

Shifting to later opening and closing

☐
☐
☐
☐

Opening on Sundays

☐
☐
☐
☐

Opening for longer on Saturdays

☐
☐
☐
☐

Opening for longer in the evenings

☐
☐
☐
☐



**16.** If you have increased non-traditional opening times, how has this been funded?  
Is it through:

*(Please tick all boxes that apply)*

The reallocation of resources within the library service

New sources of funding from the council

Other new sources of funding *(please state)*

☐  
☐  
☐

**17a.** Have any of the following outcomes been observed since you increased non-traditional opening hours?

*(Please tick all boxes that apply)*

More visits in total

More visits from target groups

More books lent

More use of ICT facilities

Other *(please specify)*

☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3  
☐ 4  
☐ 5

**17b.** To what extent would you attribute these outcomes to the increased hours?  
*(Please tick all boxes that apply)*

More visits in total

More visits from target groups

More books lent

More use of ICT facilities

None of these

Other *(please specify)*

	in all cases	in some cases	not at all	don't know
More visits in total	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More visits from target groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More books lent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More use of ICT facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of these	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**17c.** What information, if any, have you collected which indicates that increased hours have contributed to more use of library services? *(Please describe)*

**17d.** Are the increased hours targeted at particular users (e.g. families)?  
(Please say which users)

—  
—  
—

**18.** Do you have any other comments about the extended role of libraries?

—  
—  
—

**Please could you give some details to help with the analysis.**

Your job title

Length of time in post

Name of Authority

Is there a scrutiny committee with specific responsibility  
for libraries?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Is there a cabinet member with specific responsibility  
for libraries?

Yes

☐

No

☐

**We would like to make a small number of case-study visits to library  
authorities that have interesting or innovative approaches to extending  
the role of libraries. Would you be willing for a researcher to contact you?  
If so, please give a telephone number/email address for contact.**

**We are very grateful for your help in  
completing this questionnaire.**

## Appendix 2: Key facts and figures on the funding and use of public libraries

There have been a number of studies of libraries and library use by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Market & Opinion Research International (MORI), the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and others, and these have been collected for a report on libraries and library use, up to and including the year 2003, published by the MLA (Matty, 2004)<sup>3</sup>. Data for this appendix has been drawn from CIPFA statistical tables and from the Matty study. It should be noted that Matty reports statistics collected either for the UK as a whole, or for England only, while in contrast, the NFER study covered public libraries in the 149<sup>4</sup> local authorities in England and 22 in Wales. Where available, figures for England and Wales are quoted (these are drawn exclusively from the CIPFA statistics), otherwise those for England only are reported.

Public libraries in England and Wales spent over £887.3 million in the year 2002/3 (excluding capital charges). Overall, their net expenditure was £762.2 million, an increase of £48.3 million (6.8 per cent) on the figure for 2001/2 (figures from CIPFA website [www.ipf.com](http://www.ipf.com)).

The number of public libraries in England and Wales open for more than ten hours a week was reported to be 35,850 in the year 2002/2003 (CIPFA, 2004).

Matty points out that public libraries are not able to operate deficit budgets or to build up reserves. Table A.1 shows that spending by public library services in the year 2002/2003 amounted to nearly £463 million for staffing, £110 million on collections, £97 million on premises and £2.7 million on preservation work.

**Table A.1 Budget spent by English and Welsh local government on the public library service in 2002/03**

	£
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>887,371,401</b>
Staff	462,707,094
Collections	110,195,670
Preservation	2,741,329
Premises	97,398,067

*Total expenditure figures exclude capital charges  
Source: CIPFA, 2004*

According to CIPFA, library expenditure on premises, employees and support services has remained largely stable since 1997/98. However, there has been a decrease in the expenditure on books as a proportion of total spend, down from 11.3 per cent in 1997/98 to 9.2 per cent in 2002/2003. At the same time, expenditure on audio-visual stock has risen from 11.5 per cent of the total spend on materials in 1997/98 to 17.3 per cent in 2002/03 (CIPFA, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004).

### Staffing

The total number of full time equivalent (FTE) employees in the workforce of public libraries in England and Wales during 2002/2003 was 22,661.8. As can be seen from Table A.2, nearly a quarter of these (24 per cent) are professional staff.

