

# **Better Libraries, Better Lives**

**A review and improvement plan  
for  
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Annie Mauger**

**April 2010**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>1. Introduction</b>	
Remit	13
Methodology	14
<b>2. Background and context</b>	
National issues and policy context	15
Local context and priorities	22
Notes of caution	26
<b>3. Analysis of the current services</b>	
Comparison with CIPFA neighbour authorities	28
Comparison with national standards	32
Comparison with Empower, Enrich, Inform	33
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats	38
<b>4. Critical success factors</b>	
Case studies	50
Areas of potential	54
Governance	56
<b>5. Recommendations</b>	62
<b>Appendices</b>	74
<b>Sources</b>	84

## Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Doncaster MBC to inform a new libraries strategy and improvement plan. It has been identified that the role of the Library Service and the benefits that it brings are unclear to elected members and staff in the Council. The performance of the Library Service suggests it is not achieving as it should be. The tender for this work was very clear that it should be '*innovative, independent and objective*'.

### 1. Methodology

The key areas of activity undertaken in developing this work include:

#### *Research*

A desk based exercise to look at current policy contexts, best practice and case studies of a variety of library service improvement plans and their impacts.

*Data and literature analysis:* An important element of this part of the work was an analysis of the key strategic documents relating to the Council as a whole and an identification of areas of strategic fit, where library services may be and could be contributing.

*Information gathering and on site visits:* An extensive programme of visits and information gathering activities were undertaken including one to one meetings with library managers, departmental heads and team leaders.

*Consultation and discussion:* Internal consultation with staff, managers and elected members has been undertaken, but the remit did not include public consultation.

*Developing the vision and plan:* The results of the information gathering, consultation and data analysis were all used to formulate a vision for the future and identify key areas for change and improvement. The resulting plan includes short, medium and long term goals and broad proposals for change and development.

### 2. Research outcomes:

Library services have a part to play in the delivery of local community and this report draws on the critical successes of other authorities to suggest ways forward. A wide ranging internal analysis was undertaken to identify barriers to achieving an excellent service, solutions to these problems and key areas where greater efficiencies could be achieved to allow reinvestment in services and flexibility in delivery to meet local need.

**National Policy context:** A new policy statement from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has recommended what a modern library service should be like and a number of other key agencies have published opinions. These are analysed in the report, but faced with this level of guidance and recommendations for what a library service should be like, the need to focus on what is best for Doncaster and its communities becomes increasingly important. Any recommendations in this report are

made in the context of all of the guidance but will aim to address local issues and address local need for improvement in Doncaster.

The latest and most influential policy statement on public libraries was produced by the DCMS in March 2010 and is the outcome of a consultation and review of Public Library Services entitled 'Empower, Enrich, Inform'. Services have been assessed against the new government requirement in Section 3 and recommendations for improvement in Section 5 take these specifically into account as all local authorities will have to demonstrate how they meet the requirement for a 'core offer' and a 'local offer' from libraries by October 2010.

### **3. Key findings:**

#### **Performance:**

Doncaster libraries have fewer active borrowers and loan less books and other materials than benchmark neighbour authorities. There are more libraries per head of population and fewer qualified staff than the majority of neighbour authorities. The service has a high cost per resident and an average turnover of books.

Overall, in an analysis against statistical measurements of performance, Doncaster is not performing well and the trend is downward. However, statistics are only a part of the picture and there are signs of optimism in the willingness to look for a new approach and in many pockets of good practice which can be found across the Service.

The service does not meet traditional government standards nor the new required core and local offer provisions, particularly in relation to tailoring services to community need, with standardised opening hours and inefficient back office practices draining resources to support an outdated infrastructure.

#### **Management issues:**

The current management systems and structure is not efficient or effective in delivering a modern library service. Matrix management has confused the staff and removed the skills of both front line and middle managers, with very few staff across the service having an understanding or expertise in libraries and particularly in working with children. Few of the front line staff teams have grounding in library skills, do not have them built into their job descriptions and their managers lack understanding in what these are.

The strength for the library services as a whole and the good news for the Council is that from top to bottom across the staff teams and beyond, there is a belief that libraries are a good thing and can do valuable work, even if there is not a clear picture of what that might be. This report aims to address this issue clearly and articulate that contribution.

There are many dedicated people in the Library Service who are committed to their community and customers and are champions of reading, learning and inclusion. There are areas of excellent practice and many national initiatives are being pursued despite low levels of resources.

However, dysfunctional cultures are developing as a result of a lack of understanding of the core purpose of a library service and a lack of clarity of messages and vision for libraries and their role in supporting the needs of people in the Borough, particularly relating to literacy, children and families and vulnerable groups. The service has lost its ability to respond to customer need.

### **Buildings and opening hours:**

Many of the library buildings do not present a positive image of the Council, although this should be qualified with the statement that this *can be* and often *is* overcome by the welcome of the staff, which was clear at a number of locations. Library buildings are one of the few that customers *choose* to enter and use to take up Council Services and there are also many of them distributed in local communities. A local authority building in a community sends a message to local people about how the Council cares for them and the environment that they provide for their leisure and learning time.

The Council faces a key decision as to whether to continue to deliver services from an infrastructure of buildings that it cannot afford to maintain to an acceptable standard, or delivers from fewer but better buildings that can provide a range of modern services and are welcoming to children, families, learners and vulnerable groups.

Opening hours are standardised as opposed to customised locally and are draining the resources of the service. Overall there is a sense that the Council is telling the customer that there is a certain way, time or place to access Library Services but not designing services around the needs of the customer, whether that be to have the library open on a Sunday or access services and order books online.

### **Stock:**

With the stock fund approximating £300k, there is an average of £1 per person spent on materials for libraries each year. Ensuring the choice of a range of materials in good condition and including the latest in demand titles is essential for any successful library service. The way that these materials are procured and provided in Doncaster needs to be reviewed and modernised to ensure best value for the tax payer's investment and the broadest choice for the customer.

### **Services to vulnerable groups:**

There are many excellent examples of initiatives that the Library Service teams have been involved with which are very valuable to a number of vulnerable groups. These include the Home Library Service for older people and people with disabilities, the Reader Development Service and developing partnerships for learning at local libraries

with training and job support providers and initiatives such as the Six Book Challenge for basic skills level adult readers.

### **Mission and purpose for the Library Services:**

However, reading is not a mission for *all* of the library staff, from front line to back office. The value of literacy and its link to learning and skills should be embedded in the organisation as the name of a seaside town in a stick of rock. This mission is the uniting factor that creates a sense of values and an ethos that supports all of the work with the customer.

There is no clash between this and the delivery of customer services as the belief that libraries are the place for help and information of any kind is fundamental to good customer service and every visitor is a potential reader. This mission and the associated values have not been cemented together between the customer services and the library specialist managers and staff.

Libraries need to take every opportunity to provide solutions to the delivery of other Council services and to actively seek to be commissioned to deliver them. The key is to set libraries in the context of their wider contribution to the strategic needs of the Borough and to have a realistic and modern delivery model that makes the best of limited resources, keeping the customer at the heart of the service.

Libraries must be led and championed by expert voices who can help all parties to agree that they provide a neutral and beneficial space for all members of the community in local areas and should be encouraged to perform at their best. It is essential that senior staff and politicians grasp the potential contribution of libraries to their local communities and local priorities. If this does not happen, the service that is invested in will not deliver value for money and will continue in a downward trend.

### **External government pressure**

The library services in Doncaster have already been subject to interest from government bodies, based purely on statistical analysis. This is insufficient understanding to make a clear judgement but nevertheless there is pressure to demonstrate significant improvement to services or attract further intervention.

The key thing is to be able to demonstrate that there has been review and consideration of the performance issues and that there is a plan for improvement and a strategic direction for change in place.

Change needs to be managed. Any proposed changes need wide political and senior management support and brave decisions need to be taken. The need for strong leadership to drive this forward cannot be underestimated.

## **Critical success factors**

An analysis of the critical success factors that have worked in transforming services in other local authorities has led to the following conclusions:

- A strong and determined leadership is required to deliver and sustain effective change.
- Without a workforce that understands and engages with the vision for the library service, is recruited to deliver it and equipped through training and development, success and vital improvements in customer service will be impossible to deliver.
- In implementing change to the Library Service in Doncaster, a planned communication strategy to ensure the engagement of staff, senior managers and elected members, and most importantly the customers and potential customers will be essential to achieve success.

**Doncaster libraries need to regroup and refocus to deliver core service and its strengths before being in a position to deliver on targets for other departments. The initial focus must be on restructure and renewal of the library service to provide the potential and capacity to deliver more in partnership with others.**

Core Principles should be:

- Treat the services as though your customers were paying because they are, through their taxes.
- Have a clear discreet structure with a core service and mission.
- Using marketing effectively and look at ways to enhance services.
- Work hard to retain customers through marketing, extending reach, responding to new customer needs.

A key success factor for transformation will be to establish these principles across the whole of the service and move from a position where the customer is taking what you choose to provide to a place where services are tailored to their needs and to attracting repeat 'business' from them.

An analysis of the current activities of the Library Services and the growth and potential sustainability of them identified a number of areas to divest, grow or solve problems. Book issues and internet access remain the 'cash cows' but must be promoted to sustain interest as usage is declining. There are star services that need nurturing and developing but the key thing is to focus on ensuring that the core business of the library service grows and maintains impetus whilst looking at new potential areas for development and turning problems into advantages through better use of resources.

**Public libraries are a local service, paid for by taxation which is raised locally, that are valued and prized in their own right. But they are also assets through which the Council can deliver local priorities. With the right investment and development, libraries can become fit to deliver services for other departments and provide an essential front line delivery model.**

## **Alternative governance models**

A study of alternative governance models such as cultural trusts and commissioning was undertaken to identify the potential for these options for Doncaster's Libraries.

Key findings reveal that choosing alternative governance models depend on a fit and functioning service that can be transferred as a real asset.

At the **current time**, the library services are **not fit** to become part of a trust model. Trusts are not a solution to problems but a way to grow and develop services, and there are major improvement issues that would stop any group of trustees from sensibly taking on the libraries until these are resolved.

The focus for now needs to be on ensuring that the core Library Service is fit for purpose so that it can then offer to deliver services that meet broader priorities in a more structured way. To achieve this, there must be an understanding at a strategic level of what is on offer and the skills and attitudes at the front line to deliver it. This should be a core objective built into a plan for change.

