

Community engagement in public libraries: an evaluation as part of the Big Lottery Fund Community Libraries Programme

Final Report

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Executive Summary

In September 2008, MLA commissioned ERS Ltd. to take forward the evaluation of the Community Libraries Programme¹ (CLP), which is managed by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). The Programme has resourced 58 local authorities in England with a total of £80 million:

the authorities received grants of between £250,000 and £2 million each to renovate, extend or build new libraries so that they can offer a broader range of activities to their communities, with a focus on reaching new audiences.

The unique aspect of the programme is the attempt to involve the community in the development, delivery and management of their library services. Many engagement activities captured in this evaluation focused on the physical library development phases, in some cases with aspirations to progress to a more long-term view of sustaining community engagement in the delivery and management of services. Key questions for this evaluation period were:

- Has BIG funding made an impact on enhancing the role of libraries in engaging with their communities (users and non-users)?
- Has BIG funding made an impact on changing perceptions of library services?
- Has BIG funding made an impact on learning and skills development for users, staff and volunteers?

Key findings

Although building works have been beset by delays, where they have been completed they have generated a variety of impacts as detailed below.

Impact of community engagement on library perceptions

- The considerable efforts that focused on enhancing the experience of users, and engaging with non-users has made a positive impact on the perceptions of local libraries, particularly held by those who had not previously used or had become actively involved in their library to any significant extent.
- There is no doubt that quality standards in delivering library services have been driven up: people see that libraries are transformed into lighter, brighter, cleaner and friendlier places and this translates into increased usage.
- Where new or refurbished libraries have been open for a sufficient period to gather robust data, good progress has been made in terms of higher user numbers and more diverse user profiles. This has been achieved in part by developing different community engagement approaches, both through employing new staff and deploying volunteer with whom certain community groups have greater empathy (and who offer additional capacity for community engagement) and by training existing staff.
- For example, new library members at the Meadows in Nottingham are up 46% on levels prior to the BIG investment. In part, this might be attributed to the 'curiosity factor' of visiting an improved facility, but the promotion of the library and encouragement to use it would not have been possible to the same extent without the staff resource.
- The focus on community engagement with young people, who have traditionally been difficult to reach, has shown great success (see sections 4 and 6). User registrations for young people, especially in Lancashire appear to have been boosted through the benefits they see in the introduction of self-issue desks.

¹ http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_community_libraries

- In many cases, the investment in library buildings and in community engagement activities had positive spin-off effect for library staff: where there has been fear and anxiety due to changes in working practice and job roles, there is also hope and excitement about the opportunities for libraries to make a difference to their communities and enhance staff skills through community engagement training..

Impact of community engagement on workforce development

- Some staff are reported to lack confidence in community engagement activities, and there are barriers to changing the hearts and minds of 'traditional' library staff. Nevertheless, other staff have embraced new ways of working and risen to the challenges.
- The decision by a small minority of staff to move on rather than embrace change has been an opportunity to inject new blood into some library services.
- Dedicating resources to community development staff, particularly those with similar ethnic make-up, and/or training has made an impact on the success of community engagement (see Section 7)

Impact of community engagement on partnership working

- Some existing partnerships have been strengthened, with local authority colleagues and external partners appearing to have a better appreciation of the value of libraries in facilitating access to local communities (see Section 4). In addition, new partnerships have been formed, particularly where library facilities have been reported 'better fit for use' by voluntary and community sector organisations (see Section 7).
- There is evidence that libraries have improved relations with new external partner organisations, who value the accessible and safe spaces they offer which in turn help them engage relevant community members.
"The added value of the library above other places is it being a safe place for people to come and is well used by the elderly who are a target group" ²

Impact of community engagement on learning and skills

- Case studies (see Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7) include examples of libraries being invigorated as centres of wider community based learning and skills. Although the numbers benefiting are in the hundreds rather than the thousands, as many projects are still in their infancy, some residents report significant outcomes in terms of motivation and attitudes to learning.
- In respect of those participating in scheduled learning activities, this has led to expectations of improved levels of educational attainment amongst children and young people and enhanced employability amongst adults.
- Overall, the most significant achievements have been in respect of children and young people, in particular the engagement of those who might not have been considered to be likely library users. This has included boosting user numbers in younger age ranges. For example, in The Meadows Library in Nottingham, there has been an 83% increase in under 11s joining the library and 200% increase in 11-15s (see Section 6.).
 - The engagement of children and young people has encouraged learning and involved them in positive activities.

² Patient Advice & Liaison Officer

“The children really enjoyed themselves and learnt a great deal, gaining an insight into African culture and looking at racism during discussions about ‘black awareness’. The children were all keen to participate by playing the instruments, singing and dancing, showing lots of enthusiasm”³

- Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculations demonstrated that the value of the social benefits generated by work with children (Section 6) exceeded the investment in these activities. For further information on SROI see Appendix 6)
- In addition, this evaluation shows that some of the group sessions staged in libraries have improved skills (English for Speakers of Other Languages, literacy and communications skills), increased confidence and reduced feelings of isolation.

“I prefer the conversation class to going to learn English at school because it’s more flexible and I can ask lots of questions and learn whatever I want to learn”.⁴

- Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs), (see www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk) especially relating to Skills and Behaviour & Progression, are a significant feature of most of the case studies (see especially Section 4. and Section 6).

Impact of community engagement on wellbeing

- Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculations demonstrated that the value of the social benefits generated by work with a group of people dealing with mental health issues (Section 7) exceeded the investment in these activities.

“I live by myself, therefore being part of a group helps me feel human and less depressed”. Coming to the group helps me have interaction with people. “The group helps me get out of the house, allows me to talk to my friends and is very therapeutic”.⁵

- Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs), especially relating to Health and Wellbeing, Strengthening Public Life and Stronger and Safer Communities, are a significant feature of most of the case studies (see especially Section 4. and Section 7).

Impact of community engagement on volunteering

- Given the disruptions to service delivery arising from capital works, volunteering opportunities have varied between libraries. The best example is offered in Lancashire, where a Volunteer Services Officer has been employed and who subsequently delivered volunteer engagement training to staff within each of the three libraries. This in turn has provided a model adopted by other departments within the local authority.
- Volunteering has also supported skills development.

“The staff have been extremely approachable and helpful and they have taught me things I didn’t previously know about whilst helping with the practicalities of establishing a reading group”⁶.

- There are some examples of volunteers taking on more diverse/responsible roles than has been the case hitherto. However, this needs to be carefully managed to ensure that staff perceive volunteers not as a threat to their jobs but as adding value to their roles.
- In many instances, the profile of volunteers is restricted and there would be merit in recruiting volunteers that better reflect the profiles of local communities.

“I thought you had to be a librarian to work in the library.”⁷

³ St. James School, Lancashire (Teacher Letter)

⁴ Library user, Nottingham

⁵ Library users, Sandwell

⁶ Volunteer, Haslingden Library

⁷ Library user, Sandwell

- Volunteer recruitment tends to be ad hoc rather than strategic, but there is great potential to attract more volunteers (especially from the ethnic and social communities that libraries serve) and to utilise them more effectively.

Impact of community engagement on contributions to National Indicators⁸

- Getting buy-in from Local authorities has been recognised as a challenge. This evaluation has shown that libraries (see Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7) make a contribution to local authority National Indicators as follows:
 - NI 1: % of people from different backgrounds getting on well together (see Sections 4, 6 and 7))
 - NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (see Sections 6 and 7),
 - NI 3: civic participation in the local area (see Sections 5 and 6),
 - NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (see Sections 4, 5 and 6)
 - NI 6: participation in regular volunteering (see Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7),
 - NI 9: use of public libraries (see Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7),
 - NI 13: migrants' English language skills and knowledge (see Sections 5, 6 and 7) and
 - NI 110: positive activities for young people (see Sections 4, 5 and 6),

Sustaining and advancing community engagement

- The success of the programme in leveraging additional investment is reflected in the figures obtained from the Intermediate Group of libraries and extrapolated, suggesting that the addition of cash and in kind contributions at the local level has boosted the value of the Programme to just over £100 million (see 10.4 onwards).
- There has been capital investment from other sources to ensure sustainability of the programme's effect: For example, a major capital improvement programme is now in place for the next three years funded by Lancashire County Council totalling £3m in investment (see section 4).
- Many libraries see the value in developing different approaches to engaging with key audiences. While there is a lot of 'informing', there is less evidence of 'deciding together'. However, most libraries have involved local communities in making decisions about how new libraries will look and in helping to deliver services but are yet to be at a stage where local communities are helping to manage operations.
- Specific libraries' engagement activities highlight the complexity of delivering community benefits through the development of ambitious schemes, for example, while working from temporary facilities (North Yorkshire), and addressing some members and not others in the design of specific library spaces. Primary research undertaken for this evaluation suggests good progress is being made and some encouraging achievements have been recorded, especially in respect of the extent to which community members have been not only consulted but actively involved in some decision making.
- The development of geographically and thematically segmented community engagement strategies in Bristol is evidence for innovative approaches in trying to target certain community groups more effectively.
- Library staff have not always felt equipped to carry out community engagement activities; as a result, training has been planned into future events (see Sections 4. and 5.).

⁸ References to National Indicators (Nis) pertain to those in place during 2009/10, rather than the revised list of indicators published in April 2010, which no longer includes some NIs

Recommendations for Libraries

Learning Lessons	Recommendations
<p>1. How to engage communities successfully, over the long-term and develop more innovative approaches to community engagement.</p>	<p>1.1 For libraries to identify which communities they want to reach, what these groups need, and the ways in which libraries can help meet those needs and what libraries can do differently to help meet those needs.</p> <p>1.2 For libraries to recruit specialist staff, train existing staff and work with partners that provide routes to engagement and which have the capacity to deliver.</p> <p>1.3 Libraries need to ensure that relationships have been developed with appropriate partners in order to facilitate community engagement. The MLA might explore further the specific benefits/issues arising from the co-location of libraries with other service providers, for example as has happened in Bolton.</p>
<p>2. How to target young people</p>	<p>2.1 For libraries to involve young people in creating and managing their own space and utilising modern technology to the full.</p>
<p>3. How to retain existing users</p>	<p>3.1 For libraries to ensure that changes to physical layouts and means of service delivery do not alienate traditional library users.</p>
<p>4. How to develop successful partnerships</p>	<p>4.1 For libraries to demonstrate the unique role of libraries in offering safe and inclusive spaces through which partners can access priority groups.</p> <p>4.2 For libraries to ensure that spaces need be become more mobile, as this will allow community groups to use spaces for different purposes.</p>
<p>5. How to involve library staff and build their confidence in engaging with community members</p>	<p>5.1 For libraries to ensure they keep library staff informed, address perceived threats and highlight opportunities for building confidence through training (see Appendix 10)</p>
<p>6. How to get the most from volunteering</p>	<p>6.1 For libraries to take a more strategic approach to volunteer recruitment/ management, establishing where they can play a role and then recruiting appropriate people, for example, recruiting volunteers that better reflect the profiles of local communities.</p>
<p>7. How to address lack of representativeness of local communities on project groups that aim to benefit the communities.</p>	<p>7.1 Engage people using the approaches outlined above, offer opportunities to contribute in formats and via mechanisms that are accessible and provide appropriate support and encouragement.</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This evaluation was carried between September 2008 and March 2010 and builds on related research commissioned previously by MLA⁹. It involved capturing data on three levels of detail: Intensive, Intermediate and National levels.
- 1.2 The study team was asked to continue to work with a number of authorities which had been previously selected. This involved the following six local authorities that belonged to the 'Intensive' group:
 - Bristol;
 - Lancashire;
 - North Yorkshire;
 - Nottingham;
 - Sandwell; and
 - Newcastle.
- 1.3 Key questions for this evaluation period were:
 - Has BIG funding made an impact on enhancing the role of libraries in engaging with their communities (users and non-users)?
 - Has BIG funding made an impact on changing perceptions of library services?
 - Has BIG funding made an impact on learning and skills development for users, staff and volunteers?
- 1.4 Further detail on each of the case study libraries can be found in Appendices 4 and 5 and a full list of those interviews and consulted within each of those libraries is presented in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 For details on the Intermediate and National level libraries, please, refer to sections 10 and 11 respectively.
- 1.6 In addition, the evaluation sought to capture the social return on investment (SROI) of the Programme (see section 9 and Appendices 7 and 8).

⁹ In 2007 Sector and The Research Unit were commissioned by MLA to carry out a baseline qualitative evaluation for the programme and its impact on community engagement in public libraries.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 In respect of the Intensive Group, 5 of the 6 local authorities were involved in the previous evaluation work, with Lancashire replacing Slough which declined MLA's invitation to continue to participate in the evaluation. Newcastle had been identified as a 'control' authority in the previous research and, as such, continued their participation through this evaluation.
- 2.2 The 'Intermediate' Group of 16 authorities was selected by MLA following their invitation to authorities to participate on this basis, which required them to provide some information in addition to that required by BIG but not to be subjected to the amount of fieldwork hosted by the Intensive Group. These are listed in Appendix 8.
- 2.3 At the national level, all 58 Community Libraries Programme participant authorities were expected to submit monitoring returns to BIG as a condition of their funding. However, only about half have done so. For the purposes of the evaluation, these reports have been reviewed by the Study Team as they have become available.
- 2.4 Given the different stages of progress of capital development in each of the case study authorities, fieldwork was shaped around planned activities in each location in order that the study could benefit from opportunities to gather evidence at community events, Steering Group meetings, library openings and other activities as they were taking place. Consequently, the fieldwork has been delivered progressively and responsively throughout 2009 and into early 2010.
- 2.5 The evaluation has been supported by an Advisory Group. Details of this Group and of the approach followed can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.6 The following Sections (3-8) provide details of each of the 6 case studies in turn
- 2.7 Section 9 provides three SROI assessments:
- Lancashire – focused on the 'Young Stars' group;
 - Nottingham – focused on the 'Homework Club'; and
 - Sandwell – focused on the 'Make Friends with a Book' reading group.
- 2.8 Sections 10 and 11 provide the evaluation of the Intermediate and National level libraries, respectively; and Sections 12 and 13 give overall summary points, conclusion and recommendations.

3. Bristol (Case Study 1)

Key summary points:

- Development has suffered significant delays due to the complex nature of the site which includes both residential and business units in addition to the Junction 3 Creative Learning Centre.
- Since obtaining planning permission in July 2009, community engagement activities have been undertaken, and this case study highlights the complexity of delivering community benefits through the development of such an ambitious scheme.
- The evaluation has shown the importance of early engagement and listening to those that are affected by 'change'.
- While it seemed that the aspiration to engage with Bristol's community members and 'act together' was hampered at the outset of the project, the development of geographically and thematically segmented community engagement activities is proof that libraries are thinking of new and more effective ways in engaging with their communities.
- In addition, other creative and innovative ways of engaging with the community has been done through arts engagement programmes and the use of existing resources, such as local community radio.
- There are learning lessons with respect to the lack of representativeness of local communities on project groups that aim to benefit the communities. As this case may have shown, it is difficult to find and recruit a representative community sample that would be willing to get engaged, which is a barrier that needs to be addressed.

Overview

- 3.1 J3 will be Bristol's first, purpose-built *creative* learning centre. The project encompasses a new community library and learning centre that aims to be an iconic, fully accessible, safe and inviting space providing creative learning activities, based on an innovative redefinition of a library¹⁰. Responding to identified needs and aspirations of local people, the project will celebrate the diversity and heritage of its visitors, using culture and creativity as the lynchpin for learning.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

- 3.2 Delays in obtaining planning permission have not helped matters, particularly in relation to recruiting resident volunteers. Since obtaining planning permission, in July 2009, some progress has been made in respect of developing an approach that is more oriented towards *community segmentation* (a way of clustering 'communities' into groups to obtain a balanced account of community perspectives). To date most engagement activities have relied on a *geographical* approach focused on local groups operating within the Easton ward. More recently the service has initiated some *thematically* focused activities through engagement with the city's Community Forums (Bristol Women's Forum, Disability Equality Forum, Young People's Forum, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum, Bristol Older People's forum, Bristol BSL Forum and Race Forum). However to ensure involvement by identified communities the service would benefit from dedicating resources to producing distinct engagement strategies for each group to maximise the effectiveness of this approach.

¹⁰ Junction 3 Creative Learning Centre Business Plan

- 3.3 At present the Terms of Reference are being drawn up for the J3 Management Board which will include Easton's two ward councillors, SPAN, 2QAB and ultimately 9 residents. There are also plans to recruit two young people to the board. Part of this process will entail identifying the various needs and skill sets that the Board will require, which in turn will be used to recruit and train resident volunteers board members. Terms of Reference will be agreed by June 2010.
- 3.4 The development of geographically and thematically segmented community engagement strategies would support this process by making the Board clearer about how it intends to both recruit resident volunteers and continue community engagement activities, including the identification of outcome measures and success criteria. In turn, this would culminate in the identification of the respective communities' aspirations for incorporation, to the extent feasible, at J3 which would lead to a greater recognition of the project's strengths among these groups.
- 3.5 As noted above, the study team is concerned that the more challenging and aspirational *Acting Together* level of participation was not more robustly pursued from the start of the project. It is felt that if the above noted approach to community segmentation and the subsequent development of different engagement strategies had been adopted from the outset, or in response to the initial production of the MLA's Key Findings noted above, the project could have progressed further along this route than has occurred to date.
- 3.6 Although the role of the delay in obtaining planning permission has been noted, and its impact on project activities should not be underestimated, at one level these delays could have in part been mitigated. For example, by adopting a more participatory approach in line with the Community Library Programme ethos following on from the initial, successful public consultation in 2004. Those residents who live adjacent to the J3 site feel they were only reactively engaged after planning permission was submitted and only because they responded by forming a group in opposition to certain elements of the initially submitted plans. Although the process of designing and planning a mixed use development is inherently complicated, engagement with residents at the outset could have served to simplify this by identifying their concerns for consideration at an early stage, which in turn may have led to obtaining planning permission sooner.
- 3.7 Additionally, during this phase it was decided not to pursue any formal community engagement activities due to a concern that residents' expectations might be prematurely raised since neither funding nor planning permission had been secured. It was also acknowledged that engaging with residents in the area was complicated by both the loss of Neighbourhood Renewal¹¹ funding, and its associated structures, and delays in establishing Neighbourhood Partnerships during a change in the council's political leadership. Being concerned about potentially mismanaging residents' expectations has merit, although this should not serve to discourage commencing some level of community engagement activities. Nor should the service be over reliant or dependent on a narrow selection of local initiatives as, by their nature, regeneration and political structures alter in line with programme and election cycles.

¹¹ Neighbourhood Renewal aims to improve the quality of life for those living in the most disadvantaged areas by tackling: poor job prospects, high crime levels, educational under-achievement, poor health, and problems with housing and their local environment.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/>

- 3.8 For example, BCfm, Bristol's first community radio station was established in 2007 with the aim of advancing the social cohesion of the communities of Bristol. Although BCfm has been utilised on quite a few occasions to discuss and promote J3 it could be utilised to a much fuller extent to engage with its diverse range of listeners. Some of the current programmes include: Over 50s show, Face to faith, Somali Ladies show, Chinese Connection, Radio Recovery, Sudanese show, Radiowski in Polish and English, and Iran show.
- 3.9 There would of course be a resource implication for promoting J3 and its associated activities, such as translation, production and air time costs. However, community engagement is a resource intensive activity, even more so in relation to engaging with the 'hard to reach', such as non-users. This requires dedicating sufficient resources, both cash and in-kind, to ensure all residents are equally provided with the opportunity to be involved and is not reliant on the resources of others to achieve the aims of J3.
- 3.10 The J3 Arts Programme, which forms a core element of the project, provides another example of how adopting a community segmentation approach could have benefitted the project. The Arts Programme is being managed by the Arts Steering Group that is made up of 6 representatives of which only 1 is a local community representative. This is despite the acknowledgement that there are thriving artistic communities and at least 23 local arts and cultural organisations/promoters in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the J3 site¹².
- 3.11 Since obtaining planning permission the Arts Steering Group commissioned the Participatory Arts Programme element of the J3 Arts Programme. The aim of this has been to commission a Bristol-based artist or arts organisation with excellent participatory arts skills to devise and deliver a community based arts programme. To date these artist have successfully engaged with 25 community representatives in the Easton ward. Their approach to undertaking walking tours, with participants showing off 'their' Easton, identified a range of less seen or promoted elements of Easton that residents are proud of. This will culminate in a number of public engagement activities and permanent exhibitions. One of the proposals includes a series of mini projects that will invite members of the community to engage with the building site at Junction 3. it should be noted the emphasis is on the building site to encourage residents to feel part of the entire process and not just the finished building. Activities will include inviting elders, refugee groups and young mothers to make a meal from their culture for the builders and inviting local knitting groups to make cosy hats for the builders in winter.
- Ladder of Participation**
- 3.12 Activities undertaken by Bristol Libraries to encourage and support community participation have to date concentrated on *Informing* and *Consulting*. As indicated above there have been a number of events seeking people's input into J3 ranging from formal systematic consultations, attendance at neighbourhood street festivals and the recent Community Festival Day. There have also been some instances of *Deciding Together*, such as when J3 project partners worked with those residents opposed to elements of the proposal, such as the loss of green space and parking congestion, and in relation to the Participatory Arts Programme's walking tours with community representatives in Easton.
- 3.13 Current community engagement activities are guided by the J3 Community Engagement Plan which outlines the aims and process for recruiting resident

¹² Participatory Arts Programme Brief, July 2009

volunteers to the J3 Programme Board. As the activities designed to meet these aims have only been undertaken since obtaining planning permission it is too early to assess their success in achieving a level of *Acting Together* with the equal participation of service providers, stakeholders and residents.

- 3.14 One concern the study team has with the community engagement activities undertaken to date is that the aim of achieving a level of *Acting Together* was not embedded within the project from the outset. It must be recognised that this is a challenging and aspirational level of participation to aim for but this does not mean it should not have been more proactively pursued, particularly given the ethos of the Community Libraries Programme.

Summary

- 3.15 There has been a wide array of community engagement activities that have been undertaken, are currently in progress or are being developed. No doubt these have served, and are serving, to keep interest in J3 alive. This is particularly important due to the delays in obtaining planning permission, which has pushed the completion date back significantly and potentially made some residents sceptical about J3 ever being completed. However, it must be recognised that these activities have impacted positively on those residents who have been informed and consulted about J3 and those participating in the More than Words project, J3 Fired Up and the Participatory Arts Programme.
- 3.16 The study team is concerned that the more challenging and aspirational *Acting Together* level of participation was not more robustly pursued from the start of the project. It is felt that if the above noted approach to community segmentation the project could have progressed further along this route than has occurred to date. That the project has been and is currently effectively engaging with residents at certain levels, such as with J3 Fired Up and the Participatory Arts Programme, indicates that this is achievable. However, it will require commitment and dedicated resources to embed this within the remainder of the J3 project to ensure the Communities Library ethos is in turn embedded within J3 management structures and service provision.
- 3.17 Since obtaining planning permission the project has picked up pace and is currently placing an emphasis on identifying and recruiting resident volunteers for the J3 management structure. This should be progressed using segmented community engagement strategies that will require careful planning to ensure representative involvement by targeted communities, such as community forum members and BCfm's audiences. To ensure this is as successful as the other community engagement activities undertaken, such as the 2004 public consultation and current arts programme activities, it would prove beneficial for Bristol Libraries to take a step back and review all its J3 engagement activities to date, including resources allocated, with the aim of identifying and learning from those that were less successful and those that are successfully engaging residents.

4. Lancashire (Case Study 2)

Key summary points:

- The Programme has benefited 3 libraries, 2 of which were closed until very late in the study period (November 2009 and January 2010). The third has been a great success, especially in its engagement of a group of young people.
- New and better partnership building has been facilitated by demonstrating the value of libraries as 'safe', open and inclusive spaces, providing a conduit through which a variety of service providers can access priority groups.
- Perceptions of libraries have also improved amongst non-traditional users.
- Volunteering has been a big success from investment in community engagement, through the employment of a Volunteer Services Officer who subsequently delivered volunteer engagement training to staff within each of the three libraries. This in turn has provided a model adopted by other departments within the local authority.
- A number of Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) and Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) have been generated, most notably Health & Wellbeing and Stronger & Safer Communities GSOs and Skills and Behaviour & Progression GLOs.

Overview

- 4.1 Aided by a Big Lottery Fund grant of £1.39m, existing library buildings have been renovated in Colne, Haslingden and Lancaster. Capital works at each of the libraries are complete, with the launch of Haslingden in April 2009, Lancaster Library in February 2010 (although open to the public in November 2009) and Colne Library open to the public since January 2010 (launched 23rd February 2010).
- 4.2 In 2006 Haslingden Library was successful in a Lottery bid to become one of 20 HeadSpace¹³ centres in the country and received a grant of £25,000. This was used to transform former office space into HeadSpace for young people, which opened in June 2008. This project also involved the employment of two part time youth workers to engage with young people through the provision of activities within the library, using facilities created by the Community Libraries Programme.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

Service Provision

- 4.3 The impact on the County Council Library Service itself has been substantial. The Regenerate Programme, with the Community Libraries Programme as the catalyst, has totalled nearly £6m investment in libraries across Lancashire (benefiting around a third of the 75 library buildings). In addition, the Project Manager has attended district partnership planning days across Lancashire to share experiences of the library service of engaging with communities, especially in respect of volunteering.
- 4.4 Across all 3 libraries there has been a substantial widening in the range of services provided to the local community, with each library working with a range of organisations such as adult learning providers, local councillors and the Police to host service provision within their buildings. Consequently, senior officers within the County Council have now recognised that libraries should play a central role in future delivery of these and other non-library services. Local councillors now run surgeries at libraries and in Haslingden it was reported that since using the refurbished library there has been greater attendance at their sessions.
- 4.5 East Lancashire Primary Care Trust (PCT) have also used libraries for its Patient Advice and Liaison Service. *"The added value of the library above other places is it*

¹³ <http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/headspace/>

being a safe place for people to come and is well used by the elderly who are a target group¹⁴

- 4.6 As a result of engagement with other service deliverers, new relationships have been established and existing ones enhanced. These have helped to draw in new audiences to libraries. For example, members of a 'Get into Reading'¹⁵ therapeutic reading group at Haslingden were not all library members previously. Having the class based in the library not only encouraged more people to attend (because it was conveniently located) but also led to individuals independently spending time in the library as a result of the class. This was also the case for 7 students of Nelson and Colne College key skills courses delivered at Colne Library, who reported that their tutor had encouraged them to select books from the library to discuss in the group with one of the less confident members of the group having been the first to do so: "you can go out in to the library afterwards and work on your own if you want"¹⁶.
- 4.7 The biggest challenge for the delivery of the project has been having the capacity amongst library staff to undertake community engagement work whilst the capital builds were ongoing or being delayed. The resources required were perhaps underestimated, resulting in some of the planned activity being postponed. The willingness/ability of staff to undertake new ways of working has also been problematic. Although some staff have undertaken training related to elements of community engagement, there is a feeling amongst some library assistants that this could have been rolled out more widely. Lessons have been learnt and this wider approach to training is now being adopted. Library management and staff also recognise the need for further community engagement training such as how to work with individuals with particular needs. Training to date has focused mainly on new library systems, such as self issue machines.
- Local Community**
- 4.8 Within the evaluation timescale, Haslingden Library provides the most complete set of user statistics. Haslingden Library re-opened in April 2009 and between this date and December 2009 book issues were up 5% on the same period in 2008, to 63,074. From September to December 2009, visits were up 1.2% on the same period in 2008. It is too early to make accurate assessments regarding Lancaster and Colne libraries, but it is interesting to note that issues at Nelson library (Colne's nearest alternative, one of a number of local libraries that had increased opening hours whilst Colne Library was closed) increased by 13,000 in Q3 2009/10 compared with Q3 2008/09.
- 4.9 The most beneficial impacts have been achieved through engagement with the friends, heritage and young people's groups. Although membership and activities for these varies across each library, they include some particularly strong examples of engagement. For instance, the Friends of Lancaster Library were engaged initially through adverts for an arts group to put on arts (including music) events at the library, as a mechanism to engage members of the community. Once established, it recognised its role as the Friends group whilst retaining its initial purpose to host events and activities in the library. The group went on to successfully deliver two events within Lancaster prior to opening and further events are planned for 2010.

¹⁴ Patient Advice & Liaison Officer

¹⁵ A joint initiative between the Lancashire Library Service and East Lancashire PCT

¹⁶ Colne library key skills course participant

- 4.10 Consultation with library users and staff members revealed mixed feedback about the design and features within each new library. A survey of users in Lancaster as part of the Voice Your View study undertaken by Lancaster University¹⁷ revealed overall dissatisfaction with the design and styling of certain elements of the library (despite the consultations carried out beforehand). Feedback regarding the design of the children's areas at Lancaster and Colne libraries revealed dissatisfaction with furniture and other features, one individual stated, *"Where is the children library? Surely the point of spending money on public libraries is encouraging children to come to the library to read and learn. This is not very inclusive space not to mention that is much, much smaller than before"*¹⁸.
- 4.11 Nevertheless, 12 young people consulted at Haslingden Library for this evaluation felt they had been involved in decision making at the library and feel they can now approach library staff to suggest changes whilst respecting that implementation will take time. It is also apparent that the new facilities and technology utilised in the community libraries has encouraged new members, for example young people consulted have reported that self issue facilities have encouraged more young people to take out books.
- 4.12 Volunteer experiences have also been positive, and one volunteer, aged 17, who established a reading group at Colne library subsequently went on to successfully apply for a library assistant post. *"The staff have been extremely approachable and helpful and they have taught me things I didn't previously know about whilst helping with the practicalities of establishing a reading group"*¹⁹.
- 4.13 However, certain elements of the original community engagement plan are yet to be fulfilled particularly in relation to the aim to engage young people in completing Arts Awards through training staff in delivery. This milestone has not been achieved due to delay in accessing the training for staff to be Arts Award assessors.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) *Health and Wellbeing*

- 4.14 The benefits cited from users of the Get into Reading group is a particularly strong example of outcomes that can be facilitated by libraries. The group is a therapeutic reading group that encourages participants to discuss issues that affect them through drawing meaning from poems and books. Issues were gradually and subtly drawn out for discussion, for example relating a poem to discussing loneliness. This promoted one individual with severe mental health problems to say "sometimes you can think like you're the only one" whilst another cited that "I had seasonal depression, but the group helps with this". Two individuals who had been referred to the group by the experts patient programme²⁰ reported that they preferred these sessions as they are "more relaxed and everyone is friendly without pressure to learn"²¹.

¹⁷ <http://www.voiceyourview.org/>

¹⁸ Voice Your View survey respondent

¹⁹ Volunteer, Haslingden Library

²⁰ <http://www.expertpatients.co.uk/>

²¹ Get in to Reading focus group participant

- 4.15 Participants also cited the companionship involved in attending the group, made possible by having a fit for purpose venue. This has also helped people to ‘get out of the house’ and not be lonely. *“The library is great, it’s convenient, if the session was further away then I probably wouldn’t go”²².*
- Strengthening Public Life*
- 4.16 The library provides a safe, inclusive and trusted public space, not least for young people who might otherwise be wandering the streets and for members of the Get into Reading group.
- Stronger and Safer Communities*
- 4.17 It was reported by young people that having a facility similar to a youth club, has helped to address misconceptions about the library and bring different social, ethnic and age groups together. A research paper on racial tensions in Haslingden in 2007²³ highlighted the issues that existed. Consultations revealed that the library has become a venue for young people from different ethnic backgrounds, participating in positive activities, mixing and building a rapport amongst groups who did not previously socialise. This was substantiated by teacher comments. *“The children really enjoyed themselves and learnt a great deal, gaining an insight into African culture and looking at racism during discussions about ‘black awareness’. The children were all keen to participate by playing the instruments, singing and dancing, showing lots of enthusiasm”²⁴*
- 4.18 According to youth workers and library staff, the engagement of young people appears to have reduced the number of anti-social behaviour incidents in and around the library building at Haslingden. Previously, a library user had been intimidated by a group of young people outside the library and, separately, the library was vandalised by local youths. Subsequently young people in the area have been engaged as young volunteers (Young Stars) and have contributed to the design of the Headspace room in the library (selecting books, magazines and the style of the furniture for the room). However, it has not been possible to establish whether the young people responsible for these previous incidents are the same as or have any relationship to the young people engaged through the Young Stars project.
- 4.19 The provision of a designated space away from the adults and the additional computer facilities has helped to address the needs of young people who in turn appreciate the respect they receive from library staff. They use the space to socialise on a regular basis and have different responsibilities, working together as a team to run Headspace and encourage other young people to use the library. The library has provided them with a sense of purpose and identity. Young people were said to be respectful of others and self managing their space to ensure nobody behaves inappropriately. The new space they have created is reported to have attracted more young people to use the library.

²² Get in to reading focus group participant

²³ Quraishi 2006, The Racial Construction of Urban Spaces in Britain and Pakistan

²⁴ St. James School Teacher Letter

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Skills

- 4.20 Volunteers within Friends of Colne Library reported that the benefits of involvement included making new friends within the community, with two members reporting having joined after moving to the area. Volunteers have developed new skills in collection care (relating to artefacts on display in the library) whilst also developing a greater sense of connection with their local heritage.
- 4.21 There are a number of examples from people participating in activities hosted at the libraries. One individual undertaking a literacy course said “I’ve started to leave notes for my husband, I couldn’t do that before”. For two members of the group, English was their second language, and their participation has helped build their confidence in using English in both spoken and written form.
- 4.22 Along with being involved in a successful funding bid²⁵ for equipment for Haslingden, the ‘Young Stars’ group also raised £400 through fund raising activities. This shows dedication and linkages to the changing of attitudes subsequent to the young people’s engagement.
- 4.23 One member of the ‘Young Stars’ group consulted at the start of the evaluation period has subsequently gone on to become a youth worker at the library. She has worked with the library staff to successfully grow the numbers of young people joining the library and engaging in positive activities. This individual has balanced her degree at Manchester University with the part time position and will be commencing an NVQ in youth work in April 2010. Prior to volunteering she lacked confidence and highlighted how engaging with the public within the library has now changed this. She also reported that she is more able to express herself and has improved her customer service skills.

Behaviour and Progression

- 4.24 Youth workers cited positive impacts of young people they have engaged, for example, one young person had previously become involved in fights with other local youths. Since being engaged had changed dramatically after going on trips and participating in activities with the youth workers alongside the library staff contributing to improving his confidence and he subsequently went on to university.
- 4.25 One individual reported that she did not like to go out of her house before attending a Nelson and Colne College class as she could not speak English very well so struggled to interact with other members of the community. This meant that any time she left her home it had to be with her husband however this has now changed and she goes out independently.

²⁵ The Young Stars received £2,600 to buy equipment for cyber games and craft activities.

4.26 Further individual examples were highlighted including young volunteers at Haslingden library. One individual suffers from cerebral palsy and has delivered I.T. support to library users including older people. This has improved his confidence and made him more outgoing. Another young volunteer aged 12 has been volunteering at Haslingden and has been very active. This included emailing the head of library service to ensure details of the young people's reading group he established was promoted on the Lancashire County Council website. This individual has also gained experience of marketing through working with his school librarian to advertise the reading group. This has resulted in his friends coming to use the library who were previously non-users.

Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity

4.27 Consultation with members of several groups revealed that socialising with new individuals within communities was cited as a positive outcome of people's involvement in classes/groups hosted within libraries.

4.28 Consultations with Friends of Library groups revealed individuals to have improved confidence, a greater sense of social inclusion and an improved perception of the library as a community facility.

Contribution to National Indicators

4.29 The young volunteers at Haslingden have also now established a relationship with the Friends of Group which has led to two young people being represented on this group, thereby making a contribution to **NI 1 - % of people from different backgrounds getting on well together**. This relationship is also significant given poor relations between younger and older people in Haslingden library reported at the start of the study period. Across all the volunteering experiences there are clear linkages to **NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality** for example young people who have been consulted in the design of young people's areas and **NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering**. Most obviously, there will have been a contribution to **NI 9 – use of public libraries**.

4.30 Consultations with Haslingden 'Young Stars' indicated that having their own space within the library has given them a place where young people in the area can go, particularly in the summer when there is "nothing to do". This links to **NI 110 – Positive Activities for Young People**. Generally, the group believed that if the facility was not available, they would be "messaging about on the streets" which was reported by the youth workers to have been a source of anti-social behaviour.