**Table A.2 Number of FTE posts in Libraries in England and Wales 2002/2003**

Type of post	Number of FTE Posts in 2002/2003
Professional posts	5,411.2
All other posts	17,250.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,661.8</b>

*Source: CIPFA, 2004*

<sup>3</sup> Matty (2004) identifies and comments on all sources of data since they were gathered from a range of studies which may have used significantly different terminology and methods of data collection

<sup>4</sup> For this project a questionnaire survey was additionally sent to the City of London

## Library Stock

In 2002/2003, public libraries in England and Wales held a total stock of 97,244,000 books, augmented by audio-visual and electronic media (see Tables A.3 and A.4).

**Table A.3 Total Book Stocks in Libraries in England and Wales 2002/2003**

Type of stock	(1,000s)
Adult fiction	24,794
Adult non-fiction	26,213
Children's	20,594
Reference books	13,813
Reserve stock and unallocated	10,478
Extra copies of items in sets	1,352
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,244</b>

Source: CIPFA, 2004

Matty (2004) provides figures that enable a comparison to be made between the number of books held by public libraries in 1998/9 and 2002/03 in England only:

- Total books held in public libraries in England in 1998/99 98,101,000
- Total books held in public libraries in England in 2002/03 90,637,000

This represents a decrease of 7.6 per cent over the four years.

**Table A.4 Total Audio-Visual Stocks in Libraries in England and Wales 2002/2003**

Type of stock	(1,000s)
Sound recordings:	
Music	2,886
Talking Books	2,017
Video	1,953
Multi-media, Open Learning Packs	96
CD-ROMs, Software, etc.	139
Reference	70
Reserve stock and unallocated	449
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,610</b>

Source: CIPFA, 2004

Again, Matty provides figures for comparison for England only:

- Audio-visual holdings by public libraries in England in 1998/99 6,547,000
- Audio-visual holdings by public libraries in England in 2002/03 7,246,000

This represents an increase of 9.6 per cent.

## Library Lending

Overall, lending of books and audio-visual materials by public libraries has reduced in recent years. Table A.5 shows the total number of books and audio-visual resources issued in England and Wales during the year 2002/2003, while Table A.6 shows the issues for England only during 1989/99 and 2002/03.

**Table A.5 Total issues of books and audio-visual materials in England and Wales in 2002/2003**

Type of stock	Number (1,000s)
Adult fiction	158,770
Adult non-fiction	82,315
Children's	79,924
Extra copies of items in sets	674
<b>Total Books</b>	<b>321,683</b>
Sound recordings:	
Music	9,306
Talking books	12,078
Video	14,308
Multi-media, Open learning packs	765
CD Roms, Software etc.	799
<b>Total Audi-Visual</b>	<b>37,256</b>

Source: CIPFA, 2004

**Table A.6 Number of items issued in public libraries in England in 1998/99 and 2002/03**

Type of stock	1998/99 (1000s)	2002/03 (1000s)
Books	389,059,857	305,112,000
Audio-visual resources	31,264,575	36,139,000
<b>Total number of items issued</b>	<b>420,324,432</b>	<b>341,251,000</b>

Source: CIPFA, 2004

As can be seen from Table A.6, during the period covered by the two years, the number of book issues has declined and the number of audio-visual resources has increased.

## Library Users

CIPFA provides figures on public library use that have been collected from the public library services (Table A.7).

**Table A.7 Numbers of library users in England and Wales in 2002/2003**

Library users	Number
Number of active borrowers	13,970,521
Number of housebound readers	101,653
Number of visits to library premises	287,306,824

Source: CIPFA, 2004

Matty (2004), reports that 41 per cent of the population said they visit a library at least once a month and that Sturgis and Jackson (2003) had estimated that between 425,000 and 607,000 people in the UK (0.8 per cent of the population) visit libraries on any given day.

Matty (2004) provided data on customers' satisfaction with library services only for the whole of the UK. This data shows that 90 per cent of users said that library services were good, and staff helpfulness was rated highly by 96 per cent of users. However, users viewed other aspects of library provision as less satisfactory, with only 73 per cent rating library stock as good and 71 per cent being satisfied with the opening hours.