## **4. Recommendations:**

Without the implementation of significant change, the Library Service will continue to try to sustain an outdated delivery model and will continue to decline. These recommendations can be the beginning of addressing this situation and delivering a service truly focused on the customer. They are made taking full consideration of the new DCMS Policy Statement, **Empower, Enrich Inform** (2010).

### **4.1. Develop a vision and strategy for the Library Service in the context of the Sustainable Borough Strategy**

An improvement plan for the Library Service will have no basis without a clear idea of what it is there to do, who it is for, and what the contribution is that it brings to overall Council priorities. Any tough decisions and major changes can only be justified in this context. The vision must be agreed by all key stakeholders, particularly elected members and senior managers, but must also be shared with customers and consulted upon more widely.

The vision and mission must articulate what the Library Service can do to support the Council's priorities but overall what it is here to do for the customers. The words that sum up the vision need to be developed with internal engagement, but it is strongly recommended that in the context of the Sustainable Borough Strategy and the shared priorities, the Library Service should focus on the following externally facing and internal priorities:

**For the customer:**



- **Helping everyone to read**
- **Supporting children, young people and families**
- **Supporting learning and skills, including digital inclusion**
- **Supporting communities and vulnerable people**

Internally, for the Service:

- **Customer led and driven**
- **Local and accessible**
- **Efficient and effective**
- **Delivering services for other Council departments**

Internally, the Library Service needs an articulated mission about the kind of Service that it wants to be, to create a sense of purpose and values for the staff that will remove some of the uncertainty that has led to variance in service quality and practice that is no longer acceptable.

**The library service must re-focus on the customer, not on the mechanics of customer services but on putting the customer at the heart of all decisions made about services.**

Libraries must be set challenging targets but these must be in the context of the resources provided to deliver them and the impact that change will have on services in the short term. Customers and elected members have the right to expect a return on the investment that is being put into Libraries but must recognise that to become efficient requires significant changes that cost in time and resources.

A priority for the Library Service must be to position itself at the heart of delivery of Council objectives as it is increasingly recognised that priority areas of need can be met through the libraries. This begins with customer services, but goes beyond that into the areas articulated as external priorities above. However, these must be championed and negotiated at a strategic level, through a clearly articulated plan.

#### **4.2. Develop a plan focused on the customer**

There must be a clear strategic plan in place to justify the changes that are necessary to make to the Library Service. There is more than sufficient evidence in this report to justify the need for radical change. Where difficult decisions have to be made, the reasons for these must be clearly articulated, or the issues that arose for The Wirral could arise in Doncaster.

The key elements of this plan should be:

- Short medium and long term goals and targets
- Restructuring and rationalising the service to focus on the strategic priorities and customer need and divesting of non-core services

- Developing the workforce to focus on the same priorities
- Consulting and engaging with customers

#### **4.3. Consult and communicate with the public and with stakeholders**

Apart from the legal obligation, there are two key reasons to involve and consult the public in service development and delivery:

- **To ensure that local views and needs are taken into account in developing new services**
- **To raise awareness and expectations about the Library Service that allows the more effective management and rationale for change**

There has been considerable consultation of existing customers about satisfaction with services, but since we know that only 16% of the population are using their local library regularly, new ways of consultation with the broader public need to be identified.

It is necessary to build a picture of what is proposed and ask specific and structured questions about what people might want. We know that overall interest is low, so it would be useful to create a picture of the possibilities, a menu of options to choose from. Opening hours are very difficult to consult on as most people will want access whenever suits them, so again a menu approach with choices that narrow down options is preferable

The tax payers have elected members to take decisions in their interests but it is essential that when doing this, they are informed by customer and non-customer views and can demonstrate that these have been considered. The Library Service could provide the perfect pilot for the Council's new consultation strategy.

#### **4.4. Retain the current governance structure within the Council but remove matrix management and create clear management lines for the Service**

The Library Service is not currently in a fit condition to be part of a trust or arms length body, but could be in the future. There are also opportunities to create an effective commissioning model but the fundamental is that the Service needs to be a **cohesive whole**, with clear leadership and management lines and a structure that facilitates improvement and customer focus.

By defining a core Library Service and articulating what can be offered, libraries will be in a good position to be commissioned to deliver for other departments and to forge new partnerships based on local, community and customer focused services.

#### **4.5. Restructure the service to align with strategic priorities and modern delivery**

A root and branch renewal of the Library Service structure is needed to do several key things that are critical to success including:

- **Creating a clearly defined leadership structure**
- **Embedding core priorities and service champions in management**
- **Bringing in new skills and areas of expertise**
- **Removing outdated back office delivery and focusing on the front line**

#### **4.6. Re-train, reinvigorate and re-vision the workforce**

The level of change that is required to deliver service improvements has to begin with every member of the team understanding the new vision and the role that their specific post plays in delivering it. Case studies show that success cannot be achieved without this.

Some of the proposals in this report will be very difficult to accept, but if the vision is communicated and at the same time there are opportunities for new roles and investment in the workforce in terms of training and development, it is possible to bring staff through the change successfully and to reinvigorate people to deliver.

Key elements of workforce reform must include:

- **New job descriptions and person specifications that focus on library skills, customer service ethos and working with children**
- **A training programme to reintroduce core library skills and the library ethos into all front line and back office staff**
- **Management and leadership training**
- **A performance management scheme that focuses on the link between personal targets and customer benefit**
- **Reinvesting resources in the expert roles that are needed to deliver excellent library services**

#### **4.7. Develop a customer focused performance management culture**

One of the issues raised in this report is about the inconsistency of message to staff about who they work for and what their priorities are. It is essential that a strong message is sent both internally and externally that the customer in the local environment is the priority and that all staff should be focused on this. The key things needed to deliver this will be:

- **Performance management systems that have clear targets owned by teams and individuals based on the vision and mission of the service**
- **Local targets for local libraries that reflect an assessment of local need and are based on clear understanding of current performance**
- **Agreed service wide standards for customer service, priorities for increased business and areas for development**
- **Recognition for achievement on a regular basis**

#### **4.8. Develop marketing and outreach strategy for the Library Service and an engagement strategy for vulnerable groups**

The Library Service needs a strategy that is guided by consultation with the wider public and designed to attract back lapsed users and generate new ones. However, it can only work when the offer to all groups in the community is clearly articulated and the service is fit to deliver on the promises it makes. It should include:

- **Marketing to non-users with incentives to join or return**
- **Include customer services as an enhanced offer**
- **Targeting specific groups in the community**
- **Services for vulnerable groups building on good practice**
- **Release funds to support initiatives**

#### **4.9. Develop long term partnerships for sustainable services**

*‘All library authorities should do more to respond to local authority commissioning, developing the necessary understanding and skills to identify new opportunities for the library service.’ (Empower, Enrich, Inform, DCMS 2010)*

In the longer term, the Library Service, rejuvenated and redefined, should be able to make offers to a range of other providers seeking solutions to local delivery of support for the community. This depends on being able to:

- **define the core offer and the local offer**
- **stick to offering services that align with core business**
- **have demonstrable areas of success and impact**
- **focus on the priorities in the Borough Strategy**

There is an opportunity in the next year as the Library Service is transformed, to embed current partnerships through effective communication with partners about the added value that will come from the changes and also to demonstrate clearly success so far. It is essential that the current partner relationships are managed through what may be a difficult time of change.

Library Services overall must contribute effectively to the targets in the Sustainable Borough Strategy and this report has identified how the Service needs to be transformed to make these top priority. If the changes can be implemented and partnerships developed that focus on these areas, there is a real chance to demonstrate the potential contribution that an efficient and effective service can make, delivering the vision and mission:

- **Helping everyone to read**
- **Supporting children, young people and families**
- **Supporting learning and skills, including digital inclusion**
- **Supporting communities and vulnerable people**

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Remit

This report was commissioned by Doncaster MBC to inform a new libraries strategy and improvement plan. It has been identified that the role of the Library Service and the benefits that it brings are unclear to elected members and staff in the Council. The cross-departmental relationships that should and could be formed are not in place due to a lack of understanding of the strategic 'fit' of the services.

At the same time, the performance of the Library Service suggests it is not achieving as it should be. Library services can and do have a part to play in the delivery of local community services in Doncaster and the aim of this report is to identify how to make these services exemplary, drawing on the critical successes that other authorities have had and learning from the examples available.

At the same time, a wide ranging internal analysis has been undertaken to identify barriers to achieving an excellent service and solutions to these problems are recommended. In addition, this report seeks to identify a number of key areas where greater efficiencies could be achieved that would allow reinvestment in services and flexibility in delivery to meet local need and develop innovation.

The tender for this work was very clear that it should be '*innovative, independent and objective*' and it is with these goals in mind that the work has been done, and this report prepared.

## 1.2. Methodology

The work was commissioned in November 2009 and since that time a wide range of meetings, research and consultation activities have been undertaken. A project plan was agreed with the commissioning officer and the key elements of the work include:

- *Research*  
A desk based exercise to look at current policy contexts, best practice and case studies of a variety of library service improvement plans and their impacts. We also looked at the critical success factors that define an excellent library service and identified pitfalls and notes of caution relation to government policy where change might be desirable but must be properly implemented. A study of a variety of governance models was also undertaken to establish the viability of some of these alternatives for Doncaster.
- *Data and literature analysis*  
An important element of this part of the work was an analysis of the key strategic documents relating to the Council as a whole and an identification of areas of strategic fit, where library services may be and could be contributing. In addition, an in depth analysis of key performance indicators against other local

authorities and national standards and criteria was critical to developing a realistic understanding of the performance of the service.

A number of strategic tools were used to look at the information gathered and synthesise information into meaningful outcomes that create a balanced view of the current picture. These will be discussed in the next section of this report.

- *Information gathering and on site visits*

An extensive programme of visits and information gathering activities were undertaken including one to one meetings with library managers, the finance manager for Libraries, departmental heads and team leaders. A number of days were spent visiting libraries with area customer contact managers, the Schools and Bibliographical Services Department and attending a number of different team meetings. Overall more than 50% of libraries were visited and more than 60 staff had an opportunity to express their views.

- *Consultation and discussion*

It is important to state that the consultation activities that have been undertaken are internal and principally involve staff, managers and elected members. The vital issue of consultation with the public is discussed in this document, but was not the remit of this work.

A number of facilitated focus groups were held in February and March, including more than 50 staff across all departments. A managers' challenge workshop was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March and a special consultation group for elected members, senior managers from Adult and Children's Services and UNISON on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

A number of conversations were held with external bodies about general good practice for libraries and critical success factors where case studies were identified that were relevant to the information gathering process. These were conducted in confidence and without reference to internal issues, focusing on their experiences and lessons learned.