Ladder of Participation

4.31 The library service rated itself highly on the ladder of participation before the capital works were undertaken, based partly on the work with young people in Haslingden. However, it was recognised that this level of engagement was not replicated across all areas of the library service. Lancashire has built on good practice examples from areas where strong levels of participation could be seen (e.g. Haslingden), rolling this out across all the community libraries and beyond to the wider service.

4.32 Each library is at different stages on the Ladder of Participation which is informed by the level of community engagement undertaken prior to the community libraries programme. For example Haslingden had already undertaken strong engagement with young people as part of the Headspace project. Overall, the emphasis has been on *consulting*, but with examples of *deciding together* and *acting together*.

Summary

- 4.33 The renovations at Colne, Haslingden and Lancaster libraries occurring over nearly a year long period have yielded some significant community engagement outcomes. Lancashire Library Service is now working to disseminate best practice from each of the community libraries' experiences and strengths across all its branches, whilst learning from any areas for improvement.
- 4.34 Staff training in community engagement is an area that has been identified as needing greater attention in the coming months to ensure staff have the confidence and skills to engage with new and existing users beyond some of the more technical aspects of their jobs such as demonstrating self issue facilities to the public.
- 4.35 The success of the community libraries programme in Lancashire has been attributed as a significant factor in the commitment of Lancashire County Council to the 'Regenerate' libraries programme where large investments have now been allocated to the renovation of further libraries in the county. The library service will feature and input in to the new County Council Cultural Strategy. Mechanisms for the engagement of volunteers are now being adopted across wider departments.

5. North Yorkshire (Case Study 3)

Key summary points:

- North Yorkshire Library and Information Service maintains 42 libraries across county and achieved a top-ranking 4-star rating from the Audit Commission²⁶. A new 15-year strategy for the Service was launched in 2009, inspired in large part by the process of initial planning for the redevelopment in Harrogate.
- The building closed in November 2008 for the works and a temporary library service is being provided from an alternative town centre location.
- The refurbished library in Harrogate is yet to re-open. Community engagement has met with mixed success and, whilst challenging, has benefited from having access to temporary facilities.
- Where community engagement has had particularly positive effects is in reaching a wider range of audiences which reflect the local population, in this case, especially the Polish community.

Overview

- 5.1 The Community Library in Harrogate involves £1.5million of Big Lottery funding going towards a £3.4 million refurbishment and extension. The building closed in November 2008 for the works and a temporary library service is being provided from an alternative town centre location. As capital works are not yet complete, much time is being spent planning, preparing and developing options for the new space. Therefore, impacts on the community as a result of the new library are evidently positive, but largely indirect at present i.e. relating to staff preparation, information provision, awareness raising and consultation with local people to inform what is going to happen as opposed to what has happened.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity Service Provision

- 5.2 The Partnership Board has enabled a new way of working through engaging a rich mix of service providers and beneficiaries, including Age Concern, Adult and Community Learning, Harrogate and District Access Group and Harrogate Forum for Older People. The Board has an open format and trust has developed amongst its members to inform the development of services to be provided from the refurbished library premises. This trust has resulted in enhanced social capital among stakeholders (i.e. local people and service providers) involved in developing activities and closer linkages with partners with access to wider networks, for example the Harrogate and Area Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). Board members have also had the chance to informally enhance and establish new relationships with each other. However, efforts to invite additional Community Champions to join the Partnership Board have not yet been successful. Meetings are held during the day, which makes it difficult for those in employment or training to attend.
- 5.3 There was consensus from library staff and other stakeholders that the library service is now more responsive to the needs of the community, that it has listened and understood its users and non-users by consulting a wide demographic and working with a range of organisations. A Storytime session including stories and rhymes in Polish has also been running in the temporary facility.

²⁶ Information taken from Facts, Figures and the Future
<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4405&p=0>

- 5.4 The selection of the organisation to provide the new library furniture was directly influenced by public 'vote' and the shelving contractor has recently been appointed, who will also attend the Planning Event.
- 5.5 The approach to the Harrogate project is also going to be extended to a new library project at Starbeck (a neighbouring town) in terms of community consultation and engagement. There are reported (by library staff and other stakeholders) to be greater expectations of the library service as an organisation and the quality of service delivery, as well as a desire to do more within library spaces. The activity is expected to foster greater community involvement and a more inclusive atmosphere.
- 5.6 An opportunity has been taken to change library opening hours, specifically allowing Thursday mornings for staff training, development and discussion sessions (requested by staff). Whilst some members of the public have tried to access the library whilst it is shut and been disappointed that they could not do so, it is of value that time is set aside for staff. One member of library staff described improved career development opportunities as a result of participation in community engagement activities.
- Local Community**
- 5.7 Comments made on the PLUS survey (October 2009) demonstrate the excitement of respondents for the opening of the refurbished facility. Some disappointment was expressed as to the length of time it is taking to complete, however, there is recognition of and gratitude for the temporary facility in the interim and the helpfulness and support of library staff.
- 5.8 Staff and the community have viewed the temporary facility as more accessible and welcoming than the previous site. It has also facilitated a new working relationship with Connexions (which is based in the same building) involving a Community Information Officer who has been working with young non-library users. It was reported that these types of engagement represented a new approach for the library service. Organisations including Age Concern and Harrogate CVS are committed to utilising space at the new library building and Age Concern particularly have been trialling approaches in the temporary facility by running weekly sessions.
- 5.9 Opportunities for the library service to have direct contact with members and networks beyond individual Partnership Board representatives add particular value to reinforce a commitment to involvement and outreach of services. This also allows participants to more clearly define the impact of their input, when library staff report directly to them.
- 5.10 Discussions with a variety of youth organisations and related stakeholders (Youth Council, CVS, Police) as part of this evaluation offered a snapshot assessment around perceptions of the library redevelopment project. The form of consultation used in the library was well received as a way of involving people in decision making. It was also felt that the outreach work taking place during the refurbishment has been productive in marketing the library. However, it was felt that there were still many opportunities to be exploited to engage young people, such as outreach at community centres and youth clubs. An image change or rebranding for the new library was also suggested in line with the 'New look, No shush' vision to change perceptions that the library is a quiet and strict venue.
- 5.11 It is too early to draw any conclusions about the individual impacts of this work, particularly as Community Champions have not yet been recruited to the Partnership Board and the library itself is not complete (so no new users are yet evident). However, those participating to date are reporting the value of improved communication and relationship building towards shared practice.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.12 Older people are a target group for the improved access provided by the refurbished facility as well as improving access to services. They are represented as an interest group on the Partnership Board (Harrogate Forum for Older People). Although not yet represented on the Partnership Board, there has been activity to engage young people in the consultation process for the refurbished library, thereby helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution.

Strengthening Public Life

- 5.13 The Partnership Board has offered a mechanism for encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement, as well as seeking to improve the responsiveness of services to the needs of the local community. The temporary library provides a safe, inclusive and trusted public space and the refurbished library will also deliver this.

Stronger and Safer Communities

- 5.14 It could be argued that the work of the Partnership Board has brought together a range of stakeholders to promote better understanding. Evidence from participants has illustrated that the Partnership Board has provided a new opportunity for dialogue. Although outcomes are not yet evident, the Partnership Board has been working with the Minority Ethnic Worker for Harrogate in order to ensure that opportunities for promoting inclusion are maximised.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Skills

- 5.15 Youth Councillors have built up confidence skills when canvassing young people to complete questionnaires. Young people have understood the concept of the questionnaire and how using the online feature could have made opinions easier to collate.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 5.16 The original Youth Councillors understood the aims and objectives of the library consultation, however, the time frame has impacted on the new Youth Councillors who have been less enthusiastic with the procedure and have had less understanding of the consultation.
- 5.17 Amongst those attending the Information Day for the Over 50s, 18 provided feedback on their experience. All but 1 felt they had learned something new by attending and that they will visit the library more in future.

Behaviour and Progression

- 5.18 The survey of young people showed around half of respondents would like to be contacted regarding opportunities to volunteer or support the design of library space. Some Youth Councillors have joined the library and are regular users since the original discussion with the library staff.

Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity

- 5.19 Young people provided creative suggestions to the Library staff through discussions and there are further opportunities to involve them regarding layout, resources, IT equipment and services.

- 5.20 Feedback from members of the Polish community highlighted their enjoyment of the library as a result of their engagement. *“I think it is a very good idea. I am so grateful for the possibility of reading books in my native language.”*²⁷

Contribution to National Indicators

- 5.21 Involvement in the Partnership Board links to **NI 3 - civic participation in the local area, NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality and NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering**. There is also potential for contributions to other National Indicators once the new library is up and running, including **NI 9 – use of public libraries, NI 13 - migrants’ English language skills and knowledge and NI 110 – Positive Activities for Young People**.

Ladder of Participation

- 5.22 Stakeholders have described the project as ‘transformational’ in its inclusive approach to library development. There is now a systemic approach to consultation and information exchange between the Council and community representatives, enabling them to have a stake in the library development. In this respect, the service was largely ‘consultative’ and ‘informative’ but has now moved towards ‘acting together’.
- 5.23 The library service is committed to the aspiration for ‘high level’ engagement (particularly ‘acting together’ and ‘deciding together’), but with recognition that it cannot necessarily be expected that local people will want to take such a level of responsibility. Additionally, where there is a desire to take such responsibility, it has to be supported by library staff or community engagement officers. It is understood by library staff that there needs to be an identification of responsibilities and appropriate support to ensure effective delivery (e.g. helping community members to understand meetings papers and feel able to contribute towards discussions).

Summary

- 5.24 It is plausible that the outcome of this work, albeit some way from completion, will be a building which is significantly more accessible to more of the Harrogate community (and visitors thereto). It is also likely that a greater number of services will be available from the library building, so enabling local people to achieve learning, well-being and employment outcomes as appropriate to community requirements.
- 5.25 There are those participating in the Partnership Board who are representatives of statutory or voluntary/community organisations, therefore their participation to some extent is a requirement of a role they are already undertaking. However, a key outcome has been to draw together these organisations where previously there was not such an approach. In addition, two members of the Partnership Board are individual members of the community and are representative of their voluntary organisations – they are not paid officers therefore their participation is not guided by any role requirements.

²⁷ Members of the public

6. Nottingham (Case Study 4)

Key summary points:

- The library has progressed towards a more community-led approach, introducing a variety of services and activities. This has widened participation and provided access to new audiences (e.g. a volunteer-led Homework Club has been a particular success, attracting children and young people who might not otherwise have used the library).
- The appointment of a community engagement team whose ethnic profile more closely matches that of the local area than is the case with core library staff has helped break down barriers within the local community.
- Partnership working is proving to be a key contributor to success.

Overview

- 6.1 The Meadows is a well-defined and densely populated community, in an area of significant deprivation. The library is located within the heart of the community which makes it easily accessible to the library's target groups, including: children and their families; young people; BME communities; refugees and asylum seekers and the unemployed. BIG funding has been used to improve the facilities, whilst introducing new ways of working to integrate the local community into the library service.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

Service Provision

- 6.2 Partnership working has been strong and there are now a range of public and voluntary and community sector agencies delivering their services from the library, some of whom did not engage with the service previously. This has also facilitated access to new audiences. For example, the Old Meadows Tenants and Residents Association has started holding their meetings in the new community room at the library. The Association's Secretary reports that since hosting the meeting at the library attendance has increased (30 to 40 people). This is attributed to the library's accessible location and the fact that it is well lit, modern, clean and comfortable.
- 6.3 The Project Manager and community engagement staff are starting to play an important co-ordinating role in the local community; identifying local need and then bringing together relevant agencies to deliver appropriate services/activities. The involvement of delivery staff is well embedded in the overall work of the service, across Children and Young People, Social Inclusion, Healthy Living and Books & Learning. The library is also starting to act as a space where different agencies work together for the benefit of the local community. For example, in March 2010 the library held a Health Awareness Day involving local GPs, Blood Pressure Nurse, Diabetes Nurse, Arkwright Meadows Community Garden (promoting healthy eating on a budget) and the Local Heritage Group (promoting walking activities). This joined up approach is clearly facilitating local residents' access to services and as such has the potential to deliver a range of social, learning and health outcomes.
- 6.4 Impacts on the working culture of front line library staff is to have been fairly limited to date. They had relatively little engagement in the development of the project particularly prior to the library re-launch. This has left the staff feeling somewhat disengaged from and lacking ownership of the project. This has also created some insecurity regarding the impacts that new delivery will have on their role. Since the library re-launch, front line staff have been included to a greater extent in the project, including training and support to help them adapt to the challenges of new ways of working. During March 2010 a training session linked to the CSI programme was delivered across a range of staff levels and volunteers. However it is recognised that further work will still be required to embed a community engagement at this level.

Local Community

- 6.5 The library appears to be moving towards a more community-led approach to delivery. Members of the public are given more opportunities to input into the service, and the library is building up a committed group of volunteers, who support events and library activities. According to library staff, local residents seem more willing to give feedback on the service and make requests about book stock. Some people have come back to the library to check whether their views were taken on board.
- 6.6 Consultation with 19 library users carried out by the Study Team, indicates people's willingness to get involved in the library. Just under to thirds said they would like to get involved in the library and just over two thirds feel they have a say in how the library is run and are able to influence what the library service offers.
- 6.7 Community Groups using the library have expressed their satisfaction with the library facilities and services, many of whom use the community room for their meetings. "The library is lighter, cleaner, more modern and has a more friendly atmosphere".²⁸
- 6.8 Early consultation with library staff by the Study Team regarding library usage (November 2008) and subsequent consultation with residents (August 2009) indicated that there could be an issue around the public's perception of what a library service means and offers, which could impact on their engagement with the Meadows Community Library. Many people still appeared to hold a view of libraries being quiet and strict spaces used to solely borrow books. These perceptions are thought to be common across many library services nationally.
- 6.9 However, it is to be expected that it may take a while to change perceptions of libraries amongst the local community, particularly non-users. In this way it is important that activities meet the local community's needs and wants. The fact that volunteers from the local community are increasingly involved in organising library activities is likely to support this, both in terms of the activities representing local need and word of mouth publicity. The introduction of CSWs also appears to be supporting wider engagement and it was clear that a number of the conversation class participants had been recommended to join the group by the CSWs. *There are people in the library from the community who I never thought I'd see here.*²⁹
- 6.10 Analysis of library user data together with user and library staff consultation indicates that overall participation in the Meadows Library has widened in terms of type and number of users (new and existing) and range of library usage. The library has good ethnic diversity amongst its users, 46% of whom come from a non-white background. In addition, there are more young people using the library now, particularly as a result of the homework club and projects delivered with pupils from local primary and secondary schools. In some cases this is causing issues around disruptive behaviour in the library. The library team in partnership with the CSB are currently seeking a solution to this issue so that it does not end up alienating other library users.
- 6.11 Some headline findings³⁰ from the Nottingham City Library Service Performance Clinic shows the following:

²⁸ Library user

²⁹ Library user

³⁰ Source: Nottingham City Library Service Performance Clinic, Usage to December 2009 (24/02/10).

- The Meadows has seen a 90% increase in new members compared to last year (and a 46% increase in numbers compared to 2007-08). Within that there has been an 83% increase in under 11s joining the library and 200% increase in 11-15s.
- The Meadows has 1,490 active borrowers, 19% of the local population, and a 28% increase since March 2009. The core groups of adults and children have seen an increase in the number of active borrowers. The number of active borrowers aged over 60s has not yet recovered from the temporary closure.
- In October 2009 the Meadows reached the highest number of monthly loans in the last 3 years.
- In September 2009 the take up of computers reached its highest level in the past 3 years.

6.12 Consultations with library users carried out by the Study Team in January 2010 indicates their satisfaction with the changes made to the library, with most saying the changes are either *good* or *excellent*. A number of the respondents had only recently started using the library. Some of those people may have used the library in the past, but only very occasionally, preferring to use other libraries because they felt they had a better selection of books and a more pleasant environment.

6.13 Consultations also found that almost all of the respondents thought that the variety of services and activities available in the library is better than before. Many of these people use the library for a range of services, not only to borrow books, but to meet friends, attend group sessions and activities and to use the internet. A common theme coming out of the consultation with users was the benefit of having more computers.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)

Health and Wellbeing

6.14 There is evidence of the impacts on volunteers' social inclusion and emotional wellbeing. A number of the CSB members are now retired and they highlighted how it is positive for them to be actively involved in the community, in stead of "sitting at home and watching daytime TV". This also indicates a contribution to mental health and wellbeing through participation.

6.15 Consultations with library users indicated that they feel comfortable in the library, enjoy using the service and feel it is a good place to meet people. All of those questioned said that using the library has contributed to their overall happiness. Again the level of interaction and communication taking place is contributing to these overall benefits.

Strengthening Public Life

6.16 The Community Sounding Board has offered a mechanism for encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement. The library provides a safe, inclusive and trusted public space and has also helped to build the capacity of community and voluntary groups (e.g. by boosting attendance at Tenants and Residents Association meetings).

Stronger and Safer Communities

6.17 In addition to practical skills, the **Conversation Class** appears to be contributing towards social inclusion. Participants report how their confidence has grown since coming to the class and the fact that they have made new friends. Indeed a number of the opinions expressed by the participants suggest that they perceive the library as a space for them, which indicates that the library is an inclusive space.

6.18 Similarly, the **Homework Club** brings together children from different schools in the neighbourhood. Given the ethnic diversity of Club members, interaction between the participants is likely to be contributing towards community cohesion.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Skills

- 6.19 **Homework Club** participants are drawn from all three local primary schools and reflect the ethnic diversity of the area. The Head Teacher from one of these schools confirmed its support, on the basis that some children's homes are thought not to be conducive to studying, particularly if they share a bedroom with siblings or if there is no quiet space in the house. Consultations with some of the children bore this out, revealing they would receive limited or no support with their school studies at home. One of the class teachers at this school, who has pupils says that she can identify the children who attend the Homework as they are enthusiastic about reading and books.
- 6.20 Anecdotal evidence from participants, their parents and the Homework Club Officer suggests that the Club is stimulating a number of learning outcomes for participants, particularly in terms of maths and literacy. It also appears to be building their confidence as a result of learning in a supportive environment and mixing with new people. Consultations with participants revealed that since coming to the Club they find their homework more enjoyable and more manageable, as well as leading to them generally enjoying learning more and to an improvement in their school grades in most cases, citing improvements in Maths and English, particularly spelling, writing and reading. Some also mentioned that their behaviour has improved. Parents confirmed the positive impacts on their children's attitude to studying and behaviour.
- 6.21 Participants in the **Conversation Class** provided highly positive feedback on their involvement, and rising attendance numbers are further evidence of success. Observation at the group and consultation with participants indicates that the class provides a supportive and informal learning environment that is guided by learner needs. All of those questioned recognised the potential of the library to help them learn new things and develop new skills, with four fifths believing they were doing so. They particularly appreciate receiving individual support and having the chance to communicate with native English speakers and several made reference to the contribution their participation in the class is making to their career and educational progression. *"I prefer the conversation class to going to learn English at school because it's more flexible and I can ask questions and learn whatever I want to"*.³¹
- 6.22 Library members of staff who have been more closely involved in the project reported impacts on their skills development. For example, the Community Librarian reported developing her confidence in working with young people, through her involvement in developing a reading project with a group of pupils at Emmanuel Secondary School.
- 6.23 Feedback from volunteers demonstrates the considerable impacts on their skills development (especially communication and organisational skills), self esteem and confidence. Volunteers also reported developing their skills in dealing with people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In some cases, skills and experience gained is helping them to progress with their education or career. For example, one of the conversation class volunteers is looking to develop a career in teaching English as a foreign language and is gaining both teaching experience and confidence in working with people who do not have English as their first language.

³¹ Library user, Nottingham

Behaviour and Progression

- 6.24 All of the **Conversation Class** participants reported how their involvement is helping to develop their confidence and ability to communicate in English. This in turn is supporting the development of a range of life skills, including: filling in forms; accessing public services; catching public transport; shopping; finding work and communicating with their children's teachers. One of the participants also mentioned how she is now better able to communicate with her own children as before she used to struggle to understand them in English.

Contribution to National Indicators

- 6.25 Broadening the range of library users, including attracting pupils from several different local schools, is likely to have contributed to both **NI 1 - % of people from different backgrounds getting on well together** and **NI 2 - % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood**. Involvement in the Community Sounding Board links to both **NI 3 - civic participation in the local area** and **NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality**. This and other voluntary work in supporting service delivery will have made a clear contribution to **NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering**. There will of course also have been a contribution to **NI 9 – use of public libraries**. The Conversation Classes held at the library will have contributed to **NI 13 - migrants' English language skills and knowledge**, whilst the Homework Club links to **NI 110 – Positive Activities for Young People**.

Ladder of Participation

- 6.26 The basis of community engagement has moved from *Informing* (before the project) to *Consultation* and is making tentative progress towards *Deciding together*. There are some examples of *Acting Together*, with community representation on the Project Board. The CSB is starting to take a more active role in directing service development and delivery and is developing a constitution as a basis for becoming a Management Board for the library. This is based on shared learning with Cambridgeshire and the draft constitution provided for use in the Meadows Library.

Summary

- 6.27 The Project Board has been effective and its membership which has comprised a good balance between library service staff and community representatives. The creation of a Community Sounding Board with representatives from local community groups has helped forge stronger links with these groups, some of whom had little or no previous links with the library. One of the outcomes of this multi-agency approach is the delivery of a wider range of services from the library. There is also now a wider representation of participants, including young people and more BME groups, which is encouraging for its potential evolution into a Management Board.
- 6.28 A future challenge will be sustaining the level of community engagement beyond BIG funding. Although the level of engagement with the project team and the CSWs has been successful, further progress needs to be made with frontline library staff. The level of buy-in has improved, however, the need for clear communication which keeps the staff informed is identified as a key priority for the project.

7. Sandwell (Case Study 5)

Key summary points:

- The Programme has benefited 2 libraries in Sandwell, 1 of which is yet to open following delays to building works. The other is proving to be very popular with a wide range of users and new activities are now provided at the library.
- A successful volunteering programme has led to Smethwick library being used as a model across Sandwell for work with volunteers.
- New partnerships with other service providers have been formed and enhanced, most notably with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- A particular success has been the initiation of a Reading Group at Smethwick library, attracting new visitors.

Overview

- 7.1 Smethwick and Bleakhouse libraries were awarded a grant of £1.4m from BIG. Smethwick Library sits on Smethwick High Street within a diverse and transient community, whereas Bleakhouse is in a more defined neighbourhood, serving a community that has been using the library for many years. Smethwick has seen a reconfiguration of existing space, improved community rooms and a new café with public toilets. Bleakhouse is still undergoing final building work and will officially open to the public in May 2010. Bleakhouse has undergone significant re-structural work; introducing user-friendly community spaces and improved facilities.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

Service Provision

- 7.2 The BIG Management team has identified that community engagement activities have attracted a wide range of people to the library. This is particularly evident through the increase in the use of community rooms and the range of local organisations using these facilities. This is also allowing Sandwell to interact with the target groups identified in the Community Engagement Plan (CEP). However, a breakdown of types of users is not available, (as explained below). Although the BIG Management team is confident that its work will have the desired impacts, it acknowledges that some milestones need to be revised to reflect the reality of what is being achieved. Activities have helped to raise the profile of the library both within the community, with key partners and on a strategic level with the local authority.
- 7.3 Partnerships have grown in strength and the co-location of services (with the local Galton Valley Children's Centre) is transferring users to the library. Partnership working is also helping to attract people who do not normally use the library or have not visited for a long time. The SLIS aims to use the new Library Management System to track users who borrow books from both Smethwick and the Galton Valley Express Library; however this system will only capture book issues and will not provide a complete picture of use. Although a lot of statistical information is available, which makes it easy to identify trends and user groups; there is no individual tracking of users, which would provide more information about the types of users visiting the library. Despite this the increased use by organisations such as Sandwell MIND as well as local organisations signposting people to the library is helping to attract a wider range of people.

- 7.4 Similarly, the library is signposting people to relevant agencies (numbers not recorded), which is helping to address a range of community issues. As a result of the library being used by the Galton Valley Children's Centre, a homeless mother with a young child who attended the story telling sessions was signposted to local agencies; resulting in her and her child being re-housed. This example demonstrates how partnership working enables the library service to achieve 'additional' benefits.
- Local Community**
- 7.5 **Smethwick library** is generating unique opportunities for the local community to take part in activities that have not otherwise been available to them, including language classes (English and other community languages), self help groups and dance classes, as well as providing additional/enhanced IT facilities. As highlighted above, the library also acts as an initial reference point; signposting individuals to a range of external agencies. As part of the evaluation, focus group sessions were held with the International English Class, the Reading Group and the Bollywood Dance Class. The participants highlighted a number of benefits from taking part in these activities, including an improvement in skills, increased confidence, motivation, social benefits and reduced feelings of isolation. Earlier consultation with the Asian Ladies Yoga Group (no longer using the library) also revealed similar benefits.
- 7.6 From April 2008 to March 2009 the number of people visiting Smethwick library was 169,446; the total number of visits made so far this year (April 2009 to January 2010) is 164,842. The number of new members joining the library since the opening in March 2009 has been 2404. User consultations revealed that 41% of people had recently started using the library and 18% of them said that this was due to the recent changes. Overall, 55% of those consulted use the library on most days and 25% use the library more than previously, with 95% intending to use the library more in the future.
- 7.7 There has been an increase in the use of community rooms, which are being used on a regular basis at Smethwick library, with interest from a variety of groups, including reading groups, anxiety management groups and dance classes. Group leaders feel that the library plays an important role in making contact with other organisations and potential participants, with the library offering a welcoming atmosphere and staff found to be very helpful.
- 7.8 However, many people attending the group sessions are not transferring their use to the rest of the library. This is seen as a key issue to be addressed. A variety of reasons have been highlighted, ranging from individuals being members of other libraries nearer to their homes as well as issues around confidence and cultural barriers for BME groups. People also highlighted that they lead busy lives and therefore it is not possible to stay in the library and browse for longer periods of time.
- 7.9 Consultations revealed strong endorsement of the changes to the library, with 32 % of the respondents describing them as excellent and 45% as Good, with 77% stating that the range of services available had improved. Consultations also revealed that 41% of the respondents feel that the extent to which the local community has a say in how the library is run has improved (although only a minority had expressed any views) and asked if they wished to get involved in the delivery and management of the library, 46% said yes and 27% said no. However, it was apparent that there was a lack of awareness amongst people of the opportunities available to get involved in delivering library services. *"I thought you had to be a librarian to work in the library."*³²

³² Library user, Sandwell

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)

Health and Wellbeing

- 7.10 As demonstrated as part of the SROI analysis in Section 10, the library is making significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the local people of Sandwell. Consultations with users indicated that 45% of people felt that the library has improved their overall happiness; 31% that their physical health has improved and 41% that the library has given them more confidence. *“I live by myself, therefore being part of a group helps me feel human and less depressed”. Coming to the group helps me have interaction with people. “The group helps me get out of the house, allows me to talk to my friends and is very therapeutic”.*³³

Strengthening Public Life

- 7.11 Growing involvement of volunteers has supported awareness and participation in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement and the library has also made some progress in improving the responsiveness of services to the needs of the local community. The library provides a safe, inclusive and trusted public space and has also helped to build the capacity of community and voluntary groups by providing high quality facilities to accommodate their activities.

Stronger and Safer Communities

- 7.12 The International English Class is helping more people to improve their English and have confidence in using it, thereby promoting integration/community cohesion and improving access to services. In contrast there is a common issue occurring within the older Punjabi community and individuals who are relying on the availability of Punjabi speaking staff and group leaders to help to remove language barriers. Although this would help to improve communication, these members of this community would also benefit from developing their skills in speaking English by interacting more with the members of staff and group leaders who do not speak community languages.
- 7.13 The library is also helping people more generally to socialise and make friends, including with social and ethnic groups with which they might not otherwise interact. Almost all of the users consulted considered the library was now a good place to meet people.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Skills

- 7.14 Senior management has recognised that changes to the working environment are contributing to an improvement in the skills and confidence of frontline staff. Staff are using a range of social, communication and management skills on a day to day basis and attempts are being made to identify other training needs. The personal skills of volunteers have also improved as a result of delivering library services. Staff from Bleakhouse library have been spending time at Smethwick to experience the changes that have taken place there and to prepare them for the opening of Bleakhouse library.
- 7.15 Consultations with users suggested that IT skills had improved and people felt that more employable as a result. The Make Friends with a Book group has been attracting first time visitors to the library from as far as Erdington (7 miles away), with many of the participants making a special trip to the library for this session.
- 7.16 During consultations at Smethwick library, users were asked whether the library has helped them to learn new things and develop new skills and three quarters of those questioned said it had.

³³ Library users, Sandwell

Knowledge and Understanding

- 7.17 Group sessions are helping to broaden people's understanding of a range of issues. For example a member of the Reading group commented that the sessions are "widening (her) interests".
- 7.18 Consultations with staff revealed a lack of understanding about the CEP and earlier consultations revealed that staff wanted to be better informed about the way in which the service is developing and how this would impact them. Subsequently, regular staff briefings and training events (February 2010) have informed frontline staff about volunteer involvement and community engagement and has improved their understanding and developed a sense of shared responsibility. During December 2009 senior library staff also attended the Black Country Library Authorities in Partnership Conference, this is a regional partnership and the event focused on best practice and benefits of using volunteers in libraries. Lessons learnt have been cascaded down to the frontline staff through the February 2010 training sessions.

Contribution to National Indicators

- 7.19 Broadening the range of library users is likely to have contributed to both **NI 1 - % of people from different backgrounds getting on well together** and **NI 2 - % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood**. Voluntary work in supporting service delivery will have made a clear contribution to **NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering** and there has been a significant contribution to **NI 9 – use of public libraries**. The International English Class will have contributed to **NI 13 - migrants' English language skills and knowledge**.

Ladder of Participation

- 7.20 Since the commencement of the Community Libraries project the SILS has progressed well along the stages of the Ladder of Participation. An annual review of community engagement activities and consultation methods is undertaken by the service. By June 2009, there had been progress across the range of activities, from informing/consulting to consulting/deciding together. By February 2010, this had progressed to deciding together/acting together, with acting together a particular feature of work with volunteers.

Summary

- 7.21 Community partnerships are creating opportunities for the ongoing development of the library service and libraries are being recognised as a key resource, delivering a diverse range of services to the local community. An understanding and realisation is developing amongst the library staff, local organisations, group facilitators and the community itself as to the role of the library as a community hub. As a result Smethwick library is being increasingly recognised as a venue, which provides personal and social benefits to the community. The library improvements are therefore helping to raise the profile of each library and in Smethwick this has generated organisational benefits through staff training and volunteer involvement. Greater understanding and continued promotion of the service is however required so that greater integration across services and groups within the community can be achieved.
- 7.22 Delays between the design consultation and the delivery of physical changes have resulted in a lack of involvement from partners, due to changing priorities.

8. Newcastle (Control)

Key summary points:

- Newcastle is the 'control' authority, with the re-construction of its City Library not in receipt of BIG funding but resourced through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Overview of the Library Service

- 8.1 As the 'control' authority, activity has not necessarily been designed with the same community engagement priorities as other authorities. The City Library in Newcastle has been rebuilt as part of a £40.2m Private Finance Initiative (PFI) involving refurbishment of branches across the city. The new City Library opened in June 2009.

Impacts of Community Engagement Activity

Service Provision

- 8.2 Library staff are now 'mobile' within the library space (described as 'floor walking') as opposed to static behind a desk, the impact being greater interaction with users to facilitate access and promote a positive presence in all areas of the library. There was an early meeting with staff regarding the floor plans and this new practice; there was some worry about this as they had '*visions of standing around for hours on end*', but despite this, there was an overall willingness to explore new ways of working.
- 8.3 All the staff consulted reported a preference for the new way of working, in spite of the demands of more travelling between floors. A key impact has been that the work has broken down social barriers between staff as they felt that the library is now a much more sociable environment making for a better working atmosphere. A routine has quickly developed and activity is timetabled, for which staff are grateful. This includes efforts to keep people in their 'floors' for some part of the day but at the same time creating variety. Nobody is excluded from any tasks. Members of staff are now more proactive and look for those who need help in the library. This has been recognised by staff and users as an impressive and positive way of working.
- 8.4 Organisational outcomes include greater staff communication, with methods including an internal newsletter, briefing dialogue sessions and staff working group. Stakeholders reported that the library service is also working more closely with other departments of the Council, as the building is used for meetings and events. It was commented that the scale of the project has required a collaborative approach with greater staff involvement to positive effect. The focus on the City Library has also catalysed broader thinking about service delivery across all branches.
- 8.5 Further to this, staff across the service are now better trained and equipped to engage with new and existing library users. They have also received training on how to work together more as a team to support each other with the ultimate outcome of providing an enhanced service to the community. They have also received training to engage more effectively with users including learning how to use self issue and support people in its use. A staff training skills audit had been undertaken previously which identified training needs of staff. Most of the training has been delivered in house although external training has also taken place including 'Welcome Host' run by the tourist information centre which all staff have now undertaken. There is an ambition of the service that all staff will achieve NVQ 2 in customer service. The library service has also worked alongside Northumbria University to develop an external course for the Library and Information Officers. It focuses on bring the whole service together by training different levels of staff to work together. The outcome is that the team are now working much better together and meet once a month along with a senior manager to ensure the best possible service and visitor experience for library users.

- 8.6 Comments that have been provided by members of the public to staff are reportedly positive and are generally spoken, an outcome of the greater personal contact. The new way of working throughout the building was considered particularly valuable for improving customer contact, as well as job satisfaction; they are approached by users much more frequently and value the opportunity to be able to support them more directly.
- 8.7 There is a degree of piloting and response of new approaches, for example, the redevelopment mixed gay and lesbian books in with general fiction, however, feedback has suggested that people cannot find what they are looking for easily. This illustrates a difference from the branch user reactions – as they wanted the section not to be separate. In this respect, there is an important learning point in terms of user engagement; the needs and preferences of users can vary by location, rather than an assumption of consistency across the service.
- 8.8 There is evidence that library staff feel increased pride in working at the library and that the high profile publicity for the service made an additional contribution towards this, specifically seeing the advertisement on local television. The opening hours have had a particularly positive public reaction in terms of visit numbers. The library is now open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 8pm, Friday and Saturday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Sunday 11am to 5pm. Previously late night and weekend openings were not as frequent and hours were more in line with the 9-5 working day.
- 8.9 The management group reported the significant positive impact on staff to the new way of working and reported that they were now looking to establish a frontline staff regular meeting to share good practice and other staffing issues after the study team hosted a session that provided a new and welcome forum for this. Several frontline staff have shared their experience with visiting librarians and one member of staff travelled to Birmingham to address a manager's workshop as part of the planning process for the new City Library in Birmingham
- Local Community**
- 8.10 Access to library services has been enhanced through longer opening hours, the introduction of self service (with self-issue and return facilities), and a range of books and DVDs being made available from an external 24 hours service area. Staff reported that some members of the public have been fearful of the new technology (supported by comments from users to the study team), for example, the self service machines, but most cope well due to the available support from the trained library staff.
- 8.11 An exploration of potential tensions between different users (especially older adults and children and young people) found that this was minimised through consultation and engagement, but also recognition that this is a reflection of 'life'. Existing customers have commented that the library is busier than they would have liked, but others said that this made the space 'lively'. Responses have included zoning space within open plan buildings and letting people know when different activities are happening so that they can choose to attend, for example, dedicated late evening openings for children and young people. Some user comments did suggest that perhaps there could be more quiet space isolated from busier areas.

- 8.12 One of the greatest quantifiable impacts to date has been the rise in new borrowers, visits, issues and enquiries since the library opened compared to before its closure. For example, there has been a 125% increase in new borrowers, showing how the new library has attracted more people within the community. Between June and August 2009, there were 22,605 new borrowers, 316,353 visits, 156,068 issues and 67,017 enquiries. The target for participants in the Summer Reading Challenge 2009 at City Library was set at 100, however, in August 2009, 485 young people had joined the programme. Results from a User Survey undertaken by Northumbria University showed that 85% were members of the library and 49% had joined within the last year. Very positive feedback was also received regarding the library staff and the building itself. 61% rate the opening hours to be very good.

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Skills

- 8.13 Library staff described how some users are 'experts' and support one another, particularly in the heritage section.

