

Wirral Library Service Review

Engagement with Stakeholders

April 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Over the past few years the Wirral Library Service has been subject to significant upheaval and uncertainty. Organisationally its location within Wirral Council has changed a number of times with responsibility for the service being shifted between three different Directorates. More traumatically, similar to many Councils seeking financial savings, the closure of around half of its 24 library buildings was proposed.
- 1.2 The proposals, however, resulted in a community backlash and, prior to the first tranche of closures, a Public Enquiry was announced. The inquiry report, published in November 2009, found that Wirral Council's plan to close the libraries was "in breach of its statutory duties under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964." The report stated that the council "failed to make an assessment of local needs" before deciding to rationalise its library service. The Council retracted its proposed closures before the Enquiry results were announced, making it technically not in breach of its duties as a library authority.
- 1.3 The *concept* of what the Council was trying to do was not the issue, but its failure to demonstrate that it understood (from evidence) the library needs of its residents and act logically in response to them was.
- 1.4 Clearly this provided further uncertainty for the service with financial savings required but no closures permitted.
- 1.5 Since this point there has been a change in political administration and the Library Service has been located within the Council's Finance Directorate – not an obvious or natural bedfellow, but in fact one where there are considerable synergies with other services also within the Directorate's remit.
- 1.6 Furthermore there is now significant political and officer support for the Library Service, with both capital and revenue investment having been approved for the forthcoming financial year, and a clear current commitment that no libraries will be closed.
- 1.7 On the flip side the Service is losing a large number of staff through voluntary redundancy – both at senior and site level. This could be viewed as both an opportunity and a threat, but the irrefutable fact is that with so many changes having occurred and so much uncertainty as to the Service's future, with some stability now in sight it is essential that the opportunity is taken to establish a clear vision to shape and drive the Service forward.
- 1.8 To assist in this process the Museums Libraries and Archives Council commissioned Torkildsen Barclay to undertake consultations with key political, professional and organisational stakeholders in order to obtain an understanding of their views on the Library Service and how they see it developing in the future.
- 1.9 The intention was that this would help inform, and be integrated with, a new Library Service Strategy. However, the Strategy is still some way from completion, so this study stands in its own right and its discussions, conclusions and views should be considered in this light.

2. CONSULTEES

2.1 Face to face consultations were undertaken with the following stakeholders:

- Members of the senior **Library Management Team**;
- Key **senior Council Officers** – acting Chief Executive, Finance Director;
- Key **Councillors** – Leader, Portfolio Holder, Libraries Champion;
- **Other Council Officers** with a management, support or partnership involvement with the Library Service – Culture, one stop shop, asset management, children and young people, lifelong learning, IT, press and PR;
- **External organisations** with a partnership involvement with the Library Service – NHS Wirral, Pentra Services, Age Concern, Connect Solutions, the Reader Organisation;
- **Community representatives**/individuals with an interest in the service – West Kirby Friends, libraries campaigner.

2.2 It must be stressed that there are a raft of stakeholders not included within these consultations – non users of the Library Service, specific local communities, and so on. These findings should assist in focussing any subsequent consultations with these groups.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

3.1 The discussions held with the stakeholders were wide ranging and undertaken in confidence. As such the overall views on the Wirral Library Service have been pulled together under the four headings of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Inevitably there was not always consensus on all items although the summary does its best to reflect the predominant view. It also needs to be stated that these are the *perceptions* of the stakeholders, not necessarily the reality; although where perception and reality are at odds the question needs to be asked as to why this is the case.

Strengths of the Wirral Library Service

3.2 These fell under two main categories.

The Library Buildings

3.3 This was a clear thread throughout the discussions, although a number of people also identified that the library *building* was not the same as the library *service*, and we will explore this later. The key comments were:

- Libraries are the hub of the community, non discriminatory, non didactic;
- Libraries are safe, known, trusted, respected;

- Libraries are “the Council in the Community”;
 - Libraries are relaxed, comfortable, informal places;
 - Libraries are venues for the development of the individual.
- 3.4 It can be argued that other buildings fulfil at least part of the above criteria – community centres, leisure centres, learning centres – but in Wirral there is a very strong stakeholder attachment to the library “brand” as somewhere safe, not exclusive, not stigmatised with negative associations (as opposed perhaps to more specialist facilities such as Job Centres and Health Centres). Politically the library is one of the more obvious manifestations of the Council at a local level with strong positive associations.