- *Developing the vision and plan*

The results of the information gathering, consultation and data analysis were all used to formulate a vision for the future and identify key areas for change and improvement. The resulting plan includes short, medium and long term goals and broad proposals for change and development.

## 2. Background and context

*‘Public libraries make a measurable and substantial contribution to local economies, and help to bridge social divides. They support well-being, encourage reading, spread knowledge, contribute to learning and skills and help to foster identity, community and a sense of place for people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures’*  
(Museums Libraries and Archives Council, 2010)

### 2.1. National issues and the policy environment

#### A statutory service

There are 3,500 public libraries in England providing community access to a vast range of books and information resources. Every library also provides access to the internet through the **People’s Network**, and in the vast majority of cases, this is free of charge. Libraries are a statutory service.

The role and responsibility of delivering a library service was given to local authorities in the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act which called for them to provide a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ library service, without defining what this meant in practice. The implication is that there is no option but to provide a library service to local people, but the shape and scope of that service has not been well defined in the past.

**Since public library services *are* statutory, it would seem the best and most logical thing to ensure that what is provided benefits the broader objectives of the Council and presents the best return on the taxpayers’ investment.**

There is an ongoing debate about what in today’s world constitutes a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ library service, but it is important for those who are leading and delivering services in Doncaster MBC to understand what this means to **them**.

#### Current policy debate

Nationally, the key bodies informing library policy and strategy are:

- The **Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)** holds ‘policy responsibility’ for Libraries in England
- **Advisory Committee on Libraries** – provides advice to the Secretary of State ‘upon such matters connected with the provision of library facilities ... as they think fit.’
- **The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) a non departmental government body with the remit to** promote best practice.
- **The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)**, the lead professional body for librarians, information specialists

## DCMS: 'Empower, Enrich, Inform'

The latest and most influential **policy statement** on public libraries was produced by the DCMS in March 2010 and is the outcome of a consultation and review of Public Library Services entitled 'Empower, Enrich, Inform'.

The document has been produced after a significant amount of consultation with a variety of bodies, authorities and opinion formers, as well as those who deliver library services. The policy statement recommends two key aspects to a modern library service that citizens should be entitled to:

A '**core offer**' that all library services in the country should provide including:

- **Library membership from birth:** Details of local schemes to ensure that library membership is available from the earliest point in a child's life (The Government expects that from April 2011 all local authorities ensure that library membership is an entitlement to children from birth.)
- **An opportunity to have your say and get involved in shaping the service** (local details to be set out)
- **Free access to a range and quality of book stock to browse and borrow and online resources and information that meet local needs** (including e-books as the market grows)
- **Access to the national book collection** – any book from anywhere: Order any book through your library (even out of print books)
- **Free Internet access for all:** Computers and access to online information and communication. (The Government will change legislation to prevent library authorities charging for internet access from April 2011. Further details set out in proposal 27)
- **Help to get online:** Support for people using the internet for the first time or searching for information
- **Links to other public services and opportunities:** Connections to health, education and learning or employment opportunities (local details to be set out)
- **A Community of Readers:** Connecting people to other readers through reading groups, activities and recommendations
- **Flexible opening hours** to suit the needs of local people (local details to be set out)
- **Commitment to customer service and expert, helpful staff**
- **A safe local space which is accessible and convenient for the community**
- **24 hour access:** Through your library's online catalogue, online reference and other services. Website details to be set out
- **Services which reach out and attract local people** (local details to be set out including 'at home' services to housebound people)
- **An opportunity to be a member of all libraries in England** Easy to join, accessible services



The Government believes that these services represent the core offer which should be provided across all library authorities in England. Most library authorities are already providing this core service in full but Government recommends that all libraries provide a universal core offer.

In terms of the review of services in Doncaster, this is a timely definition of what the government expects a modern library service to provide as a basic entitlement for all citizens. The second aspect of the recommendations builds on this approach.

The government also wants to see:

A '**local offer**' tailored to the needs of local communities that takes into account:

- Commitments on **book stock** variety, investment and procurement
- **Opportunities and activities for young people** as part of the local provision of positive activities
- Provisions for **learning** such as improving reading and writing skills, and partnerships with local schools, early years settings and children's centres
- **An events programme** including training events or activities for readers and author visits
- **Family activities:** Family reading and learning activities – Bookstart, Rhymetime, homework clubs, links to family information services, holiday reading challenges.
- **Programmes of engagement with the community** including outreach initiatives and ways of encouraging wider usage, including families
- Details of how to get involved with **user groups**, supporting or influencing the library service
- **Spaces for community use**
- **Childcare** or crèche
- **Additional Services** like CD and DVD borrowing, a book delivery service, coffee shops etc

Government recommends that library authorities finalise their Library Offer to the public by the end of 2010. Government will review the Library Offer after two years and consider whether to legislate to make it a statutory obligation.

The policy statement also offers the following guidance:

#### **Guidance on process of engagement and consultation:**

Sitting alongside the Library Offer to the public, the questions set out below are issued here as best practice guidance on the processes which Government recommends library authorities consider under their statutory duty. Government will review the best practice guidance set out here after two years and consider whether to legislate to make the guidance statutory.

**1. What resources are available and how does this match the needs of the community?**

Have you analysed and considered need and demand? What are the specific needs of adults, families and young people of all ages? Would members of the community be able and willing to contribute to the delivery of library services as volunteers or joint managers?

**2. What are the needs of those living, working and studying in the area?**

How accessible is the service? Is public transport appropriate? Are there barriers to physical access of library buildings that should be removed?

Have local people been consulted? How?

What are the views of users and what are the views of non users?

Have you done an Equality Impact Assessment?

**3. What implications are there for other strategies e.g. educational attainment, support for those seeking work, digital inclusion, adult social care?**

**4. Are there other partnerships that can be explored – e.g. with the third sector, community and development trusts or town and parish councils?**

**5. How efficient is the current service?**

- a) Are the arrangements for the delivery of the library service (eg buildings, staff, service provision, facilities, online presence etc) meeting the demand of the community and are they cost efficient?
- b) What other delivery partnerships could be formed inside and outside the library authority or region to make the library service more efficient and effective (see examples in Appendix B)?
- c) Can the facilities be used more flexibly?
- d) What are you doing to encourage use and maximise income?
- e) What scope is there for integrating or co-locating the library service with other services in the public or private sector (eg council services, post offices, schools, children's centres etc)

The policy statement also makes it very clear that where these services are failing, not providing or where local authorities are choosing to reduce the levels of service, the government is looking at new powers of intervention. A new statutory body to monitor and improve services that merges a number of the existing ones is also proposed.

**Services have been assessed against the new government requirement in Section 3 and recommendations for improvement in Section 5 take these specifically into account as all local authorities will have to demonstrate how they meet these requirements by October 2010.**

## **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries: Literacy and Information Management: Report of the Inquiry into the Governance and Leadership of the Public Library Service in England September 2009**

This report was sponsored by CILIP and the National Literacy Trust focusing specifically on 'the effectiveness of arrangements for the governance and leadership of our public library services.' Their recommendations include:

- To create a single government department with funding and functional responsibility for public libraries and that powers of intervention should be retained by the Secretary of State and be underpinned by clear guidance on the current definition of "a comprehensive and efficient service"
- The application of the Public Libraries Act 1964 should be clarified by a definition of the minimum level of service (or **core service**) to be expected by customers.
- **Local authorities** should continue to carry **responsibility** and accountability for the provision of public library services in their area and the core public library service should continue to be **free** at the point of delivery.
- Local authorities should publish a **code of customer engagement** giving a clear methodology for informing, consulting and involving their users and non users in the planning of service provision.
- The use of **volunteers** should be positively encouraged to form part of the customer offer but not as a substitute for core service provision.
- Local authorities should publish a code of practice in relation to the use of volunteers which should include practical support arrangements regarding hours, training, expenses, meals arrangements and police checks etc.
- Local authorities should be encouraged to further develop **collaborative arrangements** with particular emphasis on the provision of back office services.
- All library authorities should do more to respond to **local authority commissioning**, developing the necessary understanding and skills to identify new opportunities for the library service.

Many of the issues raised by this report have been addressed by the DCMS Policy Statement but it is significant to note that the key link between addressing the needs of the local community in terms of literacy and good library leadership and management is made explicit in this enquiry.

## **Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP): What Makes a Good Library Service: Guidelines on public library provision in England for portfolio holders in local Councils. October 2009**

Produced in October 2009 by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) this short document sets out a check list around services and key issues for libraries to assist elected members in supporting and challenging library services. It represents what is best practice and states that:

**A good library service will deliver against key policy objectives and provide:**

- A positive future for children and young people
- A fulfilling life for older people
- Strong, safe and sustainable communities
- Promotion of local identity and community pride
- Learning, skills, and workforce development
- Health improvements and wellbeing
- Equality, community cohesion and social justice
- Economic regeneration

To meet the requirements of legislation and the aspirations of policy, a good library service needs sufficient resources. Local authorities should make sure that libraries are conveniently located near local communities and transport links in order to be accessible. Opportunities for sharing facilities with other services should be explored.

Opening hours should suit local needs and lifestyles. Library services should be available beyond the walls of the library, both on line and via home delivery to vulnerable individual. Library buildings, equipment and ICT facilities should be well designed and kept up-to-date. Library resources in all media (print, audio-visual, online) should be contemporary, provide a wide range of information, ideas and works of creative imagination, and be sufficient in quantity to meet the needs of library users.

Staff should be helpful, knowledgeable, welcoming and well-trained. They should be involved in a workforce development programme. Staff in front line customer service roles should be supported by specialists in service planning and promotion, leadership and management, and those areas of service delivery requiring specialist skills and expertise.

Local library services need to be continually refreshed and improved to respond to the adapting needs of local communities, and to the changing opportunities for service development and delivery. This requires:

- A strategic approach to service planning across the area for which the local Council is responsible, aligned and contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- A focus on efficiency and effectiveness through innovation, partnership working, shared services and assessment of different models of service delivery
- Engagement of local communities in the process of service planning through a carefully structured programme of community consultation
- A process by which service performance is monitored and assessed against key indicators of service delivery and outcomes; with the results of performance assessment made public
- Evidence that the local Council has received and acknowledged professional advice and judgement in these processes of service planning, community consultation, and performance assessment

## **UNISON Taking Stock: The future of our public library service September 2008**

This is a polemical and passionate report that was produced largely in response to a study by Price Waterhouse Cooper for DCLG that focused on contracting out library services. The report states that traditional services such as children's, reference and local studies sections need to be maintained. Internet use needs to be developed, but not at the expense of the book stock. Library users and 'just as importantly, potential users' need to be able to access services at convenient times – and staff need to be negotiated with and compensated accordingly.