Activity, Behaviour and Progression

- 8.14 The new library has promoted increased activity by local people, as well as opportunities to have new experiences through the library space. Staff reported a change in user profile, with a greater number of older people (especially in groups) and young men (thought to be attracted by graphic novels and the music download stations). There are reportedly more Chinese users and the Chinese stock has been increased in response. There have also been requests for Spanish, French and Arabic material which has also resulted in increased stock.
- 8.15 Room bookings have been popular, having achieved 50% occupancy without any promotion. The library is used more frequently by agencies to provide access to their services, for example, reading groups, corporate users, outside agencies, NHS, book signings and artists' groups. Use of the exhibition space will be further developed this year.
- 8.16 A newly formed Young People's Reading Group began in January 2010 with a second session in February. Members were recruited through open advertisement using posters in the library, through the blog and through the Facebook group. It is attended by 6-8 young people aged 11 to 15.

Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity

- 8.17 Library staff have found that many more children and families are attending the library at the weekend, also observed by the Study Team. Staff and users described that it has become 'trendy' to be part of the library and 'the place to be'; it is an attractive space to spend leisure time.
- 8.18 The branding of the library is colourful and the service invests time in modern approaches to communication, for example, a regularly updated blog and Facebook page featuring photos, easily accessible information and clear contact details for further information as required.
- 8.19 The opportunity to explore genealogy has been attractive to some users, with library staff noting interest in tracing family history particularly. The library is also more frequently used by older people, particularly coming in groups. It is felt that the availability of seating and an open and welcoming café area have helped this; people sit and spend time rather than just picking up a book and leaving.

- 8.20 Storytimes are also attracting new adult members through an activity for their children; some have joined the library as a result of attending Storytime sessions. Through attending the Storytime sessions, parents can also take the opportunity to borrow books and DVDs.

Attitudes and Values

- 8.21 Members of the public approach the staff much more than they did previously, particularly as the members of staff are mobile throughout the space and are easily identifiable by their black 'uniform'. Users consulted reported satisfaction from seeing their contributions making a difference, both at an individual level and as part of a wider community.

Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)

Health and Wellbeing

- 8.22 Consultations with library users indicated that they feel comfortable in the library, enjoy using the service and feel it is a good place to meet people.

Strengthening Public Life

- 8.23 The library provides a safe, inclusive and trusted public space, as well as one that is much admired by both regular and occasional visitors.
- 8.24 There was a balance to the extent to which Customer Focus Group participants felt their influence on the redevelopment of library services. Respondents commented that there was clear evidence that the library service listened to and considered their opinions, but that not every idea could be acted upon and had to be balanced with opinion and knowledge from other sources. What was clear, however, was the great extent to which participants considered that they had 'active involvement' in the library service. Therefore, although the Customer Focus Group is being reviewed at present, previous members reported their experiences as being particularly positive, reinforcing the value of investing time in supporting and facilitating such a group

Stronger and Safer Communities

- 8.25 Although the library and activities within it are likely to be contributing towards social inclusion, there were no specific findings to report.

Contribution to National Indicators

- 8.26 Although the library may have made a contribution to a number of National Indicators, there is only hard evidence in respect of one: NI 9 – use of public libraries. As a City Centre library it serves rather different user groups to those visiting the other case study libraries and, in many respects fulfils different functions.

Ladder of Participation

- 8.27 Stakeholders consulted reported that the library service has always been dedicated to the voice of its users, particularly in terms of 'information' and 'consultation'. There has been a debate amongst library managers regarding the policy trend towards encouraging local residents to take a greater control in the management and delivery of services. In Newcastle, the concern was that even well established services to promote community management, for example, school governors, frequently struggle to attract willing participants.

- 8.28 To explore this in more depth, the Council piloted a piece of consultation in one ward of the City, investigating the extent to which local people wanted to contribute towards managing services (covering leisure, sport, libraries and arts). Delivered through the medium of film, the majority of people consulted had a preference towards greater knowledge of the provision of services as opposed to a desire for control or influence. Albeit an expensive consultation process, it was considered an effective method for gathering feedback from residents.

Summary

- 8.29 The City Library is considered by users and staff alike to be a large, attractively designed building in the centre of Newcastle. It offers a range of experiences. It has had a significant amount of capital investment in addition to library service resource to plan and prepare appropriately. Care has been taken to involve local people in the design of the building and its contents, as well as exploring ideas for activities and services to be delivered from the library space. Importantly, however, has been the time taken to work with staff to involve them in every step.
- 8.30 Despite the detailed preparation, there have been pressures (as expected) once operation began. However, all involved consider these pressures to be a symptom of the success of the activity. There is continual planning regarding work with local people, statutory and voluntary/community providers to maximise use of the services provided from the building as there is a clear understanding of the need for responsiveness and positive activity rather than thinking that the 'job has been done'.

9. Social Return On Investment

Background

- 9.1 A specific aim of the Community Libraries evaluation was to capture the social return on investment (SROI) of the Programme. SROI is a measurement approach, developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis that captures the economic value of social benefits by translating social objectives into financial measures and focuses on the most important sources of value as defined by stakeholders.
- 9.2 The methodologies and processes that underpin SROI assessments continue to evolve. Indeed, during the course of the evaluation new guidelines were published by the Cabinet Office setting out the Government's view as to the basis on which SROI assessments ought to be conducted. This indicated that the basis on which an SROI assessment would be done in early 2010 is markedly different to the approach that would have been undertaken at the time this evaluation was commissioned. The basis on which this SROI assessment was taken forward is set out in Appendices 7 and 8.
- ### Overall Approach
- 9.3 Although MLA's appointed SROI expert on the Advisory Group was of the opinion that a full and rigorous SROI assessment could not be carried out given the short timescale between community engagement activities being undertaken and the end of the study period, an attempt has been made to identify and quantify some of the social returns linked to the investments in community libraries. As agreed with the Advisory Group, these look at specific activities within a selection of the case studies, with the positions in each instance being as follows:
- Bristol – evidence provision impractical ahead of library opening;
 - Lancashire – focused on the 'Young Stars' group;
 - North Yorkshire – evidence provision impractical ahead of library opening;
 - Nottingham – focused on the 'Homework Club'; and
 - Sandwell – focused on the 'Make Friends with a Book' reading group.
- 9.4 In the course of initial meetings with staff at each library, the concept of SROI was introduced within the context of the Logic Model and Evaluation Framework. Given the inexperience of many library staff and group leaders in gathering evidence of outcomes and impacts, it was unsurprising that the concept was difficult to fully comprehend in most instances (indeed, the same could be said for many environments where monitoring/measurement is much more established). The exception was the Meadows library, which has focused on demonstrating impacts for some time, with the Development teams required to complete a project proforma, identify outcomes and analyse the actual impact and outcomes of each project. In relation to this, the library service records visitor and user data, which provides up to date knowledge of how the libraries are being used. As a result, although the library recognises the limitations of the SROI procedure, the concept was taken on board and understood.
- 9.5 In particular, attempts to attribute a monetary value to some outcomes and impacts (for example, increased self-esteem,) was considered by library staff and users to be particularly challenging. Consequently, and where possible, proxy values from referenced sources have been used (see Appendix 6). As with all SROI analyses, certain assumptions have been adopted, based on what is known about the projects/beneficiaries (not on other studies). These have been discussed with project staff and are considered by them to be reasonable.

- 9.6 SROI Impact Maps relating to Nottingham and Sandwell which set out the basis on which calculations of value relative to cost have been undertaken can be found in Appendix 7 (none was possible for the other case study libraries). It should be noted that, for consistency and reflecting the short term nature of each of the activities, benefits have only been assessed over a single year.

Bristol

Boundary Setting and Impact Mapping

- 9.7 The idea of using SROI was discussed with the Library Service and the Adult Education Team and it was generally well received in principle as a possible means of capturing and monetising some of the social returns from community engagement activities.
- 9.8 Consideration was given to identifying potential Health and Wellbeing impacts and also Volunteer Hours that could have a baseline of zero (as there are currently no volunteers at the yet to be built library). However, as the new library has not been built nor at that time had recruitment of resident volunteers commenced it was decided that undertaking an SROI was not feasible as there were (and still are not), any volunteers.
- 9.9 Consideration was also given to undertaking some type of SROI amongst participants of the various promotional projects (J3 Fired Up, More than Words) but as these were being delivered and led by different partners it was deemed impractical to incorporate (retrospectively) any SROI measurement, particularly as these participants/beneficiaries would not necessarily become resident volunteers.

Lancashire (Haslingden) – Young Stars

Boundary Setting and Impact Mapping

- 9.10 An early meeting was held with the Project Manager and Head of Service. A sample Logic Framework was presented based on information taken from the BIG application and comments were invited, but it was apparent that the Logic Framework was not well understood. Furthermore, whilst SROI was mentioned as a potential element of the evaluation, it was judged that this could not be pushed too hard too soon, for fear of prompting a negative response to the fieldwork as a whole. There was though some encouragement to be drawn from the response of the Head of Service in expressing an interest in the Logic Framework in general and SROI in particular.
- 9.11 One potential opportunity to undertake SROI analysis was with volunteers at each of the three libraries. Although consultations were undertaken with different groups of volunteers, three things were apparent: the degree of volunteering varied significantly, the level of information about the nature and scale of volunteering was also variable and the self-reported benefits of volunteering experiences were generally vague and weak (although one good example was gathered of a woman who was depressed prior to becoming involved as a volunteer and which had aided her recovery).
- 9.12 One of the strands of the Big Lottery Fund bid for Lancashire included training library staff to deliver Arts Awards to young people. This may have allowed the application of SROI, but this element of the project has yet to be realised.
- 9.13 It was hoped that organisations working with the library service to deliver sessions (such as NHS advice sessions at Haslingden) would capture information that could be used for an SROI assessment. However, the confidential nature of the services provided meant that the data required was not routinely captured, nor was there scope to do so without potentially compromising service delivery.

- 9.14 Engagement of young people at Haslingden library (the 'Young Stars') was selected as the basis for an SROI assessment. This group was brought together initially from young people who used the library but has subsequently expanded to include former non-users. However, it was acknowledged that some of these activities commenced prior to the Big Lottery Fund grant coming onstream.
- 9.15 The stakeholders were easily defined and, given the focus of the SROI assessment, the group participants were the clear priority in terms of capturing social returns on the investment in space used by them and staff support provided to them.
- 9.16 The following stakeholders were consulted for this assessment (further detail in Appendix 2):
- Group participants;
 - Community Library Project Manager;
 - Library Manager; and
 - 2 Youth workers.
- 9.17 Haslingden has a troubled history of tensions between different groups in the community, between different ethnicities and also different age groups. Specific incidents in and around the library building include a petrol bomb being thrown through an upstairs window, setting fire to the exhibition room and destroying the work of an amateur artist who had 26 paintings on display along with a number of books and furniture. In addition, a library user was attacked outside the library by young people who regularly caused a nuisance to library staff. However, since the engagement work with young people, no further similar instances have occurred. It was therefore established that the most significant changes that could be explored was in the attitudes and behaviours of young people, as demonstrated by their increased engagement in library-based activities and in avoiding a repeat of the anti-social behaviour experienced in and around the library previously.

Collecting Data

- 9.18 It was at this stage that difficulties were encountered in selecting indicators and identifying financial values and proxies.
- 9.19 The young people consulted felt that having their own space within the library has given them a place where they can go, particularly in the summer when there is very little to do in the local area. Generally the group believed that if the facility was not available then they would be "messaging about on the streets". However, identifying specific indicators and ascribing values was not possible.
- 9.20 There was reported to have been a noticeable difference in the approach and attitude of young people using the library, as they are now calmer and respect library rules whilst also self managing their behaviour, which is enforced by young volunteers. One former member of the Young Stars had previously been banned from entering the library building four times by library staff due to poor behaviour, but after youth workers and library staff worked with him he became a volunteer and subsequently went on to university. Another former Young Star has gone on to be a part time youth worker in the library. Whilst such anecdotal evidence is encouraging it does not provide a basis for meaningful indicators and quantifiable measures.
- 9.21 Some of the young stars have volunteered in the main library area which includes duties such as organising collections and generally managing the behaviour of other young people. However, volunteer hours are not recorded.

- 9.22 The young people feel they had been involved in decision making at the library and that they can approach library staff to suggest changes, whilst understanding that implementation can take time. The Young Stars were also involved in the bid writing process for an application for computer equipment and materials for their area. They have sought to encourage young people into the library by hosting cyber games sessions which have had good attendance. Once in the library building it was reported that individuals have begun to explore the building further and borrow books.
- 9.23 The library has become a venue for young people from different ethnic backgrounds to participate in positive activities, mixing and building a rapport amongst groups who would not have previously socialised. This directly contributes to NI 1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area. Although social cohesion is sometimes cited as the being the type of outcome that could be expressed in SROI terms, it is very difficult to do so at the micro level (looking at one project within one local library).
- 9.24 Consultations with young people suggested that they had gained social and practical skills, improving their educational attainment and helping them to mix with new people (across age ranges and from different ethnic groups), thereby gaining greater awareness of the situations and views of others. In addition, there have been community benefits arising from the reduction in anti-social behaviour and the absence of any repeats of the arson and assault incidents reported previously.
- Modelling and Calculating**
- 9.25 Although £1.39 million has been invested across the 3 community libraries in Lancashire, no specific figures are available for engagement work with young people at Haslingden. Furthermore, the main space used by the Young Stars group was created using funding that came onstream prior to the Community Libraries Programme. Nevertheless, there are some inputs that can be quantified.
- 9.26 The Young Stars are guided by two youth workers, employed on a part time basis. It was felt by library management that existing staff might not have the capacity or skills to engage with young people and harder to reach audiences, therefore youth workers were felt to offer a more suitable option. The full employment cost of these workers is about £25,000 a year in total. Setting aside the use of the HeadSpace area, the Young Stars access a room within the main library twice a week for up to 3 hours at a time. The external hire cost is £20 for a 3 hour session, equating to an annual cost of around £2,000 (acknowledging that the group doesn't meet 52 weeks of the year).
- 9.27 The Young Stars is not a fixed group, with membership constantly changing. Young people are involved for different lengths of time and to a variety of extents, so it is not possible to establish a cohort, track their experiences and place values on the outcomes and impacts that have been achieved across the group. In other words, the benefits derived from participation in Young Stars are largely individual and fairly vague (it occupies their time). Currently, there are around 20 members of the Young Stars group, of whom 15 are active in volunteering in the library. Attendance at the twice weekly sessions in the Library Meeting Room is reported by the Library Manager to currently average about 35 young people.

- 9.28 There are then issues of deadweight, displacement and attribution. Would the library have engaged with the young people outside of the community library programme? Well, it already had, so may have continued to do so in some form. Has youth work carried out by the library curtailed youth engagement being conducted by other agencies or moved the problem on elsewhere? Neither is thought likely. Was the reduction in anti-social behaviour/criminality due to the community libraries programme or other factors? Whilst the youth workers have played a key role, the previous capital investment to create a dedicated space for young people was crucial, besides which some of the young people might have been influenced by any number of other factors, resulting in the cessation of anti-social behaviour/criminality.
- 9.29 Whilst there are benefits from the engagement with young people to report, defining and quantifying those benefits has proved to be elusive, as a result of which no SROI calculation has been offered.

North Yorkshire

Boundary Setting and Impact Mapping

- 9.30 At the initial meeting with the Library Service and the Equality and Community Engagement Manager from North Yorkshire County Council, an overview of our proposed methodologies was discussed. This included reference to SROI as a technique which might be explored, but it was not raised again following the initial meeting as the refurbishment of the library at Harrogate has not yet been completed so the focus of the research was on the engagement of target users in consultation and information terms. The lead contacts were very supportive of the research generally.
- 9.31 The Partnership Board for the Harrogate Library redevelopment was receptive of the evaluation in terms of measuring outcomes and impacts, but the pace of the redevelopment meant it was at too early a stage to make any firm assessments. If an SROI analysis was planned and undertaken at an appropriate time with a clear understanding of requirements and resources, the Library would likely be receptive to it. However, this would need to be in the context of consideration of the benefits of this investment in the long term.

Nottingham – Homework Club

Boundary Setting and Impact Mapping

- 9.32 The initial contacts were the Community Librarian, Community Library Project Manager and Community Engagement Worker. They were taken through the Logic Model approach and introduced to the concept of SROI.
- 9.33 A number of groups were considered as possible subjects for an SROI assessment, including those that had been identified as not regular library users (the elderly, teenagers, Afro-Caribbean community, white working class community and disabled people). However, there were no specific activities targeted at these user groups, other than the Homework Club. Furthermore, it was known that there was a need for out of school support for younger children, which had prompted the planned appointment of a Homework Club Officer.
- 9.34 The Homework Club provides study support to children and young people aged from 11 to 19. It is held 3 times a week over 2 hours and there were 111 children on roll as at the end of November 2009. Of the 85 for whom year groups are recorded, 57 are in primary education and 32 in secondary education.

- 9.35 The stakeholders were easily defined and, whilst the group participants were a clear priority, the ages of beneficiaries suggested that parents and teachers were also key to this assessment. In addition, the assessment sought to capture the value of volunteering.
- 9.36 The following stakeholders were consulted for this assessment (further detail in Appendix 2):
- Group participants
 - Group volunteers
 - Parents of attendees
 - Teachers of attendees
 - Community Librarian
 - Community Library Project Manager
 - Community Library Project Sponsor
 - Community Engagement Worker
 - Homework Club Officer

Collecting Data

- 9.37 The indicators for the Homework Club were identified in line with the objectives of the Club and the potential impacts that could be achieved. The relevance of these indicators was also discussed with the Homework Club Officer, but moderated to short term indicators, given the indirect link between attendance at the Homework Club by relatively young children and future GCSE performance. Consequently, the most appropriate indicators were considered to be improvements in behaviour and more positive attitudes to learning, including improved school attendance. Whilst undoubtedly the most appropriate in the context of what the Club is seeking to achieve and given its relatively short period of operation, measuring change in respect of behavioural indicators presented a considerable challenge.
- 9.38 Attendance data was provided by the Homework Club Officer (indicating the year groups of participants and other personal information) and other evidence was gathered through interviews with stakeholders and informal discussions with participants. Surveys were distributed via the Homework Club and teachers at schools whose pupils attend the Club but very few responses were received in spite of chasing.

Modelling and Calculating

- 9.39 The Club is hosted within the Library, but there are no charges made for the use of space or equipment. However, were a charge to be levied on an external organisation, it would be £70 per session or £210 per week. It is anticipated that the Club will run during term times, which cover 39 weeks a year, giving an annual cost of £8,190.
- 9.40 The Club is primarily run by 4 volunteers, although a member of staff (Homework Club Officer) also provides support. With on-costs, the staff cost is about £5,000 per year, plus another £450 was spent on set up costs. The costs of recruiting, training and supporting volunteers is contained within these costs and there was no indication of any other costs that would need to be factored into the calculation.
- 9.41 Adding all of the above (£8,190 + £5,000 + £450) gives a total Year 1 cost of £13,640.

- 9.42 A detailed analysis of attendance sheets showed that over the 31 sessions in respect of which data had been provided (04.09.09-20.11.09), average attendance was 15.7 people. This equates to a total of 94.3 beneficiary hours per week which can be extrapolated to 3678 beneficiary hours per year. However, this might be regarded as an upper estimate, given that the Club operates on a drop-in basis and therefore it is unlikely that all participants will attend for the full 2 hours of each session. In addition, there was a substantial decline in attendance during November, although it is reported that this was only temporary. Latest reports from the Homework Club Officer are that an average of about 25 children attend each session.
- 9.43 Anecdotal evidence from participants, their parents and the Homework Club Officer suggests that the Club is stimulating a number of learning outcomes for the young participants, particularly in terms of maths and literacy. It also appears to be building their confidence as a result of learning in a supportive environment and mixing with new people. Consultations with participants revealed that they all enjoy doing their homework more since coming to the Homework Club and that they feel able to do their homework more easily. In all but one case it has also led to them generally enjoying learning more and to an improvement in their school grades. Participants mentioned that the Club has helped them improve their Maths and English, particularly spelling, writing and reading and some also mentioned that their behaviour has improved since coming to the Club. Parents consulted confirmed the positive impacts on their children's attitude to studying and behaviour. One of the class teachers interviewed says that she can identify the children who attend the Homework as they are enthusiastic about reading and books.
- 9.44 The Homework Club has only been operating for one and a half terms, so the evidence base is limited. During the first term, there was a total of exactly 100 volunteer hours recorded. Applying the average hourly wage of a Library Assistant plus other employment costs (a total of £8.40 an hour), that equates to a value of £840 over the period, equating to £2,520 a year. Skills development is not yet evident, with the main reported benefit from volunteering being a sense of satisfaction. Whilst volunteers were motivated to give of their time by the Homework Club specifically, it is acknowledged that some of them may have spent part of their time pursuing other volunteering opportunities had they arisen and this is reflected in the calculations.
- 9.45 In respect of the social returns exhibited by participants there is a need for assumptions, as there is no robust basis on which to undertake calculations. For example, if attending the Club resulted in one fewer prosecution for truancy from school, a saving would be generated of £1,829³⁴. Similarly, if attending the Club resulted in a participant achieving 5 or more good GCSEs, it is estimated that increased wages over their working life would amount to about £150,000³⁵. Whilst the former might be considered reasonable, the latter is not given the link between Homework Club attendance and GCSE performance up to 10 years in the future is far too tenuous. Alternatively, it might be considered reasonable to represent the learning value of these sessions using the proxy of the cost of a revision course. An internet search suggested an average hourly rate of such courses of about £15. Assuming average Homework Club attendance of 1 hour by 25 children 3 times a week for 39 weeks, this would generate an annual value of £43,875. These indicators/assumptions were discussed with library staff and were considered appropriate.

³⁴ DSCF data: prosecution cost plus two hours of Education Welfare Officer time

³⁵ Aiming high for children: supporting families (2007) DfES

9.46 In addition, there are issues of deadweight, displacement, attribution and drop off to consider. Would the Club have operated regardless of the community library programme? Well, there was a community room that could have been used, but this activity did not progress until the Homework Officer was recruited; which was not possible without BIG funding (so no deadweight is assumed). Has the operation of the Homework Club impacted negatively on those run by other organisations? There are homework clubs at both a local gospel church and the local Muslim Centre, but these largely cater for specific faith groups (a small displacement of 5% is assumed). To what extent can any improvements in behaviours and volunteering undertaken be attributed to the operation of the Homework Club? Consultations revealed that some children’s homes are not conducive to studying (particularly if children share a bedroom with siblings or if there is no quiet space in the house) and that some children get limited or no support with their school studies at home. The churn in active Club membership suggests that whilst attendance levels might be sustained, there is significant drop off in individual engagement (50% drop off is assumed based on an analysis of attendance to date). In respect of volunteers, the possibility of them pursuing other opportunities is acknowledged (a net to gross of 80% is assumed).

Figure 9.45: Nottingham SROI Calculation

Beneficiaries	Benefits	Gross Value (£)	Gross to Net	Net Value (£)
Volunteers	Volunteer hours	2,520	80%	2,016
Participants	Fewer instances of truancy	1,829	47.5%	869
Participants	Learning	43,875	47.5%	20,840
Total				23,725

9.47 With a net value of £23,725 and a Year 1 cost of £13, 640, the SROI Ratio (of value to cost) comes to 1.7. This does not account for reported improvement in behaviour and attitudes to learning amongst participants nor skills development amongst volunteers.

**Sandwell – ‘Make Friends with a Book’ Reading Group
Boundary Setting and Impact Mapping**

9.48 SROI was first introduced to the Head of Service and then discussed with the Community Development Manager (CDM), both of whom thought the assessment was appropriate to the types of impacts the library is trying to achieve. The concept was also addressed with the Smethwick Library Manager and a couple of group leaders and the concept was, overall, positively received.

9.49 Prior to choosing the Reading Group a number of other groups were considered as potential areas for SROI assessment. Age Concern was a new group aiming to use the library to provide taster sessions for Healthy Active Lifestyles. However this group made a slow start, achieving little interest from the local elderly population.

9.50 In addition the Asian Ladies Yoga group (consulted at the initial and mid points of the evaluation) was originally identified as a potential group that would provide the opportunity to explore social and health impacts. However this group stopped using the community room at the library as they felt that the space did not meet their needs.

9.51 Teenagers were also identified as potential subjects for SROI, as consultations with library staff highlighted that the library could offer benefits to this group in relation to community cohesion and educational attainment. However, as teenagers were not identified as a target group in Sandwell, it proved difficult to link the assessment to a specific group or activity taking place within the library.

- 9.52 The Head of Service was especially keen to pursue applications relating to mental health issues, as library activities had evolved resulting in more work being delivered in this area. This has also helped to broaden the offer and reach out to a greater variety of individuals from the community. The CDM was the key link to the development of the SROI analysis as she judged the feasibility of taking this forward and provided ongoing support. The Reading Group was set up entirely through her own contacts and she provided good guidance due to her local knowledge of Sandwell and her role in managing the development of the group at Smethwick library.
- 9.53 'Get into Reading' aims to engage people through literature to improve wellbeing, build community and extend reading pleasure. Short stories, novels and poetry are read aloud by trained facilitators, with members joining in as they wish. The Reading Group links directly to the target output in the Community Engagement Plan to run "20 sessions to combat isolation amongst people with mental health needs, delivered across both libraries by March 2010"
- 9.54 The Reading Group is directly linked to Sandwell's ambitions in respect of addressing mental health issues and the community engagement outcomes identified for local people experiencing mental health issues. The links between SROI and the library's broader projects were identified early on to ensure that the return on investment is closely linked to the activities being developed by the library as part of the Big Lottery Fund project. The group was also accessible across all key target groups and created volunteering opportunities, which provided further opportunities to explore SROI.
- 9.55 The following stakeholders were consulted for this assessment(further detail in Appendix 2):
- Group participants
 - Group Leader
 - Sandwell MIND representative
 - Sandwell PCT (Senior Mental Health Promotion Officer).

Collecting Data

- 9.56 The indicators for the Reading Group were identified in line with the objectives of the Group and the potential impacts that could be achieved. The relevance of these indicators was also discussed with senior library staff, the group facilitator and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) contact. It was agreed that these would be improvements to health, confidence/empowerment and community cohesion.
- 9.57 The independent group facilitator was clear that a number of group members were likely to be much less reliant on mainstream health services as a result of their involvement in the group. Interviews with 10 participants from the group also provided qualitative links to the potential and actual impacts of the group on the health of individuals. The calculation of values has therefore been made on the basis of guidance from the facilitator and the qualitative evidence from the beneficiaries.
- 9.58 Evidence was gathered in the course of Interviews with library staff, the Library Manager, Community Development Manager and group leaders, as well as consultations with group members and surveys of participants conducted by the PCT.

Modelling and Calculating

- 9.59 The set-up costs (provided by Sandwell PCT and the library) were £3,070 which broke down as follows: training for facilitator £1,000; pilot of 10 two hour sessions, with cost of £100 per session to facilitator, (fee includes preparation), total cost £1,000; and time contributed by two key members of staff funded under the Community Libraries Programme, costed at £1,070. Although this was a 14 week pilot, were the sessions to run for most of the year (say 50 weeks), the facilitator would rise to £5,000.
- 9.60 There is a small weekly cost of tea and coffee for participants and use of a community room, provided free by Sandwell Library and Information Service. For the purposes of this exercise, this in-kind contribution has been valued on the same basis as community rooms in other libraries are charged out to external bodies (£7 an hour) plus a notional cost for refreshments (£1.50 per head). This gives weekly costs of £14 for room use and £12 for refreshments, giving a total of £26 per week equating to about £1,300 a year (acknowledging that the Club will not run for 52 weeks a year).
- 9.61 This suggests total Year 1 costs of £8,370 (annualised). However, it should be noted that this would likely reduce in future years, assuming that no further facilitator training nor any additional library staff contributions were required.
- 9.62 On average, 8 people attend the group each week (for a 2 hour session), supported by 2 volunteers.
- 9.63 On the assumption that participation in the group resulted in 1 person not attending Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), the cost saved would be £62³⁶ per week. Grossing up to an annualised value (assuming the Group could operate for 50 weeks a year), that would equate to £3,100. On the assumption that participation in the group resulted in 1 person not having to access a Mental Health Social Worker, the cost saved would be £31³⁷ per week. Grossing up to an annualised value (assuming the Group could operate for 50 weeks a year), that would equate to £1,500. These indicators and assumptions were discussed with library staff and were considered to be entirely appropriate.
- 9.64 In respect of issues such as community cohesion, empowerment, increased confidence and reduced isolation, notional values were sought from participants in terms of what they would have paid to have achieved such benefits. However, the responses (even with prompting/guidance) did not offer a basis on which to perform robust calculations. Taking the mid-point of values offered by most people (i.e. ignoring the highest and lowest values), the consensus was that each session was 'worth' £3.00 to each participant, although it should be noted that in large part this reflects the low income levels of participants.

³⁶ Unit Costs of Health and Social Care (2007) Curtis

³⁷ Ibid

- 9.65 The PCT has been making use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Evaluation tool, which is a measurement scale, which assesses mental health using positively worded terms. Scores range from 7 to 35, with 21 being the mean and the higher the number the better the level of wellbeing. Results for this group over the first 5 weeks were consistently above average, but declined over the period. Whilst this suggests that people’s sense of wellbeing was reducing, it may have been the case that it would have reduced even more but for their involvement in the group. In addition, people initially tend to score ‘false highs’ as they don’t feel confident to share their real feelings and some participants had volunteers completing the evaluation as some are visually impaired. The CDM and group facilitator therefore highlighted that as people feel more comfortable with the group they tend to be more honest with the scores.
- 9.66 Given the very low values ascribed by beneficiaries and the limitations of the Warwick-Edinburgh Evaluation tool, a proxy value of £50 per hour has been adopted, which appears to be the average cost of an hour long session with a life coach (based on average values derived from a handful of practitioners as advertised on their websites). It is also, by coincidence, the rate charged by the group facilitator. Based on weekly 2 hour sessions running 50 weeks a year, this would suggest a value of around £5,000 per person or £40,000 in total.
- 9.67 In respect of volunteering, the proxy value used is £8.20 an hour, which is the average wage of Library Assistants at Smethwick, plus employment costs. Were the project to run over a full year, 200 volunteer hours would be worked, giving a value of £1,640.
- 9.68 Set against the above are issues of deadweight, displacement, attribution and drop off. The project is only being delivered because of the collaboration between the library and the PCT and many participants travel long distances to attend the group, suggesting that alternatives are not readily available. It is though possible, in spite of the advantages offered by the library, that an alternative venue could be found (so 10% deadweight is assumed). However, there was no existing activity to displace (0% assumed) and all of the reported benefits are attributed to the project (100% assumed). Drop off is difficult to judge, but, with a small group, small numbers equate to significant percentages (25% is assumed). Volunteers might have other volunteering opportunities, but they appear to be motivated specifically to contribute to this project (a net to gross of 80% is assumed). The net effect is shown below.

Figure 9.71: Sandwell SROI Calculation

Beneficiaries	Benefits	Gross Value (£)	Gross to Net	Net Value (£)
Participants	Improved mental health	4,600	67.5%	3,105
Participants	Social	40,000	67.5%	27,000
Volunteers	Volunteer hours	1,640	80%	1,312
Total				31,417

- 9.69 With a net value of £31,417 and an annualised Year 1 cost of £8,370, the SROI Ratio (of value to cost) comes to 3.8.

Lessons Learnt

- 9.70 It is apparent that undertaking SROI assessments in case study libraries has been challenging. Whilst some difficulties related to specific local contexts, there were also generic issues that might be encountered were SROI analyses attempted elsewhere.

Resources

- 9.71 Consideration ought to be given to resourcing SROI, both in terms of training staff in its use and the time to develop and deliver acknowledging that they may well have other priorities. Thought would also need to be given to the benefits of this investment in the long term (e.g. wider acceptance and embedding of SROI nationally).

Timing

- 9.72 It was acknowledged that the time taken to recruit and bed in new staff meant that new groups could not be formed and new activities developed as soon as had been hoped. Given the challenges faced in forming groups/instigating activities and the different levels of time required to get things up and running, selecting an appropriate focus for an SROI assessment was very difficult. This would suggest that plans for an SROI assessment ought not be taken forward until and unless the focus of the assessment is absolutely clear in terms of the group involved, the activities in which they are participating and the length of time over which their participation is expected.

- 9.73 It was also apparent that longer term evaluation would be required to determine the actual impacts on beneficiaries in terms of health, employment, confidence etc. and to be able to more accurately assess return on investment. Whilst it is recognised that there is potential to forecast SROI, this is more reliable when the base from which evidence is being extrapolated is robust, and most of the activities being undertaken by libraries had only been going for a short period at the time of this assessment.

Sensitivities

- 9.74 The characteristics of the beneficiary group (e.g. children attending the Homework Club in Nottingham and people with mental health issues attending the Reading Group in Sandwell) can make it difficult to conduct meaningful and detailed consultations. This is either because consultees are unable or unwilling to speak about their personal circumstances and what benefits they have derived from participating in an activity. There can also be sensitivities with other stakeholders, especially if they are undertaking/commissioning their own evaluations and do not want to risk those exercises being adversely affected by another simultaneous impact assessment.

Valuing Benefits

- 9.75 None of the stakeholders consulted felt comfortable valuing the benefits derived from projects and where this was attempted (in Sandwell) the result was values that might be challenged by other observers. This reflects both consultees lack of experience in undertaking such an exercise and the fact that for those from low income backgrounds what appear to be modest sums of money in actual terms can represent a significant proportion of their weekly income. In addition, stakeholders may have deliberately attributed a 'low' value as a result of suspicion over charges being introduced.
- 9.76 Valuing benefits would also be helped were activities to take place over a reasonably long period of time, enabling their full impacts to be appreciated. There is also an issue in respect of sample size, with small numbers likely to produce crude averages which cannot necessarily be taken as a reliable indication of benefits likely to accrue were activities replicated elsewhere. Similarly, with many of the benefits regarded as being individual, they can prove difficult to aggregate, especially where the information provided by beneficiaries is inconsistent and where membership of a group is fluid. SROI assessments can be carried out more confidently with a fixed cohort.

10. Intermediate Group

10.1 The evaluation involved liaison with an Intermediate Group of 16 local authorities, each of which was sent a short questionnaire in February 2009 and a very similar questionnaire in November 2009. All 16 responded to the first survey, albeit that the prescribed format was not adhered to in all cases and 11 responded to the second survey. This section summarises the responses to these two surveys and, in particular, seeks to highlight the different forms of community engagement undertaken over the period, the groups on which most of this attention has been focussed, partnership working and the outcomes of work to date (with no impacts yet recorded).

10.2 It should be noted that 7 of the 11 respondents were library services where one or more community libraries had not yet opened/re-opened at the time responses were returned (December 2009/January 2010). In most cases community engagement work has been aligned with development activity, hence whilst a significant amount has been done to inform communities and consult them about new developments, there is not yet much community involvement in the delivery of services/management of libraries. Consequently, responses will have been skewed according to what activities have been undertaken to date in each case. For example, some libraries will not have involved volunteers to any significant extent (or at all) in advance of a library opening and so cannot yet place a value on this as a means of community engagement nor on prospective outcomes/impacts on users and user groups.

Aims of Engagement

10.3 The shared aim of Intermediate Group libraries has been to involve the community in the development, delivery and management of their library service. Specific aims of engagement varied according to local circumstances and, in particular, the stage of development/re-development of the library. They included aiming to:

- ensure the present and future needs of the community are met;
- improve the learning and skills potential for local families, enhancing the life and education prospects for adults and children;
- create a more environmentally friendly and sustainable building;
- draw together people from across the community to share their skills/knowledge;
- raise awareness of the new library and the significance of the new investment;
- build long term community support;
- celebrate the distinctive features of local cultures; and
- provide better access to information and advice and to Council and other services.

Investment

10.4 From the information provided it has not been possible to disaggregate what has been spent on community engagement activities specifically, nor in many cases to provide a split between capital and revenue funding. Nevertheless, some useful information has been elicited in respect of total investments and from which sources this has come. The table below is an aggregation of the figures provided by the 11 members of the Intermediate Group of local authorities responding to the second survey and relates to projected spending for the whole project, not just spending to date.