Expressed Support for the Service

- 3.5 This is an undoubted current strength. Whereas local authorities elsewhere in the UK are closing library buildings in order to achieve savings, this is not the case in Wirral. There is clear:
- Political Support;
 - Community Support;
 - Directorate and Officer Support;
 - Investment – both capital and revenue, including:
 - The re-location/integration of the Council’s One Stop Shops within the Libraries;
 - Investment in public WiFi;
 - Investment in eBooks;
 - Continued support for Library Service projects such as *Get into Reading*;
 - Investment in publicising and promoting the Libraries and the wide range of services they provide through the *Wirral Libraries – More Than Books* campaign.
- 3.6 There is therefore a great deal of positivity towards the concept of the library service and the library buildings. For a service that has largely been left to its own devices in the past it is important to maximise the opportunities that such goodwill and attention bring. In order to do so requires a clear vision as to what the service represents and where it needs to go. Which brings us onto the perceived weaknesses.

Weaknesses of the Wirral Library Service

Lack of Vision and Leadership

- 3.7 Vision and leadership come from a variety of directions and sources: national, political, community, Directorate, and the library management itself. It is perhaps not surprising, given the recent history of the service in Wirral, that clarity as to its future direction has been lacking, and this cannot be laid solely at the

door of the library management. However, as we have seen, the climate is now right to address this, and it will require strong and focussed leadership to maximise this opportunity and drive the Library Service forward.

3.8 Specific comments on vision and leadership can be summarised as follows:

- Lack of vision - particularly amongst librarians themselves;
- The Library service can be enhanced, it doesn't serve enough of the community – the service needs to identify what the communities want;
- The service has not understood its potential, libraries are not proactive enough;
- There is a lack of vision, staff morale, and leadership;
- There is a need to separate the service from the building - the buildings are a millstone to the development of the service;
- Libraries are trying to be too many things to too many people;
- The performance indicators for libraries are no longer relevant – it is not about the number of books lent but the *outcomes* achieved as a result of providing the service;
- The service has been poorly promoted, both within the Council and to the public.

3.9 Much of the above is also reflected in the feedback regarding the perceptions of the service itself.

A "Dated" Service

- Delivers moderately well, but is stuck in the '60s and '70's;
- The service is old hat - a bit like a Hovis advert, it generates a sense of nostalgia but hasn't changed with the times;
- The principles of libraries remain, but the method of delivery has moved on;
- The traditional role of lending books and providing resources is in decline;
- There is an in built resistance to change;
- Demand for the traditional adult library service is declining – the future has to be more than books on shelves.

3.10 In truth the above comments could refer to many local authority library services across the UK, not just in Wirral. Nor should they mask the many good things that are provided through the service and the buildings, and also the new initiatives Wirral is planning. Nonetheless it is true that the way in which the customer consumes the service is changing, and that libraries and librarians need now to react to those changes. This is discussed later under the Discussion and Implications section.

Opportunities for the Wirral Library Service

3.11 The future opportunities partly reflect the identified Strengths and partly the changes that are beginning to occur as a result of both investment and cut backs:

- To reiterate once again, there is now strong political and officer support, making change more likely and easier to deliver;
- There is a clear opportunity to regenerate and redefine libraries as social and learning hubs, and as information, advice and guidance centres;
- Similarly there is the opportunity to redefine the library *service* and its role within the Council and the community;
- Part of this is perceived as including clear "targeting" of services, with the focus on vulnerable people, young people, the unemployed and the elderly;
- There is the opportunity to define a "core" library offer, then add to and adapt this according to the needs of the local community the service and building provides for – not a "one size fits all" concept, but a range of options such as used by Tesco with the different offerings of the Metro, Express, and Extra brands;
- Loss of staff – this is an opportunity in that it provides the chance to redefine the role of the library staff in light of any refocusing of the service and appoint people with the skill sets to deliver this, rather than necessarily "more of the same".

Threats

3.12 The main threats are perceived to be:

- Loss of staff – the mirror of the opportunity, as it means a lot of experience and local knowledge may disappear;
- Staff morale – with so much change and previous history, it may be difficult to re-enthuse the staff that remain;
- Inability to drive change – identifying the future vision and route forward is one thing, having the people and leadership to make it happen is another.