The report asserts that better sharing of good practice across authorities within the context of a publicly accountable service is needed. There is a need for better training, and not relying on volunteers. This reports notes, as do others, that usage and visits of public libraries increased with the arrival of the People's Network, however this does seem to have levelled off now.

In terms of staffing, the report states that *'overall staffing numbers have been maintained but at the expense of replacing professional staff with clerical staff. The Bourdillon benchmarks of 1962 recommended that 40% of staff should be qualified. In 1980 the proportion was 33%; today it is just 21.4%'*

The report concludes that there should be a commitment to the following five objectives to inform debate. These do come from a pre-credit crunch era:

- *Adequate resources and funding for library services, staff and premises*
- *Empowerment of staff and communities to shape services together;*
- *Partnership working between libraries and councils across the UK to share information and good practice;*
- *Responsiveness to library users from all backgrounds;*
- *Provision of staff training and development*

A summary **PESTLE** analysis of both national and local environmental issues is included as **Annexe A**. This analysis is designed to highlight issues of greatest influence and importance to the delivery of services and has been taken into account in prioritising areas for improvement and development.

**Faced with this level of guidance and recommendations for what a library service should be like, the need to focus on what is best for Doncaster and its communities becomes increasingly important. Any recommendations in this report will be made in the context of all of the guidance but will aim to address local issues and address local need for improvement in Doncaster.**

## **2.2. Local policy and local needs**

This section gives a brief overview of Doncaster as a borough and its needs but as this is an internal document it is expected that the readers are fully conversant with the overall picture. The key point is to highlight ways in which libraries can contribute to the Council's priorities and meet community need.

### **The local community**

Doncaster is the largest metropolitan borough in England covering 225 square miles, much of which is rural. Doncaster's population is estimated at 301, 522 (2007) with growth anticipated at a slow rate to more than 322,000 by 2022, but within that a significantly higher growth in the 50 plus age range and a 15% reduction in the working age population, which will create real challenges.

Doncaster is the 41<sup>st</sup> most deprived area in England. Employment rates are low and nearly one in five people were claiming benefits in 2008. Skills levels are low and this affects worklessness to a high degree.

There are infrastructure and transport needs to better link the Borough together and recent town centre developments have made the significant impacts on the look and feel to visitors. In addition there are plans for a new Civic and Cultural Quarter and an ambition to use culture as a driver for change. However, some communities lack access to education and training, jobs, green spaces and facilities.

### **Skills and Learning**

Doncaster has only 17.4% of people qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above and 61.2% to Level 2. A significantly lower number of students progress to higher education than the national average. Skills are a high local priority and there is a need to encourage the take up of training and development opportunities. The number of young people achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A to C was only 39% in 2008.

### **Health**

There are real issues with healthy lifestyle, obesity, age related needs and heart disease in the Borough. Life expectancy is lower than the national average and there is a gap between the most disadvantaged and those who are better off. There are also higher rates of substance abuse in young people and high levels of drug misuse in adults. There is also low participation in cultural and sporting activity.

### **Crime and anti-social behaviour**

Crime rates are higher than the national average, particularly in deprived areas and levels of anti-social behaviour have been increasing. The link is made to improving meaningful life changes, satisfaction with their communities as ways to reduce this.

## **The Borough Strategy, the Mayor's priorities and the Local Area Agreement**

There are seven priorities in the Sustainable Borough Strategy for Doncaster and library services can have an impact on aspects of each one. The Mayor's top ten priorities are included in these shared priorities and those that Library Services can most effectively contribute to are highlighted below. An analysis of key areas of contribution to specific LAA targets is included as **Annexe B**.

**LAA: A prosperous place**

**Mayor: Improving Doncaster's economy through increasing and diversifying business opportunities and tourism opportunities across the Borough**

Ensuring economic growth, design, housing and transport links. This priority has includes tackling worklessness and improving skills.

### **The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Promoting literacy and basic skills
- Providing a safe and friendly community based environment to host job hunting and skills and training opportunities
- Providing access to online technology in the local community to help people help themselves
- Providing a wide range of information and access to support agencies

**LAA: Skills and Lifelong learning**

**Mayor: All children have an education that enables them to make informed choices to meet their needs, have increased access to further and higher education and to succeed in the local job market**

Giving local people the chance to take advantage of economic growth and enjoy a variety of cultural and learning opportunities that improve their quality of life. This priority includes developing a diverse and skilled workforce with increased aspiration, benefiting from education and participating in their cultural heritage.

### **The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Promoting reading and learning through libraries and activities in them
- Providing Bookstart, a chance for early development of literacy and numeracy
- Providing reading development opportunities for all ages
- Providing a high quality library service to schools
- Providing homework help and support for young people
- Providing access to the Internet and online study resources
- Providing information and support from trained staff

**LAA: Healthy and caring**

**Mayor: Ensure people in need of adult social care are provided with a timely and appropriate service**

Improving and protecting the health of all residents, reducing health inequalities and improving quality of life for vulnerable people. This priority focuses on improving the health of the population, reducing health inequalities and improving the quality of life of vulnerable people.

**The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Providing up to date and timely information
- Delivering partnership activities with health providers, such as health information 'on prescription'
- Delivering library services from co-located LIFT buildings with special health information resources
- Providing opportunities for mental health support through meaningful reader development activities and 'books on prescription'

**LAA: Safer, cleaner, greener: a safe, clean and green environment for residents with better parks and open spaces**

**Mayor: Protect the environment from developers, decay and architectural vandalism**

This priority focuses on improving the local community environment and enabling people to feel safe and happy in their local neighbourhood.

**The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Providing high quality and welcoming community buildings that local people enjoy visiting
- Working with other agencies to provide opportunities for young people that improve literacy and skills and reduce anti-social behaviour

**LAA: Improving neighbourhoods together**

**Mayor: Regenerate Doncaster's town centre**

This is a cross cutting priority focusing on providing responsive and accessible neighbourhood service delivery which meets the needs of residents and supports and encourages them to improve their own well-being. This priority aims to improve satisfaction for local people with their local area and to increasingly consult on local decisions and encourage community contribution.

**The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Providing a focal point for neighbourhood delivery in partnership
- Providing meeting spaces and places for community contribution
- Providing a pioneering consultative approach to service delivery
- Providing meaningful volunteering opportunities for local people

**Equality of opportunity**

A cross cutting priority focusing on ensuring that all residents have the same opportunities in life and do not suffer discrimination. This priority aims to ensure



that people from different backgrounds have the same life opportunities and that positive relationships are promoted in communities.

**The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Providing information and resources to support the learning of all communities
- Providing specialist services to vulnerable and disabled people

**Environmental sustainability**

A cross cutting priority focusing on addressing the environmental issues, reducing waste and making the best use of finite resources. This priority aims to improve the local environment and reduce waste.

**The library service has the potential to support this priority through:**

- Promoting Council information to support these aims
- Providing access to Council services that support these priorities, such as waste management.

**2.2. Worklessness and literacy**

Libraries are essentially about reading as their core business. In an area like Doncaster, with very mixed socio-economic backgrounds and some levels of high deprivation literacy as a route to skills and jobs must be a major consideration.

The National Literacy Trust published a policy statement in 2009 that states:

- **One in six people** in the UK struggle with literacy. This means their literacy is below the level expected of an **eleven** year old
- A quarter of young people do not recognise a link between reading and success
- Men and women with poor literacy are **least** likely to be in full-time employment at the age of thirty
- Concerns over **staff literacy** are widespread. Of employers who rate the competency of their low skilled staff as poor or satisfactory, over half report problems with literacy.
- Poor literacy skills can also be a serious barrier to progressing in employment. 63% of men and 75% of women with very low literacy skills have never received a promotion
- There are too many adults who lack basic literacy skills. In 2006 a Government the *Leitch Review*, found that more than five million adults lack functional literacy, the level needed to get by in life and at work
- Age is closely linked to attitudes towards reading and reading behaviour. 30% of 5-8 year olds read a book every day compared with only 17% of 15-17 year olds
- 14% of children and young people in lower income homes rarely or never read their books for pleasure
- **Parents** are the most important reading role models for their children and young people. 71% of young people say that their mothers are their most important role model for reading and 62% say their fathers

- One in five parents finds the opportunity to read to their children, with the rest struggling to read to their children due to fatigue and busy lifestyles. Of the parents that read to the children, 67% are mothers compared to 17% of fathers
- Recent research has shown that the likelihood of fathers reading to their children is linked to their socio-economic background. Fathers with higher incomes are more likely to read to their children, for example, 21% of dads in £40-50k income homes are the principal reader, compared to just 11% in homes with an annual income of £10-15k.

In summary, the public library service should be able to provide a significant contribution to tackling these key areas of need in Doncaster:

- Literacy and worklessness
- Skills and lifelong learning
- Neighbourhood delivery
- Local community identity
- Active and healthy people
- Equal access for vulnerable groups

#### 2.4. Notes of caution: The Wirral Enquiry

Government policy towards Libraries was tested during 2009 when Wirral Council proposed the closure of 11 of its public libraries. Culture Secretary Andy Burnham intervened at the start of April and called for a local inquiry into the proposed closures to test whether the Council's plans were consistent with their statutory duty to provide all residents with a comprehensive public library service. The Council altered its policy before the very clear conclusions of the inquiry, which were:

- That the Council's decision to reform its Library Service in the manner proposed placed it in breach of its statutory duties. The report considered neighbourhood centre model each with a library at its heart is a sound starting principle as a method of delivery **but** the plans need to be based on **evidence** which shows that it comprehensively and efficiently meets the needs of the community desirous of using the Library Service
- That the primary reason for this breach was that the Council **failed to make an assessment of local needs in respect of its Library Services**
- There were concerns that although the Act does not specifically cover the role of schools in library provision, the Council had not been able to demonstrate that it has had **due regard to the general requirements of children**, considered to be a breach of its statutory duties
- The **absence** of a **strategic plan** or a **development plan** for the service, based on an assessment of need and a contemporaneous review of the service, completely hindered the Council being able to describe how its plans would meet the needs of and have due regard of those who live, work and study in the Wirral.
- That there was a further breach in relation to the needs of **deprived**

### **communities**

- That without adequate plans for **outreach services**, the Library Service as a whole would not be compliant
- The report also recommend that the Secretary of State required the Council to produce **a clear strategic development plan for the Library Service** in Wirral to his satisfaction and submit this for approval within six months of the publication of the report
- Subject to his endorsement of this report, the report recommended that the Secretary of State require **updates of this plan** to be submitted to him annually for the next five years, with ongoing support and advice provided by the MLA.