Figure 11.4: Investment in Intermediate Group Libraries

Source of Funding	Amount (£)
BIG	16,405,000
Local Authority	4,714,000
Sure Start	100,000
Working Neighbourhoods Fund	56,000
Regional Development Agencies	50,000
Other	48,000

- 10.5 The table above shows that these 11 library authorities have received £16.4 million of BIG funding, leveraging in a further £4.7 million of local authority funding and around £0.25 million from other sources, giving a total of £4.95 million. Although the sample size is a little small to offer a reliable average, this gives an average of about £309,000 per library which, if grossed up across the programme as a whole, would represent total leverage of about £17.9 million.
- 10.6 Most libraries (9 of the 11 respondents to the second survey) were unable to provide values for the in-kind support offered, although it was not always possible to quantify this in detail. Amongst the 9 libraries that were able to provide quantified information on in-kind support, this was valued at about £400,000 in terms of libraries staff time, about £70,000 in contributions from other local authority colleagues and about £80,000 in contributions from partner organisations, giving a total of about £550,000. Although the sample size is a little small to offer a reliable average, this gives an average of about £61,000 per library which, if grossed up across the programme as a whole, would represent total in-kind support of about £3.5 million.
- 10.7 Although the calculations presented above ought to be treated with some caution, given the sample sizes involved, the figures suggest that overall BIG investment has generated total match funding (in cash and in kind) of around £21.4 million.
- 10.8 In addition to the substantial physical developments that have been undertaken, resources have commonly supported the appointment of a Project Co-ordinator on either a full time or part time basis. In addition, they have funded:
- general publicity and information;
 - internal and external training courses for staff;
 - the commissioning of consultants to facilitate community engagement;
 - visits to other libraries seen as exemplars, mainly involving library staff but also members of local communities in some instances;
 - visits to book suppliers involving library staff and members of local communities;
 - The costs of hosting meetings, sometimes including attendee travel costs;
 - replacement of stock; and
 - refurbishment of staff areas.

Target Groups

- 10.9 There was a long list of target groups on which libraries had focused their attention. The most common were: school age children (especially those with literacy difficulties and other special needs); parents/carers; and older teenagers/young adults. In addition, at least 2 of the 11 libraries responding to the second survey noted a particular interest in one or more of the following (in order of popularity):
- Adult Learners (especially those with low educational attainment);
 - People with learning and other disabilities;
 - Older people;
 - Hard to reach and new communities (including migrant workers);
 - People on low incomes;
 - Job seekers; and
 - People with health/mental health issues.
- 10.10 Target groups remained largely the same during the course of 2009, although some libraries reported having engaged with new groups:
- In Bolton a merger of the libraries service with museums and archives enabled the former to engage with young adults with learning difficulties via an award winning scheme already being delivered by colleagues working in museums. Also, co-location with health service providers offers the potential to focus work on people with health-related problems;

- In Bury assistance was given to 2 community groups to help them become established and then become involved in the community library project;
- In North Tyneside there has been new engagement with schools and colleges, community groups, specialist interest groups and other local authority services; and
- In Westminster, the creation of a new community space within the library was attracting a significant number of potential user groups/partners from the public, private and third sectors.

10.11 In the context of the above, it should be noted that a lot of attention has been paid to retaining the loyalty and commitment of current users alongside encouraging usage by new groups. It should also be noted that some authorities are not seeking to target specific groups as they want their library to be seen to be open to all.

Forms of Engagement

10.12 All libraries have sought to inform/consult communities, to a greater or lesser extent. However, active involvement in the delivery and management of library services is quite restricted due to the stage of library development (as discussed later in this section).

10.13 Predominantly, libraries have sought to engage with their local communities through presentations to community groups and community consultation events. Where libraries have opened/re-opened, opening/launch events have commonly been staged to promote libraries and what they offer and were also being planned by most other libraries yet to open. Other types of activities undertaken/tools deployed are listed in Appendix 8. Interestingly, given the reported difficulties in engaging with young people, only 1 of the 11 libraries responding to the second survey mentioned the use of a social networking website.

Partnership Working

10.14 During the course of 2009, Intermediate Group local authorities continued to work with existing partners and, in many cases, began to collaborate with new partners as opportunities arose. In many cases, the motivation appears to have been to ally with other community-focused services for mutual benefit.

10.15 At least 3 of the 11 Intermediate Group libraries responding to the second survey reported having been working with at least one of the types of partners listed below (in order of popularity):

- Community/voluntary bodies;
- Youth groups;
- Schools and colleges;
- Primary Care Trusts/Health Centres;
- Sure Start/Children's Centres;
- Older People's Centres/Charities;
- Disability groups/officers/charities; and
- Local Authority Cultural Services.

10.16 Additional partners mentioned by these libraries and the other 5 Intermediate Group libraries who responded only to the first survey are listed in Appendix 8. In some cases, these working relationships have evolved significantly during the course of developments, especially where the new community library is co-located with other service providers.

Library-Based Activities

- 10.17 In seeking to present a new face to their local communities, libraries have been keen to explore new ways of delivering core services and also to develop new activities. Examples of activities being undertaken or planned to be undertaken within/outside new/refurbished libraries operated by at least 3 of the 11 respondents to the second survey include (in order of popularity):
- Arts and Craft classes/workshops;
 - Adult literacy courses;
 - ICT beginner courses;
 - Gardening projects; and
 - Story telling.
- 10.18 In addition, there is a long list of other activities being undertaken/proposed, as listed in Appendix 8.

Barriers to Community Engagement

- 10.19 Most of the Intermediate Group were able to report that all/the vast majority of planned outcomes and milestones had been achieved as originally envisaged in community engagement plans (albeit some run through the whole of 2010 and many planned outcomes and milestones were not scheduled to be achieved by the time of the second survey of the Intermediate Group).
- 10.20 Nevertheless, almost all libraries reported some barriers to progress. The main barriers to progress were said to be: difficulties in recruiting to Library Panels/ Management Groups (including getting beyond the 'usual suspects'); particular difficulties in engaging young people; and preconceptions of the public, linked to outdated images of libraries. Other barriers mentioned are listed in Appendix 8.
- 10.21 In particular, it seems that whilst residents are often keen to be consulted and have shown great enthusiasm for a number of community libraries, that they are much less inclined to want to commit to becoming involved on a long term basis. One library also acknowledged that there was a distinct lack of interest in the new development and so numbers engaged were low.

Measuring Impacts

- 10.22 The most common mechanisms put in place to measure impact include: feedback from individuals, provided on an ad hoc basis in a variety of formats (email, handwritten notes and oral); recording numbers of activities and attendance at each session; and user surveys. Other tools adopted to measure impact are listed in Appendix 8.
- 10.23 However, it should not be inferred that there is extensive use of such tools; it appears that each library has adopted 1 or 2 of the above, on average. Furthermore, although described as means of measuring community engagement and its impacts, these appear to be more reviews of progress.
- 10.24 It is also apparent, that in gathering quantitative information, libraries have been unable to break down this information by postcode, gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristic. This is either because these questions have not been asked or, where they have, they have not been answered in sufficient detail or by sufficient numbers of people. This therefore makes it impossible to accurately judge the extent to which libraries are engaging with all of their local communities or at least are making progress in engaging with non-traditional library users. That is not to say that they are not – and some of the evidence within the information provided as part of this research would suggest that they are in many cases – simply that it is not possible to provide detailed/quantifiable evidence that they have done so.

- 10.25 In addition, several respondents had postponed any larger scale community engagement until after building works had/have been completed and/or were not considering putting measurement tools in place until after libraries had opened/re-opened. In these instances, they considered it too early to be able to say anything meaningful about the outcomes/impacts achieved.

Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

Local Communities

- 10.26 The involvement of local communities has resulted in significant inputs being made into library design, with much less involvement in service delivery and service management, mainly linked to the phasing of developments but also difficulties in engaging with communities in some instances. Typically, this has included recruiting local people onto a Library Panel or Steering Group, or using existing groups as a source of advice/guidance. In respect of the 11 Intermediate Group local authorities who responded to the second survey, community involvement in the development, delivery and management of library services is summarised in the tables in Appendix 8.
- 10.27 Where circumstances have allowed, libraries have sought to sustain the activities of existing groups and/or reinvigorate them on completion of building works. However, there are few examples of new user groups being formed. It seems that in part this is due to the manner in which libraries are operating; delivering services to/staging activities for defined groups but not constituting user groups as such. In other cases, the stage of development at the time of responding meant that libraries were not functioning (or not functioning fully) and so were not engaged in establishing user groups.
- 10.28 The number of volunteers working with each of the libraries responding to the second survey ranges from 2-57, with a total of 155 reported across the 10 libraries responding to the second survey which provided figures. None of the respondents was able to provide a full breakdown by gender/ethnicity/disability and so no analysis is possible. In any event, some respondents made the point that, for example, whilst BME representation might be very low that this was a reflection of the ethnic profile of the local area not because of a lack of engagement with minority ethnic groups.
- 10.29 In a number of cases libraries are not seeking to recruit new volunteers until developments are complete.
- 10.30 Volunteers have been active in both helping to shape new developments and in continuing to provide services, often from temporary premises. For the most part they have been recruited onto panels/boards/steering groups and so involved in decisions about the design and layout of new libraries (mainly), the services to be offered at the library (commonly) and, in a few cases, recruitment and selection of library staff. Some panel members have also acted as community champions/peer advocates as have other volunteers. Other roles/responsibilities given to volunteers are listed in Appendix 8.
- 10.31 In some cases, libraries have become a hub of community activity as they now provide meeting facilities that were either unavailable previously or are of a much higher standard than others available locally. This has attracted a wide range of groups to hire community rooms, although it is not clear as to what level of engagement they have with the library itself. There is no evidence of more meaningful engagement in the operation of the library nor of members of such groups accessing library services.

Library Staff

- 10.32 It is apparent from both surveys that libraries staff have been presented with opportunities and challenges in the context of community library developments. Whilst some have embraced the opportunities, others have struggled with the challenges and a minority have either resisted change or left their posts rather than change their way of working. Overall though, libraries responding to the second survey report positive outcomes and appear optimistic about the future.
- 10.33 Some authorities regarded their staff as already possessing the requisite skills and believed that this programme has enabled them to utilise existing skills rather than enhance them or develop new skills. However, in most cases, training has been provided and/or library staff have been exposed to new experiences which have equipped them with new skills.
- 10.34 In support of the transitions that their services have undergone/are undergoing (and in order of popularity) library staff have been involved in:
- Publicising new developments;
 - Undertaking community consultations;
 - Community engagement training (both independently and that provided by Big Lottery Fund in November 2009);
 - Customer care training;
 - Training in self service equipment and related customer service training;
 - Training in diversity/equalities issues;
 - Service promotion training;
 - Visits to other libraries to learn lessons about the impact of design on library users/use; and
 - Delivering library services in new venues.
- 10.35 As a result of the above and other measures, it is believed that library staff have benefited to a considerable extent and in a number of ways. In order to popularity, these benefits were reported to be as follows:
- Enhanced skills related to community engagement and identifying community needs;
 - Developed skills in the use of new technology;
 - Developed greater awareness of the place of the library in the community and the enhanced community role it will have with new library facilities
 - Raised confidence in dealing with particular user groups;
 - Developed specific skills in working with young people;
 - Been trained in volunteer recruitment;
 - Developed marketing/promotion skills;
 - Been encouraged to work more collaboratively with library colleagues;
 - Had job descriptions amended; and
 - Had new posts created to support them.
- 10.36 However, it would be wrong to infer that staff in each library have undergone extensive training or that large numbers have been involved in some of the activities listed above. The picture is very patchy, with little or no formal training in some cases, but quite extensive training in others. However, even where little or no formal training has been carried out, the experience of working in different ways and with different groups of people appears to have equipped staff better for engaging with their local communities. Nevertheless, some libraries reported being under-prepared and nervous about taking on the new challenges with which they had been presented and reported a lack of clarity about what new roles and responsibilities staff would be asked to undertake.

- 10.37 Several libraries reported installing self service technology which they believed had fundamentally (and positively) changed the way in which some staff are deployed and the manner in which they interact with library users. In these and some other cases, staff are reported to have become much more flexible, recognising the need to do so in order to better meet community needs.
- 10.38 Staff profiles have not changed to any significant extent, although some staff are reported to have opted for early retirement/other posts rather than engage in the processes that were underway. Most staff seem to have reacted positively to taking on a whole new way of working. Overall, there is a belief that the staff in post and their working protocols are now much more attuned to community needs than previously, as evidenced by the approaches/activities undertaken as described in this section of the report.

Summary

- 10.39 Whilst not without its difficulties in some instances, the consensus appears to be that the new approaches to community engagement that have been adopted have been a positive experience overall and has given a new impetus to libraries, their staff and the communities that they serve. However, libraries acknowledge the difficulties in quantifying outcomes and impacts, not least because of the length of time required to record and analyse anything meaningful.
- 10.40 Nevertheless, libraries are generally upbeat about the future. All of the elements of community engagement have been seen by libraries as being important in laying the foundations for generating future outcomes and impacts. In particular, respondents to the second survey highlighted:
- Community involvement in respect of strategic decision making;
 - Partnership working with third sector, public sector and private sector;
 - Community involvement in relation to the design/delivery of activities; and
 - The promotion of the library as a space for community activity.

11. National Programme

- 11.1 At the outset of this evaluation it was assumed that BIG Reports for all 58 beneficiary authorities would be reviewed and findings incorporated as appropriate. In the event, mid year reports and mid year write ups relating to 29 authorities and an end of year report and end of year write up relating to one authority (Birmingham) were provided. This section of the report is therefore based on a total of 60 reports from the 30 authorities listed in Appendix 9.
- 11.2 Conspicuously, and disappointingly, only 3 of the 5 case study library authorities in receipt of BIG funding (Lancashire, North Yorkshire and Nottingham) have submitted reports to BIG.
- 11.3 It should also be noted that 8 of the above authorities were also members of the Intermediate Group of local authorities (which means that only half the Intermediate Group authorities have submitted BIG reports).
- 11.4 Given that total reporting by all of the libraries listed above ran to more than 500 pages, this section is an attempt to summarise findings from a review of documents rather than offer a detailed analysis.

Progress

- 11.5 It should be noted that these reports cover a wide variety of timescales, which makes analysis somewhat difficult in that not only do reporting periods vary from authority to authority but of course development periods (as well as start dates and end dates) vary as well. It is also the case that some reports only cover periods up to Spring 2009, with no more recent information available. Consequently, progress is assessed against each library's own schedule and based on the most recent report available. Progress made by each library is summarised in the table in Appendix 9.
- 11.6 As is quite clear, the vast majority of libraries have seen project milestones slip, and consequently community engagement activities have rarely proceeded in accordance with original community engagement plans.
- 11.7 These delays appear to be due to one or more of the following factors:
- late approval of BIG grant;
 - protracted tendering processes;
 - extended development periods;
 - staff restructuring/loss of existing staff;
 - difficulties in appointing new staff;
 - difficulties in recruiting to management boards; and
 - difficulties in sustaining commitment to management boards/other consultation groups.

Investment

- 11.8 Financial data provided in reports was patchy, being unavailable in a number of cases and even where figures were provided these related mainly to expenditure to date and not overall budgets. In respect of match funding, only about half of the libraries made explicit statements, with three quarters of those confirming there was match funding and one quarter that projects were wholly BIG funded. However, only two of the libraries detailed how much match funding was being provided by local authorities and/or other partners and so no reliable calculations of leverage cannot be undertaken based on the reports provided.

Target Groups

- 11.9 Amongst the specific groups with which libraries have been seeking to engage, by far the most common were: older teenagers/young adults, followed by young children and members of minority ethnic groups (commonly with a view to putting on ESOL classes within the library). Other groups on which libraries had focused their attention (in order of popularity) were as follows:
- Older people;
 - People with low levels of educational attainment;
 - Disabled people;
 - Parents of young children;
 - Asylum seekers/refugees;
 - Unemployed people/job seekers; and
 - People with learning difficulties.
- 11.10 Recruiting young people and sustaining their interest appears to be a common issue. It is perhaps therefore surprising that more support has not been given to libraries in this regard (given the significant number of them seeking to engage much more fully with young people), if only to facilitate exchange of experience. Based on BIG reports, there are few examples of libraries thinking creatively or even adopting what have become mainstream means of communicating with young people, such as blogs and social networking sites, as evidenced below.

Forms of Engagement

- 11.11 All libraries have sought to inform/consult communities, to a greater or lesser extent. However, active involvement in the delivery and management of library services is quite restricted due to the stage of library development at the time reports were submitted.
- 11.12 Predominantly, libraries have sought to engage with their local communities through general consultation events, brochures/newsletters/leaflets/ flyers (including 1 dual language), community surveys (including 1 dual language) and specific outreach visits (to schools, community centres etc.) Other fairly common types of activities undertaken/tools deployed are listed in Appendix 9.
- 11.13 Project/Management/Advisory Boards of varying descriptions and involving a range of sizes and structures are in place in almost all cases. However, reports do not state in all instances whether they include members of local communities, though it would appear that in most cases they do. It is equally clear that many libraries have struggled to recruit community members (especially young people) and/or sustain their interest, especially where development periods are (or have become) lengthy.
- 11.14 Whilst in many reports it is not clear as to the roles and responsibilities that community members on project boards are playing, it is nevertheless apparent that some have made important contributions to library projects, as detailed later in this section.

Partnership Working

- 11.15 In most cases, partnership working has developed according to the types of prospective users being targeted by each library. For example, those wishing to engage with very young children and their parents/carers have commonly sought to collaborate with a local Sure Start/Children's Centre. In other cases, partner selection appears to have simply been a reflection of the local organisational infrastructure (or, at least, libraries' awareness of it), with the roles played by some organisations unclear. That having been said, it could simply have been the case that some libraries were seeking any means possible by which to promote their new facilities across the community.
- 11.16 Not all of the reports included explicit information on partners, but it was evident in almost every case (and may indeed be true in every case, had reporting been more detailed) that libraries have identified three key sets of partners: local community and voluntary groups; other local authority departments (most commonly, adult learning, extended schools, youth service and cultural services); and local schools/colleges. Other types of partners are listed in Appendix 9.
- 11.17 There is very little information within the reports offering insights into how effective partner collaborations have been and/or what has been achieved as a result.

Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

Local Communities

- 11.18 Either through the various consultation mechanisms mentioned previously or through the management boards that have been established, there is reported to have been direct community input into the early stages of library development and, to some extent, future operations (though not management).
- 11.19 By far the biggest area of influence has been in the design/layout of new library facilities, explicitly mentioned in reports from three quarters of libraries. Just under half of libraries reported that there had been community input into debates about future service provision, with just over one third being consulted on library furniture/décor. Community members have also had an input into other issues, as listed in Appendix 9.
- 11.20 There has been a particular emphasis on the internal layout according with community preferences, including provision of areas targeted at specific user groups (older people, young people, learners etc.) and good disabled access. Consultations have also led to the purchasing of equipment to better meet the needs of particular user groups, such as the disabled, elderly and those for whom English is not their first language. In addition, in some cases, account is being taken of community demands for longer opening hours and access to parts of the building outside library opening hours.
- 11.21 At the time reports were submitted, volunteering was largely restricted to involvement in management boards. Nevertheless, a number of libraries alluded to potential volunteering opportunities, as listed in Appendix 9.

Library Staff

- 11.22 In almost all reports it was clear that project co-ordinators have been recruited/designated. Although not explicitly stated in all reports, it is also apparent that other staff have been (mainly) recruited or (sometimes) designated to oversee/undertake community engagement activities.

- 11.23 In one case, two key posts had been re-defined to incorporate increased responsibilities and community engagement requirements. However, in only one other case did a report state that new work objectives had been embedded within staff performance appraisals, which was done to both encourage delivery and identify staff development needs.
- 11.24 Some general inductions into new ways of working have been undertaken with staff, but seemingly largely confined to taking them through plans for the new library and, sometimes, the community engagement plan. Only in a very few cases did reports state that skills assessments/training needs analyses of staff had been undertaken.
- 11.25 Nevertheless, although only a minority of libraries reported undertaking staff training, this appears to have covered quite a wide range of topics, including:
- Community consultation/engagement;
 - Craft activities;
 - Customer care training;
 - Equality/diversity;
 - Event planning;
 - Healthy eating;
 - ICT;
 - Learning delivery support;
 - New technology (including self service equipment);
 - Publicity/promotion;
 - Setting up and facilitating steering groups;
 - Stock presentation techniques;
 - Story telling; and
 - Volunteering.
- 11.26 In addition to the above, there were also reports of library staff participating in project boards, visiting other libraries and shadowing staff at other libraries, as well as mentors from other libraries coming on-site to provide support.

Summary

- 11.27 Reviewing BIG reports involved looking at information provided on different bases and over different time periods, making it somewhat difficult to draw any firm conclusions. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a majority of library authorities are experiencing delays in respect of at least one of their community libraries, in respect of capital works and/or community engagement activities (the two being commonly linked).
- 11.28 As previously stated, the reports on which this section is based relate largely to the period prior to Summer 2009, at which point community engagement activities had been mostly limited to informing communities about plans for new libraries and consulting groups on design/layout. As a result, outcomes/impacts reported were very limited.
- 11.29 It should also be noted that in a majority of cases milestones were scheduled to be achieved in 2010 or 2011, even before the delays reported by most of the libraries. Consequently, even if more up to date reports were available, it is unlikely that community engagement activities will have generated many outcomes/impacts by early 2010.

12. Overall Summary

12.1 Given the different timescales to which libraries have been working, the range of ambitions/scale of capital works involved and the variety of contexts within which they have been taken forward, the aggregation of findings and drawing of general conclusions ought to be done with some caution. Nevertheless, there are a number of observations that can be made with confidence. These are based on the fieldwork undertaken in respect of the Intensive Group, the surveys of the Intermediate Group, the national level analysis and the workshop involving Intensive Group and Intermediate Group authorities.

Reaching Targets and Strategic Objectives

12.2 Although in a number of cases targets/milestones were not scheduled to be achieved until after the evaluation period, it is clear that most libraries developments have suffered delays, which in turn have disrupted planned community engagement activities. Amongst the case study libraries, those that were able to open on schedule and within the evaluation timescale (albeit only 3 of the 8 in total) have exceeded expectations in terms of the numbers of users, with supporting evidence of more diverse user profiles.

12.3 In respect of MLA's strategic priorities, those considered to be most relevant were:

- Learning and Skills: to increase opportunities for learners to progress/unlock their potential.
- Communities: to promote inclusivity and support sustainable communities.
- Excellence: to strengthen the sector's capacity to innovate and continually improve across workforce, collections, services, funding and partnerships.

12.4 Whilst it is too early to say what the community libraries programme might ultimately contribute to the above, based on progress to date:

- Learning and Skills – is an area of significant potential success. Although the numbers benefiting are in the hundreds rather than thousands and many projects are still in their infancy, some individuals are reporting significant outcomes in terms of motivation and attitudes to learning, which are expected to enhance educational attainment and employability over the longer term in respect of children and young people and more immediately in respect of adults (especially those improving their English language skills). Importantly, libraries (and their staff/volunteers) are seen to be playing a unique role, in offering local people a safe, accessible and attractive space, in which users feel supported without being pressured.
- Communities – are being brought together by libraries, often as a result of the efforts of dedicated community engagement workers. Nevertheless, progress has not perhaps been as fast or as extensive as anticipated and significant challenges remain in some areas, reflecting the length of time it takes to make and cultivate key contacts, build up trust and change perceptions of what libraries offer and the types of people for which they exist.
- Excellence – there is no doubt that quality standards have been driven up, in terms of the buildings, the configuration of spaces, the décor, the furniture, self-service equipment, IT facilities, book stocks: staff skills/attitudes, volunteering, partnerships and the overall feel of libraries that have benefited from BIG investments.

Implementation

- 12.5 Where capital works have been completed and community engagement plans have been successfully implemented, the community libraries programme has been truly transformational. Libraries have become hubs of community activities, their users have increased in number and diversity and their staff have risen to challenges with energy and enthusiasm.
- 12.6 Without the physical improvements across these libraries it may have been more difficult to change the working practices and attitudes of library staff and to recruit additional volunteers, and it would certainly have been more difficult to engage non-users. Furthermore, adaptable and accessible community space of high quality is considered highly valuable, both in terms of user satisfaction but also in impressing upon communities, other local authority departments and other partners the importance/relevance of libraries.
- 12.7 Unfortunately, in most cases, community engagement activities have been linked to physical developments and delays have therefore created problems. Nevertheless, where community engagement staff have been recruited and where temporary library facilities have been available, it has been possible to carry out useful work with partner organisations, community groups and individuals. For example, this seems to have been especially effective in Nottingham, where the ethnic profile of community engagement workers was more representative of the local community than was the case in respect of core library staff, helping to break down barriers and overcome misperceptions of the library.
- 12.8 A number of implementation issues are briefly discussed below. Examples of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented and a full assessment can be found in Appendix 10.

Engagement issues: Using the Local Infrastructure

- 12.9 There are numerous local mechanisms through which libraries are accessing particular communities of interest in order to inform and consult.
- Strengths** - Schools, community and voluntary groups used to access specific groups.
- Weaknesses** - Reliance on existing networks. Use of networks to inform/consult not consult/decide together. Third sector bodies having higher priorities.
- Opportunities** - Quick, effective and low cost means of accessing target groups.
- Threats** - Fragility of local infrastructures (funding issues). Possible resentment if not engaged early/given prominent role.

Engagement issues: Getting Communities Involved

- 12.10 In many cases, efforts are being made to get beyond the 'usual suspects' and ensure that groups that represent a significant number of potential users become involved in the processes that shape developments, service delivery and, in due course, service management.
- Strengths** - Establishment of diverse steering groups involved in key decisions.
- Weaknesses** - Token consultations designed to merely tick the community engagement box. Informing confused with consulting and consulting confused with deciding together.
- Opportunities** - Ability to better meet the needs of users.
- Threats** - A rejection of the library.

Workforce Issues - Preparing Staff for Change

- 12.11 Engaging with communities has required many of those working in libraries to adopt a wholly new way of working. Some have embraced this enthusiastically; others have struggled to adapt or even rejected change.

Strengths - Training provided for staff and visits to other libraries organised.

Weaknesses - Staff unaware of Community Engagement Plan. Lack of consultation. Lack of support/guidance to adapt to change.

Opportunities - Improvements in staff skills, motivation and retention.

Threats - Inability to embed community engagement. Demoralised staff and loss of staff.

Recruiting and Deploying Volunteers

- 12.12 In many places, the profile of volunteers is restricted and there would be merit in recruiting volunteers that better reflect the profiles of local communities. There are some examples of volunteers taking on more diverse/responsible roles than has been the case hitherto.

Strengths - Volunteers involved in deciding as well as doing and drawn from wide base. Use of volunteers to supplement staff resources

Weaknesses - Types of volunteers narrowly drawn and volunteer use restricted. No strategic approach to volunteer recruitment/ management and some skills gaps evident amongst volunteers.

Opportunities - Potential to involve new people and in more responsible roles, both to cement engagement and enhance the offer

Threats - Staff concerns about volunteers 'taking their jobs'

Outcomes

- 12.13 Considerable efforts have been/are being made to enhance the experience of users and to engage with non-users. In respect of users, there is general agreement that physical improvements to libraries have been for the better. Notwithstanding the occasional gripe, the vast majority of users are fulsome in their praise for the 'lighter, brighter, cleaner, friendlier' spaces that have been created and for the manner in which libraries are being run. The introduction of self-service technologies, modern décor, extended IT facilities and availability of community rooms are all serving to transform people's perceptions of libraries, what they are for and who they are for.
- 12.14 In respect of non-users, there has been some notable progress, albeit that there have also been frustrations in terms of the length of time it has taken to get some groups on board, the inability to sustain engagement in a few instances and in being unable to make any progress with some groups.
- 12.15 Overall, the most significant achievements have been in respect of children and young people, in particular the engagement of those who might not have been considered to be likely library users. For example, the Homework Club in Nottingham and the Young Stars group in Haslingden have been especially noteworthy in terms of the extent of engagement and early evidence of positive outcomes on behaviour, learning and ambition.
- 12.16 Amongst the case studies there is strong evidence of **Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs)** being generated in respect of Health and Wellbeing, Strengthening Public Life and Stronger and Safer Communities. There is equally strong evidence of **Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)**, especially in respect of Skills and Behaviour & Progression.

- 12.17 Community libraries have also contributed towards the achievement of **National Indicators**. In addition to NI 9 – use of public libraries this has included: NI 1 - % of people from different backgrounds getting on well together; NI 2 - % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood; NI 3 - civic participation in the local area; NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality; NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering; NI 13 - migrants' English language skills and knowledge and NI 110 – Positive Activities for Young People.

Policy and Programme Development

- 12.18 In most cases, libraries have attempted to establish structures that involve local communities in making decisions about libraries much more closely than hitherto. This has seen local people consulted (and listened to) about design, décor, furniture and stock selection. In some cases, they have also been party to staff recruitment processes. However, many libraries continue to struggle with the challenge of involving the full range of people that would be representative of their local community..
- 12.19 Furthermore, once libraries are up and running there appears to be less enthusiasm for continued engagement. The sense appears to be that key decisions have been taken, so what is there to manage/influence? Although specific issues may arise from time to time that provoke a response amongst some community members, it would appear that, for the most part, they are happy to leave the running of libraries to the professionals.
- 12.20 That having been said, there is a continuing need for libraries to engage with their local communities. Some groups will take a long time and a lot of hard work on the part of libraries to be persuaded to use the facilities and access the services on offer. It is also the case that some areas experience a significant turnover in their populations and so community needs and wants will change. In both cases, libraries need to ensure that relationships have been developed with appropriate partners in order to facilitate community engagement. In this regard, MLA might explore further the specific benefits/issues arising from the co-location of libraries with other service providers, for example as has happened in Bolton.
- 12.21 In addition, it is interesting to note the different approaches to community engagement in terms of staffing, with some staff in dedicated community engagement posts (predominantly new recruits) and others devoting a proportion of their time to community engagement (predominantly existing staff). The former helps in terms of additional resource and in providing a focus, but can see the postholder and their activities remain separate from the rest of the library, if the approach is not carefully managed. The latter addresses the integration issue but may mean community engagement activities are restricted by lack of resources and competing priorities.
- 12.22 A number of policy and programme development issues are briefly discussed below. Examples of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented and a full assessment can be found in Appendix 10.

Sustainability Issues - Partnership Working

- 12.23 The sorts of groups that libraries may be targeting are sometimes the same as those on which other service providers are seeking to focus their attention. Positive responses have been to see such organisations as potential collaborators rather than 'competitors'.
- Strengths** - Joint developments/close working relationships with other service providers (especially PCTs and Children's Centres).
- Weaknesses**- Competing interests. Partners not benefiting in proportion to their investment.
- Opportunities** - Improved access to non-traditional library users/those in key target groups. Ability to deliver services more efficiently.
- Threats** - Possible resentment if not engaged early/ given prominent role.
- 12.24 **Evaluation Issues - Measuring Outcomes and Impacts** Community engagement is about attracting more people, from more diverse groups, accessing more services on a more frequent/extended basis, culminating in libraries being seen as a major community asset. However, the culture of measuring outcomes and impacts is under-developed in the sector and there are issues about both the ability and willingness of libraries staff to do so, in some instances.
- Strengths** - Baselineing and update exercise to measure outcomes and impacts. Feedback used to inform service delivery.
- Weaknesses** - No information on users, none being collected, no guidance as to how to do so and no help being sought.
- Opportunities** - Ability to demonstrate the results of new investments/engagement activities.
- Threats** - Inability to demonstrate the value of investing in library services.

13. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 13.1 The key evaluation questions posed by MLA in the study brief were as follows:
- Has BIG funding made an impact on enhancing the role of libraries in engaging with their communities (users and non-users)?
 - Has BIG funding made an impact on changing perceptions of library services?
 - Has BIG funding made an impact on learning and skills development for users, staff and volunteers?

Libraries and Community Engagement

- 13.2 Libraries were required to engage communities in the development, delivery and management of library services. The available evidence suggests most libraries have involved local communities in making decisions about how new libraries will look and most have been seeking to establish enhanced roles for volunteers, especially in helping to deliver new services. However, involving the full range of people that would be representative of local communities has been challenging. No libraries appear to yet be at a stage where local communities are helping to manage operations and it seems unlikely that this will happen to any significant extent, mainly due to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of local people to get involved to this extent. Whilst they want to be consulted and involved in some aspects of operations, they appear reluctant to take on significant and longer term responsibilities.
- 13.3 Although in a number of cases targets/milestones were not scheduled to be achieved until after the evaluation period, it is apparent that most of the physical developments have suffered delays. With community engagement activity often linked to developments this has inevitably led to difficulties. Those libraries that have opened report good progress, in terms of the numbers of users and engagement with new user groups. However, there is not yet reliable information on which to assess the Programme's contribution to MLA's strategic priorities. Reports submitted to BIG do not include sufficient data, apart from which nearly half of the grant recipients have failed to submit reports at all.
- 13.4 Where new or refurbished libraries have been open for a sufficient period to gather robust data, good progress has been made in terms of higher user numbers and more diverse user profiles (e.g. new library members at the Meadows in Nottingham are up 46% on levels prior to the BIG investment). This has been achieved in part by developing different community engagement approaches, both through employing new staff and deploying volunteer with whom certain community groups have greater empathy (and who offer additional capacity for community engagement) and by training existing staff.
- 13.5 The focus on community engagement with young people, who have traditionally been difficult to reach, has shown great success. User registrations for young people, especially in Lancashire appear to have been boosted through the benefits they see in the introduction of self-issue desks.
- 13.6 Amongst the Intensive Group, an interesting example was provided by the use of BCfm, a community radio station. Although used to promote and discuss the new library, its potential to communicate with specific communities in a range of community languages has not yet been fully exploited but highlights an approach that might be used elsewhere.

Changing Perceptions of Library Services

- 13.7 Funding was allocated to projects which work with their communities to:
- Invigorate libraries as centres of wider community learning and development and learning based activities
 - Create, improve and develop library spaces that meet the needs of the whole community
 - Be innovative and promote good practice in the ways libraries are designed and run
- 13.8 Judged against these criteria, and based on the limited evidence available:
- Libraries **have been invigorated** as centres of wider community learning and development and learning based activities;
 - BIG investments **have** created, improved and developed library spaces that meet the needs of the whole community; and
 - There are **some examples** of innovation and good practice in the ways libraries are designed and run, though progress has not been smooth in all cases.
- 13.9 Largely based on the Intermediate Group surveys, it is apparent that considerable efforts have been/are being made to enhance the experience of users and to engage with non-users. Although the extent of success is difficult to judge, there has been no lack of effort in undertaking outreach work, developing new partnerships and trying to find different ways of bringing into libraries wider audiences. A recurring theme was a conviction not to allow library spaces to become static.
- 13.10 Evidence from the Intensive Group was that there has been a positive impact on the perceptions of local libraries, particularly held by those who had not previously used or had become actively involved in their library to any significant extent. Indeed, people see that libraries are transformed into lighter, brighter, cleaner and friendlier places and this translates into increased usage.

Learning and Skills Development

- 13.11 Although there is a paucity of evidence of impacts at the national level, the much stronger evidence from the Intensive group suggests that libraries play a unique role in respect of learning (as well as mental health and social inclusion). Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs), especially relating to Skills and Behaviour & Progression, are a significant feature of most of the case studies. There is evidence of improved attitudes to learning and of expectations of improved levels of educational attainment and employability, albeit numbers of beneficiaries remain modest for the time being.
- 13.12 Overall, the most significant achievements have been in respect of children and young people, in particular the engagement of those who might not have been considered to be likely library users. This has included boosting user numbers in younger age ranges, encouraging learning and involving them in positive activities. Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculations demonstrated that work with children (Section 6) indicated that the social benefits generated justified the investment in these activities.
- 13.13 In addition, this evaluation shows that some of the group sessions staged in libraries have improved skills (English for Speakers of Other Languages, literacy and communications skills), increased confidence and reduced feelings of isolation.
- 13.14 In many cases, the investment in library buildings and in community engagement activities had positive spin-off effect for library staff: where there has been fear and anxiety due to changes in working practice and job roles, there is also hope and excitement about the opportunities for libraries to make a difference to their communities and enhance staff skills through community engagement training..