4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 So what can we take from the stakeholder feedback, and how can this help shape a vision and practical actions to move the service forward?
- 4.2 Probably the most important fact to recognise is that there are two quite clear perceptions of libraries arising from the discussions:
 - The Library as a “Place”
 - The Library as a “Service”
- 4.3 We will examine each of these in turn.

The Library as a Place

The History of Libraries

- 4.4 Generally in many people’s minds the library *building* has been synonymous with the library *service*. There are good historical reasons for this, which are worth touching briefly on here.
- 4.5 The advent of the written word as a way of storing and communicating knowledge led to the desire and need to collect and store such knowledge where it could be accessed and referred to. Such practices have continued for thousands of years. Some 30,000 clay tablets found in ancient Mesopotamia date back more than 5,000 years. Collections of papyrus scrolls from ancient Egyptian cities date back to 1300-1200 BC, and many other examples of such repositories of information can be found.
- 4.6 In time the term for these repositories – the buildings in which such collections were kept – became the word we know today, the “library”.
- 4.7 It is generally accepted that the surge in growth of libraries occurred throughout the 1600’s and 1700’s, although these were mostly academic or private collections not accessible to the general public.
- 4.8 The real development of the free, accessible and open public library in the UK took place from 1850 onwards, when the *Public Libraries Act* allowed all cities with populations exceeding 10,000 to levy taxes for the support of public libraries. Development was subsequently fuelled by the 1870 Public School Law, which led to an increase in general public literacy. By 1877, more than 75 cities had established free libraries, and by 1900 the number had reached 300.
- 4.9 In 1964 the *Public Libraries and Museums Act* placed a duty on every library authority to “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof..”. The Act also emphasised the *desirability* of providing access to not only reference materials and literature, but to “pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials..”, and specifically to “*encourage* both adults and children to make full use of the library service”.
- 4.10 Today there are an estimated 3,500 public libraries provided by local authorities in the UK.
- 4.11 The library *building* has therefore always been synonymous with the *service* as – since Mesopotamian days – the medium for conveying information, knowledge

and literature has been a tangible, physical product. Whether this has been a clay tablet, papyrus roll or - more recently - a book, they have all needed to be collected and stored in a building for people to be able to access their content.

- 4.12 This situation is now changing as the advent and exponential growth of the internet means increasingly that the “repository” of knowledge and information is not a physical one. It is the World Wide Web. To obtain such information a person still needs a physical medium, but this medium is increasingly a computer or phone or laptop or eBook reader, rather than a reference book. More crucially the user can access such information on those media without moving from their chair. They no longer have to physically visit a building such as a library to obtain what they want.
- 4.13 These changes are inevitably reflected in the usage of public libraries. The Government’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport quotes a decline in the number of visits to library premises of around 20% over a 16 year period, and a steady decline in the loans of adults’ books over the decade prior to 2008/09 by more than a third. Interestingly the loan of children’s books has increased for each of the previous five years, although it is still lower than it was 10 years ago.
- 4.14 The DCMS Taking Part Survey measures the percentage of the population using libraries (the term “use” includes remote access and communication as well as physical visits to library buildings), and shows a significant year on year decline in adult use of from just under 50% in 2005 to around 37% in 2009.
- 4.15 None of the above means there is no longer a need for a public library service or for public libraries. Whilst usage may be declining, it is still substantial; not everyone has (or can afford) access to the internet or to the devices on which to download information, although the mobile phone is becoming increasingly ubiquitous; books in their own right are still a hugely popular medium, particularly for recreational reading. However this may change in the future with changes in the book market already beginning to happen. Recently released commercial results from Pearsons who own the book publishing firm Penguin, showed that the book retail market remained “tough” but was offset by strong publishing and rapid growth in its eBook operation, which has seen a 300% year on year increase in sales.
- 4.16 If we consider just how quickly and dramatically the delivery of music has evolved over the past 10 years – from LP, to cassette, to CD to digital downloads – then we cannot ignore the potential revolution that will occur in a rapidly changing world, and the traditional library service has to be delivered in a relevant and contemporary way to keep abreast of those changes.
- 4.17 The main implication, however, is that the original primary function of libraries as repositories for books is becoming increasingly irrelevant (but certainly not yet redundant). It is why many local authorities find it acceptable to close library buildings in order to make financial savings.
- 4.18 This is not, however, Wirral’s way. Wirral has a different vision for the library buildings. Whether or not it has been clearly articulated or expressed in a strategic way, and whether or not in some instances the perceived distinction between the building and the service is still blurred, the “Wirral way” has come across strongly in the consultations, and we will do our best to explain it here.