Any Local Authority reviewing its library service must be mindful of these recommendations. It must be demonstrated that an assessment of the impact on local communities has been undertaken.

This report should be able to provide a framework for decision making that will satisfy many of the issues raised by the government in relation to the decisions made in the Wirral. It is absolutely key to have a strategic plan in place that sets decisions in the context of priorities and customer interest.

### 3. Analysis of the current services

#### 3.1. Comparison with CIPFA neighbour authorities

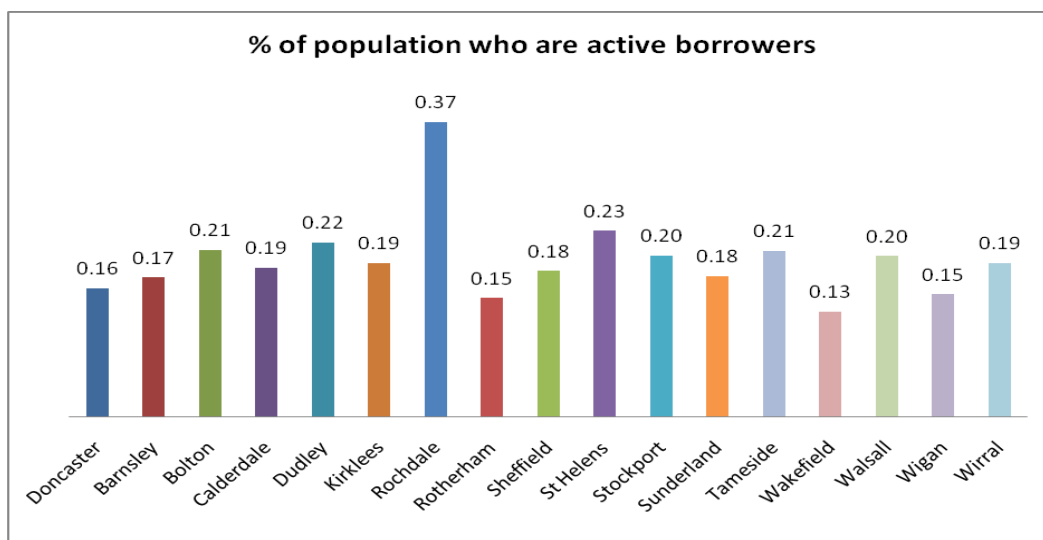
The nearest neighbour authorities are all metropolitan boroughs identified by CIPFA based on the data collected for libraries, including population and usage, and all of the detailed data ranges that make up the public library performance information. All data in this report is based on the CIPFA estimates for 2008-09, the most recently available information.

The nearest neighbour authorities are:

Barnsley	St Helens
Bolton	Stockport
Calderdale	Sunderland
Dudley	Tameside
Kirklees	Wakefield
Rochdale	Walsall
Rotherham	Wigan
Sheffield	Wirral

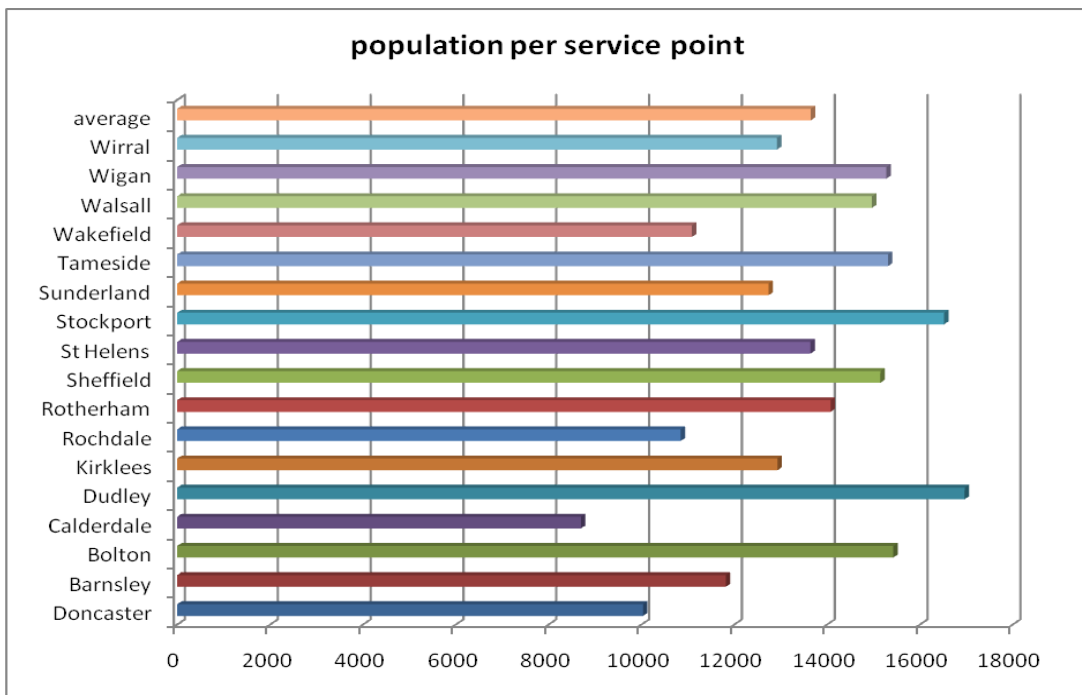
There are more than 200 separate statistical comparators collected for public libraries which are easily available, so this analysis is based on key areas that reflect some of the issues about performance that will be discussed further in the report.

**Figure 1: % of population who are active borrowers**



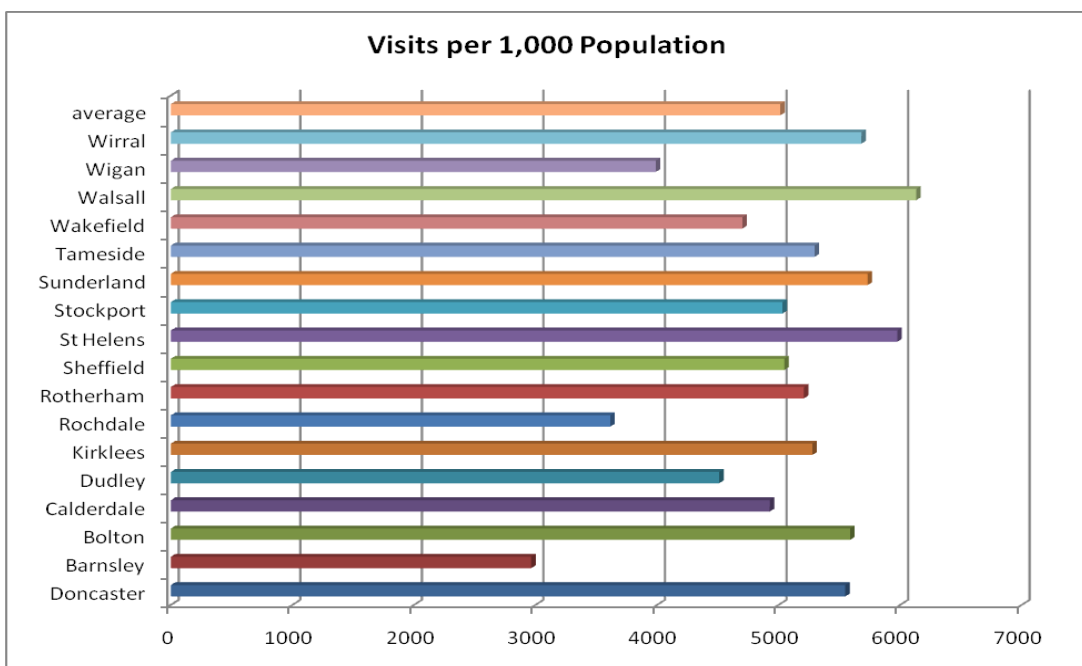
An active borrower is defined as someone who has borrowed at least one item from the library during the year. This figure is sourced from the library management system and relates to borrowing and not membership figures. The average for active borrowers is 19%. Doncaster falls below average at 16% for 2008-09 but this may be lower for 2010-11.

**Figure 2: Population per service point**



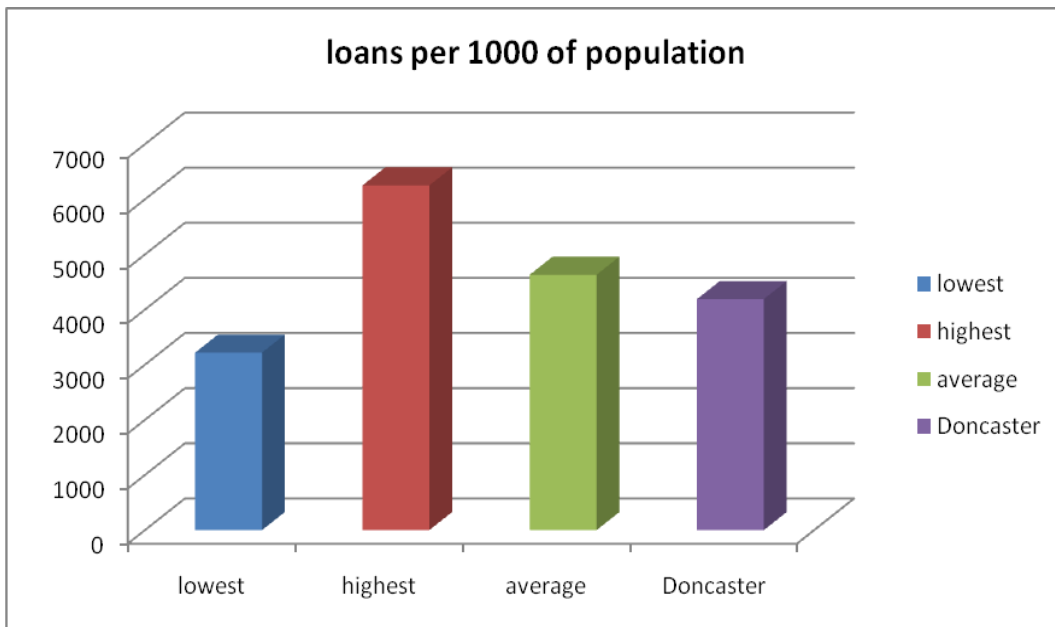
This data relates to the number of libraries per resident. In efficiency terms, more people per library is better as this should demonstrate that the population is being served well from fewer libraries. Doncaster has the second *lowest* number of people per library, (10038 people per library), a high level of distribution. Doncaster is the largest metropolitan borough covering a huge area, so this wide distribution of libraries may be a result of trying to provide for many resident communities.