Recommendations

- 13.15 There is a need to have all libraries report to BIG in a more timely fashion and using a fixed template which would enable evidence to be gathered on a comprehensive and consistent basis.
- 13.16 There is a continuing need for libraries to engage with their local communities and demonstrate the relevance and benefits of what they and their partners have to offer. In this context there are two specific roles that MLA might perform:
 - As a facilitator for the exchange of good practice between libraries; and
 - Exploring further the specific benefits/issues arising from the co-location of libraries with other service providers
- 13.17 In respect of the former, more specific recommendations are offered below.

<p>1. How to engage communities successfully, over the long-term and develop more innovative approaches to community engagement.</p>	<p>1.1 For libraries to identify which communities they want to reach, what these groups need, and the ways in which libraries can help meet those needs and what libraries can do differently to help meet those needs.</p> <p>1.2 For libraries to recruit specialist staff, train existing staff and work with partners that provide routes to engagement and which have the capacity to deliver.</p> <p>1.3 Libraries need to ensure that relationships have been developed with appropriate partners in order to facilitate community engagement. The MLA might explore further the specific benefits/issues arising from the co-location of libraries with other service providers.</p>
<p>2. How to target young people</p>	<p>2.1 For libraries to involve young people in creating and managing their own space and utilising modern technology to the full.</p>
<p>3. How to retain existing users</p>	<p>3.1 For libraries to ensure that changes to physical layouts and means of service delivery do not alienate traditional library users.</p>
<p>4. How to develop successful partnerships</p>	<p>4.1 For libraries to demonstrate the unique role of libraries in offering safe and inclusive spaces through which partners can access priority groups.</p> <p>4.2 For libraries to ensure that spaces need be become more mobile, as this will allow community groups to use spaces for different purposes.</p>
<p>5. How to involve library staff and build their confidence in engaging with community members</p>	<p>5.1 For libraries to ensure they keep library staff informed, address perceived threats and highlight opportunities for building confidence through training (see Appendix 10)</p>
<p>6. How to get the most from volunteering</p>	<p>6.1 For libraries to take a more strategic approach to volunteer recruitment/ management, establishing where they can play a role and then recruiting appropriate people, for example, recruiting volunteers that better reflect the profiles of local communities.</p>
<p>7. How to address lack of representativeness of local communities on project groups that aim to benefit the communities.</p>	<p>7.1 Engage people using the approaches outlined above, offer opportunities to contribute in formats and via mechanisms that are accessible and provide appropriate support and encouragement.</p>

Appendix 1: Evaluation Methodology

An inception meeting for the study was held on 26 August 2008, following which exact terms of reference for the evaluation were agreed between ERS and MLA, summarised in an Action Plan. The evaluation has been supported by an Advisory Group. Although no specific terms of reference were issued, the emphasis was on it providing advice to add value to the evaluation rather than steering it as such. The members of the Board have included:

- Abigail Smith, DCMS;
- David Potts, Project Manager, MLA;
- Jennifer Ngyou, Policy Adviser CLG, MLA;
- Julie Spencer, Head of Libraries and Museums, Bolton MBC;
- Mike Clarke, Head of Libraries, Information & Community Learning, London Borough of Camden;
- Peter Bailey, Evaluation Manager, BIG;
- Sally Maynard, Loughborough University (September 2009);
- Sarah Wilkie, Programme Manager- Framework for the Future, MLA (up to March 2009);
- Silvia Anton, Senior Research Manager, MLA (replacing Ailbhe McNabola, Head of Research and Evidence, MLA); and
- Tom Schuller, NIACE.

The first meeting of the Advisory Board was held on Friday 17 October 2008, with subsequent meetings held on 29 April 2009, 23 September 2009 and 10 February 2010.

Stage 1: Logic Model and Evaluation Framework Review

Working with MLA, the Advisory Board and the six intensive case study library authorities, the first task was to separate and re-shape the Draft Logic Model and Evaluation Framework previously prepared by consultants commissioned by MLA³⁸.

A Logic Model and Evaluation Framework links the outputs and outcomes of a programme with the activities and processes it delivers and its original aims and principles. It is a systematic way of presenting the relationships between the resources of a programme, its planned activities and the anticipated changes as a result.

The purpose of Stage 1 was for the Study Team to consolidate and streamline the Logic Model and Evaluation Framework based on an understanding of what data was being captured by authorities and what the evaluation sought to establish. The agreed Logic Model and Evaluation Framework used to underpin this study can be found in Appendix 3.

Stage 2: Data Capture

As previously described, this involved capturing data on three levels of detail: Intensive, Intermediate and National.

The data capture was designed to answer the evaluation questions as identified within the evaluation brief, namely:

- How effective is the management of the Community Libraries Programme in delivering agreed objectives and reaching targets?
- What are the effects of the Programme on MLA's main stakeholders (in particular, users and non-users)?
- Could the same impact have been reached through different mechanisms or programmes?
- What are the needs of the sector?

³⁸ In January 2008 Jura Consultants was commissioned to assist MLA in developing a logic model and evaluation framework for the next stage of evaluation.

- What models have been tried before to deal with these needs?
- Which specific needs is MLA best positioned to address?

Intensive – 6 Case Studies

An initial meeting took place with each of the aforementioned case study authorities in October/November 2008. These meetings were held with the people leading the developments in each authority and regular contact was maintained throughout 2009.

In February/March 2009 more extensive fieldwork commenced in each local authority area, comprising a combination of:

- *Focus Groups* – with users of library services prior to the programme; new users of libraries services; and non-users of libraries services;
- *Focus Groups* – with library management and staff;
- *Semi-structured qualitative interviews* - with Heads of Service, library management teams, library staff and those within each local authority responsible for community engagement/development; and
- *Surveys (paper and web based)* – of users and non-users to track participants and gain feedback from those not engaged through the programme.

It was originally intended that these exercises would be repeated (with appropriate modifications) in July 2009 and November 2009, but with an increasing emphasis on gathering information on outputs, outcomes and impacts on the library service, library users and wider communities as they came to fruition. However, delays in building works and in some community engagement activities meant that outcomes and impacts have been extremely limited.

In practice, given the different stages of progress of capital development in each of the case study authorities, the fieldwork was shaped around planned activities in each Community Library location in order that the study could benefit from opportunities to gather evidence at community events, Steering Group meetings, library openings and other activities as they were taking place. Consequently, the fieldwork has been delivered progressively and responsively throughout 2009 and into early 2010.

Intermediate – 16 Case Studies

With regard to the 16 participating ‘intermediate’ authorities, there was recognition of the need to minimise the burden on these authorities, in respect of the information requested from them, whilst still tracking key activities and gathering key pieces of information.

As such, data capture has utilised surveying methods. Two surveys were conducted, firstly in early 2009 and secondly in late 2009. They were designed by ERS and kindly piloted by Bolton Library Service. The surveys were distributed and collected by MLA and analysed by ERS (see Section 11).

National – All Programme Participants

In September 2009, ERS received the first batch of Mid Year reports, submitted by beneficiary authorities to BIG. These reports contain information on achievement and progress against project outcomes and milestones.

It had been hoped that these would have been available much sooner, but there were delays both to projects and in the submission of these reports. Further reports were received in November 2009 and December 2009.

Stage 3: Reporting and Dissemination

An Interim Report was submitted in March 2009, as per the agreed Action Plan, and formed the basis of discussions at the Advisory Group meeting in April 2009. A comprehensive update (not required as part of the Action Plan) was submitted in early September 2009 and formed the basis of discussions at the Advisory Group meeting later that month. A series of early draft reports were submitted to MLA in the months that followed, as well as regular telephone and email updates.

This report brings together all the quantitative and qualitative evidence and provides an overall assessment of the Community Libraries Programme, its impacts, longer term legacies and overall contribution to relevant national agendas and policies.

The report presents separate sections in each of the case study authorities. As previously described, the nature of Community Library development in each of the case study areas has varied, as has the pace of development. This not only relates to the capital works, but also the activities undertaken by the library service in preparation i.e. for their own staff, working with partners, engaging users and engaging non-users. As such, there is localised variation which is reflected in the diversity of activity and different level of detail provided in each case study section. Separate chapters also consolidate the evidence from the 'Intermediate' group and the national evidence provided.

There is a separate chapter on Social Return on Investment, although the findings derived from this approach have proven to be somewhat limited in terms of usefulness and scale of impact.

Appendix 2: Stakeholder Consultations

Bristol				
Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Library Community Engagement Officer	Adam Cutler	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Community Engagement Manager	Asif Khan	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	3
Trinity Road Library - Supervisor	Ella Beard	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Manager - Customer Services	Emelli Doran	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Manager - Service Development	Janet Bremner	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Bristol Adult Learning Service	John Windsor	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Staff - Trinity road Library	Jude Crampton	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Manager - Service Development	Julie Bowie	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	4
Library Manager - Building Development	Julie York	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Manager - Service Improvement	Kate Cole	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Head of Service	Kate Davenport	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Staff - Trinity road Library	Kate Rouse	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Community Engagement Officer	Munawar Hussain	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Bristol Adult Learning Service, Arts and Wellbeing	Sarah Cooke	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Library Community Engagement Officer	Tammi Redman	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Ignite Pottery Session - Asian Elders	Isobel Golt-Morris	External	Participant Observation	1
Ignite Pottery Session - Drop In	Isobel Golt-Morris	External	Participant Observation	1
Somali Family Event at Trinity Road Library	TBC	External	TBC	
BCfm Community Radio for Bristol	Zahir Malik	External	TBC	
Community Art Project Artists	TBC	External	TBC	
Sikh Resource and Community Development Centre Manager	Narinder Veer Kaur	External	Telephone Interview	1
Community at Heart PR/Communications Officer	Stacy Yelland	External	Telephone Interview	1
Local Residents Group	Tim Martin	External	Telephone Interview	1

Lancashire Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Acting Head of Library Service, Lancashire County Council	Julie Bell	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
Colne Library Manager, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Gillian Harbour	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
Haslingden Library Manager, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Michelle Sisson	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
Lancaster Library manager, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Diane Baxter	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
YourSpace Project Manager, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Heather Pitman	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	4
Acting Strategic Manager Planning, Lancashire County Council	Ann Marsh	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
Chair of Software Engineering Department of Computing, Lancaster University	Jon Whittle	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Senior District Partnership Officer, Lancashire County Council	Eileen Winnington	External	Telephone Interview	1
Management Information Officer, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Des Meyers	Internal	Telephone Interview	2
Head of Intelligence, Lancashire County Council	David Burnham	External	Telephone Interview	1
Health trainer, East Lancashire PCT	Hayley Ratcliffe	External	Telephone Interview	1
Team Leader for Health Trainers, East Lancashire PCT	Halima Laheri	External	Telephone Interview	1
Mental Health Development Specialist, East Lancashire PCT	Leigh Walmsley	External	Telephone Interview	1
Get In To Reading Project Director	Janet swan	External	Telephone Interview	2
Chair, Friends of Library group Colne	Christine Bank	External	Focus Group	2

Volunteer Service Officer, Lancashire County Council	Helen Plant	External	Telephone Interview	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Richard Davis (Lead)	External	Focus Group	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Janet Rogan	External	Focus Group	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Mary Lockwood	External	Focus Group	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Gary Hart	External	Focus Group	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Christina Hibbins	External	Focus Group	1
Vivid Arts Group, Friends of Lancaster Library	Kevin Atkinson	External	Focus Group	1
Haslingden Library Young Stars group		External	Focus Group	1
PALS Officer, Patient Advice and Liason Service	Carol Kerr	External	Telephone Interview	1
Councillor, Rossendale Borough Council	Councillor Granville Morris	External	Telephone Interview	1
New library user Lancaster	Charles Lea	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Friends of Library Colne/Heritage Group	Jill Pengelly	External	Face to Face Meeting	2
Friends of Library Colne	Christine Bank	External	Face to Face Meeting	2
Friends of Library Colne	Yvonne May	External	Face to Face Meeting	2
Friends of Library Colne		External	Focus Group	1
Youth worker, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Leesa Amin	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	2
Youth worker, Lancashire County Council Library & Information Service	Sadakha Amin	Internal	Face to Face Meeting	1
Get In To Reading Group	Janet Swan (Lead)	External	Focus Group	1
Colne Heritage Group		External	Focus Group	1
Nelson and Colne College Course Participants, Colne Library	Mary Robinson (Lea)	External	Focus Group	1
Young Volunteer, Haslingden Library	Austen ??	External	Focus Group	1
Friends of Library, Haslingden		External	Focus Group	1

Newcastle (Control)				
Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Head of Culture, Libraries and Lifelong Learning, Newcastle City Council	Tony Durcan		Focus Group	2
Access to Learning Manager, Newcastle City Council	Janice Hall		Focus Group	2
Assistant Head of Libraries, Newcastle City Council	Alan Wright		Focus Group	2
Buildings and Facilities Manager, Newcastle City Council	Mark Thurston		Focus Group	2
Systems Manager, Newcastle City Council	Andrew Fletcher		Focus Group	2
Senior Library and Information Manager, Newcastle City Council	Fiona Hill		Focus Group	2
Libraries' Development Manager: City Library, Newcastle City Council	Angela Forster		Focus Group and Face to Face Meeting	2
City Libraries Manager, Newcastle City Council	David Fay		Focus Group and Face to Face Meeting	2
Senior Lecturer/Programme Leader MA/MSc Information and Library Management by Distance Learning, Northumbria University	Biddy Casselden		Face to Face Meeting	1
Programme Leader: MA/MSc Information & Library Management, Northumbria University	Jackie Urwin		Face to Face Meeting	1
Customer Focus Group	Angela Forster (Lead)	External	Focus Group	1
Children and Young People's User Group	Fredella Hair (Lead)	External	Focus Group	1
Library Preview	Angela Forster (Lead)	External	Participant Observation	1
City Library Staff	Angela Forster (Lead)	Internal	Focus Group	1
Storytime	Jen Brown (Lead)	External	Participant Observation	2
Young People's Reading Group	Becky Gardner (Lead)	External	Participant Observation	1

North Yorkshire				
Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services, North Yorkshire County Council	Julie Blaisdale	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
General Manager Libraries, Adult and Community Services, North Yorkshire County Council	Chrys Mellor	Internal	Face to Face and Telephone Interviews	2
Equality and Community Engagement Officer, Adult and Community Services, North Yorkshire County Council	Shanna Carrell	Internal	Face to Face and Telephone Interviews	2
Principal Officer, Harrogate Library, North Yorkshire County Council	Jill Fellerman	Internal	Face to Face and Telephone Interviews	2
Community Engagement Officer, Harrogate Borough Council	Fiona Friday	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Community and Information Officer, North Yorkshire County Council	Sue Proctor	Internal	Face to Face and Telephone Interviews	2
Community and Information Assistant, North Yorkshire County Council	Greg Kubas	Internal	Telephone Interview	2
Area Adult Learning Manager (Harrogate), North Yorkshire County Council	Heather Clarke	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Area Youth Worker, North Yorkshire County Council	Julie Spink	Internal	Face to Face	2
Deputy Director, Harrogate Council for Voluntary Service	Mark Hopley	External	Telephone Interview	1
Harrogate Minority Ethnic Steering Group & Forum	Louise Cousins	External	Face to Face	1
North Yorkshire Library Strategy Launch Event	Chrys Mellor (Lead)	Internal/External	Participant Observation	1
Getting to Know You Session	Jill Fellerman (Lead)	Internal/External	Participant Observation	1
Partnership Group	Chrys Mellor (Chair)	Internal/External	Participant Observation	5

Community Engagement Team	Jill Fellerman (Lead)	Internal	Group Discussion	1
Youth Council	Julie Spink (Lead)	External	Focus Group	1
Harrogate and District Access Group	Trevor Stearn (Lead)	External	Group Discussion	1
Harrogate Forum for Older People	Jean East (Lead)	External	Group Discussion	1
Information Day for the Over 50s	Jill Fellerman (Lead)	Internal/External	Participant Observation	1
Actively Involving Young People	Carol Gaiger (Lead)	Internal/External	Group Discussion	1
Special Storytime	Sue Proctor (Lead)	Internal/External	Participant Observation	1

Nottingham				
Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Library Service Delivery Manager, Nottingham City Council	Joan Bray	Internal	Face To Face Meeting, Focus Group And Telephone Interview	5
Head Of Library Service (Job Share), Nottingham City Council	Natalie Sellears	Internal	Focus Group And Face To Face Meeting	2
Head Of Library Service (Job Share), Nottingham City Council	Christine Dyer	Internal	Focus Group	1
Head Of Community Development / Engagement, Nottingham City Council	Gwen Isherwood	Internal	Focus Group And Telephone Interview	2
Community Based Team Librarian, Nottingham City Council	Connie Chapman	Internal	Telephone Interview	3
Library Manager, Nottingham City Council	Grenville Davies	Internal	Face To Face Meeting And Telephone Interview	3
Librarian, Nottingham City Council	Becky Harris	Internal	Face To Face Meeting	1
Librarian, Nottingham City Council	Elaine Dickinson	Internal	Face To Face Meeting	2
Project Manager (Meadows Alive!), Nottingham City Council	Helen Wallace	Internal	Face To Face Meeting And Telephone Interview	4
Community Engagement Worker (Meadows Alive!), Nottingham City Council	Nadeem Haider	Internal	Face To Face And Telephone Interview	3
Homework Officer, Nottingham City Council	Hannah Bailey	Internal	Face To Face Interview	2
Community Support Worker, Nottingham City Council	Mohammed Ahmed	Internal	Face To Face Interview	1
Community Support Worker, Nottingham City Council	Shazia Mohammed	Internal	Face To Face	1
Performance Improvement Manager, Nottingham City Council	Stephen Chartres	Internal	Face To Face And Group Discussion	2

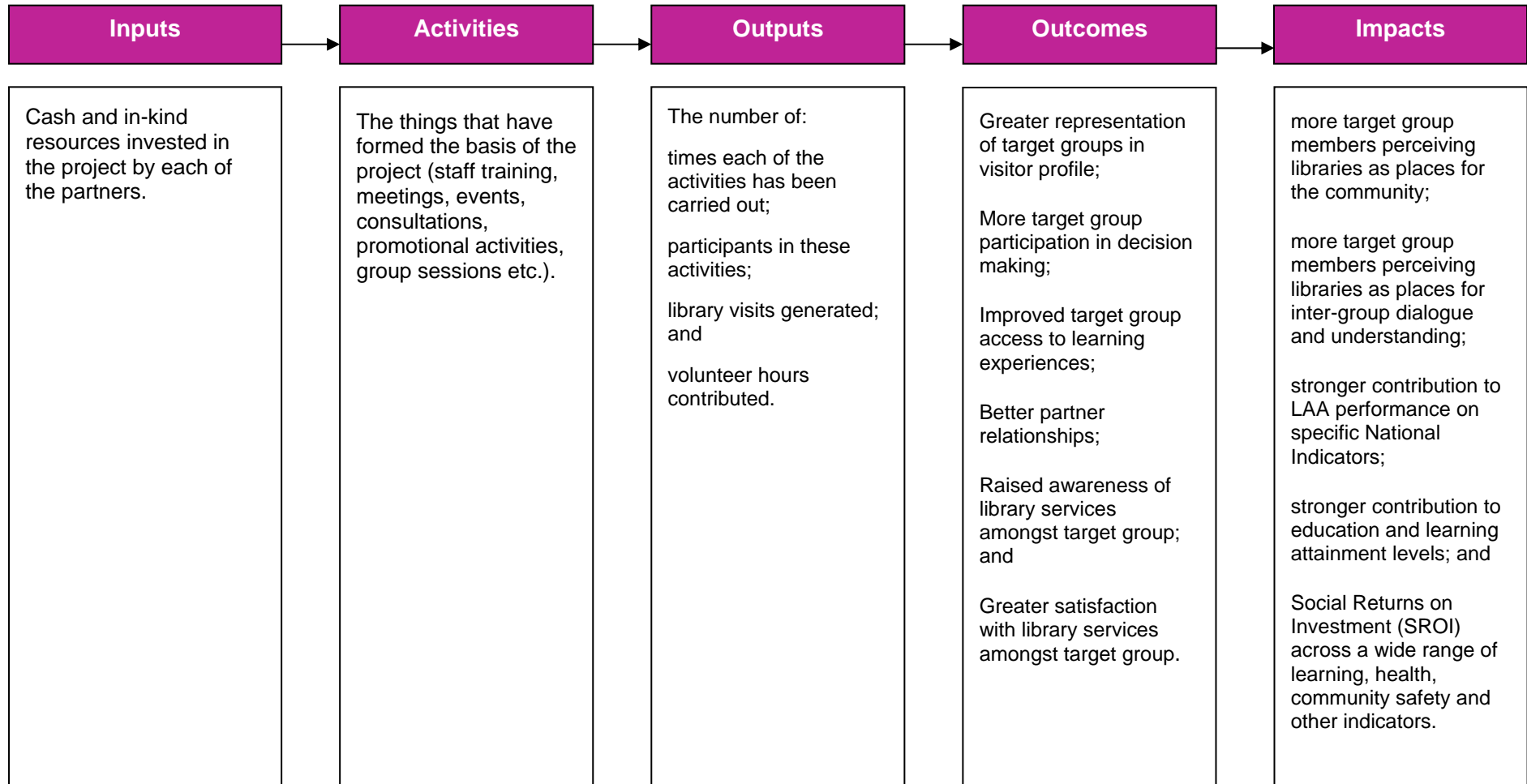
Councillor for Bridge Ward	Councillor Ian MacLennan	External	Group Discussion	1
Committee Member, Meadows Partnership Trust	Robert Morrell	External	Group Discussion	2
Committee Member, Arkwright Community Gardens	Di Clausen	External	Group Discussion	2
March and Grachowski, Architects	Steve Riley	External	Group Discussion	1
Chairwoman, Old Meadows Tenants And Residents Association	Jackie Lehuquet	External	Telephone Interview	1
Head Teacher, Welbeck Primary School	Carol Norman	External	Telephone Interview	1
Meadows Alive! Junior Sounding Board		Internal/External	Focus Group	2
Community Sounding Board		Internal/External	Group Discussion	1
Homework Club, Meadows Library	Hannah Bailey - Lead	Internal/External	Face To Face Meeting	2
Conversation Club	Jason McCormack -Lead	External	Focus Group	1
Meadows Library Dignitary Launch Event		Internal/External	Face To Face Meeting	1
Meadows Library Community Launch Event		External	Face To Face Meeting And Resident Survey	1
Meadows Library Users		External	Face To Face Meeting	1
Meadows Library User Statement Board		External	Face To Face Meeting	1

Sandwell				
Stakeholder	Name	Internal/External	Type of Engagement	No. of Engagements
Head of Service, Sandwell MBC	Linda Saunders	Internal	Telephone Interview	2
Principal Libraries Officer (Central Library), Sandwell MBC	Heather Vickerman	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Principal Libraries Officer & Acting Programme Manager for Buildings, Sandwell MBC	Dawn Winter	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Community Development Manager, Sandwell MBC	Coral Musgrove	Internal	Face to Face Meeting & Telephone Interview	3
Smethwick Library Manager, Sandwell MBC	Jean Fenn	Internal	Face to Face Meeting & Telephone Interview	3
Bleakhouse Library Manager, Sandwell MBC	Suzie Drew	Internal	Face to Face Meeting & Telephone Interview	3
Assistant Community Manager, Sandwell MBC	Eileen Howard	Internal	Focus Group	2
Bleakhouse Library Supervisor, Sandwell MBC	Jacqueline South	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Smethwick Senior Library Supervisor, Sandwell MBC	Daljit Shankar	Internal	Focus Group	1
Smethwick Library Supervisor, Sandwell MBC	Tracey Langley	Internal	Focus Group	1
Smethwick Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Miriam Abbott	Internal	Focus Group	2
Smethwick Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Sarina Creswell	Internal	Focus Group	1
Smethwick Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Tracey Onions	Internal	Focus Group	1
Smethwick Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Pramila Patel	Internal	Focus Group	1
Bleakhouse Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Odette O'Connor	Internal	Focus Group	2
Bleakhouse Library Assistant, Sandwell MBC	Helen Cherrington	Internal	Focus Group	2

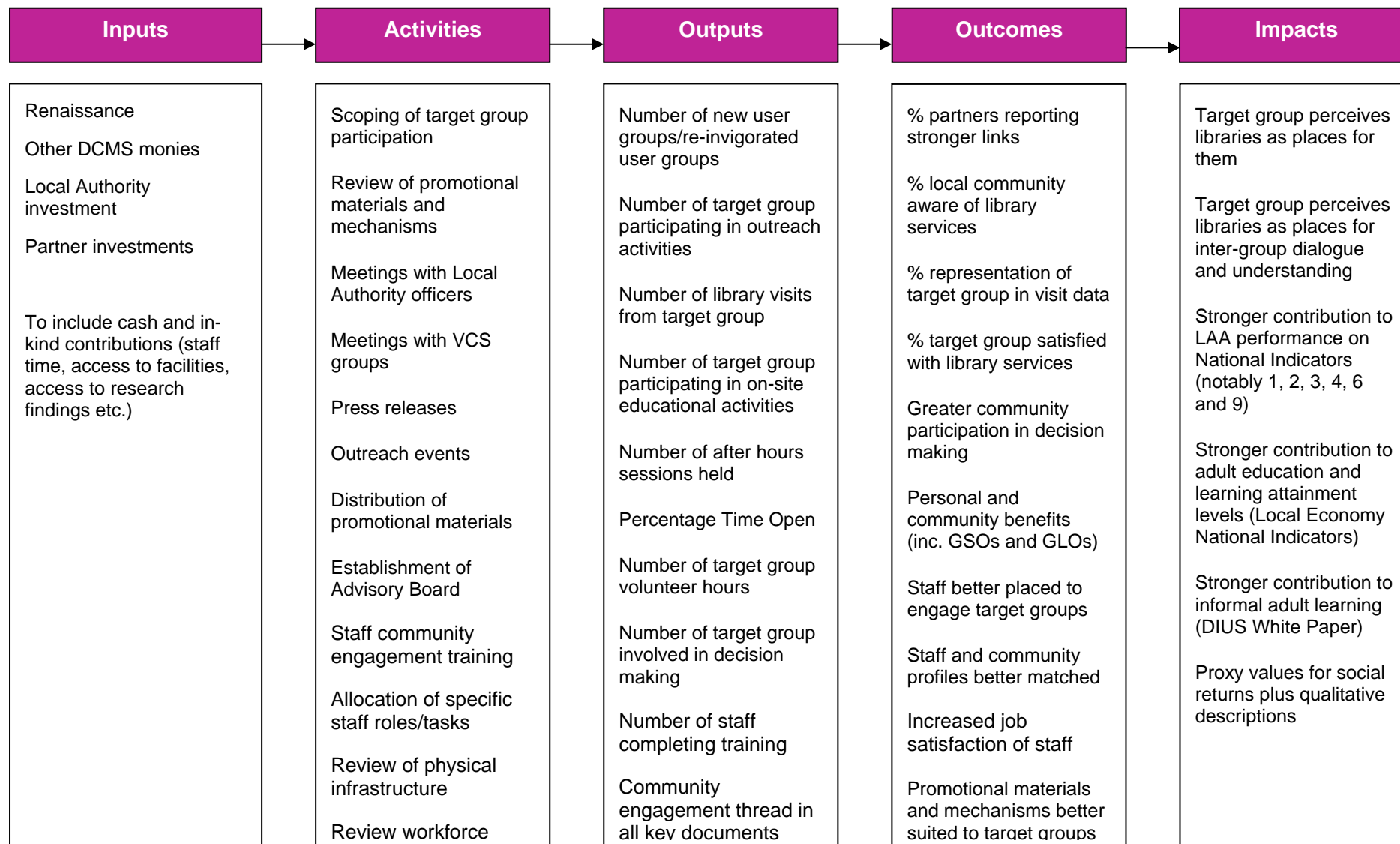
Strategic Policy Officer , Sandwell MBC	Heather Chinner	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Press and PR Officer, Sandwell MBC	Darren Beck	Internal	Telephone Interview	1
Community Wellbeing Worker, Sandwell PCT	Pally Bath	External	Face to Face Meeting & Telephone Interview	2
Community Wellbeing Worker, Sandwell PCT	Simon Price	External	Telephone Interview	1
Group Facilitator, Sandwell PCT	Gina Neale	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Senior Mental Health Promotion Officer, Sandwell PCT	Sasha Gelpy	External	Telephone Interview	1
Employment Officer, JobLink	Bobby Kaur	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Tutor, Mercian Heritage	Jean Nugent	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Community Support Officer, Age Concern	Gini Lawrence	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Advice and Guidance Tutor, People Serve	Sabina Yasmin	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Asian Ladies Yoga Group	Pally Bath (Group Lead)	Internal/External	Focus Group	2
Making Friends with a Book Group	Gina Neale (Lead)	Internal/External	Face to Face Meetings & Practice Observation	1
International English Class	Jessica Unruh (Lead)	Internal/External	Focus Group	1
Bollywood Dance Class	Monica Kaur			
Homework Club (teenagers completed surveys)	Names not provided	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Bleakhouse User Group (Representatives from Friends of Group and other library users)	Jacqueline South (Lead)	Internal	Focus Group	1
Smethwick Library User Surveys	Smethwick Library Users	External	Face to Face Meeting	1
Smethwick Library User Statement Board	Smethwick Library Users	External	Face to Face Meeting	1

Appendix 3: Logic Model and Evaluation Framework

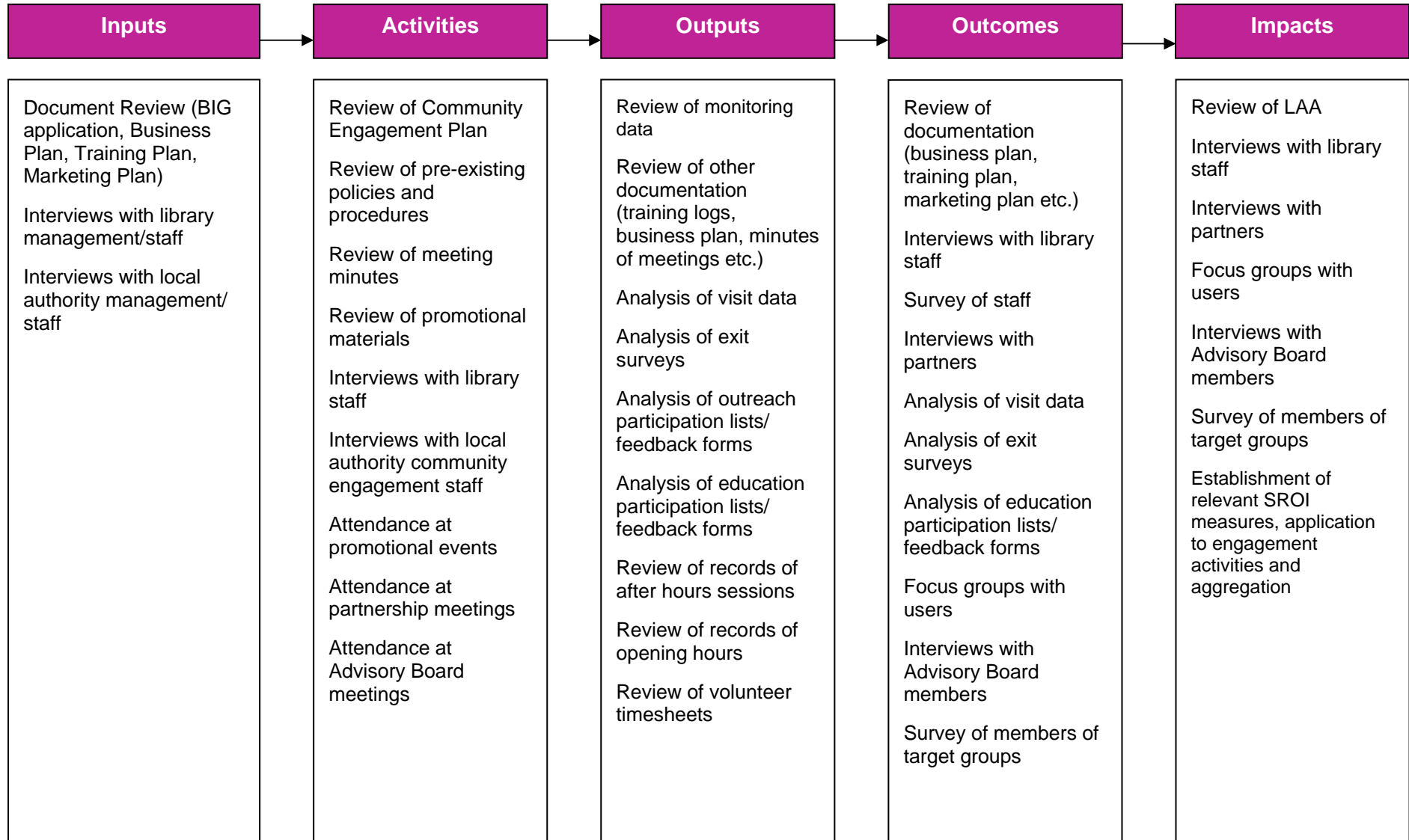
Logic Chain - Overview



Logic Chain - Indicators



Logic Chain - Methodologies



Appendix 4: Overview of Library Services

Bristol

Background

Bristol Libraries delivers information, learning and reading activities citywide through 27 libraries, two learning centres and the CREATE environmental centre. Library and learning visits total around 2 million a year, and the customer base crosses all social, ethnic and age ranges³⁹. The overall priority for 2009-2010 is to focus the service on improved delivery against directorate and corporate outcomes and on increased user take-up and satisfaction. This will be achieved through a clearly targeted activities programme and greatly improved performance management⁴⁰.

Data from the Active People Survey⁴¹ (April 2008 to April 2009), the sport and recreation survey, in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in Bristol who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 46.1%. (In comparison the usage of museums and galleries in Bristol was 56.7% and overall participation in Arts was 47.8%).

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-08 the population of Bristol rose by 4.5% but library visits declined by 13.2%, although book issues fell by only 2.4%. Although one service point was added during this period, the number of sites opening 30 – 44 hours decreased by two while those opening 10 – 29 hours increased by three⁴². The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ stayed constant at 92.1%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as ‘good’ edged up from 83% to 85%⁴³.

The 2006 Bristol Libraries Public Library User Survey (PLUS) highlighted that provision at Trinity Road Library, which will close when Junction 3 Creative Learning Centre (J3) is opened, was insufficient. Compared to the city average, a significantly higher percentage of users described all aspects of the Trinity Road Library as Poor or Very Poor, especially for Opening hours, Attractiveness of library outside, Attractiveness of library inside, and Choice of books.

In December 2004 Bristol Libraries successfully conducted their first public consultation exercise that set the tone and direction of the subsequent development of J3. In total 550 adults, young people and children from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds were engaged. Overall, 95% of respondents supported the need for a new library facility. Their identified vision was for a place that was “not a boring library” but a place that was “buzzing with activities” and had “a culture of enabling people to use it”.

³⁹ Libraries & Learning Service Delivery Plan 2009-2012, Bristol City Council

⁴⁰ As above

⁴¹ The national sport and recreation survey that provides statistics on participation in sport and active recreation for all 354 local authorities in England, http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx

⁴² CIPFA data: Financial Information 2007-08 Actuals, excludes mobile libraries

⁴³ DCMS (2008)- ‘Public Library Service Standards’. 3rd revised edition April 2008

Conversely, in 2007 consultations undertaken as part of the MLA's longitudinal impact evaluation of the Community Libraries Programme revealed that:

- While the inspiring vision is clearly strongly held by senior library managers and other council stakeholders, it is less well recognised by frontline staff and the community;
- The project would benefit from better community segmentation;
- The library service needs to be clearer about how it intends to develop community engagement;
- The community focus groups did not identify significant strengths in the project;
- A clear communications strategy is needed; and
- Outcome measures and success criteria need to be developed.

Subsequent delays in obtaining planning permission did not help matters, particularly in relation to recruiting resident volunteers. Since obtaining planning permission, in July 2009, most of these points are being addressed. Some progress has been made in respect of community segmentation (a way of clustering 'communities' into groups to obtain a balanced account of community perspectives). This approach requires careful planning to ensure representative involvement by identified communities and requires developing different engagement strategies for each group. For example, most engagement activities have relied on a geographical approach focused on local groups operating within the Easton ward which should be complemented by adopting a thematic approach through engaging with the city's community forums (Bristol Women's Forum, Disability Equality Forum, Young People's Forum, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum, Bristol Older People's forum, Bristol BSL Forum and Race Forum).