Wirral's Approach to Library Buildings

- 4.19 Wirral is considered by many of the stakeholders to comprise a mix of quite distinct and discreet communities, encompassing both urban and rural, affluent and deprived.
- 4.20 The libraries are seen to have a very strong "brand image" in that they are trusted, respected, non discriminatory, neutral PLACES where most people feel comfortable and have generally positive feelings about. This image has been built up over many years, and is stronger than, say, that of a community centre or neighbourhood centre. The subtle association with free, non compulsory self improvement, information and learning is one of the reasons for this.
- 4.21 As such, the Library is seen as:
- A good vehicle for discreetly promoting the Council within the community;
 - The main hub and focal point for each distinct community that comprises Wirral;
 - A good PLACE to deliver other appropriate community based services.
- 4.22 The Council has made a clear commitment not to close any Library buildings in the foreseeable future and, in the sense that "we are where we are", it is therefore sensible to make the best use of the buildings and the library brand in the pursuit of the Council's objectives and local community need.
- 4.23 In reality many of the Library buildings no longer house just the Library Service. The Council is committed to integrating One Stop Shops within the library buildings – the One Stop Shop is *not* a library service, but has a natural synergy with the service and with the concept of the Library building as a community resource. Life Long Learning uses many Library buildings to deliver its activities because they are relaxed, informal environments frequently situated at the heart of local communities (and therefore accessible). But Life Long Learning is *not* a library service, although it fits with the original purpose of libraries as places for self improvement and the pursuit of knowledge. It was indeed stated that some of the best adult learning facilities elsewhere come through the integration of Life Long Learning and Libraries. There are other examples where services such as health and employment have found the Library ethos and atmosphere appropriate for the delivery of some of their outcomes.
- 4.24 The Library as a *Place* is therefore becoming increasingly more than a venue for delivering the Library *Service*, but a building from which a range of complementary and sympathetic services can be provided. As such (and odd though it may sound) a Library Building does not necessarily have to be run by librarians, but by staff who can attract appropriate services and ensure they operate in an integrated and complementary way within the Library.
- 4.25 By "appropriate" we mean services that are needed within the local community that the library serves AND will not dilute or damage the library brand.

Implications of the "Library as a Place" for Wirral

- 4.26 If it accepted that Libraries in Wirral are more than a venue for the delivery of the Library Service – and there does appear to be a strong Council commitment to develop them as community hubs – then there are a number of key questions to answer:

- What should these “new” libraries look like?
 - How will they be managed?
- 4.27 It is beyond the scope of the report to answer these in depth, but the following touches upon some of the points to consider.
- 4.28 With regard to the future “look” of the Wirral libraries, physical changes are already being implemented to integrate One Stop Shops into a number of the sites. Other factors that need to be taken account of are:
- **Trends** – as we have discussed the way in which information and reading materials are being accessed is changing. This means that the space needed for reference books, and even lending materials will not be as great as it was in the past. This can free up space for other complementary uses. The need for local authorities to change the layout of its buildings to meet evolving need is not new. Up to the early 1990’s sports and leisure centres had small multigyms and large bars. With the growth of demand for fitness provision and the more responsible approach to drink driving there was a complete reconfiguration of leisure centre layout, with the bars often being removed and being replaced by large fitness facilities. Similarly squash courts were converted to a range of other uses. A leisure centre designed now would have little resemblance to one designed in the ‘80’s. Such changes have already started to happen in libraries with the provision of IT suites, but a more radical and imaginative approach is now required when designing for the future.
 - **The Needs of the Local Community** – the mix of services provided within a library (e.g. lifelong learning, one stop shops, library service) will be specific to the local community that it serves and - referring back to the Enquiry – it is essential that these are accurately identified. For instance, the level of IT provision or quiet spaces for study may be greater in libraries serving less affluent communities where access to the internet within homes is limited and children having to share bedrooms makes homework difficult, than in affluent areas where this is less likely to be the case.
 - **Public Expectation** – public expectation in terms of the quality of facilities and services is much higher now than in the past. The design and layout of a library building needs to reflect this. Public views of what a “good” library should look like (cafe, the need for different zones – quiet, children, PC, WiFi, activity etc.) is beginning to be documented. A recent focus group study by Blackburn with Darwen of users and non users is enlightening in this respect, and no doubt the Council would be happy to share this with Wirral.
 - **Council Policy** – the design and layout of the “new” libraries should take account of Council target groups and overall policy. So, if the key groups are for instance the elderly and young people, the design and facility mix needs to reflect this.
 - **Physical Limitations** – it is of course axiomatic that you cannot fit a quart into a pint pot. If the size and configuration of the library building limits its potential for change, a degree of pragmatism is required. However, if the building cannot meet the identified needs of the community it may be sensible to examine what other local Council assets can, and re-locate the library and re-brand whatever that asset is as the local Library. This is not in contravention of the political promise not to close libraries, just replacing an outdated building with a better equivalent to serve the same community.