**Figure 3: Visits per head of population**



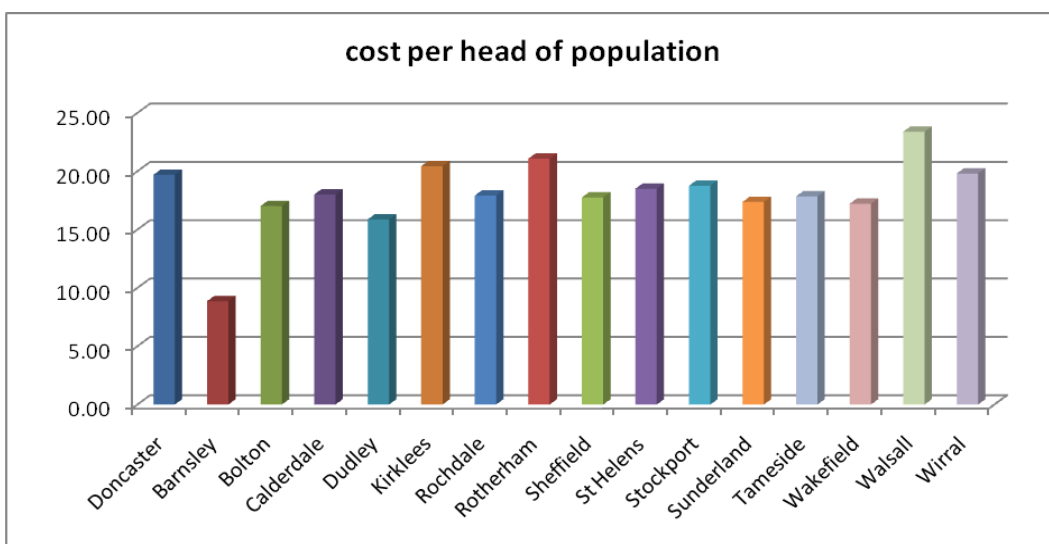
Doncaster's visits per 1000 population are 5548, which is by no means the lowest in the comparator group. However, the visits are in decline. In addition the number of active borrowers is in decline. See **Figure 1** above.

**Figure 4: Loans per head of population**



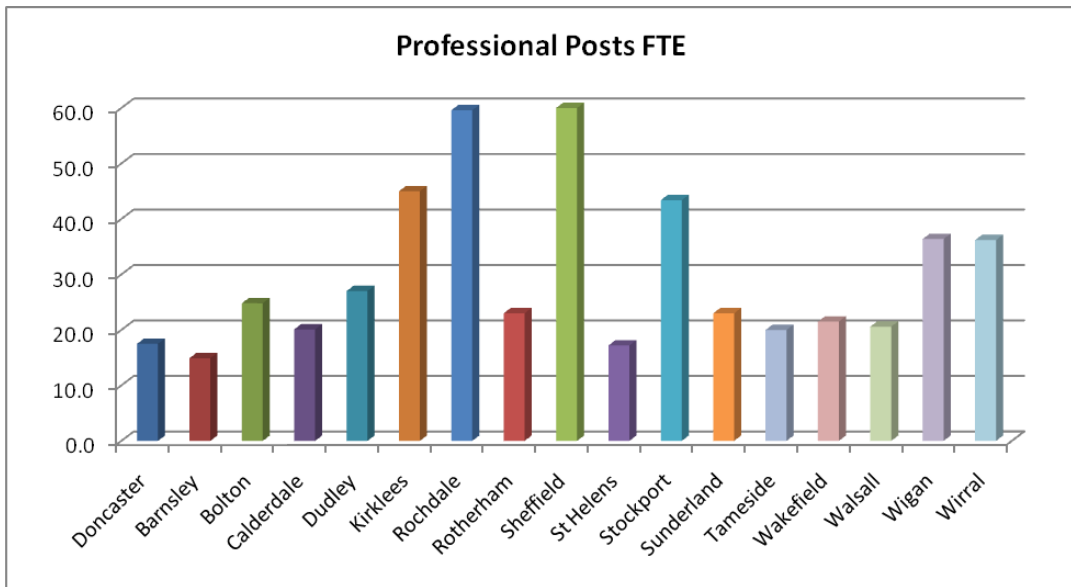
Loans are below average at 4190 per 1000 population. This figure may have decreased in the past year.

**Fig 5: Cost per head of population**



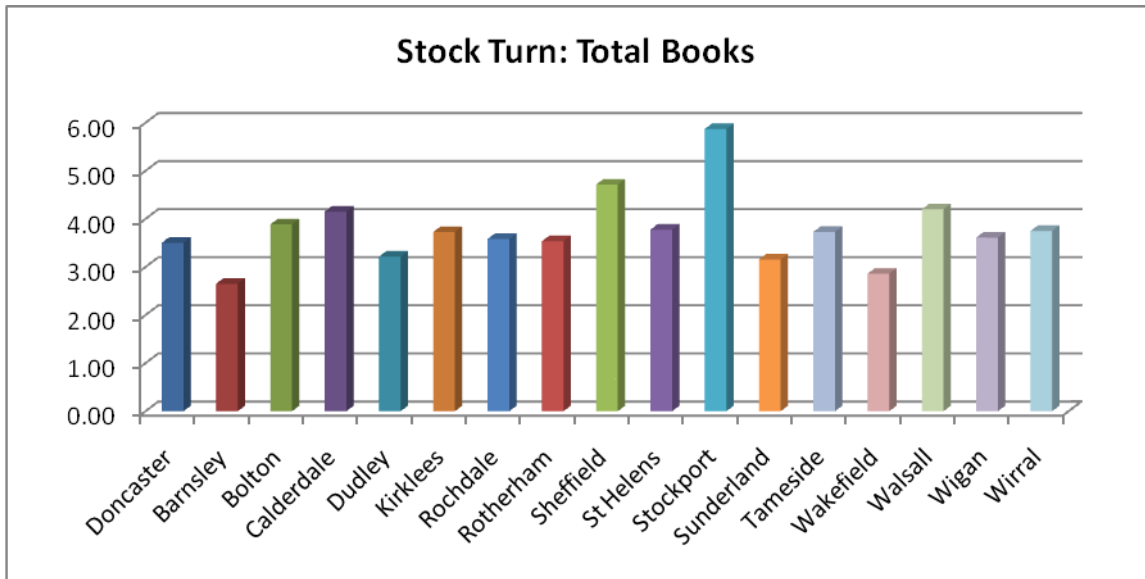
The cost per head for Doncaster in 2008-09 was £19.70. This is higher than average and is possibly due to comparatively high numbers of opening hours. There is comparatively low expenditure to keep each library open, so it is more about the running costs for so many libraries.

**Figure 6: Levels of professional staff**



Doncaster has below average numbers of qualified librarians involved in service delivery. This issue will be addressed later in the report.

**Figure 7: Stock turn: book loans per item per year**



This comparison shows how many times a book is going out per year. On average each book is being borrowed 3.5 times per year, which is about average for the comparator group but could be improved.

### 3.2. Comparison with national standards

#### **National Indicator 9:**

The LAA national indicator for Libraries is **NI 9: the percentage of local residents who have used the public library service in the past year**. This is measured through the Sport England Active People Survey and is currently 36.6%, below the national average.

Doncaster has not adopted NI 9 as an LAA national or local target but it is still valuable to assess the data as a basis for improvement.

#### **Public Library Standards:**

Public Library standards were last revised in 2008 but stand as a good measure of where a service should aspire to. They played a key part in the 18 CPA culture indicator assessments and in Doncaster's 2006 score. In the last CPA rating – The Harder Test, Doncaster scored 2 for Culture (where 26 authorities scored 4, 57 authorities scored 3, 64 authorities scored 2 and 2 authorities scored 1).

A table of the standards and Doncaster's scores is included as **Annexe B**.

At the time the performance against the standards would be classed as adequate, with most of the measures around customer satisfaction being met, a high level of opening hours, above average levels of ICT provision.

However, the standards not met include numbers of visits to libraries and also the measures about the performance of the stock and new items added are not adequate. The percentage of the population living within a mile of a static library is also below standard but given the size of the borough this is not surprising.

The key question is how to maintain the standards that have been met and improve on the others as basic indicators of performance in a time when the resources and usage are declining? The other question that it is worth asking is whether these standards are measuring the right things.

Clearly usage will continue to be a major factor in measuring performance, but there may be other measures that would more significantly tell a story about the success or otherwise of Doncaster's libraries, based on more local priorities.

**Overall, in an analysis against statistical measurements of performance, Doncaster is not performing well and the trend is downward. However, statistics are only a part of the picture and there are signs of optimism in the willingness to look for a new approach and in many pockets of good practice which will be looked at below.**



### 3.2. Comparison with ‘Empower, Enrich, Inform (DCMS)

In **Figure 8** below, Doncaster Libraries ‘offer’ is compared with the core offer and in **Figure 9**, the local offer in the new policy statement from the DCMS.

**Figure 8: comparison with Government’s core offer:**

Description	Analysis of Doncaster’s performance
<b>Library membership from birth:</b>	Negotiations are currently under way with the registrar. Bookstart offers a membership card to all babies at their nine month health check.
<b>An opportunity to have your say and get involved in shaping the service</b>	A number of surveys into satisfaction with the service but no record of consultation on service development in the future.
<b>Free access to a range and quality of book stock to browse and borrow and online resources and information that meet local needs</b> (including e-books as market grows)	Access to a wide range of books is free and through the Yorkshire Book Buying Consortium to a greater number of electronic resources but some delays in being up to date with things that are in demand, due to cost, e.g. Ancestry.com. No market testing of e-books at the current time. No methodology in place for assessing local need.
<b>Access to the national book collection</b> – any book from anywhere: Order any book through your library (even out of print books)	Access is provided but there have been charges for this service which may be deterring people from using it. Also more books are lent across the country than are borrowed for local readers, but there is income generation in providing this.
<b>Free Internet access for all:</b> Computers and access to online information and communication.	A high number of computers are available but there is currently a charge for access after the first hour so this is limiting to the service.
<b>Help to get online:</b> Support for people using the internet for the first time or searching for information	There is support available in partnership with Doncaster College but demand is greater than supply at the moment.
<b>Links to other public services and opportunities:</b> Connections to health, education and learning or employment opportunities	Staff are working hard to make these links with some success but the senior level strategic links that move these partnership opportunities forward are not happening as required due to a lack of leadership availability for libraries.