J3 will transform a currently semi-derelict site which is prone to anti-social behaviour whilst increasing the diversity of facilities available for everyone in the Easton ward and adjacent neighbourhoods. The development will include: state-of-the-art library with learning and creative zones; community meeting rooms; a crèche; commercial and residential units; and public open space. The site is next to a number of community facilities including Millpond Youth Centre, Millpond Primary School, the Greek Orthodox Church of St Peter and the St Paul and Charlotte Keel Health Centre.

One of the most significant impacts on the progress of J3 was the 2009 economic downturn, which negatively impacted on the value of the land that Bristol City Council was intending to sell, necessitating a significant review of the design of the development. After several iterations the designs for J3 obtained planning permission in July 2009 with an opening date set for March 2012.

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and Activities

There has been an range of activity seeking community input to the development of J3, starting in 2004, ranging from local residents approaching the Head of Libraries to formal consultation exercises, including:

- *Public Consultation facilitated by Scarman Trust - December 2004;*
- *Public Consultation at Trinity Road Library – December 2005;*
- *Public Meeting - January 2006;*
- *Publicity at street festivals - summers of 2006 and 2007;*
- *Public Meeting - May 2007; and*
- *Baseline Focus Groups (with MLA) - November 2007;*
- *Public Consultation at Refugee Week Activities – June 2008; and*
- *Public Consultation at the Greek Orthodox Church - August 2008.*

The initial demands for an improved library in Lawrence Hill highlighted that the Trinity Road Library was wrongly located (due to shifts in population densities) and did not offer a suitable range of stock or activities (due to changes in demographics).

Despite consultation exercises undertaken in the early stages of developing the design for J3, Bristol Libraries were subsequently faced with the establishment of a residents' group opposed to elements of the proposed development. This group claims that the initial J3 planning application was submitted with minimal consultation with those residents living immediately adjacent to the site and therefore likely to experience the greatest impact. This group was eventually engaged in the design process, after they submitted a petition against the application, but felt undue consideration was given to the other project partner agendas. However it must be noted that the group was not opposed to the redevelopment of the site and J3 per se but to local impacts such as the number of proposed flats and associated traffic and parking congestion and the loss of trees.

The Library's Community Engagement Team did continue to inform and consult people about J3 both formally and informally through their various work with community organisations, such as the Easton Community Partnership Board, Bristol Pakistani Community Women's Group clients, and Asian Day Centre clients. Activities organised by the team have included: the Easton Community Centre hosting the J3 display boards; an article in the area's community newsletter 'Up Our Street'; the Sikh Resource Centre hosting two well attended consultations with a range of people; and several slots on BCfm, Bristol's community radio station.

Running concurrently is 'J3 Fired Up', an MLA Learning Revolution Festival Grant project, which has been engaging residents and community groups in the Easton ward. It is running a number of workshops, such as pottery and stained glass making, for residents to produce art work, some of which will be placed in J3. In addition, J3 was promoted through the More than Words project, a Learning Revolution Transformation Fund project, which used the theme of language to bring together local residents from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

A Somali Family Reading Activity event was held at Trinity Road Library, in March 2010, supported by the Libraries' Community Engagement Team, Children's Team, Adult Learning and Reader Development Team to engage with Somali mothers and children and promote J3 and volunteering opportunities therein. This event was an overall success attended by approximately 300 adults and children, 31 new users enrolling and 4 people indicating they are interested in volunteering, with 2 more who said they would consider it.

The largest promotional event, since obtaining planning permission, was the Community Festival Day at the Mill Youth Centre, adjacent to the J3 site held in March 2010. The Festival included a range of activities with J3 taking the opportunity to consult with participants about the cultural activities people would like to see in the new centre in addition to promoting resident volunteering opportunities. Over 100 people attended the day with 5 people indicating they are interested in volunteering, with 5 more who said they would consider it.

There are also plans to attend a Jobs Fair at the Trinity Community Centre, adjacent to the Trinity Road Library, which is being delivered by Bristol city Council's Economic Regeneration Team and Job Centre Plus. Last year's event was attended by approximately 400 people so this will provide an excellent opportunity to promote J3.

Staffing

In the main, J3 is being managed by core Bristol Libraries staff, such as the managers for Building Development, Service Development and Community Engagement. Each brings their respective experience and expertise to the project to ensure a joined up approach, from the physical development phase through to engaging with residents to informing service provision.

Structures

In 2009 the J3 Arts Steering Group was established to oversee the delivery of the J3 Arts Programme. This is being managed by an arts consultant and includes a range of project stakeholders including the appointed Project Manager from Willis Newson and representatives from Bristol Libraries, GCP Architects, Knightstone Housing, Leadbitter Construction, BCC Senior Public Art Officer, BCC Neighbourhood Arts Officer, and a local community representative. In June 2009 the Steering Group appointed a locally based artist to develop the J3 entrance screen and public art landscaping. Additionally two artists have recently been appointed to deliver an 18 month long Participatory Arts Programme, discussed further below, that aims to raise awareness and encourage engagement with J3, celebrate the area's diverse communities and rich heritage and create opportunities for local people to participate in a range of arts activities to encourage a sense of local ownership and pride.

Partnerships

Knightstone Housing Association is a strategic housing partner of Bristol City Council who will purchase part of the site to develop housing and workspace to provide a substantial part of the capital funding required for J3. They will also project manage the building of the whole development.

Since 2004, Bristol Libraries has been working with two third sector organisations, 2QAB and Single Parent Action Network (SPAN). 2QAB is a Community Interest Company specialising in capacity building with community organisations, public bodies and grassroots individuals with an emphasis on inclusive consultation processes. The Single Parent Action Network (SPAN), a national charity based next to the proposed J3 site, delivers a programme of education and training courses and confidence-building activities for some of the hardest to reach people in Lawrence Hill and Easton, and would transfer this work to J3.

Given the complex nature of the development, which includes both residential and business units in addition to the Junction 3 Creative Learning Centre, this grouping of partners has proven beneficial in relation to bringing partners' respective expertise to the project. For example, on a practical level, Knightstone Housing Association will project manage the building of the whole development while 2QAB will utilise their expertise, introducing new methods of engagement. On a delivery level, the partnership benefits from members who play a 'critical friend' role through providing challenging advice and support to encourage new ways of working. Additionally, the partners are driven by working together to successfully deliver shared outcomes such as the development and delivery of family learning activities.

As with any partnership, particularly when dealing with the delays associated with J3, things have not always been easy. The delivery of the More than Words project highlighted the need to work more closely at an operational level, such as when action planning, to avoid confusion over individual partners contributions to project activities. Additionally, during the design phase one of the original national partner organisations underwent a restructuring that resulted in the formation of a new locally based organisation, 2QAB, retaining their involvement in the project.

Although neither of these have negatively impacted on the partnership in the study teams opinion the partners would benefit from reviewing and clarifying the role of the partnership, particularly as community engagement and volunteer recruitment is now being rolled out since obtaining planning permission. In the spirit of the critical friend role identified above, this should include discussing and agreeing methods of communication, roles and responsibilities, and importantly individual organisations aims for J3.

Volunteers

Subsequent to obtaining planning permission the Libraries Community Engagement Team prioritised the identification and recruitment of resident volunteers to sit on the J3 Programme Board and the team are currently in the process of developing volunteer 'Expression of Interest' forms.

Lancashire

Background

Data from the Active People Survey (April 2008 to April 2009) in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in Lancashire who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 51.3%. (In comparison the usage of museums and galleries in Lancashire was 51.0% and overall participation in Arts was 42.8%).

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-2008 the population of Lancashire rose by 1.0%, but library visits fell by 5.5% and book issues by 2.3%. This was though during a period when the number of service points declined by 10%, albeit these were those with limited opening hours. The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good' stayed constant at 94%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good' edged down from 88% to 87%.

The Lancashire Community Library Programme involved the renovation of existing library buildings in Colne, Haslingden and Lancaster. These libraries were selected by the Head of Library Services as they viewed them as being amongst the most forward thinking and receptive to change. It was hoped that these examples would instigate a culture of change in other library branches as part of the County Council's wider library improvement programme, 'Regenerate'.

Prior to the Community Libraries Programme the development of services was led by senior libraries staff, although there have been isolated examples of community engagement regarding the development of services. For example, a Lifelong Learning Development Officer was appointed at Colne in 2002 to ensure that the community's views were represented and with the specific task to form more/stronger links with the community. In 2004/5 the Library Service undertook community consultation with users and non-users in Rossendale and South Ribble, in relation to opening hours. This marked the beginning of a deeper level of community engagement, facilitated by the County Council's Community Engagement Officer.

Previously, there were no formal Friends of Library groups and engagement across the three libraries was sporadic and limited. For example although some engagement had taken place with individuals at Colne regarding local history this was on a relatively informal basis. Public meetings and promotional events were held as part of community consultation exercises leading up to the Lottery application. These involved high level strategic stakeholders including the leader of Rossendale Council. In addition, the views of partners and library users were canvassed in all three locations.

Each library building has a different history. Colne Library was purpose built in the 1970s, Haslingden Library was originally a Mechanics Institute and later opened as a library in 1905 whilst Lancaster Library was built in the 1930s. This illustrates the range of potential challenges faced at each building in bringing them in line with modern library standards.

In 2006 Haslingden Library was successful in a Lottery bid to become one of 20 HeadSpace⁴⁴ centres in the country and received a grant of £25,000. This was used to transform former office space into HeadSpace for young people which opened in June 2008. This project also involved the employment of two part time youth workers at the library to engage with local young people through the provision of activities within the library. Having this infrastructure already in place no doubt boosted the prospects of this project being successful. For example a number of the individuals who became involved in the Young People's group at Haslingden had already been engaged by the youth workers.

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and Activities

Community engagement activities in each library have varied, although there were a number of core activities that have taken place in each library as follows:

- Friends of Libraries have been set up in each of the 3 locations⁴⁵;
- Heritage Groups have been set up in each of the 3 locations; and
- Young people's groups have been set up in each of the 3 locations.

The establishment of Heritage groups has been the most successful across each of the libraries with each being established at relatively early stages. The Friends of Groups at Colne and Haslingden have had strong and consistent membership although the Lancaster group has undergone some structural changes (though this has not prevented the achievement of notable outcomes). The work to establish the young people's groups in each of the libraries has been a particular challenge for Lancaster and Colne libraries.

Common elements of engagement with these groups in each library include: involvement in the design of the library improvements (in particular the young people's group in the design of their space), services to be delivered from the buildings and stock selection.

Examples of engagement activities within each library are summarised below.

Colne

- Friends of group were involved in supporting I.T sessions for older people
- The Heritage Forum is volunteering to deliver a joint project for the library service and record office
- Engagement with Nelson and Colne college to run Skills for Life courses
- Whilst the library was closed, Storytimes were held at Colne Children's Centre
- Living library event

Haslingden

- The Heritage forum had an exhibition at the library re-opening
- Youth forum have been successful in an application to the Youth Bank for £2600 which has been used to buy equipment for cyber games
- Living library event (27 Feb 10)

⁴⁴ <http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/headspace/>

⁴⁵ Friends of Libraries established in Colne in April 2008, Lancaster July 2008 and Haslingden June 2008.

Lancaster

- 2 community arts events at the library organised and delivered by the 'Friends of' group prior to the refurbishment, including members of the community holding workshops in storytelling, dance, art and music
- Living library event for young people outside the library organised and delivered by the 'Friends of' group, after the library refurbishment started
- Get It Loud in Libraries⁴⁶ gigs involving young volunteers (established prior to improvements)

The two arts events at Lancaster library engaged new members of the community that had not visited the library before with all 50 individuals surveyed reporting that they would be likely or very likely to visit the library again after attending the event.

Of particular note is the community engagement that has taken place at Haslingden library involving work with the Youth and Community Team and a local community group (H24YA) which has successfully re-engaged some disaffected local youths. Currently there are 20 members of the 'Young Stars' group although it cannot be said how many of these can be considered disaffected although in consultation there was a general agreement that if they had not been engaged by the library service then they would be 'out in the streets' and potentially causing trouble.

In addition, Lancashire has promoted the highly publicised and acclaimed 'Get it Loud in Libraries' project aimed at 15 – 25 year olds, where Facebook and Myspace websites have been used to engage with the community on issues such as which bands they would like to see appear at upcoming events. Although in place before the Lottery bid, the campaign and activities related to it have formed a key element of community engagement activities. Get it Loud in Libraries events are reported to have brought in new audiences and contributed to changing perceptions amongst communities.

Staffing

A Project Manager (formerly the manager at Haslingden Library) was appointed and is responsible for ensuring that the actions within the Programme Community Engagement Plan are undertaken and for submitting monitoring and update reports to Big Lottery Fund. Each individual branch manager has taken the lead for community engagement activities within their respective libraries. Training has been delivered to Library Managers at each library by engaging members of the "Raising Our Game" improvement programme team to deliver bespoke workshops for key members of staff and the Project Manager to ensure that library staff have the necessary skills to effectively engage the community through service delivery.

Structures

The Project Steering Group involved the Project Manager at each of the branches, the Head of the Library Service and Acting Strategic Manager for Planning. This Group has had regular meetings and other library staff are involved as and when appropriate. These were cited by the group when consulted as being highly beneficial throughout the project's development, enabling the sharing of good practice, experiences and ideas.

Friends of Library groups were recruited from within their respective local communities, using a variety of methods including shopping centre displays, posters and visits to schools and

⁴⁶ <http://www.myspace.com/getitloudinlibraries>

colleges. In turn, they have successfully engaged with local schools to promote two events hosted within Lancaster Library, aimed at both pupils and parents/carers. This success is measured anecdotally by the attendance reported by library staff.

Partnerships

Each library has also worked with a range of organisations and stakeholders such as adult learning providers, local councillors and the police to host services within the buildings. Across the 3 libraries, staff have met with relevant community education services to identify appropriate courses that could be run at libraries. This includes working in partnership with Lancashire Adult Learning, Lancashire Education Business Partnership and other learning providers.

Volunteers

There has been a substantial level of volunteering across the Lancashire Community Libraries programme which has been facilitated by the employment of a Volunteer Services Co-ordinator (VSC) within the library service (from May 2008). The VSC subsequently trained staff at each of the three locations in how to plan a programme for each volunteering opportunity and how to recruit and train volunteers. Volunteer hours were provided for young people as detailed later although hours for adults are not always formally captured.

Recruitment is on the basis of need at each library and target outcomes have been established by the Volunteer Co-ordinator. At Haslingden, a coffee morning for potential volunteers was held whilst staff also approached individuals they thought might be interested prior to the renovations taking place. Volunteers are given specific roles and a placement plan. Volunteer input has ranged from groups taking time to contribute towards the design of libraries through to the organisation and delivery of events within library buildings such as Living Libraries events at Colne, Haslingden and Lancaster.

The library service now regards itself (and indeed are recognised by other council departments, such as the Regeneration and Adult and Community services, as demonstrating exemplary practice in respect of volunteering. This has contributed towards a significant over achievement of the original target that by 2010, there will be a 25% increase in volunteering capacity as a result of library staff working with 60 local people. Volunteering is still developing in Lancaster and Colne Libraries, but achievements at Haslingden Library indicate the longer term potential of volunteering at each of the Community Libraries.

The Volunteer Services Co-ordinator reported that since Haslingden library opened in April 2009 through to January 2010, young volunteers had contributed 912 hours. Since Lancaster and Colne libraries opened the figures provided for young volunteers until end January 2010 were 451 hours in total (Lancaster's contribution has been lower due being open for a shorter period). The wider volunteer hours for all age groups (including time contributed by 'Friends of groups) are not routinely captured. However, as a result of this evaluation it is now recognised by senior managers that this is an area where the library service will improve the monitoring regarding data capture procedures.

North Yorkshire

Background

North Yorkshire Library and Information Service maintains 42 libraries across the county and achieved a top-ranking 4-star rating from the Audit Commission⁴⁷. A new 15-year strategy for the Service was launched in 2009, inspired in large part by the process of initial planning for the redevelopment in Harrogate. The four strategic aims are as follows.

1. Our libraries are centres of excellence for: books and opportunities for reading; learning; and access to information technology and computers, including the internet.
2. Our libraries are the venue of choice for information.
3. Our libraries are relevant and responsive and at the heart of local communities.
4. Our library service has a workforce that is committed to these aims and fit for the purpose of delivering them⁴⁸.

Data from the Active People Survey (April 2008 to April 2009) in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in North Yorkshire who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 48.8%. (In comparison the usage of museums and galleries in North Yorkshire was 59.5% and overall participation in Arts was 47.3%).

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-2008 the population of North Yorkshire rose by 2.3%, with library visits rising by 1.0% and book issues by 6.5%. This was in spite of there being one fewer library but seems to be linked to extended opening hours at some service points. The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good' stayed constant at 95%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good' reduced from 92% to 88%.

The Community Library in North Yorkshire is being developed in Harrogate, with £1.5million of Big Lottery funding going towards the £3.4 million refurbishment and extension. The building in Victoria Avenue closed in November 2008 for the works and a temporary library service is being provided from an alternative town centre location. Whilst an iconic, historic building, significant drawbacks in its functionality and access had been identified, for example, IT provision (People's Network) was provided in a very small portakabin at the side of the building, there was a lack of meeting space and private interview rooms and stairs made access to certain rooms of the library difficult for people with prams, pushchairs or wheelchairs.

⁴⁷ Information taken from Facts, Figures and the Future
<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4405&p=0>

⁴⁸ 'New look, no shush' Library and Information Service Strategy 2008-2013
<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2837&p=0>

Local people have welcomed the development as other libraries in North Yorkshire have been updated previously leaving them feeling somewhat excluded. There is no revenue funding for this project, therefore it is being resourced through existing roles and responsibilities. As the library building is not yet complete, much time is being spent planning, preparing and developing options for the new space. Therefore, impacts on the community as a result of the new library are indirect at present i.e. relating to staff preparation, information provision, awareness raising and consultation with local people to inform what is going to happen as opposed to what has happened.

Analysis of existing library use by the library service had identified that the branch was considered to be well used by the traditional user groups, but there was a desire to make the library more welcoming to, and meeting the needs and/or demands of, 'a wider range of people. In particular, to address access difficulties for the ageing population, to respond to demand from the growing migrant communities for internet/computer access and to engage more children and young people.

Access has been a key theme. This includes physical access, for example, meeting the needs of a target group of older people with learning disabilities and providing an accessible toilet with changing facilities for adults ('changing place'), and access to services, for example, planning for new services to be delivered from the new space created.

Facilitated by the Community Engagement Officer at Harrogate Borough Council, Harrogate District Citizen's Panel was surveyed regarding library services at an early stage in the development⁴⁹. A total of 1,500 questionnaires were sent and 931 were returned, representing a 62% response rate. The main findings were as follows:

- 64% of respondents had used the library within the last 12 months whilst 18% did not use the library at all;
- A number of reasons were given for not currently using a library; most commonly a preference to buy or borrow books from friends (47 responses) followed by a preference to use the internet for research (39 responses);
- Those that endorsed different opening hours were asked to specify the hours they would like their local library to open. The most common response was evening open hours (81 responses), followed by weekend opening (34 responses); and
- Greater use of the library would be encouraged by offering additional library activities and facilities, public services, information/advice on public services and better access/parking.

In this respect, the findings of this consultation supported the views of the library staff, particularly identifying IT (internet usage) as a preferred tool, improvement to access through opening hours and parking, and greater range of services offered from the library.

⁴⁹ 'Public Consultation Report on Harrogate Library Development, Harrogate Borough Council July 2008'

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and activities

A key focus has been on the development and maintenance of publicity in order to maximise awareness of the redevelopment. A number of options have been explored, including radio advertising, the latest version of the Adult Learning Prospectus and inclusion in the Harrogate CVS newsletter.

Additional methods used to promote the redevelopment include online methods, including a 'blog' which features pictures of the new build and a page on Facebook. Library staff have also undertaken outreach work within the community such as having stalls in town centre locations to promote the library service and the project to redevelop the library in Harrogate. The start of the next round of consultation will occur at a Planning Event which will be a multi-agency event including organisations such as Age Concern, Harrogate Council for Voluntary Services and North Yorkshire Adult Learning Service, representatives of which have been already working alongside the library service. However, the library service is keen to retain the focus on the new library itself and members of library staff intend to walk the streets outside the event, to encourage participation and interest. The consultation will also cover specific aspects of the new library (for example, shelving and layout) rather than more general topics as it has been up to now.

Harrogate has a Polish community (with other Eastern European communities), a small group of African residents and a small established Chinese community. Through the skills of a member of library staff, there has been engagement with the Polish community, including:

- Stock selection;
- Information about the Library Service being given at a special community service engagement event surrounding Mass in a local church; and
- 'Polish Storytime' led by a Polish mother in the temporary library which was advertised through local Polish shops as well as through local Children's Centres.

In addition, facilitated by the Harrogate Minority Ethnic Forum Development Worker, a group of Chinese women was introduced to the services of the temporary library through a visit guided by library staff. They were encouraged to make suggestions about what they would seek from the new library. It is hoped that these library visits could be repeated once every 3-4 months to build up their confidence and a relationship with library staff to help them feel more comfortable as they only speak limited English.

Engagement with young people has taken place with students from Harrogate College who have produced artwork on display in the library gardens. Students produced designs based on the concept of the "written word" for the section of hoarding screens and three statues of themselves in stainless steel reading and leaning against letters of the alphabet.

"All 3 students received Distinctions and are on their way to university to study graphic design and advertising. As well as coming up with the design for the art panels, they had to negotiate with the clients, organise the printing of the panels including sourcing material suitable for outside production as well as managing the design and completion of the stainless steel statues. All of this is has been valuable experience for them."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Adam King, Art and Design Tutor at Harrogate College, referenced in news release <http://www.harrogate.ac.uk/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=9&cntnt01dateformat=%25d%20%25B%20%25Y&cntnt01returnid=108>

Staffing

A programme of workforce development activity has been undertaken with staff to equip them in terms of community engagement. Members of library staff have participated in the Partnership Board (see Structures section below) and 98% of staff have undertaken customer service training. Example sessions are as follows:

- Community Engagement Workshops led by the Equality & Community Engagement Officer, North Yorkshire County Council;
- Community Engagement & Partnerships course run by FPM Training;
- Teenage Training organised by North Yorkshire County Council; and
- Self service customer care training.

Initially, there was a fear of change amongst library staff, however, this fear has been minimised so that staff are actually enthused by the positive outcomes that will be enabled as a result of the redevelopment and associated service changes. It was commented that prior to the success of funding for the redevelopment, there had been a high turnover of staff but this has reduced considerably; perhaps as a result of individuals being keen to make a contribution and 'see it through' to completion and linked to a clear timetable for delivery.

Staff have particularly relished the opportunity to undertake outreach work and visit other libraries for inspiration and to see examples of good practice. There have been visits to nine other libraries, including the City Library in Newcastle and the branch library in Gosforth (also redeveloped by Newcastle City Council). There is now a strong level of enthusiasm to pursue new ways of engaging non-user groups, for example, having music events in the new library.

Structures

The key planning and delivery mechanism for the work in Harrogate has been the establishment of a Partnership Board. Early meetings were held with the voluntary and community sector, which is active and strong in the area. There were also discussions with officers within the directorate (Adult and Community Services) particularly regarding services for older people. Membership of the Partnership Board now comprises a range of organisations, from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, including:

- North Yorkshire County Council (General Manager Libraries - Chair);
- North Yorkshire County Council (Staff from Harrogate Library);
- North Yorkshire County Council (Adult Learning Manager);
- Harrogate Borough Council (Community Engagement Officer);
- Age Concern North Yorkshire (Harrogate)
- Harrogate and District Access Group;
- Harrogate Forum for Older People;
- Harrogate Council for Voluntary Services;
- Harrogate Minority Ethnic Forum.

The Partnership Board seeks to avoid duplication of community engagement, maximising existing knowledge and expertise. The Board has established formal Terms of Reference for its activity which have been in place since April 2009. Whilst it will not be responsible for managing the operation of the library service, it will play a prominent role in the direction of the project particularly in engaging the community. Greater cross-agency working is expected to have a significant impact on service delivery for all participants (i.e. linkage with library provision) and the type/scope of community engagement undertaken by the library service.

Generally, the Partnership Board continues to be well attended by a range of stakeholders. The variety of stakeholders offers rich discussion, given their different organisational size,

status and areas of interest. It continues to be important to ensure that those represented on the Partnership Board cascade information to their members and networks. Developing further community representation (Community Champions) on the Board is an ongoing challenge, however, efforts continue to be made through the Harrogate District Minority Ethnic Forum and developing relationships with the Youth Council. There is still progress to be made to ensure that target groups (specifically older people, migrant communities and young people) are represented, and initial aspirations to engage young people and individuals from migrant communities to the Board have yet to be realised.

There have been requests from library staff and other stakeholders for Equality and Diversity Training – there is a Level 2 course which is being trialled with BME Forum members, if successful and appropriate it will be rolled out to other agencies.

Partnerships

Stakeholders reported that there is now much stronger partnership working between the library service and representatives of a range of voluntary and community sector organisations, from high level management through to a variety of user and non-user groups, facilitated by a balance of representation on the Partnership Board.

“Links with Harrogate Library have strengthened and we now advertise library services and special events. Discussions with library staff have been lively, enthusiastic and beneficial to both agencies and the links we have developed will continue once the development is completed and the new library is up and running.”⁵¹

In seeking to develop space and services in the library that are fully accessible to older people with a range of access requirements, a number of relevant organisations have been consulted throughout development (including when initial plans were being established). For example, to inform the development of an action plan to deliver new services specifically targeted at older people, planning consultation was tabled on the agenda of the Harrogate and District Older People’s Reference Group. In addition, other access requirements have been explored through the involvement of Harrogate and District Access Group. Indeed, one of its members was invited to test the RFID machine which is likely to have a place within the redevelopment.

Harrogate Youth Council has been involved in the redevelopment of Harrogate Library through discussions with library staff and a visit to the library. During the summer of 2009 the Youth Council was invited to the temporary library and to discuss positive and negative elements of the existing library with library staff. Harrogate Library staff produced a questionnaire which the Youth Council circulated through youth clubs, projects and schools. However, a new Youth Council was elected during this process, resulting in a need for new engagements. This way of working is new for the library service and it is intended to be continued as the library opens so as to inform final content and service delivery.

“We had predicted young people would prefer to use technology when in fact the personal one-to-one canvassing approach has worked much more efficiently.”⁵²

⁵¹ Partner Organisation

⁵² Partner Organisation

Nottingham

Background

Data from the Active People Survey (April 2008 to April 2009) in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in Nottingham who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 48.6 %. In comparison, corresponding figures for the usage of museums and galleries in Nottingham was 46.6% and overall participation in the Arts was 41.3%).

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-2008 the population of Nottingham rose by 3.6% but library visits declined by 14.6% and book issues fell by 18%. This was in spite of an additional service point being introduced and with extended opening hours. The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good' stayed constant at 89%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good' edged down from 87% to 84%.

The Meadows is a well-defined and densely populated community, with a population of 7,870 people in around 3,500 households. It is within an area of significant deprivation, particularly relating to health deprivation/disability and high proportions of children being affected by income deprivation. The Meadows also has a reputation for drug use and gun crime.

The library is located within the heart of the community which makes it easily accessible to the library's target groups, including: children and their families; young people; BME communities; refugees and asylum seekers and the unemployed. A relatively high proportion of the local population are from BME communities, with particularly high representation from Indian; Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups.

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and activities

The library has extended its opening hours to the public and is now open five days a week. One and a half of those days are dedicated to activities for the local community and are known as Community Days. During the Community Days the library is staffed by the Community Engagement Support Workers (CESWs).

The Homework Club started in September 2009 and provides study support to children and young people aged from 11 to 19. It is also attended by the younger siblings who can attend 'story time' with volunteers. The Club is run by a Homework Officer, who was recruited in August 2009. It is held 3 times a week for a two hour period and there are currently around 100 children on roll, with between 25-30 children attending each session.

The Conversation Class started in September 2009 and is an informal learning session targeted at people who do not speak English as their first language but who are seeking to develop their communication skills and build confidence. The group comprises Indian, Bangladeshi, Japanese and Spanish participants. It started with only 2 attendees and now has 15 members who meet on a weekly basis during term time. The group is lead by the Inclusion Team Librarian and is supported by 3 volunteers (one an ex-ESOL teacher and two university graduates. The aim is for the group to become volunteer-led.

Theme days have been held at the library since it re-opened in August 2009. The first of which was a Jobs and Learning Fair held in September 2009. These events are organised in partnership with local agencies. For example, the Jobs and Learning Fair was delivered in partnership with the employment team at the Meadows Partnership Trust. A Health Awareness Day is planned for the end of March 2010, to be delivered in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). In addition, an event focusing on the National Children's Book Award, encouraging under 5s to visit the library will be held in May 2010 along with a Collectors Day planned for later in the year.

Service Delivery includes GP drop in sessions, local Councillors' weekly surgeries, weekly Welfare Rights surgeries and weekly surgeries delivered by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). A Job shop has been held every Tuesday since October 2009 and is delivered by a member of the library inclusion team who provides job seekers with one to one support to search and apply for employment. On average 3 to 4 people attend each week.

Engagement with Emmanuel Secondary School involves the Community Engagement Worker (CEW) and Community Librarian working on an outreach basis with Year 7 to 11 students from Emmanuel School to develop library projects.

A range of fun and leisure activities have been run since the library reopened starting with a Black History Event (Positive Images) held at the end of October 2009. Since January 2010 these events have been organised by the Community Sounding Board (CSB), beginning with a history talk on the Meadows and followed by a Quiz Night, with the latter attracting 50 people. A Film Night is also being planned over the next couple of months and a Pampering day will be held in the library allowing local people to receive training through taster sessions.

There is one Community room in the library which is available for use during the five days the library is open and also in the evenings. The original plan was to have the community room available for use even when the library is closed but there have been issues around getting insurance to cover a member of the community being a key holder. The library is now paying an external security firm to open and lock up the room out of library opening hours. The community room is used every week for the homework club, conversation class and a local Councillor's weekly surgeries. The room has also been used by the following agencies: Transformation Team; Environment Agency; Arkwright Community Gardens; The Labour Party; Groundforce; Old Meadows and Tennants Residents Association; Blooming the Meadows; Nottinghamshire Police; and Nottingham City Homes.

Staffing

From the outset, Nottingham Library Service sought to establish mechanisms to facilitate the delivery of the community engagement element of their Community Libraries project (Meadows Alive!). This included the creation of posts to support the delivery of the Community Engagement Plan.

The library was staffed by a library manager, two library assistants, and a community librarian, all but one of whom are White British and two of whom are Meadows residents. A Project Manager was appointed in September 2008 to oversee the delivery of both the physical build and Community Engagement Plan (CEP). A part time Community Engagement Worker (CEW) was recruited in September 2008 to deliver the CEP and facilitate local community involvement in the development of the Library. There was representation from the local community on the interview panel for the recruitment of the CEW.

The first of the two Community Engagement Support Workers (CESWs), was appointed in November 2009 and the second in December 2009. They are line managed by the CEW to support him in the delivery of the CEP. They are also responsible for staffing the library during its extended opening hours and supporting the development and delivery of community-led initiatives in the library. Two of these three new staff members are British Asian, and their language skills have facilitated community engagement.

Structures

A Project Board was set up in December 2007 to oversee project delivery. It comprised library staff, the area's (City Council) Neighbourhood Manager, resident representatives from two of the Meadow's principal community groups (Meadows Partnership Trust and the Arkwright Meadows Community Garden), the ward councillor, city council officers and the project architect. The involvement of the Neighbourhood Manager has helped ensure that the Meadows Alive! project forms an integral part of the City Council's Community Empowerment Plan, which seeks to address National Indicators 4 (Influence decisions in the local area), 6 (participating in regular volunteering) and 5 (overall satisfaction in the general area).

A Community Sounding Board (CSB) was formed in December 2008, with a view to securing community input into the development of the Meadows Alive! project with the expectation that the group would eventually become the Meadows Library Management Board. It started off strongly with 30 members signing up (15 regular attendees).

However, following the library re-launch staff were concerned about vibrancy and representativeness of the CSB, due to some of the previous members moving out of the area and a loss of focus for the group. Furthermore, many of the active CSB members were said to be drawn from a small number of local community activists and whilst their involvement has been appreciated, there were concerns about the extent of their other commitments and their ages and ethnic profile being not fully representative of the local area.

Late in 2009 there was an open evening held at the library to try to recruit new CSB members. Twenty people attended the event and there were a lot of new faces including from BME groups and younger people. The first meeting in 2010 was moved to an evening and 15 people attended. At this meeting, the CSB discussed the expectations of their involvement and established sub-groups to develop different activities. One of these will explore establishing a Management Board, with significant input from the City Council's Community Centre's Development Team Leader and the local Neighbourhood Manager. An early skills analysis of CSB members has been undertaken and a training log has been compiled related to the development of the Management Board.

A Junior Sounding Board was set up in May 2009 to engage children and young people in the design and development of the library. It has had input into the design of the children and young people's space in the library and the selection of book stock. It was also involved in a garden project, designing garden art, working with a community artist and the Meadows Arkwright Community Garden. As a result, the young people gained a sense of ownership over the space they transformed which also led to a sense of pride over what they had achieved. Previously, the group had 15 regular attendees who were recruited from 4 local primary schools. Although all of these young people were girls they represented a diverse mix of ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. The Project Manager is looking to reinvigorate this group so that they can have a more regular input into the development and delivery of the library service and to work more closely with the CSB.

Partnerships

The CEW and CESWs have sought to forge links with different agencies and groups in order to facilitate engagement with the library's priority groups. This has involved a lot of outreach work. For example, the CEW has worked with the local Youth Inclusion Team to engage hard to reach young people participating in a youth inclusion scheme for 13 to 16-year-olds who are engaged in crime or are identified as being most at risk of offending, truancy, or social exclusion.

The CEW has tried to link in with established local groups, such as the Meadows Partnership Trust, Old Meadows Tenants and Residents Association and the Meadows Arkwright Community Gardens, by attending their meetings and inviting their participation in the CSB. The CEW has also made efforts to engage the migrant and asylum seeker community through attending Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum meetings. The library and other agencies working in the Meadows have struggled to work with this group. Some success has been achieved with the Conversation Class.

More generally, the Library Management Team has sought to raise the profile of the Meadows Alive! Project at a strategic level. The portfolio holder for libraries and culture in Nottingham city has expressed his support for the work being carried out at the Meadows Library and has written libraries into his manifesto of commitments. Once completed the library was given two official launches, the first of which was a 'Dignitaries Launch', to which a wide range of senior council officers and elected members were invited.

Gaining both service and cross-service buy in has always been a strategic priority, with the Meadows Alive! project acting as a pilot for a community-led service model which the Library Management Team aspires to roll out across the library service city-wide. The Library Management Team has promoted the project throughout their networks and meetings and achievements and events at the Meadows have been publicised via the City Council monthly staff magazine.

Community groups, including the Meadows Partnership Trust and the Old Meadows Tenants and Residents Association have also supported the publicity of the library and Community Library project, by placing articles and adverts regarding the library in their own publications.

Stakeholder Days have been held involving a range of local agencies setting up a stand in the library for a morning once a month, to advertise their services and engage the public. Unfortunately, these have been poorly attended.

Volunteers

Throughout the project, the Project manager, CEW, members of the CSB and Meadows librarians have actively sought opportunities to recruit new volunteers to the library. Attempts are also being made to appoint volunteers from groups currently using the library, including the Homework Club and the Conversation Class. A training needs analysis has helped to create a training programme for volunteers (and staff).

It is envisaged that volunteers will take on specific roles linking to their own communities so that the library can become better informed of the types of activities and events certain communities would like to attend at the library.

Sandwell

Background

Data from the Active People Survey (April 2008 to April 2009) in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in Sandwell who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 47.2 %. (In comparison the usage of museums and galleries in Sandwell was 34.8% and overall participation in Arts was 31.7%). The Sandwell Library and Information Service (SLIS) aims to achieve an increase in the percentage of adults using libraries as a direct result of the improvements being made to Smethwick and Bleakhouse libraries. It is also hoped that usage will increase across wider members of the community, particularly the target groups identified.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-2008 the population of Sandwell rose by 0.4% but library visits declined by 6.6% and book issues fell by 8.4%. This was in spite of extending opening hours at some service points. The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good' stayed constant at 93%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good' dipped from 84% to 82%. During 2008-2009 Sandwell managed to reverse this decline and visits increased by 3% compared to the 2007-2008 figures. In addition, 21,989 new library members were enrolled during 2008-2009.