- 4.29 In order for a strategic approach to be taken as to the future of individual libraries, their future role and potential for development should be identified taking into account the above factors. It is fully accepted that this may be a strategy to be delivered over a period of time, depending on available resources, but it is better to have a clear vision for each and every library in Wirral rather than adopt an ad hoc and piecemeal approach.
- 4.30 Lastly - whilst on Libraries as a Place - for those Library buildings that host a multiplicity of functions, it is not essential that they are managed directly by librarians. The day to day responsibility for ensuring integrated services, cleaning, building maintenance, opening and closing, staffing of generic areas, allocation of space, could be undertaken by a non librarian – provided they fully understood the ethos and service expectations generated by the Library brand. This would free up librarians to concentrate on the development of the library service itself.

The Library as a Service

The Issues

- 4.31 It is essential that the Wirral Library Service defines what its core functions and purposes are, what its unique role is within the Council. Historically the service has been so closely linked to the buildings, this is not easy for library staff to do, and this is not an issue solely restricted to Wirral.
- 4.32 By defining its core functions outside of the context of a building it is easier for the Council, its partners, and its users to understand the Library Service's role and how it contributes to Council policy. The buildings are only one avenue through which the service can be delivered, and by defining the functions outside of this context more imaginative and creative ways of delivering service outcomes can be developed.
- 4.33 As a comparison Life Long Learning knows what its core role is as a service, and whilst it delivers some of this service within buildings it runs, much of its service is delivered within buildings that it does not – schools, libraries, community centres, day care centres etc. The service is separate from the building. Similarly sports development can take place in leisure centres, schools, local parks, or through other agencies or bodies such as clubs or County Sports Partnerships. The role of sports development to increase participation in sport is clear, but it can do this through a wide range of mechanisms and organisations.
- 4.34 The impression we have received is that the library service has struggled to clearly define its role outside of the provision of books and buildings. Whilst it does many other worthy and valuable things they are often not within a strategic context. There is no focus, no prioritisation. As a result of the many challenges and changes the service has faced it is now almost reactive in its approach – “tell us what we should do” – rather than being proactive and clearly spelling out its vision – “this is what we do, this is where we want to go, this is how it helps meet Council objectives”. Services and schemes that could also be construed as providing library services, such as the outreach project *Get into Reading*, are viewed as competition rather than as a strategic tool and partner that forms part of the overall delivery of the library service. Whether the Library staff are directly delivering the service or not is irrelevant, providing they are ensuring the appropriate services are delivered – directly, through partnerships, through outsourcing, through enabling work, through grant aid.