Description	Analysis of Doncaster's performance
<p><b>A Community of Readers:</b> Connecting people to other readers through reading groups, activities and recommendations</p>	<p>Some activities are being delivered but there are great constraints on resources to ensure that these can happen universally and with the engagement of all staff in each library.</p>
<p><b>Flexible opening hours</b> to suit the needs of local people (local details to be set out)</p>	<p>This is not the case at all. Opening hours are standardised and have not been the subject of consultation with local people or analysis of other local services.</p>
<p><b>Commitment to customer service and expert, helpful staff</b></p>	<p>Commitment is articulated but investment in creating expert staff is not evident from training opportunities or job descriptions.</p>
<p><b>A safe local space which is accessible and convenient for the community</b></p>	<p>Not all of the libraries are in the most accessible locations and they need to be assessed for safety and convenience.</p>
<p><b>24 hour access:</b> Through your library's online catalogue, online reference and other services. Website details to be set out</p>	<p>Limited online access will be greatly improved by the purchase of a new library system to be implemented in 2010. Full 24/7 access should be the result.</p>
<p><b>Services which reach out and attract local people</b> (local details to be set out including 'at home' services to housebound people)</p>	<p>Housebound people receive a good service but outreach to other local groups is limited and particularly services to other vulnerable groups such as those from different ethnic backgrounds.</p>
<p><b>An opportunity to be a member of all libraries in England</b> Easy to join, accessible services</p>	<p>There are still some barriers to making it easy to join but there is a willingness to participate in national schemes.</p>

**Figure 9: comparison with Government's local offer:**

Description	Analysis of Doncaster's performance
<p>Commitments on <b>book stock</b> variety, investment and procurement</p>	<p>This is an area that requires significant modernisation in approach and use of technology and a review of investment and value for money.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities and activities for young people</b> as part of the local provision of positive activities</p>	<p>The support teams are delivering as much activity as possible but there are significant resource issues that make local involvement of staff very difficult. There is no strategy for young people.</p>

Description	Analysis of Doncaster's performance
Provisions for <b>learning</b> such as improving reading and writing skills, and partnerships with local schools, early years settings and children's centres	However, public library involvement is limited due to resource issues and some difficulties in forming partnerships. The School Library Service is doing excellent work in this area. There is no strategy for children, this no articulated offer.
<b>An events programme</b> including training events or activities for readers and author visits	This is provided in a limited way due to resources, there are no real budgets allocated to development activity. Even for example, to pay transport costs for an author. Staff constantly look for sponsorship but have to miss some offers that they cannot match with resources.
<b>Family activities:</b> Family reading and learning activities – Bookstart, Rhymetime, homework clubs, links to family information services, holiday reading challenges.	Bookstart and Rhymetime are provided and there is support for homework clubs. The lack of strategic links can make it difficult to have a planned programme linking across to other service providers although efforts are made wherever possible to do so.
<b>Programmes of engagement with the community</b> including outreach initiatives and ways of encouraging wider usage, including families	There are few outreach and marketing initiatives principally due to lack of resources and there is no articulated strategy for addressing the decline in service take up through marketing and outreach activity.
Details of how to get involved with <b>user groups</b> , supporting or influencing the library service	There is some user involvement through reading groups and visually impaired groups but no overall strategy for user engagement and on vehicle specifically for it.
<b>Spaces for community use</b>	These exist and need further exploitation.
<b>Childcare</b> or crèche	Not currently provided but would only be so for specific reasons.
<b>Additional services</b> like CD and DVD borrowing, a book delivery service, coffee shops	CDs and DVDs are available for loan, book delivery may be investigated in future and the coffee shop in the Central Library was closed.

**There is still some way to go for Doncaster to be able to meet the requirements of the new Government policy for the core and the local offer, but every small change will help to improve the services.**

Empower, Enrich, Inform also asks some key questions about how the services are performing and relating to the customer and the community and these are analysed below:

**What resources are available and how does this match the needs of the community?** *Have you analysed and considered need and demand? What are the specific needs of adults, families and young people of all ages? Would members of the community be able and willing to contribute to the delivery of library services as volunteers or joint managers?*

At the moment, services in Doncaster are based on historical provision, attempts to serve all of its communities in a vast geographical area and historic political decisions about where services should be provided. There is a good understanding of the specialist needs of vulnerable groups but no overall analysis in a strategy that draws on the knowledge of experts in other Council departments such as Adult and Children's Services.

Volunteers are used in a limited way but there is no strategy of participation and involvement. This needs to be investigated in the future, and there are examples of successful community run library services, that do not take away from core provision.

**What are the needs of those living, working and studying in the area?** *How accessible is the service? Is public transport appropriate? Are there barriers to physical access of library buildings that should be removed? Have local people been consulted? How? What are the views of users and what are the views of non users? Have you done an Equality Impact Assessment?*

In terms of physical accessibility, there are a high proportion of libraries across the borough though some are barely adequate in their provision of access for people with disabilities. An Equalities Impact Assessment has now been completed.

There has been no consultation with local people other than in surveys regarding satisfaction to users in the library. There has been no consultation with non-users or lapsed users of library services, who are in the majority. This will be addressed in the recommendations.

**What implications are there for other strategies e.g. educational attainment, support for those seeking work, digital inclusion, adult social care?**

There is some excellent work being done to address these issues in pockets and at local level, as well as some partnership negotiation. However, without a strategic link being made and a senior level partnership broker, this work is hard to get off the ground. The contribution that libraries can make to these agendas must be articulated and championed.

**Are there other partnerships that can be explored – e.g. with the third sector, community and development trusts or town and parish councils?**

There are without doubt other partnerships that can be explored and people who would want to work with the Library Service, but there is very limited capacity and lack of any kind of articulated engagement strategy so these partnerships are being developed in an ad hoc manner and based on current opportunity. There are also elements of Library Service delivery that in other places would be delivered by the third sector and negotiations should happen around making that so, in particular the Reading Aids Service.

**How efficient is the current service?** *Are the arrangements for the delivery of the library service (eg buildings, staff, service provision, facilities, online presence etc) meeting the demand of the community and are they cost efficient?*

The arrangements will be discussed further below but currently they are neither entirely efficient nor meet community needs. There are a lot of libraries but many are of a low standard of building internally and externally and are they are not all in the right location. There are significant costs of maintaining the current infrastructure that means outreach activity is limited. There are good numbers of computers for online access but charges imposed after the first hour. There is an inadequate online presence at the moment.

*What other delivery partnerships could be formed inside and outside the library authority or region to make the library service more efficient and effective?*

Other Council departments have expressed a keen interest in working more closely with the service. Some regional partnerships are in place, such as the book buying consortium and there is discussion about offering schools services to a neighbouring area but there is no strategy and analysis of potential partners.

**Can the facilities be used more flexibly?**

There are a number of large library buildings with unused floors or back offices that could be shared. The majority of the libraries are in need of modernisation to create spaces that are suitable for usage of different facilities. All libraries can be customer service centres.

**What are you doing to encourage use and maximise income?**

There is no income generation strategy and in fact there are income targets against services that are either no longer delivered or do not generate sufficient interest to generate funds. There is a need to review all targets and identify new sources of income, such as delivering services for other departments or other authorities, or new delivery partnerships.

**What scope is there for integrating or co-locating the library service with other services in the public or private sector (eg council services, post offices, schools, children's centres etc)**

There are ongoing discussions with the PCT and with Building Schools for the Future about provision of library services in new builds. However, there needs to be a number of strategic conversations about the future direction of libraries in local communities and the meaning of shared facilities, the limits and the benefits.

### 3.4. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis is included as **Figure 8** below. The strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal elements of the Service highlighting key areas where there are signs of good practice and good quality services. The assessment of opportunities and threats will be more externally focused and will also draw on a PESTLE analysis in **Annexe C**.

**Figure 8: SWOT analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Commitment of leadership Some very dedicated and skilled staff Well stocked, lots of computers Good locations for some and some New and refurbished buildings School library service	Who is in charge? Workforce, skills and culture Old buildings and outdated infrastructure Outdated back office processes Limitations on services to vulnerable people
Borough strategy Partnerships in neighbourhoods Local positioning New Civic and Cultural Quarter Literacy needs in community Children and family priorities	Public spending cuts Political environment External government pressure Resistance to change Lack of understanding of role and value of libraries at strategic level

### **Opportunities**

### **Threats**

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

#### **Who is in charge?**

**The most important element in any organisation’s success has to be its leadership.** In the case of the Library Service, there is a commitment to making it a success at senior level, which is a major strength. At the moment, there is no one overall senior person responsible for delivering a comprehensive and efficient service and for championing that service and its potential across the Council. **There is an urgent need for an expert who can articulate the contribution that libraries can make to overall Council objectives.**

The issues are complicated by management structures. The services are split between front line community library services delivered across neighbourhoods, sharing the same management as the Central Library, and further complicated by the delivery of Customer Services at some but not all of the libraries.. A central team of

specialist services delivering reading development activities, home and mobile library services, schools and prison services, local history, reference and bibliographical services.

The front line staff teams are managed by neighbourhood managers and supervisors some of whom have less than a basic knowledge of the skills related to delivery of library services but also the ethos, purpose and potential of libraries and their impact on the local community.

There are dedicated and committed managers at all levels in the service but the current **system** seems to stop the whole service from moving forward as the decision making process and negotiation between the deliverers of the front line and of the specialist services become an issue. The service is becoming dysfunctional and losing its focus as lack of clarity of purpose is leading to confusion and lack of direction.

Culturally, the service is suffering from management by email, lack of coherence in messages and different messages depending where you work. In discussions with library staff at all levels in the organisation, **it becomes clear that some people are not clear who is in charge at all and feel as though they are working for more than one boss.** At the same time, conflicting instructions can come from different areas of the management structure.