Sandwell Library and Information Service (SLIS) aims to be "open to everyone: to explore, discover and enjoy"⁵³. Smethwick and Bleakhouse libraries were awarded a grant of £1.4m from BIG. Smethwick Library sits on Smethwick High Street within a diverse and transient community, whereas Bleakhouse is in a more defined neighbourhood, serving a community that has been using the library for many years. The improvement of these libraries will complete Sandwell's network of library "plus" in each of its six towns, (linked spaces with multiple uses). Smethwick has seen a reconfiguration of existing space, improved community rooms and a new café with public toilets. Bleakhouse is still undergoing final building work and will officially open to the public in May 2010. Bleakhouse has undergone significant re-structural work; introducing user-friendly community spaces and improved facilities.

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and activities

Both libraries have undertaken consultation with their local communities since December 2007. Initially, this was in the form of community meetings, inviting local people to comment on the improvements they would like to see. Surveys were also completed by library users at the beginning of the project and provided a snapshot of use. The public has also been given the opportunity to provide their thoughts on comment cards throughout the project and regular publicity has been used to keep the community informed of the changes taking place. To highlight the demographics of the area and inform the targeting of services, the project team also used MOSAIC, a classification system that examines the UK population in relation to socio-economic groups. In addition, the library managers attended local meetings such as 'Celebrating New Communities', which focused on combating isolation within the local community and bringing together different groups of people.

⁵³ Together: Sandwell Libraries connecting communities, Business Plan, 2008

However, community engagement activities have been behind schedule due to delays in building work and the appointment of a Community Development Manager (CDM). However, the CDM (with colleagues) has made significant progress in working towards targets identified in the Community Engagement Plan. These targets include (that by December 2010):

- Communities are actively engaged in the development, delivery and management of library services.
- Improved design and accessibility in the two libraries will benefit 500 families with young children, resulting in increased confidence in using library services.
- 500 people from BME communities will benefit from attending learning activities resulting in them reporting improved basic skills.
- 30 people without Level 2 qualifications will have been trained to deliver library activities, increasing their confidence when seeking employment.
- 2 library user groups and one voluntary sector organisation will have taken part in planning and delivering library based activities resulting in them having improved confidence in participating in community decision making.⁵⁴

The communities targeted by the SLIS include job seekers, people from BME backgrounds, families with young children, newcomers to the UK, people without formal qualifications, people aged 50 and over, as well as voluntary groups and agencies using the using both libraries. These agencies include Sandwell MIND, Job Link and Adult and Family Learning.⁵⁵

The initial stages of community engagement focused on specific elements of design and this has led to the adoption of a Reading Garden at Bleakhouse Library. The old layout of the building did not cater well for different users and their needs, which created some difficulties between users from different generations. On some occasions there have been instances of anti-social behaviour; however the it is hoped that the new community rooms will allow more appropriate use of building space and will alleviate some of these issues. Specific requests for Smethwick Library included the need for public toilets, a café and extra community rooms. Suggestions for these improvements came largely from the groups using the existing room as well as the library staff. The fact that the existing community room was not being used to its full potential was also raised along with the need for refreshments at the library.

Community engagement activities at Smethwick Library have focused on establishing links with the community and developing work with new groups by using printed information and presentations during initial group sessions to inform the public about the range of library services available. A Volunteers Week took place in June 2009 where a mobile library bus was taken around different venues across Sandwell to promote the new library facilities.

Smethwick library was completed in March 2009 and an Open Day was held in April 2009 and was attended by Sandwell MIND, Shaw Trust, Birmingham College, Mercian Heritage, Age Concern and People Serve. At the official launch event in July 2009, local organisations including Options for Life, Sandwell MIND, Walk to Beijing, Adult and Community Service, Bollywood Dance and Holly Lodge School, promoted their services to local people, whilst also demonstrating their interest in using the new facilities. In January 2010 the library hosted a free Advice & Information Open Day in partnership with Age Concern. The event provided a variety of sessions for visitors and was again attended by a range of different organisations.

⁵⁴ ⁵⁴ Together: Sandwell Libraries connecting communities, Business Plan, 2008

Smethwick library continues to develop ideas that will engage with the public and plans to deliver a 'Spring Clean for the Soul Day' in March 2010. This event will showcase all of the wellbeing activities that have taken place since the library opened. The event coincides with the anniversary of the completion of the work and will again give people the opportunity to meet groups holding sessions in the community rooms.

The next stage of engagement will involve greater input from the staff to help achieve contact with the target groups. It has been difficult to obtain measurable feedback from groups using the community rooms as they choose to leave the library following their sessions. The library manager intends to use any constructive feedback to reconsider how some activities are delivered. However, this would depend on the feasibility of implementing the changes that have been suggested, whilst also ensuring that the library remains on target with the use of community rooms. The BIG Management team will be exploring options around how to encourage more constructive and regular feedback from groups.

The Make Friends with a Book Group has seen an average of 8 people visiting the sessions over the first 10 weeks and feedback provided by participants which indicates significant personal and social benefits. For example, reading out aloud is helping individuals to develop confidence and also lifting their mood, whilst the interaction with other members of the group is allowing people to develop friendships and gain a broader understanding of different cultures. The Sandwell PCT Confidence and Wellbeing Team are extremely pleased with how the group has progressed and will be providing continued funding for the sessions to be delivered at Smethwick library. There are also plans to provide these sessions in other community languages. The Library investigating the feasibility of this and the PCT have also committed to a closed group for Dementia sufferers possibly in partnership with BUDS (Better understanding of Dementia in Sandwell) possibly in a library setting.

The comments below offer an insight as to the nature and scale of the benefits derived from participation in the Group:

- *"I think the group is wonderful. 'Make Friends with a Book' was recommended to me as I am off on long term sick and being stuck in the house and feeling lonely. I really enjoyed it, using my brain and taking part in the discussions, it made me feel much better in myself"*
- *"I suffer with manic depression and these sessions lift my mood no end"*
- *"Before I came to the group I was fed up with being on my own in the house, but now I really look forward to coming to the group, I enjoy the interaction of the people, being privileged to hear their point of view"*
- *"I am finding it difficult to find a job and have not got any relatives here. Therefore I feel lonely but the group helps me meet people and gives me more confidence"*
- *"The group helps people to build their confidence"*
- *"If you are alone the group gives you something to go out for"*
- *"The group makes me feel normal as I used to feel isolated"*
- *"I was in a challenging place in my life and under medical supervision; the group has made me stronger and is building my confidence... I may only have 2-3 more sessions with my psychotherapist as I feel I don't need it anymore."*
- *"The group has increased my confidence and is helping me with my search for jobs"*
- *"As the group acts as a form of therapy, the effects are ongoing; it is also helping to form friendships and is helping with social cohesion"*
- *"I feel much more positive and happier; the group has fulfilled a huge need and I feel less isolated"*

The Adult and Family Education Service has received funding via The Learning Revolution Community Learning Support Programme managed by NIACE –SAFL (Sandwell Adult and Family Learning) and will be managing the Community Learning Champion's in Sandwell. The Champions will initially be posted at Smethwick library to support promotional work in schools and with adults; encouraging participation in informal learning opportunities, resulting in people trying out new activities.

Community engagement activities at Bleakhouse Library have been impacted by the delays in building work. However, this work is gaining momentum as several volunteers have been signed up to provide support with the delivery of library services and a number of providers are on board to deliver a variety of activities and courses. The CDM will be working with the library supervisor to establish a clear focus for community engagement. The library supervisor has also been attending various events, such as school fetes, for outreach and promotional opportunities; developing a better understanding of the needs of the local community. The library supervisor also attended a Sensory Story Telling course that has helped to develop ideas for delivering these sessions at the library.

In-depth consultation was undertaken with a local school and pupils produced drawings of what they would like to see in the new library. This gave the library supervisor the opportunity to engage with the pupils, promoting the notion of the library as a 'new' space and will hopefully encourage greater use once the library re-opens.

The library manager has also held meetings with key local agencies such as 'Ideal for All'⁵⁶ and Joblink⁵⁷, which is securing interest and commitment from local organisations. The local community will be invited to the official opening to visit the library and enjoy refreshments, with the possibility of inviting some schools to bring a class of pupils to observe the improvements that have been made. Thereafter, the library supervisor and the CDM plan to attend as many local events as possible; including schools fetes, information stands at local churches and arrange coffee mornings at the library.

Consultation with library staff, group leaders and library users has highlighted that the café and community rooms at Smethwick Library are thought to be creating good opportunities to reach out to non-library users, although more work needs to be done to identify non-users more accurately. As well as teenagers, it is also known that the elderly residents from the white community are not using the library. For young people this can be due to the stigma attached to using a 'library' and the elderly are using alternative venues for community gatherings, such as local churches. The BIG Management team is going to be looking at how to address these issues.

Staffing

All members of the senior management team have been closely involved in promoting the new library services and have contributed to the community engagement activities. A Community Development Manager (CDM) was appointed in February 2009 and has worked closely with local agencies and community groups to encourage the use of both libraries.

⁵⁶ A charity run by and for disabled people, providing social/health care: www.idealforall.co.uk

⁵⁷ Supports people who are unemployed/seeking a return to work: www.webwell.org.uk

Structures

A Project Board was established in January 2008 and has received support from the Communications Team at Sandwell MBC. A Communications Plan was drawn up for the project in line with the Sandwell Communications Strategy and Big Lottery Fund guidelines.

The continuation of the Project Board has also been a key achievement as it has proved difficult to engage members from different organisations due to changing priorities and internal staff changes. Sandwell has overcome this challenge by having library managers maintain contact with partner organisations and keeping them informed of the latest developments within each library (especially important for Bleakhouse library due to the delay with building work). The BIG Management team is also looking at restructuring Project Board meetings to encourage greater attendance, as there are a large number of members not attending on a regular basis.

Partnerships

New and enhanced partnerships are proving beneficial in helping to engage target communities. The CDM and the Smethwick Library Manager are members of the 'Smethwick Community Group', attended by different agencies delivering services to the local community. The group comprises the Sandwell Irish Community Association, Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT), Smethwick Youth and Community Centre and Sandwell Homes. All agencies work to ensure that their services are not duplicated and identify ways of supporting each other's activities across Sandwell.

The management team has approached VCS groups for help to promote the new facilities. For example, the CDM has been developing a relationship with the Brushstrokes charity, working with newly arrived asylum seekers in Smethwick and attended an event arranged by the charity to promote the role of the library in assisting those aged 50 and job seekers. Brushstrokes has since introduced users to the library and has been publicising events taking place there. Work is also being developed with the Community Action Project, Extended Services, Sandwell Irish Community Association, Extended Schools and a joint event was held with the Smethwick Youth Community Centre. Age Concern has been encouraged to hold events in libraries across the Borough.

Sandwell MIND and the PCT are also increasing the services they deliver at the library and Adult and Family Learning have identified the library as a key tool in improving school attendance. In particular, the library has helped the PCT engage with the local community as it provides a 'stigma-free' venue.

In addition, the library has developed a Service Level Agreement with Galton Valley Children's Centre, which includes scheduled use of the library by the centre and arrangements for Smethwick Library to hold some stock at an Express library at the centre. The Express library has been set up with its own library service stock and computer system; operating as a 'mini' library with some identified performance targets. The setting up an express library at the Centre is providing an outreach service and is encouraging more families to use the library, as well as helping identify user needs. A number of unexpected outcomes have also been achieved, in particular identifying/signposting people who need support with issues such as homelessness, unemployment and abusive relationships.

There are also plans to set up partnership agreements with the groups using the community rooms, including the SAATHI mental health group held once a week, Job link sessions, Bangladeshi Youth Forum and family support activities such as Autism workshops. Surgeries are also held by debt agencies on a fortnightly basis. These agreements would help to ensure that the rooms are used in accordance with the library's guidelines and would also ensure some certainty over the continued use of the community rooms.

However, it has been difficult to establish links with Connexions due restructuring that has been taking place within the organisation. The BIG Management team feel that working closely with Connexions could bring key benefits in terms of engaging with local teenagers. The CDM has also tried to establish links with local employment advice agencies, without success.

Volunteers

A volunteer recruitment process has been introduced, which will involve frontline staff identifying service gaps and making recommendations for the types of volunteers that could fill them. Volunteers currently on board are going to be approached to become 'buddies', working with prospective volunteers. Tailored training sessions have helped staff to develop an appreciation of the benefits of volunteering to the library service.

The SLIS is aiming towards "10 volunteers completing 30 hours of volunteering by December 2010" and to "Deliver 10 volunteer qualification sessions by December 2009". In total 5 volunteers have been brought on board at Smethwick library following the launch. Interest from the public has grown substantially and the involvement of volunteers is proving beneficial to the library service. Volunteer involvement is seen as an integral part of the project and essential to how the libraries operate. Between March 2009–January 2010, volunteers completed 130 hours of volunteering. Establishing a budget for volunteer training is being explored.

The CDM sits on the 'NI6 Steering Group', a group comprising of key local partners in the delivery of the NI6 target. The group leads on volunteering and aims to improve the co-ordination of volunteering in Sandwell. The development of a Volunteer Toolkit has largely been based on the work delivered at Smethwick library as the Chair of the NI6 Steering Group feels that this is an excellent example of how volunteers can be used across any organisation. Smethwick library is therefore helping the council to reach out to target communities.

Newcastle

Background

Newcastle Libraries and Information Service has 18 libraries across the City offering learning materials, study space, recreational reading, audio and visual material, and free use of computer equipment and internet/email access. The priorities of the Libraries, Information and Lifelong Learning Service include a focus on providing quality customer service, a programme of capital improvements, staff development, public consultation and engagement (including specific reference to young people)⁵⁸.

Data from the Active People Survey (April 2008 to April 2009) in respect of National Indicator (NI) 9 shows that the percentage of adults in Newcastle who have used a public library service in the last 12 months equated to 47.2%. (In comparison the usage of museums and galleries in Newcastle was 54.9% and overall participation in Arts was 44.9%).

Newcastle is participating as the 'control' authority, therefore activity has not necessarily been designed with the same community engagement priorities as other authorities. The City Library in Newcastle has been rebuilt as part of a £40.2m Private Finance Initiative (PFI) involving refurbishment of branches across the city.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Public Library Service Standard (PLSS) data can be found in Appendix 5. The main points to note are that between 2006-08 the population of Newcastle declined by 1.7%, but library visits fell by 32.8% and book issues by 17.0%, largely due to the closure of the original Central Library for its redevelopment. The percentage of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good' dipped from 94% to 91%, whilst the percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good' dropped from 87% to 80%.

The new City Library opened in June 2009 and staged a number of pre-opening visits for particular interest groups. As previously described, the City Library is one element of capital refurbishment of branches across the City. Therefore the practice established through this work has permeated the entire service and out to local communities who use the branches.

Implementation of Community Engagement Activity

Events and activities

Although part of a wider programme of refurbishment, the reconstruction of the City Library is the flagship development undertaken by the Council's library and information service. Furthermore, its city centre location on an established library site means that it will serve a wide range of communities. The service is keen to "get people talking about the library service be it good or bad" through a marketing campaign and series of events and activities. An events company was appointed to manage the programme of events in the first year of opening, culminating in the official opening by the Queen in November 2009.

⁵⁸ A full list of priorities to 2009 can be found at http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/libraries_serviceplan?opendocument#intr

Consultation regarding the design of the City Library, its services and its stock began very early in the redevelopment process. In addition to surveys and feedback forms and an established Customer Focus Group, other groups have been formed to contribute to the development of services, which included strategic input (evaluation of the PFI bids, young people met with Councillors regarding the design of the library) as well as operational (choice of furniture and stock selection). The Service offered payment of expenses to participants in the Customer Focus Group, which met on an occasional basis. This group is currently being reviewed in light of the profile of users of the new library space.

As part of an exercise to both raise awareness and contribute to a tangible output, during summer of 2007 more than 1,000 people in Newcastle were asked: What makes you happy?; What would you change?; What do you fear?; and What gives you hope? The answers were woven directly into drawings that are printed onto the windows of the new City Library and are a visible demonstration of the contribution of individuals to a high profile piece of thought provoking public art.

Continuing the links with public art, there is also gallery space exhibiting a range of visual art; at present, an exhibition shows photography taken by local amateurs and to celebrate the Chinese Year of the Tiger, a tiger sculpture was produced within the library enabling visitors to see the work in progress as well as the finished article. This also linked in to a special story time and crafts session linked to Tigers.

Events held at the library have been considered by staff to be successful in terms of numbers and attendance from a broad spectrum of people. Staff also considered the events to be better organised than anything previously and that a dedicated events management resource has been helpful. Evaluation of these events will be published in March 2009.

Staffing

A management review in 2009 created a new structure which included a dedicated City Library Development Manager's post and a team of service specific managers. Consultation, training and support were needed to enable frontline staff to work in a more customer focussed way delivering services and it is a key characteristic of the redevelopment that library staff have been part of the process, informed and informing it.

Structures

There has been discussion regarding the idea of forming a 'Friends of Library' group to help manage/run aspects of the library, which has support in principle but with a requirement for much more consideration. In particular, users consulted were conscious that they are not the only user group, understanding the need to reconcile all views and that library staff are a key group as well as local people.

In this respect, in terms of management, the library service remains the main driver. However, there are elements of activity which will formalise a greater contribution from local people. An example of this is a Programme Management Board which may be established to explore decisions regarding the use of the performance space in the City Library. As yet this has not yet been progressed, with impacts and outcomes yet to be apparent. The service has, therefore, developed its practice to 'involve' with potential for further 'empowerment' where appropriate/desirable.

Partnerships

Of particular note is the increase in the number of organisations offering 'drop in' facilities to the local community from within the library making a range of services more accessible. These include:

- Connexions;
- New Pathways;
- Newcastle Futures;
- St Oswalds Hospice;
- CfBT Education Trust;
- Warm Front;
- Age Concern; and
- Northumbria Police.

The majority of these are new relationships between the library and service deliverers with organisations being attracted by the prospect of a greater catchment of target audiences. In turn, there is a chance that users of these non-library services could become new members.

Volunteers

Opportunities for volunteering have been discussed, and, consultation with staff has shown their pride and commitment towards their work with concerns that volunteers would change this, potentially causing division.

However following discussion with staff and unions and as a result of feedback during wider consultation it is notable that members of staff have begun to identify where value could be added to the library service through volunteers, as well as being beneficial to the volunteers themselves. This includes, for example, a successful heritage volunteer group has recently been established, with other areas of volunteering being explored during 2010 including young people who could support the Summer Reading Challenge.

Letters have been sent to all of the organisations and individuals who came to pre-opening tours in order to invite further contact (albeit not necessarily a formal volunteering opportunity). Another group has offered an interest in I.T. Relationships with Newcastle and Northumbria University music departments have also been explored, regarding support to the management of the printed music section and to start to make an online catalogue. This could offer students a 'live' volunteer project opportunity to enhance their learning experience.

In this respect, the library service has been more receptive to working with groups and individuals when they can offer specific expertise for specialist tasks rather than undertaking library assistant-type duties. For example, one group did suggest offering tours of the library, however, this is an example of activity which is not considered appropriate.

Appendix 5: CIPFA Data

Bristol

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	393,900	398,300	410,500	416,400	6%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	5,197	5,185	4,820	4,502	-13%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	4,107	4,070	3,655	3,973	-3%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.41	-2%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁵⁹ (£)	22,347	21,825	21,050	20,627	-8%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	18,635	18,359	17,803	20,314	9%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	12,348	11,287	11,379	11,325	-8%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	8	8	1	9	13%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	66	61	64	56	-15%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE60)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	32.3	20%	132.5	80%	164.8
2006	32.3	20%	132.5	80%	164.8
2007	32.3	20%	132.5	80%	164.8
2008	36.5	22%	132.5	78%	169.0

⁵⁹ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁶⁰ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁶¹
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	0	0%	3	11%	12	43%	13	46%	28
2007	0	0%	3	11%	12	44%	12	44%	27
2006	0	0%	3	11%	14	52%	10	37%	27
2005	0	0%	3	11%	14	52%	10	37%	27

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁶²	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	6	6	5
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	26%	47%	53%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	66%	75%	80%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	86%	88%	91%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	5,185	4,820	4,502
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	92.1%	92.1%	92.1%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	83% ⁶³	83%	85%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	107	230	187
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	9.8 years	5.6 years	5.7 years

⁶¹ Excluding mobile libraries

⁶² DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁶³ Previous national target was 77%

Lancashire

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	1,152,000	1,156,100	1,165,700	1,168,100	1%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	6,179	6,162	5,962	5,828	-6%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	6,757	6,172	6,069	6,029	-11%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.45	0%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁶⁴ (£)	16,949	17,399	17,283	18,033	6%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	17,173	17,359	18,050	18,338	7%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	10,062	9,847	10,007	9,984	-1%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	14	15	14	13	-7%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	59	57	55	54	-8%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE ⁶⁵)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	143.1	27%	380.0	73%	523.1
2006	144.1	27%	380.0	73%	524.1
2007	143.1	28%	375.2	72%	518.3
2008	140.1	27%	381.2	73%	521.3

⁶⁴ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁶⁵ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁶⁶
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	0	0%	8	10%	28	36%	41	53%	77
2007	0	0%	8	10%	28	36%	41	53%	77
2006	0	0%	9	11%	27	32%	49	58%	85
2005	0	0%	9	11%	27	32%	49	58%	85

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁶⁷	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	8	8	8
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	64%	63%	65%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	85%	83%	86%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	94%	93%	95%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	6,162	5,962	5,828
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	94%	94%	94%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	88% ⁶⁸	88%	87%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	230	221	216
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	5.6 years	5.7 years	5.8 years

⁶⁶ Excluding mobile libraries

⁶⁷ DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁶⁸ Previous national target was 77%

Newcastle

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	269,500	276,400	270,500	271,600	1%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	7,600	7,587	6,532	5,098	-33%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	4,965	4,663	4,201	3,871	-22%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.61	0.58	0.57	0.60	-2%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁶⁹ (£)	29,150	27,823	25,320	27,271	-6%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	28,017	25,045	25,723	28,053	0%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	16,037	14,493	14,745	15,139	-6%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	10	10	9	11	10%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	57	58	57	54	-5%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE ⁷⁰)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	31.5	19%	132.5	81%	164
2006	30.0	19%	129.0	81%	159
2007	27.0	18%	126.0	82%	153
2008	28.0	17%	136.0	83%	164.0

⁶⁹ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁷⁰ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁷¹
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	5	26%	5	26%	4	21%	5	26%	19
2007	5	25%	5	25%	5	25%	5	25%	20
2006	1	6%	8	44%	4	22%	5	28%	18
2005	1	6%	7	39%	5	28%	5	28%	18

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁷²	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	11	9	9
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	64%	65%	63%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	72%	73%	71%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	82%	82%	81%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	7,587	6,532	5,098
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	94%	94%	91%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	87% ⁷³	82%	80%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	226	257	397
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	6.7 years	6.2 years	4.2 years

⁷¹ Excluding mobile libraries

⁷² DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁷³ Previous national target was 77%

North Yorkshire

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	579,900	582,000	591,600	595,500	3%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	4,249	5,187	5,202	5,241	23%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	5,111	4,994	5,052	5,317	4%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.36	-14%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁷⁴ (£)	17,079	17,743	17,785	19,233	13%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	15,794	16,748	17,393	17,573	11%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	8,758	8,790	9,257	8,999	3%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	11	13	13	13	18%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	55	52	53	51	-7%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE ⁷⁵)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	70.1	29%	171.1	71%	241.2
2006	66.5	28%	174.4	72%	240.9
2007	65.3	28%	170.9	72%	236.2
2008	51.4	24%	162.7	76%	214.1

⁷⁴ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁷⁵ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁷⁶
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	0	0%	8	20%	12	30%	20	50%	40
2007	0	0%	8	20%	11	27%	22	54%	41
2006	1	2%	5	12%	12	29%	23	56%	41
2005	1	2%	5	12%	11	26%	26	60%	43

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁷⁷	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	6	6	6
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	67%	71%	76%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	79%	82%	86%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	88%	90%	94%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	5,187	5,202	5,241
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	95%	95%	95%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	92% ⁷⁸	92%	88%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	216	225	226
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	5.8 years	5.7 years	5.7 years

⁷⁶ Excluding mobile libraries

⁷⁷ DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁷⁸ Previous national target was 77%

Nottingham

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	275,100	278,700	286,400	288,700	5%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	4,762	5,060	4,797	4,324	-9%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	5,095	4,847	4,387	3,975	-22%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.53	0.51	0.48	0.47	-11%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁷⁹ (£)	18,377	17,714	18,445	20,138	10%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	19,198	20,185	19,541	19,426	1%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	10,335	10,574	10,314	10,599	3%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	13	12	13	12	-8%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	54	52	53	55	2%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE ⁸⁰)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	29.8	22%	106.5	78%	136.26
2006	29.0	21%	109.8	79%	138.81
2007	37.0	26%	104.0	74%	141
2008	29.8	22%	106.5	78%	136.3

⁷⁹ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁸⁰ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁸¹
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	0	0%	5	24%	7	33%	9	43%	21
2007	0	0%	5	24%	7	33%	9	43%	21
2006	0	0%	4	20%	7	35%	9	43%	20
2005	0	0%	4	20%	7	35%	9	43%	20

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁸²	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	7	10	10
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	62%	61%	66%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	88%	88%	87%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	93%	94%	94%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	5,060	4,797	4,324
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	89%	89%	89%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	87% ⁸³	87%	84%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	197	213	212
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	11.4 years	9.7 years	9.3 years

⁸¹ Excluding mobile libraries

⁸² DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁸³ Previous national target was 77%

Sandwell

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change %
Population	285,800	286,300	287,600	287,500	1%
Annual physical visits per 1000 population	5,108	5,280	4,939	4,934	-3%
Annual book issues per 1,000 population	4,623	4,471	4,086	4,094	-11%
Staff in post per 1,000 population	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.46	5%
Total Net Expenditure per 1,000 population ⁸⁴ (£)	16,986	17,381	17,382	17,100	1%
Total Revenue Expenditure per 1,000 population (£)	17,049	16,473	16,890	17,321	2%
Revenue Expenditure (per 1,000 Population) – Employees (£)	8,613	9,007	9,266	9,599	11%
Materials Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	15	11	12	11	-27%
Employee Expenditure as a % of Gross Service Expenditure (%)	51	55	55	55	8%

Year	Professional Posts (FTE ⁸⁵)	% Total	Other Posts (FTE)	% Total	Total (FTE)
2005	22.7	17%	110.1	83%	132.8
2006	23.0	18%	105	82%	128.0
2007	19.7	16%	107.2	84%	126.9
2008	22.7	17%	110.1	83%	132.8

⁸⁴ CIPFA data. Financial Information (2007-08 Actuals) - Total Net Expenditure including Capital Charges

⁸⁵ Full time equivalent

Year	Open 60 hours and over		Open 45 to 59 hours		Open 30 to 44 hours		Open 10 to 29 hours		Total Service Points ⁸⁶
	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number	Total Points	Number
2008	0	0%	5	26%	8	42%	6	32%	19
2007	0	0%	2	11%	11	58%	6	32%	19
2006	0	0%	2	11%	11	58%	6	32%	19
2005	0	0%	2	11%	11	58%	6	32%	19

Public Library Service Standard	Performance Measure ⁸⁷	Target	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PLSS1	Proportion of households living within specified distance of a static library	88%- 1 mile	n/a	n/a	n/a
		100%- 2 miles	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	128 hours	n/a	n/a	n/a
PLSS3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet	100%	100%	100%	100%
PLSS4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population	6	9	9	9
PLSS5	i) % of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	60%	57%	58%
	ii) % of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	74%	75%	75%
	iii) % of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	88%	89%	89%
PLSS6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,300	5,280	4,939	4,934
PLSS7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library service as 'very good' or 'good'	94%	93%	93%	93%
PLSS8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as 'good'	87%	84% ⁸⁸	84%	82%
PLSS9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	216	181	193	202
PLSS10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan	6.7 years	8.4 years	7.6 years	6.7 years

⁸⁶ Excluding mobile libraries

⁸⁷ DCMS (2008) - 'Public Library Service Standards'. 3rd revised edition April 2008.

⁸⁸ Previous national target was 77%

Appendix 6: Social Return On Investment

Background

Social Return on Investment (SROI) was pioneered by Jed Emerson and the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund in the USA and further developed by the New Economics Foundation, amongst others, in the UK. SROI aims to help organisations understand and manage the social, environmental and economic benefits (value) that they are supporting. It is a measurement approach, developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis that captures the economic value of social benefits by translating social objectives into financial measures and focuses on the most important sources of value as defined by stakeholders.

The starting point for developing the approach to SROI in this study was a meeting with MLA's appointed SROI expert on the Advisory Group. He expressed the clear opinion that a full and rigorous SROI assessment could not be carried out given the short timescale between community engagement activities being undertaken and the end of the study period. To a large extent, the experience of the evaluation team has borne out this advice. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to identify and quantify some of the social returns linked to the investments in community libraries. As agreed with the Advisory Group, these look at specific activities within a selection of the case studies.

The approach to the SROI assessment was based partly on ERS' past experience of gathering evidence of social impacts and attributing values to them and partly on the guidance published on the new economics foundation (nef) website (www.neweconomics.org). In respect of the former, ERS has built up a data bank of values that can be attached to a variety of impacts relating to a large number of the Government's National Indicators. They cover Children and Young People (127 indicators), Economic Development and Environment (82 indicators), Healthier Communities and Older People (153 indicators) and Safer and Stronger Communities (198 indicators). The sources of these values are government departments and published expert studies. In respect of the latter, whilst broad guidance was available, understandably (given the need to protect the commercial value of their consultancy services) nef did not publish detailed guidance on its website.

The methodologies and processes that underpin SROI assessments continue to evolve. Indeed, during the course of the evaluation new guidelines were published by the Cabinet Office setting out the Government's view as to the basis on which SROI assessments ought to be conducted. This indicated that the basis on which an SROI assessment would be done in early 2010 is markedly different to the approach that would have been undertaken at the time this evaluation was commissioned.

Overall Approach

In the course of initial meetings with staff at each library, the concept of SROI was introduced within the context of the Logic Model and Evaluation Framework. Given the lack of experience amongst library staff and group leaders in gathering evidence of outcomes and impacts, it was unsurprising that the concept was difficult to fully comprehend (indeed, the same could be said for many environments where monitoring/measurement is much more established).

In particular, attempts to attribute a monetary value to some outcomes and impacts (for example, increased self-esteem,) was considered by library staff and users to be particularly challenging. Consequently, and where possible, proxy values from referenced sources (taken from the ERS data bank referred to above) have been used.

In respect of exploring SROI within each of the 5 Community Libraries Programme case studies, the positions were as follows:

- Bristol – unable to provide evidence;
- Lancashire – focused on the ‘Young Stars’ group, but unable to derive a calculation;
- North Yorkshire – unable to provide evidence;
- Nottingham – focused on the ‘Homework Club’; and
- Sandwell – focused on the ‘Make Friends with a Book’ reading group.

SROI Impact Maps relating to Nottingham and Sandwell can be found in Appendix 8.

Appendix 7: SROI Impact Maps

Project Name: Homework Club, Nottingham			Project Time Period: September 2009 - Ongoing								
Stage 1			Stage 2								
Inputs		Outputs	Outcomes								
What is invested	Annual Value (£)	Activity numbers in	Description of change	Indicators of change	Information sources	Extent of change	Length of change	Proxy used to value change	Financial value	Information sources	
Meeting space provision in library	8,190	Participants: Reported average of 75 per week at an assumed average duration of 1 hour each over 39 weeks equating to annual total of 2,925 hours	Participants: Improved behaviour	Participants: Reported behaviour improvements	Participants: Club Officer Volunteers Parents Teachers	Participants: 'Significant', but not possible to quantify	Participants: Too early to say	Participants: None	Participants: None attributed	Participants: n/a	
Set up costs	450		Better school attendance	Teachers	No data supplied	No data supplied	1 fewer prosecution for truancy	£1,829 per person	DSCF data: prosecution cost plus 2 hours of EWO time		
Staff time	5,000		More positive attitude to learning	Reported improvements in attitudes to learning	Club attendees Teachers	Significant', but not possible to quantify	Too early to say	Participation in revision classes	£15 per hour per child, average attendance of 25 children 3 times a week for 39 weeks	Websites of those offering revision courses	
			Improved school results	School results	Teachers Head teachers	No data supplied	No data supplied	No data supplied	None attributed	n/a	
		Greater use of library	Library use by under 11s	Library user data	Compared to (2007/08) 26% increase in under 11yrs joining the library as new users and 16% more under 11yrs actively using	Too early to say	None	None attributed	n/a		

Project Name: Homework Club, Nottingham				Project Time Period: September 2009 - Ongoing							
Stage 1				Stage 2							
Inputs		Outputs		Outcomes							
What is invested	Annual Value (£)	Activity numbers in	Description of change	Indicators of change	Information sources	Extent of change	Length of change	Proxy used to value change	Financial value	Information sources	
		Volunteers: 4, contributing a total of 300 hours per year	Volunteers: Increase in volunteering	Volunteers: Volunteer hours	Volunteers: Volunteers	the library	Volunteers: Zero baseline so all additional	Volunteers: Too early to say	Volunteers: Library Assistant employment costs	Volunteers: £ 8.40 per hour over 300 hours per year	Volunteers: Library
			Enhanced skills	Applications for paid work	Volunteers	None	n/a			Annual total (participants + volunteers) £48,224 (gross)	

Project Name:		Project Time Period:		
Stage 3				
Gross to Net Calculations				
Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution	Drop off	Net Impact
<p>Participants: This is a wholly new initiative and none of the attendees were attending Homework Clubs previously. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% deadweight.</p> <p>Volunteers: This is a wholly new initiative and none of the volunteers were active previously. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% deadweight.</p>	<p>Participants: Although there are 2 Homework Clubs in the area, one is linked to a Gospel Church and the other to the Muslim Centre. None of those attending the Club at the library reported having attended other Clubs and none were thought likely to do so. Although there is a possibility of some displacement in the future, this is not thought to be significant. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 5% displacement.</p> <p>Volunteers: It is possible that volunteers may have come upon other volunteering opportunities. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 20% displacement.</p>	<p>Participants: Consultation with participants, volunteers, the Club Officer, parents and teachers suggest that reported outcomes are directly linked to participation in the Homework Club. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 100% attribution.</p> <p>Volunteers: Volunteering outputs and outcomes relate directly to this project. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 100% attribution.</p>	<p>Participants: The attendance data provided only covered the first 10 weeks (31 sessions) and suggested a significant drop off in attendance. However, the Club Officer reports this to have been a temporary blip. Given the short period of time for which the Club has been operating, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which the reported benefits will be sustained. However, the churn in active Club membership would suggest that whilst attendance levels might be sustained that there is significant drop off in the attendance of individuals. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 50% drop off.</p> <p>Volunteers: All volunteers have been fully engaged. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% drop off.</p>	<p>Participants: Taking the gross figure of £45,704, this ought to be adjusted as follows: Displacement: - 5% Drop Off: -50% This gives a net figure of £21,709.</p> <p>Volunteers: Taking the gross figure of £2,520, this ought to be adjusted as follows: Displacement: - 20% This gives a net figure of £2,016.</p> <p>Total Total net impact is £23,725.</p>

Project Name: Reading Group, Smethwick			Project Time Period: November 2009 – February 2010								
Stage 1			Stage 2								
Inputs		Outputs	Outcomes								
What is invested	Annual Value (£)	Activity numbers in	Description of change	Indicators of change	Information sources	Extent of change	Length of change	Proxy used to value change	Financial value	Information sources	
Meeting space provision in library	1,300	Participants: Reported average of 8 per week at an assumed average duration of 1 hour	Participants: Health improvements	Participants: Reduced visits to GP	Participants: Group members	Participants: No data supplied	Participants: Too early to say	Participants: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy costs	Participants: £62 per person per hour	Participants: Unit Costs of Health and Social Care (2007), Curtis	
Set up costs	2,070										Reduced visits from social worker
Group leader time	5,000		Improved confidence and empowerment	Warwick - Edinburgh Evaluation tool scores	PCT Survey Data (of the Group) Group members Group leader Library staff	Declining scores	Too early to say	Life coach costs	£50 per person per hour	Websites of life coaches	
		Community cohesion	None selected	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Project Name: Reading Group, Smethwick	Project Time Period: November 2009 – February 2010
Stage 1	Stage 2

Inputs		Outputs	Outcomes								
What is invested	Annual Value (£)	Activity numbers in	Description of change	Indicators of change	Information sources	Extent of change	Length of change	Proxy used to value change	Financial value	Information sources	
		Volunteers: 2, contributing a total of 200 hours on an annualised basis	Volunteers: Increase in volunteering Enhanced skills	Volunteers: Volunteer hours Applications for paid work	Volunteers: Volunteers Volunteers	Volunteers: Zero baseline so all additional None	Volunteers: Too early to say n/a	Volunteers: Library Assistant employment costs	Volunteers: £ 8.40 per hour over 200 hours per year Annual total (participants + volunteers) £46,240 (gross)	Volunteers: Library	

Project Name: Smethwick Library

Project Time Period:

Stage 3

Gross to Net Calculations

Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution	Drop off	Net Impact
<p>Participants: The BIG project provided the facilities and opportunities to allow an existing (funded) PCT project to operate in the local area for local people. Consultations indicated that ready alternatives are not available and that the space the library offers is especially attractive/suitable for delivering this type of project to this type of audience. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 10% deadweight.</p> <p>Volunteers: This is a wholly new initiative and none of the volunteers were active previously. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% deadweight.</p>	<p>Participants: Sandwell PCT have funded the reading group project, however the BIG project has improved the facilities (availability of community rooms and café where the sessions will be held) at Smethwick Library; raising the profile of the venue to encouraging use by groups. The library is a favourite local venue of choice for Sandwell MIND. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% displacement.</p> <p>Volunteers: It is possible that volunteers may have come upon other volunteering opportunities. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 20% displacement.</p>	<p>Participants: Consultation with project deliverers and beneficiaries made a compelling case for the reported benefits being linked directly to the project. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 100% attribution.</p> <p>Volunteers: Volunteering outputs and outcomes relate directly to this project. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 100% attribution.</p>	<p>Participants: To date, levels of participation have been sustained, but whether benefits will continue to be felt beyond the pilot period is difficult to judge. Given the small size of the Group, if only 2 participants failed to experience sustained benefits. that would represent 25% drop off. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 50% drop off.</p> <p>Volunteers: All volunteers have been fully engaged. For the purposes of the SROI assessment, there is assumed to be 0% drop off.</p>	<p>Participants: Taking the gross figure of £44,600, this ought to be adjusted as follows: Deadweight: - 10% Drop Off: -25% This gives a net figure of £30,105.</p> <p>Volunteers: Taking the gross figure of £1,640, this ought to be adjusted as follows: Displacement: - 20% This gives a net figure of £1,312.</p> <p>Total Total net impact is £31,417.</p>

Appendix 8: Intermediate Group

Community Involvement – Development	
Service Area	Participation
Bournemouth	Library panel where 6 female and 2 male community reps accounted for 8 of the 12 panel members, including 1 young person (aged 17) and 1 member with a disability
Bolton	A Library Learning Group (4 college tutors) and consultations with members of an existing disability group, both informed design, layout and equipment purchase. Consultations with parent, youth and other groups have informed activities programmes/service delivery.
Bucks	Local Management Groups in each of the 3 libraries in question contributed to their design. Each Group involves 13-15 people, two thirds from each local community, one third from library staff.
Bury	A steering group has been established for each of the 4 sites, comprising between 8-12 people and including 2 young people and 1 disabled person in each case (not by design). There is also an overarching project management group comprising 3 libraries staff, 4 community members and contractor representatives.
Cornwall	A group of 19 people were involved in the development phase, including 4 staff, 3 trustees, 5 representatives from community organisations and 7 library users. Amongst Group members there was an almost equal gender split, all were white British and there was a good spread of ages, including 2 teenagers and 2 over 60.
Derby City	Across 3 sites a total of 143 people were involved in designing the library, selecting public art designs, developing service offers and interviewing library staff applicants. Between a third and a half of this number are in attendance at panel meetings.
Gateshead	Friends Group formed (50 women, 20 men aged 40-80) and consulted on design/layout along with 6 female teenagers. Project Management Board formation delayed until nearer development completion.
Norfolk	A steering group involving different local people/representatives of local organisations at different times.
North Tyneside	A meeting was held to gauge interest in becoming a steering group member and the group comprises 8 people, half of them pensioners, with a 6/2 split of female to male. In addition, a dozen pupils in Years 8-10 at a local school have also been involved.
Suffolk	User Forum and Young People's Panel have both helped make key decisions, including the choice of library name, artworks, charging/booking conditions for community rooms, décor, furniture and café menu.
Westminster	A Project Steering Group was established in January 2008, meeting every 2 months. It comprises 4 libraries staff, 6 other local authority staff, 2 local councillors, 2 representatives of a local youth forum and 1 local resident.