Defining the Service

- 4.35 Stakeholders had many views on the role of the library service, often integrating this with the role of the library buildings. Not all views were similar. For instance, some stakeholders believed the role of a library service as a provider of information was in decline, whereas others considered it to be a key function.
- 4.36 Taking the views overall, and also taking account of the historical function of the library service to provide free and accessible resources for self improvement, the following are recommended as the core functions and/or objectives of the service:
- To provide free, comprehensive and accessible resources for **reading for pleasure** – this could be through books in libraries, books distributed from a central point to care homes/post offices/individual houses, ebooks and so on (much of which is already done). As technology changes the method of delivery will change, and the service will need to be innovative and creative as to how it responds to these changes - but the *function* always remains the same.
 - To provide accessible portals and guidance for those seeking **information for study, research, self improvement and knowledge** – this has always been a primary function of the library service, and the traditional reference libraries and reference librarians have been key to helping adults, students and pupils to find the right sources of information and materials. Even in the age of Google this does not need to change, although the mechanisms for doing so will – from people visiting the libraries to be shown where to find relevant information on the internet, to the possible provision of a single central reference library, to remote support either from the library service itself or through national portals.
 - To facilitate **the development of individual literacy**, specifically for those outside of a full time learning environment – this encompasses early years reading, children’s libraries, book clubs, the outreach programmes such as *Get into Reading*. It can entail partnership working with Life Long Learning and other agencies.
 - To be a primary source of **local community information** – this is a key but often overlooked function. The coordination of information on clubs, societies, events, activities, local facilities, local history, attractions and so on. Particularly with Wirral’s expressed intention of retaining each community library building, there is a focal point for each community’s information, as well as the potential for more online based provision. This can also encompass local talks, guided tours using volunteers, YouTube lectures. Once the function is agreed the only restrictions are imagination and budget.
 - To be a primary source of **public service information**, including the Council’s and other agencies – once again an important function, although one that may now cut across a range of services in the Council. Who coordinates what, and what role the Library Service plays would need to be clearly defined.
- 4.37 In reality, the library service already does many things mentioned above, but not within a clear strategic framework. Once clear functions are agreed then the library service can start thinking about how best to deliver them, irrespective of library buildings. Where the Council has clear target groups – the young, unemployed, elderly – then the priority in terms of actions taken and the focus of particular functions can be developed to meet their needs. This does not

change the function, which remains constant, but will impact on where available resources are channelled – so, for instance, work on “the development of individual literacy” may ignore the affluent, middle class user and focus solely on areas of deprivation, long term unemployed, and so on. Specific PI’s for each can function can then be developed relevant to the outcome desired (rather than simply how many books have been issued).

5. SUMMARY AND ACTIONS

- 5.1 The Wirral Library Service has been through some traumatic changes over the past few years which has affected staff morale and provided uncertainty as to its future direction.
- 5.2 There is now clear political and officer support for the service, and in order for the full benefit of this to be achieved the service needs to establish a clear view of its role and purpose within the years to come. This needs to follow through in both the functions it focuses on and the actions it takes. The service needs to communicate its role clearly within the Council and to external stakeholders and the broader community. It has clear statutory duties, and the service needs to proactively lead on the future delivery of those duties, coordinating, planning, and working in partnership to ensure those duties are fulfilled.
- 5.3 It is clear that, within Wirral, there are two quite clear perceptions of libraries:
- The Library as a “Place”, and
 - The Library as a “Service”.
- 5.4 The Library as a Place is about more than being simply a venue for the Library Service. It maximises the benefit of the library “brand” by encompassing other complementary services and functions that meet the needs of the local community it serves. A potential definition or vision for the library could be:
- “A Wirral Library is a friendly, accessible place that provides a safe, trusted and welcoming resource aimed at meeting the needs of the local community. Its focus is on providing information, knowledge and reading for self improvement and enjoyment.”
- 5.5 The Library as a Service extends beyond the boundaries of the Library buildings, and should not be constrained or restricted by four walls. It should have clearly defined functions that are largely unique and specific to the service, but accept that the way in which those functions are delivered will evolve within a rapidly changing world. It is recommended that those functions focus on:
- Reading for pleasure;
 - Information for study, research, self improvement and knowledge;
 - The development of individual literacy, specifically for those outside of a full time learning environment;
 - Provision of local community information;
 - A source of public service information.

5.6 There are a number of actions that Wirral now needs to take:

- To agree or amend the functions proposed and turn them into both an overarching vision and a strategy that sets out how each function will be delivered (both now and in the long term), the priority target groups, and the PI's required to measure the successful achievement of the outcomes required.
- A review of the structure of the Library Service and the skills required to deliver these functions. Where practical appoint staff accordingly. This needs to take into account that librarians may not need to manage library buildings, and that their roles may become more strategic and commissioning based.
- Prepare a strategic development plan for each of the Library buildings, taking into account which services are required to meet local need, and the range of factors discussed earlier in this report.

5.7 There is much yet to be done, but the Council is now proactively moving the service forward with investment and support. The provision of a strategic framework with clearly defined goals will ensure that the benefit of such investment and support is fully maximised.