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## **Websites**

### **Inspiring Learning for All**

<http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/default.aspx?flash=true>

### **Improvement and Development Agency**

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/>

### **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council**

<http://www.mla.gov.uk/index.asp>

### **IDeA Knowledge**

<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>

# List of documents from websites

Documents were retrieved from the following websites as part of the literature review:

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals [www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk)

Department for Culture, Media and Sport [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

Department for Education and Skills [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

Improvement and Development Agency [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

including IDeA Knowledge [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)

London Libraries Development Agency [www.llda.org.uk](http://www.llda.org.uk)

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource) [www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk)

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

National Literacy Trust [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)

New Opportunities Fund [www.nof.org.uk](http://www.nof.org.uk)

The People's Network [www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk](http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk)

Tavistock Institute [www.tavistock.org](http://www.tavistock.org)

United Kingdom On Line Network [www.ukoln.ac.uk](http://www.ukoln.ac.uk)

Beacon Councils 2002–3: "Libraries as a Community Resource"

London Borough of Barnet [www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk)

Blackburn with Darwen Council <http://library.blackburnworld.com>

Leeds City Council [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)

Liverpool City Council [www.liverpool.gov.uk](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk)

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)

Suffolk County Council [www.suffolkcc.gov.uk](http://www.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

Sunderland City Council [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk)

London Borough of Sutton [www.sutton.gov.uk](http://www.sutton.gov.uk)

Other library authorities

Cambridgeshire County Council [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council [www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)

Newcastle City Council [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)

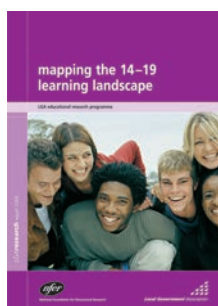
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk)

Staffordshire [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

# LGA educational research programme

The LGA Educational Research Programme is carried out by the NFER. The research projects cover topics and perspectives that are of special interest to LEAs. All the reports are published and disseminated by NFER, with separate executive summaries.

The summaries are available free of charge both on paper and on the NFER website at [www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk)



## **Mapping the 14–19 learning landscape**

*David Sims and Susan McMeeking*

This report, based on an extensive literature search, maps the learning landscape for the 14–19 age group. The research details the policies and strategies that will require collaboration between key players at national, regional and local levels. The current provision of education and training for this age group is described in detail.

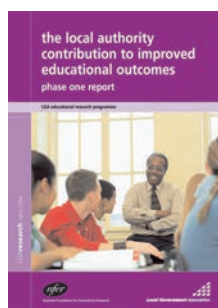
This report is essential reading for all local authorities keen to see the reform of 14–19 learning work in practice.

LGA research report 10/04

Published in 2004

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Price £8.00



## **The local authority contribution to improved educational outcomes: phase one report**

*Anne Wilkin, Kay Kinder and Dominic Schad*

Recent government policy and legislation has emphasised the value of a holistic approach through increased partnership working by services, acknowledging that children's needs are often complex and multi-faceted and thus do not fit neatly within the remit of one service or agency.

This report provides an overarching perspective of the educational outcomes achieved, or aspired to, in the new local authority landscape, and how a range of local authorities perceive their contribution to such outcomes.

LGA research report 25/04

Published in 2004

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## **School attendance and the prosecution of parents: perspectives from education welfare service management**

*Sally Kendall, Richard White and Kay Kinder*

This research is the first stage of a three-phase study and provides an overview of the prosecution process within local education authorities from interviews with 122 principal education welfare officers or equivalent, and data on prosecutions provided by nearly 100 local education authorities between September 2001 and July 2002. It gives an in-depth study examining the effects and effectiveness of prosecuting parents as a strategy to combat non-attendance at school.

LGA research report 43

Published in 2003

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Public libraries have been established for over a century, providing lending and information services. However, there has been an overall reduction in the number of books being borrowed in recent years, leading to speculation about the future of library services.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport has published documents outlining ways that libraries can become more socially inclusive and has set up an agency charged with helping to turn the vision into reality.

This report presents the findings of a study that examined the provision that public libraries offer communities over and above their traditional role as lending and information services.

Key findings concern:

- partnership working
- funding
- targeting user groups
- the role of library staff
- national and local support.

The study makes recommendations both for libraries and for central and local government in response to issues identified.

This report is important reading for all library and information professionals, for local authorities and all groups looking to make more of their library resources.