Community Involvement – Delivery	
Service Area	Participation
Bournemouth	Not applicable.
Bolton	Working with Age Concern to use their volunteers to help deliver services and established Young Library Volunteers Advisory Group.
Bucks	Local Management Groups in each of the 3 libraries in question helped set up Friends of Library groups to help deliver some community activities.
Bury	Not applicable.
Cornwall	A Management Board has been formed, meeting for the first time in December 2009.
Derby City	A youth group is undertaking landscaping works at one library where the library panel is considering becoming a properly constituted group. (The other 2 sites are not yet open and no activity was reported).
Gateshead	Project Management Board recently formed (8 women, 5 men aged 40+). More specialist boards to be formed in 2010.
Norfolk	A steering group involving different local people/representatives of local organisations at different times.
North Tyneside	Sub-groups recruited via community roadshows will be formalised and involved in service delivery and a Library Forum is to be established, meeting twice yearly.
Suffolk	The User Forum has recently re-formed and its support needs are being considered. The Youth Panel is in transition.
Westminster	This may be guided by the Project Steering Group in due course.

Community Involvement - Management	
Service Area	Participation
Bournemouth	Not applicable.
Bolton	Experience suggested no merit in forming a dedicated group, but better to gain input from established interest groups and other groups which the service has set up (such as Young Library Volunteers).
Bucks	Local Management Groups in each of the 3 libraries contribute to their management.
Bury	Not applicable.
Cornwall	A Management Board has been formed, meeting for the first time in December 2009.
Derby City	At one site the library panel is considering becoming a properly constituted group. (The other 2 sites are not yet open and no activity was reported).
Gateshead	Project Management Board recently formed (8 women, 5 men aged 40+). More specialist boards to be formed in 2010.
Norfolk	A steering group involving different local people/representatives of local organisations at different times.
North Tyneside	Sub-groups recruited via community roadshows will be formalised and involved in management of the library and a Library Forum is to be established, meeting twice yearly.
Suffolk	The User Forum has recently re-formed and its support needs are being considered. The Youth Panel is in transition.
Westminster	This may be guided by the Project Steering Group in due course.

Forms of Engagement

Predominantly, libraries have sought to engage with their local communities through presentations to community groups and community consultation events and, where appropriate, opening/launch events. Other types of activities undertaken by at least 4 of the 11 respondents to the second Intermediate Group survey were as follows:

- Arts and crafts activities;
- Cascading of information via Area Fora/Neighbourhood Groups;
- Displays;
- Outreach visits (e.g. sheltered housing, local schools etc.);
- Recruitment onto Project Boards/Panels/Groups; and
- User/community surveys.

Thereafter, there were a whole host of other tools deployed:

- Articles in local press/community newspapers;
- Attendance at external meetings;
- Broadcasts via community radio;
- Commissioning of public art (with community involvement);
- E-mail bulletins;
- Film making/distribution;
- Information events with contractors/partners;
- Landscaping work (with community involvement);
- Leaflets/posters/newsletters;
- Library Websites;
- Mobile libraries;
- Naming competition;
- Partner organisations survey;
- Roadshows;
- Site visits to the library under development;
- Social networking websites; and
- User/community focus groups.

Partnership Working

At least 3 the 11 Intermediate libraries responding to the second survey reported having been working with at least one of the types of partners listed below (in order of popularity):

- Community/voluntary bodies;
- Youth groups;
- Schools and colleges;
- Primary Care Trusts/Health Centres;
- Sure Start/Children's Centres;
- Older People's Centres/Charities;
- Disability groups/officers/charities; and
- Local Authority Cultural Services.

Additional partners mentioned by these libraries and the other 5 Intermediate Group libraries who responded only to the first survey, were as follows:

- Charitable trusts;
- Citizen's Advice Bureaux/other advisory bodies;
- Elected members/community leaders;
- Environmental groups;
- Equalities specialists;
- Ethnicity-focused membership groups;
- Fire Service;
- Heritage groups;
- Housing bodies;
- Jobcentre Plus/Connexions/other employment/training advice bodies;

- Kids' Clubs/Playgroups;
- Local Authority Anti-Social Behaviour Team;
- Local Authority Neighbourhood Localities Team;
- Local Authority Children's Services;
- Local Authority Community Services;
- Local Authority Housing Services;
- Local Authority Adult Learning Services;
- Local Authority Parks Departments;
- Local regeneration bodies;
- Private sector;
- Places of worship;
- Police;
- Probation Service;
- Teenage pregnancy services;
- Tenants and Residents groups; and
- Theatres/art galleries.

Library-Based Activities

Examples of activities being undertaken or planned to be undertaken within/outside new/refurbished libraries operated by at least 3 of the 11 respondents to the second survey include (in order of popularity):

- Arts and Craft classes/workshops;
- Adult literacy courses;
- ICT beginner courses;
- Gardening projects; and
- Story telling.

In addition, there is a long list of other activities being undertaken/proposed, including:

- Adult numeracy courses;
- Advice and guidance on personal matters (e.g. finance);
- Babysitting courses;
- Digital media projects;
- Drama;
- Drumming;
- Electronic links with specific libraries in other countries;
- Environmental projects;
- Exercise classes;
- Film festival;
- First aid courses;
- Homework club/school work area;
- ICT taster sessions;
- Interest group meetings/drop-in sessions
- Knitting group;
- Modern Foreign Language classes;
- Parent and baby/toddler sessions;
- Poetry;
- Reading group;
- Science/engineering events;
- Self-esteem/personal courses/activities;
- Young leader's course.

Barriers to Community Engagement

The main barriers to progress were said to be: difficulties in recruiting to Library Panels/Management Groups (including getting beyond the 'usual suspects'); particular difficulties in engaging young people; and preconceptions of the public, linked to outdated images of libraries.

Other barriers mentioned included:

- Capacity issues amongst libraries staff;
- Conflicts between different user groups;
- Cultural barriers;
- Delays in appointing a Project Co-ordinator;
- Delays in construction/refurbishments;
- Difficulties in engaging with adults in full time employment;
- Difficulties in getting volunteers to make specific commitments;
- Lack of meeting space due to building works;
- Language barriers;
- Some prospective volunteers being unwilling to undergo CRB checks (albeit their disengagement might be regarded as a positive outcome);
- Staff/management resistance to change; and
- Staff re-structures.

For the most part, volunteers have been recruited onto panels/boards/steering groups and so involved in decisions about the design and layout of new libraries (mainly), the services to be offered at the library (commonly) and, in a few cases, recruitment and selection of library staff. Some panel members have also acted as community champions/peer advocates as have other volunteers. Other roles/responsibilities given to volunteers have included:

- Advising on stock purchase;
- Community consultations;
- Craft activities;
- Creating/updating book displays;
- Digital media activities;
- Community events; Delivering 'early years' activities;
- Delivering library services to the housebound;
- Delivering 'out of school' activities;
- Delivering talking book club sessions;
- Delivering youth poetry sessions;
- Establishing an archives collection;
- Gardening projects;
- General support for library users;
- Healthy living advocacy;
- Learning advocacy/support;
- Library events;
- Organising reading groups;
- Providing homework support to library users;
- Providing research support to library users;
- Providing ICT support to library users;
- Re-stocking bookshelves;
- Story telling; and
- Support for library opening day celebrations.

Appendix 9: National Group

Reports have been submitted to BIG by the following library services, although those with an asterisk were not forwarded to the study team.

- Birmingham
- Bolton
- Bradford
- Calderdale
- Cambridgeshire
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Derby City
- Gateshead
- Halton
- Hertfordshire
- Lancashire
- LB Ealing
- LB Enfield
- LB Merton*
- LB Wandsworth*
- LB Westminster
- Liverpool
- Luton*
- Manchester
- Norfolk
- North Somerset
- North Tyneside
- North Yorkshire
- Nottingham
- Oldham
- Redcar & Cleveland
- Slough
- South Gloucestershire
- Staffordshire
- Wolverhampton

Project	Progress
Birmingham	Milestones each put back 6 months due to delay in grant confirmation. Community engagement plans reported to be in place but not yet delivered due to delays in completing developments. Work began on 2 sites in June 09 and was completed in July 09. Work was scheduled to start at the other 3 sites in July/August 09 for completion at 1 site in November 09 and the other 2 in 2010.
Bolton	Delay in appointing Project Co-ordinator (May 2009) but good progress since then. Some milestones reported to be back on target but others have been pushed back. Library closure has limited community engagement options.
Bradford	Good progress, though library opening is later than scheduled. Community engagement has been largely through outreach work with a wide variety of people via a range of different groups.
Calderdale	The report focused more on extensive future plans for engagement/consultation, although some promotional work had been carried out. Activities were postponed due to delays in starting the development linked to tenders coming in over budget.
Cambridgeshire	Engagement has been largely through partnership working and using existing organisations with specific interests to represent the views of different sections of the community. Milestones revised but good progress being made, albeit engagement activities are more modest than most other areas.
Cheshire West & Chester	Being subject to local government re-organisation there have been disruptions and there have been delays to capital works. As a result, milestones have been pushed back.
Derby City	One library opened Summer 2009, the opening of another has been put back 6 months to July 2010. No date given for opening of third library
Gateshead	Good progress on community engagement, although much activity was not scheduled to start until after the report date. Particular focus on learning from other libraries.
Halton	At the time of reporting, community engagement was in its early stages, mainly involving consultations about what people wanted to see in the new library. No opening date for library given.
Hertfordshire	Dip in community engagement work during building phase, but scheduled to pick up again after planned opening of library in September 2009. Most milestones not scheduled for completion until after report date.
Lancashire	Delays at the outset, followed by problems with building works have pushed back library opening dates and, along with delays in recruiting some staff, this has disrupted community engagement activities.
LB Ealing	Opening pushed back from June 2009 to expected date of September 2009. Good engagement with wide variety of community/voluntary groups and other agencies, mainly to gain input into building design and services offered, with some difficulties reported in forming a community engagement sub-group.
LB Enfield	The closure of the library has been very disruptive and attendance at both the adult and children's advisory board meetings has been poor, leading to the latter being disbanded in favour of consultations with pupils at a local school.
LB Merton	Awaiting reports
LB Wandsworth	Awaiting reports
LB Westminster	Extensive consultation to gauge user views on design and service delivery, via a wide variety of mechanisms and eliciting a high level of input. Community space scheduled to open January 2010.
Liverpool	Delays in setting up a steering group led to delays in recruiting community workers. There has also been a need to be sensitive to a wide range of interests and avoid creating unnecessary tensions between community groups/their representatives. This has seen project milestones slip.
Luton	Awaiting reports
Manchester	The project appears to be progressing well and has been focused on engaging young people, a small number of whom have been extensively involved in design/service plans and promoting the library to their peers.
Norfolk	Capital works have been planned to keep parts of the library open at all times.

	Completion was scheduled for September 2009. Community engagement work has been underway since January 2009 and reported to be progressing well.
North Somerset	At the time of the report there was very limited community involvement in the project board but there had been significant numbers consulted.
North Tyneside	Community engagement work began in Autumn 2007, but was heavily disrupted by the start of building work and lack of capacity to undertake the work (due to competing pressures, staff restructuring and absence of key staff). The formation of a new Community Engagement Team has provided fresh impetus. Library opening was scheduled for January 2010.
North Yorkshire	Community engagement stalled in November 2008 when the library moved to temporary premises, but this has now resumed. Engagement has been mainly through existing groups, with a particular focus on older people, in line with the local demographic. Early milestones achieved on schedule; later ones came after the date of the report. There is a management board, but delays reported in securing community involvement.
Nottingham	A Community Sounding Board, involving adults and young people, has been established alongside the Project Board. A Community Engagement Worker was appointed at an early stage (September 2008). There is a particular focus on recruitment of significant numbers of volunteers and deploying them in a wide range of activities in due course. Library opening was delayed, with new date scheduled for August 2009, putting back some engagement activities.
Oldham	Steady progress but delay in appointing Project Outreach Worker has led to slippage of some milestones and there is a lack of clarity as to the outcomes being pursued. The library is now open.
Redcar & Cleveland	Friends of Library Group established and has been actively involved in design/layout decisions. However, numbers involved are low and engagement with young people has proved difficult. Staff restructuring has meant little progress in promoting the new library, which is scheduled to open in April 2010.
Slough	Good progress is reported, although most key outcomes are not scheduled to be achieved until July 2011.
South Gloucestershire	Library Management Board established December 2007 with community representation. The Library Service has joined with the Leisure Trust and PCT in South Gloucestershire to share information and undertake joint marketing
Staffordshire	Promotion/consultation undertaken across the community as well as some capacity building with community activists. Engagement work has been less intensive during the building phase, with the library scheduled to open in September 2009.
Wolverhampton	A focus group was convened to contribute to design/layout/furniture/décor decisions, meeting every 2 months, with a Management Board being formed comprising representatives of a number of relevant organisations.

Forms of Engagement

Predominantly, libraries have sought to engage with their local communities through general consultation events, brochures/newsletters/leaflets/ flyers (including 1 dual language), community surveys (including 1 dual language) and specific outreach visits (to schools, community centres etc.) Other fairly common types of activities undertaken (in order of popularity) were as follows:

- Local press articles;
- Library website/blog;
- Attendance at community meetings/events;
- Displays;
- Ideas board/book/box;
- Focus groups;
- On-site art projects; and
- Established Friends of Library Groups.

Other tools deployed by at least one of the libraries were as follows::

- E-mail bulletins;
- Film production/distribution;
- Opening events
- Partner organisation surveys
- Roadshows;
- Site visits;
- Social Networking Site; and
- Text messaging.

Partnership Working

Libraries have identified three key sets of partners: local community and voluntary groups; other local authority departments; and local schools/colleges. In addition, it appears to be quite common for libraries to work with the following (in order of popularity):

- Sure Start/Children's Centre;
- Connexions;
- Other libraries;
- Job Centre+/other employment bodies;
- BME Groups;
- Faith groups;
- PCT/Health bodies;
- Residents/Tenants Associations; and
- Local regeneration bodies.

Other partners mentioned by these libraries, were as follows:

- Adult learning providers;
- Charitable trusts;
- Citizen's Advice Bureaux;
- Disability groups;
- Elected members/community leaders;
- Environmental groups;
- Heritage groups;
- Housing bodies;
- Police;
- Private sector; and
- Women's groups.

Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

Local Communities

There is reported to have been direct community input into the early stages of library development and, to some extent, future operations (though not management). By far the biggest area of influence has been in the design/layout of new library facilities, explicitly mentioned in reports from three quarters of libraries. Just under half of libraries reported that there had been community input into debates about future service provision, with just over one third being consulted on library furniture/décor. In fewer instances, community members have also had an input into the following (in order of popularity):

- Staff recruitment/selection;
- Stock selection;
- Landscaping/public art;
- Opening hours;
- Events;
- Assessment of building work tenders;
- Naming; and
- Policies for space hire charging/booking.

At the time reports were submitted, volunteering was largely restricted to involvement in management boards. Nevertheless, a number of libraries alluded to potential volunteering opportunities as follows:

- Arts and craft sessions
- Community archive development
- ESOL classes
- Homework clubs
- ICT support
- Maintaining external areas
- Opening events
- Promoting the library/library use Reminiscence sessions
- Stocking library shelves
- Story telling
- Working with early years groups

Library Staff

Although only a minority of libraries reported undertaking staff training, this appears to have covered quite a wide range of topics, including:

- Community consultation/engagement;
- Craft activities;
- Customer care training;
- Equality/diversity;
- Event planning;
- Healthy eating;
- ICT;
- Learning delivery support;
- New technology (including self service equipment);
- Publicity/promotion;
- Setting up and facilitating steering groups;
- Stock presentation techniques;
- Story telling; and
- Volunteering.

Appendix 10: Summary of Discussions at Libraries Workshop

Engagement Issues

Libraries are on different rungs of the ladder of participation, and whilst some have advanced to 'deciding together' or even 'acting together' others are still at the 'informing' stage and focusing on promotion/awareness raising.

Strengths

- Access to/ability to recruit highly competent community engagement workers.
- Where tenders for building works have come in under budget, this has freed up resources for community engagement.
- Local communities have been involved in genuine decision making which has resulted in changes in design and determined that nature of service provision that more closely match community preferences/needs/ambitions.
- Advisory boards that involve those from bodies that represent particular community interests can both ensure that community needs/aspirations are articulated and provide conduits to specific community groups.
- Approaches can be informed by previous experience.
- Areas that have received regeneration funding benefit from the creation of an extensive third sector infrastructure and from other service deliverers tending to have had experience of operating in the locality.
- Volunteers utilized very effectively by involving them in specific activities, suited to their interests/skills (often service delivery rather than general management)

Weaknesses

- An over-reliance on contacts individual library staff might have and a lack of a strategic approach at senior level.
- In attempting to engage new user groups it is possible to overlook the need to continue to support and be attractive to existing user groups.
- Community engagement undertaken by other local authority colleagues can be comprehensive but detached from the library, resulting in absence of ownership amongst library staff.
- Some advisory groups have been formed without giving full consideration to how they could be utilized resulting in some having unexploited potential.
- The lack of time to prepare a fully thought through community engagement strategy has resulted in some approaches being rushed and not achieving all they might have done.
- Advisory groups are not always wholly representative of local communities and getting the 'right' people can be a challenge.
- Some service offers have been too niche and failed to generate take up amongst community members (although re-design has addressed this issue).
- Timeframes for achieving milestones/targets can be overly ambitious and set up failure.
- Community representation can relate to factional/personal interests rather than broader community interests.
- Some advisory group members can be 'professional' committee attendees, more interested in the process than the outcomes.
- Some groups are too big to function effectively.

Opportunities

- Refreshing the membership of project boards/steering groups ensures that they remain vibrant and that community engagement is sustained.
- Where a local authority lacks credibility with local communities the engagement process can help improve the way in which it is perceived.
- There may be other local authority services or potential partner organizations pursuing community engagement strategies/activities that can inform a library's approach and/or with which it can become involved.
- Having operated successfully during the development phase, advisory groups can be reinvigorated by giving them clear roles and responsibilities thereafter.
- Engagement can be broadened by addressing barriers to participation, such as length/timings/styles of meetings.
- Engagement activities can result in groups being brought to the attention of libraries and/or their significance becoming more apparent.
- The creation of specialist for a can aid engagement by tapping into specific interests.
- By engaging groups libraries can benefit owing to the fact that they can sometimes access funding not available to the library.
- Those positively engaged can become advocates for the library in question/library services in general.

Threats

- Being immersed in building-related issues can mean that community engagement isn't given the attention it needs.
- Ambitions to undertake engagement activities can fall foul of organizational politics between a local authority and a prospective partner or within a prospective partner.
- Prospective partners can be focused on other priorities, even to the extent of being hostile to an approach from a library if they perceived a threat to themselves.
- There is a danger of advisory groups being usefully employed/engaged during the development phase but lacking a sense of purpose thereafter.
- The inability to always respond positively to community requests/suggestions can be misinterpreted as unwillingness to respond positively.
- Whilst some advisory group members bring lots of experience of participating in decision making processes others might not, and may become disengaged if not given appropriate training/support/encouragement.
- Advisory groups can be dominated by the 'usual suspects'.
- Advisory groups can become stale.
- Community requests/suggestions could clash with library preferences/priorities.
- Catering for some community groups can disaffect others.
- Engagement activities can be compromised by practical issues, such as the need for CRB checks for volunteers undertaking particular activities.
- Some people only want short term involvement, making it difficult to sustain the interest of 'good' people.
- Failure to deliver on promises undermines credibility with the community.
- Failure to evolve and respond to opportunities could leave a library static and in danger of becoming irrelevant to local communities.

Workforce Issues: Preparing Staff for Change – Addressing Hopes and Fears

Strengths.

There was overall agreement that training had been provided for staff and visits to other libraries had been organised. Visits allow staff to see how things are done at other libraries and training sessions help staff to realise that they are already undertaking community engagement work whilst also identifying areas for improvement and greater engagement.

- Using the Community Libraries programme as a model of change; persuading staff to work differently.
- Greater understanding of what community engagement entails and opportunity to formalise existing procedures.
- The Community Development Manager post helps to embed a sustainable approach to community engagement by training other members of staff. This role is seen as a huge bonus to the library service.

Factors contributing to the strengths of the programme

- Regular communication.
- Although there are considerable benefits in completing staff training at an early stage, it is important to ensure that the training is not premature. For instance it may not be appropriate to undertake training on community engagement, whilst structural changes are taking place. The ongoing development during the course of the project may also suggest a phased approach to staff training.

Weaknesses

Agreement over the need to work more closely with staff regarding community engagement.

- Frontline staff not recognising the benefits of additional responsibilities and links with personal development.
- Only senior staff are more aware of the CEP.
- Difficulties in cascading information between different members of staff.

Suggested approach to addressing these weaknesses

- Need for training on community engagement and involvement of volunteers; providing frontline staff with successful/worked examples of engagement with the community.
- Support frontline staff to recognise how they have developed their skills.
- Need to provide updates to all new members of staff.
- Making time to provide feedback on the outcomes of consultation activities and reasons for not taking on certain suggestions made by staff. This will help to avoid staff feeling like they have not been consulted.
- Working with the frontline staff and investing time in their development and understanding of the changes taking place.
- Asking frontline staff about their knowledge of the local community to help them make a contribution and feel valued.

Opportunities

There is potential to improve skills, motivation and retention.

- The Community Libraries programme creates the opportunity to tap into wider community agendas; providing the impetus for staff buy-in.
- Positive impact on staff roles; making revisions where necessary. Also an opportunity to review the workforce and disperse staff into more suitable roles.
- Opportunity to integrate the goals of the library service with Local Authority objectives for community engagement.
- Staff can build confidence and hand over power to the community; understanding the benefits of this approach
- Opportunity to train staff and raise awareness of community involvement/engagement; hence developing an understanding of how the service is progressing.
- Developing a sense of ownership and shared responsibility amongst frontline staff; developing their confidence through the completion of different tasks.
- Using local staff knowledge to identify areas for volunteer support to deliver library services.
- Long term changes to organisational culture.
- Improved team working between different levels of staff with managers and frontline staff having more confidence in each others abilities to undertake community engagement work.

Suggested approach to realising these opportunities

- It is important to move forward together as a workforce with a vision for the 'whole service'.
- Need to provide shared training and opportunities for staff visits between different libraries.
- Need a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

Threats

Although a loss of staff was acknowledged as a possible threat, staff changes/departures are actually seen as an opportunity to achieve the correct balance within the library team, ensuring that the 'right' individuals who are interested in being part of the changes to the library service, are on board.

- Not ceasing the opportunity to make changes when the opportunity is available.
- Having staff with the wrong attitude can be a threat to the service and impede the long term goals of implementing cultural change.
- Sudden changes to service can add pressure on staff
- Community engagement being associated with this project alone rather than identifying the need for this approach to be implemented as a long term measure across the organisation.
- Long term staff not willing to change.
- Use of staff recommendations for volunteers could be limited to the types of people they would like to work with.

Suggested approach to averting threats:

- Important to recognise that communities undergo continual changes and the library service (together with its staff) need to change and refresh in line with this. This will also ensure greater buy-in when new ways of working are introduced.
- Recognition of the time taken to adapt to changes. Therefore important to take the staff on a journey through each stage of development in the library service.
- Understanding of community engagement across the whole workforce.
- Achieve staff buy-in through regular communication, meetings, feedback and celebration of staff achievements.

Workforce Issues: Recruiting and Deploying Volunteers

Strengths

- Volunteers are being involved in decision-making through user forums, community forums, specific forums (e.g. for young people) and constituted project or community management boards
- Volunteers are being involved in project delivery and/or profile-raising as peer mentors (e.g. 1:1 computer mentors), leading reading/writing groups, friends groups, young mums running storytelling groups
- The process of recruiting and coordinating volunteers is made much easier if the library has a specific post (e.g. a Community Development Manager, or a Volunteer Coordinator) to take care of it.
- Also helps to embed volunteer management in existing staff job profiles
- Having a Corporate Policy about volunteers is useful. This can cover accreditation, CRB checks, payment of travel expenses, etc.
- Volunteers can often help with the tasks normally undertaken by paid staff, and are able to spend more time on those tasks. Examples cited by projects included: help with shelving, and help for people using computers.
- Some projects gave examples of when volunteers can and do increase the diversity of library users. Particularly the case with older volunteers/users. Also two separate examples given of Asian volunteers who offer computer mentoring in English and Gujarati, and which may have been responsible for the rise seen in Gujarati-speaking computer users in the library. Intensive work with the Community Development Officer at one library has resulted in increased attendance by young people.
- Some benefits for volunteers were also raised, including increased self-confidence, increased employability skills, improved mental health/wellbeing (through social interaction, or through escape from other parts of their lives)

Weaknesses

- It can be a challenge to implement decisions made by volunteers, where those decisions differ from the path that the Local Authority would have chosen
- It is important to manage expectations of volunteers with respect to them getting further employment or training. Needs to be made clear from the start. Some libraries use job descriptions to this end.
- Challenges in retaining volunteers beyond the initial buzz of the new project. Helpful to give volunteers a motive, a reason to be interested.
- Having the capacity to properly manage/coordinate volunteers
- Getting a volunteer profile that resembles that of the local community:
- Recognised that this is difficult. Some projects said that their volunteer profile does lean towards older women (on their Friends groups)
- Recognised that it is also desirable to get the right balance between a representative profile and the getting the right experience. One solution may be to get people with the right experience in the first place, and then to upskill and get the right profile over time.
- One library noted that large parts of its local community are very transient, with up to 60 languages spoken, and it would therefore be hard to keep the volunteer profile representative all the time
- Challenges in reaching the 'hard to reach' volunteers: their working hours may impair their ability/availability to volunteer; they may lack the motivation; they may already be doing some other community activity

- It is challenging to coordinate/administrate volunteering (including CRB checks, supervision for volunteers aged under 16, training, etc). It takes time and resources. Staff may be unclear about who should be responsible for managing volunteers. Frontline staff are already busy. Managing volunteers requires certain skills, which are not always already present. Libraries have addressed this through employing dedicated Community Development or Volunteer Coordinators in some cases, or through integrating volunteer management into staff profiles in other cases, and through using volunteer contracts/codes of conduct. Other projects have not managed to successfully address this challenge yet.

Opportunities

- None discussed

Threats

Some paid staff may have initially felt threatened by the presence of volunteers, although by no means all staff felt this way: many welcomed volunteers. However, most libraries in the group had ways to smooth over this potential problem, including:

- Having a clear policy that states volunteers will “supplement, not replace”. One project worked with UNISON from the start.
- Being flexible about what volunteers are used for
- Clearly communicating roles and value of volunteers to staff
- Having volunteer job descriptions
- Holding regular meetings with volunteers, especially 'awkward' ones, to guide them through what is required of them
- Noted that there can be a poor perception of volunteers which is often disproven
- Because volunteers are volunteers, they're not beholden to attend. If they don't turn up as promised, staff have to pick up the pieces. A solution may be to explain responsibilities/commitment at the start.

Sustainability Issues

Strengths

- Effective partnership working
- Reaching the wider community through partners (e.g. mental health service providers).
- Providing a safe venue through which other partners can access target groups
- Libraries as a community hub.
- Mutually beneficial partner relationships.
- Deepening and broadening partner relationships.
- Ability to attract businesses (e.g. to use rooms for training).
- Staff alive to opportunities and able to pursue them.
- 'Exchange of space' between libraries and partners.

Weaknesses

- Libraries offering the same things as other providers.
- Failure to capture the benefits of partnership working.
- Lack of knowledge about how to articulate contributions to National Indicators.
- Lack of buy-in amongst senior management.
- Partners needing to get something out of the relationship.

Opportunities

- Changes in broader contexts opening up roles for libraries.
- Partners are looking for space generally and means of accessing target groups specifically, both of which new libraries could provide if accommodated into design/if spaces are flexible.
- Demonstrate the benefits (vfm) of using libraries, to partners and communities.
- Recruit community advocates.
- Ability to evidence contributions to wider agendas
- Delivering services in a different way
- Staff changes can bring new ideas/attitudes/energy.
- Evolving requirements of communities.
- Improved marketing of what libraries offer

Threats

- None discussed.

Evaluation Issues

Strengths:

There was broad agreement in base-lining and updating exercises as a strength, although participants felt that longitudinal studies require flexibility, especially when goal posts have changed in planning priorities, and the strategic emphasis has changed etc. Also, a different set of players and other factors in a changing work environment may mean that longitudinal studies aren't the preferred option for evaluation. However, otherwise there was a strong agreement that measuring impact on individuals and groups of people e.g. elderly is important, as opposed to counting/collecting information e.g. about how many users enter the library, which may not tell us anything about the outcome and impact of using library services.

Weaknesses:

There was clear disagreement in both discussion groups and the feedback forms about 'no information on users' as a weakness; especially the quantitative information on 'how many' and 'who' is said to be widely available. While there is lots of information on users, however, there is less capacity on collating and analysing this information to use for marketing purposes; of more generally: to put to more effective use.

Tracking data 'before and after' was seen as very important. One weakness was that staff is still a little reluctant to engage with users of libraries at that face to face level. In addition, some participants felt that their library was unique, because you could not classify 'regular' library users, so there was no point in tracking.

With respect to the statement around 'guidance': there was less concern, as peer support on how to evaluate is strong. People agreed there was enough guidance as to measuring outcomes, but that capacity and being able to convince funders/partners is more related to being in the right place at the right time with the right set of people. People favoured learning with/from peers; however, less emphasis was placed on going on courses to learn 'how' to evaluate.

On the whole, participants agreed that 'they are so busy doing it, that there is little time in evaluating their work' beyond what is regularly being collected anyway. So it requires real effort in capturing the qualitative information, i.e. the case studies that show impact on a daily basis. Staff needs to develop this mindset.

8 specific written feedback points about disagreement with weakness (see hard copies sent):

- "Lack of information about service- all our house keeping systems generate a host of information we could use more effectively"
- "Lack of info on customers and impact- we need to do this , just need channels and time"
- "Weaknesses re evaluation - disagree"
- "No info no users and none being collected"
- "the fact that libraries don't know who their users are. They do."
- "No information on users"
- "the evaluation, I believe we are able to demonstrate changes"
- "information , marketing"

Opportunities

A number of opportunities were mentioned: for example, in convincing social service partners in achieving common policy objectives with respect to older people care. One participant said that she presented simple messages about how older people felt their lives had more meaning through engagement with the library services, and that was sufficient in accessing funding from Social service providers. Similarly, other opportunities mentioned are through partnerships including schools partnerships, JobCentre Plus and specifically, one on numeracy skills for children.

The group participants agreed that marketing opportunities are plenty and should be realised; but that this is about being in the right place at the right time and knowing the right people. A good example was given about a Bolton libraries who formed a committee of cross-party members and getting buy-in through elected members. This group now serves for other functions e.g. discussing the DCMS review.

Threats

There was disagreement on the word 'inability' to demonstrate the value. While there was agreement that evaluation data helps in demonstrating the value of library services, it was felt that there is more scope in marketing and making libraries' voice heard, as opposed to being unable to show the value: 'It's about finding the right pathways' to use the information that is already there.

Participants started talking in terms of funding cuts and capacity issues (while relating to the point of 'valuing services'). They felt that technology (e.g. self issuing desks) has made a difference in releasing staff time to engage with users more directly; although in some cases, users don't expect staff to appear on the floor and have difficulties in recognising the resource they are given. On the flipside; staff still has to accept the role they can play in helping users directly gain access to libraries' resources.

Caution should be given as to recommending how to do evaluations/and the scale of evaluations when dealing with smaller/poorer authorities.

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