The centralised services and the front line do not have a shared philosophy about what they are there to do.. Staff in branch libraries feel that initiatives are piloted in and due to the lack of time and low numbers that they have to work with, they cannot get involved in delivering the added value community engagement work.

People who work in the centralised teams feel resented by some staff at the front line and the culture has become one of asking for 'favours' as opposed to being clear about who is doing what. As there have been attempts to change and modernise the service, the traditional cultures have not been addressed and the removal of some long term working practices has led to resentment, as there has been no other rationale for change put forward apart from efficiency.

There is a big variation in culture and practice across the teams, from basic procedures, to a series of 'beliefs' about what is happening to very obvious things such as the adoption of uniforms by some libraries and not by others. **Such behaviours appear in organisations where there is no clear vision and messages being communicated from the top. Where there is a vacuum, people fill it with their own perceptions and behaviours.**

### **Workforce and skills**

The strength for the library services as whole and the good news for the Council is that from top to bottom across the staff teams and beyond, there is a belief that libraries are a good thing and can do valuable work, even if there is not a clear picture of what that might be.

There are many dedicated people in the Library Service who are committed to their community and customers, are champions of reading, learning and inclusion. There are areas of excellent practice and many national initiatives are being pursued despite low levels of resources.

However, there are a considerable number of staff who lack a fundamental understanding of the purpose of libraries and their role in the community but also lack the basic skills, such as stock management and working with children and young people. There are few people around in the service who can create a picture for all staff of what a modern library service should offer its customers.

Doncaster has a very low number of professionally qualified staff working in the service, at 17.5 people. This is one of the lowest of any authority but the issue is **not** necessarily about numbers but about professionalism, attitudes and skills. With these low levels, there are few people around the service to advise on what a good library service should be like from their experience and expertise. There are no professionals from other disciplines such as youth or community work to enhance and link in service provision. Overall the service has lost some of its professional standards which is impacting on service delivery.

A review of the job descriptions reveals that current job profiles for front line staff do not mention any specific skills for library work as a requirement and also do not mention working with children, an essential component of these important frontline jobs. This applies to supervisors as well as to assistants. There is no requirement to have any knowledge or show potential to develop any skills in these areas.

Everyone in the library service needs to be working together as a team and with different bosses and different messages, this becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. *Senior managers themselves asked for definitions of a core library service and what it was supposed to do and favoured the idea of creating that core service which could offer to deliver customer services to neighbourhoods.*

**There is little point in buying new library technology and attempting to modernise systems and practices without modernising the strategy, thinking and vision of the libraries and ensuring that this is understood throughout the service with appropriate cultural change management. This is the only way to ensure success.**

### **The library buildings network**

There is a huge variation in the quality of the library buildings across the Borough. On one hand, opportunities to develop new libraries in partnership have been taken up with considerable success, such as the LIFT partnership libraries at Edlington and Thorne, although less successfully so at Denaby where the usage has not increased. It is unclear what research was done into community need when this project was initiated.



Investment in library buildings clearly stopped in the 1980's, but it is not necessarily age that inhibits the effective use of the buildings. Those built in the 1960's, the small 'square' libraries in smaller communities, whilst not very spacious, tend to be light and welcoming and with refurbishment could be adequate for purpose. However, some of the more recent buildings from the '70's and early '80's were ill conceived and whilst seemingly very spacious, are not well designed and are inefficient, with high ceilings, appearing dark and less welcoming. The fact that they have not been decorated for many years does not help, and mezzanine floors create both difficulties with supervision and with wasted space.

Some investment in libraries that are customer service centres has improved the look and feel and created meeting spaces and private rooms that can be used by the community. However, many buildings are desperate for internal refurbishment and no matter how much money were spent it is difficult to improve the external aspect of some of them. Some have empty space that has to be maintained but is not used, whilst others are bursting at the seams.

There are major challenges in trying to operate a modern library service from buildings that are outdated, not kept up well and not fit for purpose. This includes the Central Library, which was built as a carpet factory, is poorly located and has not benefited from any significant modernisation.

At the same time, the lack of understanding about service delivery can mean that internal presentation is lacking, and the arrangement and amateur look of the libraries can put people off. For example, children's sections or computer suites being located up a difficult set of stairs, lack of planning of spaces, hand-made signage, untidiness, lack of attractive display and out of date materials being kept.

Some libraries are simply located in the wrong place, with difficulties with access, bad signposting and unwelcoming frontage contributing to the lack of custom. No analysis of the community facilities has taken place in a systematic way to ensure that libraries are located in the right places and are accessible and convenient for local users.

There is a very low maintenance budget (£75k per annum across all sites) which cannot realistically do more than plug leaks and deal with immediate needs. There is no capital renewal programme for libraries which means that refurbishments are not scheduled. New developments will not happen unless there is an entrepreneurial approach to partnership from a strong leadership who can make the case that any significant new development in a community could potentially include a library.

Many of these buildings do not present a positive image of the Council, although this should be qualified with the statement that this *can be* and often *is* overcome by the welcome of the staff, which was clear at a number of locations.

Library buildings are one of the few that customers *choose* to enter and use to take up Council Services and there are also many of them distributed in local communities.

A local authority building in a community sends a message to local people about how the Council cares for them and the environment that they want to provide for their leisure and learning time.

**The Council faces a key decision as to whether to continue to deliver services from an infrastructure of buildings that it cannot afford to maintain to an acceptable standard, or delivers from fewer but better buildings that can provide a range of modern services and are welcoming to children, families, learners and vulnerable groups.**

### **Opening hours**

There are comparatively long library opening hours in Doncaster across the whole of the service, with a fairly standard matrix of hours which relates to the size of library and community served, but is also driven by access to customer services. The hours that are in place have generally evolved historically and in some cases are limiting access at times when children and families might find the service most accessible and come in to use the facilities.

However, there has been no local consultation about the opening hours and no tailoring to the needs of individual communities or recognition of different needs. There is no opening on a Sunday and Saturday hours are limited. Basic online access is provided to allow for requests and renewals of loans and there are also connections to online reference and enquiry services.

This standardised approach is not the most effective use of resources and does not chime with Government guidelines about flexibility relating to the needs of each community. It may also be that some libraries are open more hours than they need to be and others too few. Given the constraints that maintaining these hours with minimum staffing puts on both budgets and service quality, it would seem that this is unsustainable in the future.

**Overall there is a sense that the Council is telling the customer that there is a certain way, time or place to access Library Services but not designing services around the needs of the customer, whether that be to have the library open on a Sunday or access services and order books online.**

### **Stock**

Library stock is a problematic area where considerable resource is being expended on books and other materials but the return on the investment is not being seen at the moment, as the numbers of books and other items on loan continue to decrease.

The best deal on book purchasing is being achieved through the North West and Yorkshire Purchasing Consortium which is a good efficiency measure. However, the methods of procurement are outdated, in that staff members still select books, a

time consuming activity which in most library authorities is a service provided by the supplier and tailored to the needs of the customer. Little benchmarking activity is undertaken to compare stock performance with other authorities.

The Bibliographical Services Team is large in comparison to most modern library services and works in a traditional way with very little automation of key processes. Cataloguing books is undertaken in house, which in most library authorities is an automated function in the majority of cases and done by suppliers prior to delivery.

The outdated stock management systems mean that material is not circulating between libraries and this has impact on buying decisions. Data is available on which areas of the stock are most heavily used, but does not always seem to be made the best use of. The push to make books and other materials perform and earn their place on the shelves is not evident.

Large amounts of excess stock in good condition that are in storage as opposed to being on the library shelves mean one of two things: that fewer items are being borrowed or the wrong books are being purchased. In the case of Doncaster, there is evidence that both are true.

There has been no formal assessment of customer needs and the librarians working in the Bibliographical Services Department do not regularly visit and consult with front line library staff about what items are most frequently in demand or assist them in skills with presenting the material. Considering the lack of library skills in the front line staff this would seem to be a much needed service to the community libraries.

Much time is spent on loaning material to other library authorities which whilst this generates income also employs the bulk of the time of two staff members. This kind of demand on Doncaster's stock from other libraries suggests that decisions are being made to purchase material that others choose to loan on demand but do not invest in as a part of their own collection.

Many of the income generation targets are linked to stock performance and therefore struggling. Some types of loan such as DVDs would pay for the purchase of the new stock if all income was reinvested, but this is not possible due to corporate income targets, and in some cases there are income targets against material that is no longer loaned which is negative and untenable in a modern service.

There is some analysis of popularity of items but there has been no formal consultation with customers about the types of material that they would prefer. Clearly people have wide tastes, but some questions could be asked to inform buying decisions.

A range of very modern tools are available for analysing customer choices and tailoring purchases to need and these will be implemented with the new library system purchase. *However*, again it is a question of changing culture at the same

time as changing systems or this investment will not achieve what it has been designed to do.

Reference services are beginning to modernise as the consortium purchasing of online reference materials has been introduced. However there has not been any comprehensive monitoring of how the reference and information collections are used that would allow the services to be tailored to customer need. The removal of Doncaster College to its new site has seriously affected business from students in the Central Library. Online services are clearly superseding book based materials and it is important that these are made as accessible as possible.

**With the stock fund approximating £300k, there is an average of £1 per person spent on materials for libraries each year. Ensuring the choice of a range of materials in good condition and including the latest in demand titles is essential for any successful library service. The way that these materials are procured and provided in Doncaster needs to be reviewed and modernised to ensure best value for the tax payer's investment and the broadest choice for the customer.**

#### **Services to vulnerable groups**

There are many excellent examples of initiatives that the Library Service teams have been involved with which are very valuable to a number of vulnerable groups. These include the Home Library Service for older people and people with disabilities, the Reader Development Service, developing partnerships for learning at local libraries with training and job support providers and initiatives such as the Six Book Challenge for basic skills level adult readers.

There is a successful Bookstart Scheme delivered to all babies in the Borough and also the Summer Reading Challenge, which increased take up by about 15% last year. The people delivering these activities in the Central teams believe strongly in the value of engaging children and families in reading and of the long term impact on literacy and skills.

Prison and Health Libraries provide excellent services delivered through the Library Service but funded separately. These are delivered in a very targeted and professional way and support the learning of those in vulnerable situations. There is a key difference where services that are externally funded is concerned in terms of accountable delivery, standards and targets that is more clearly articulated than in the internally funded services. The Schools Library Service is an excellent example of this and will be discussed more in Section 4.

With a 3.5% black and ethnic minority population and a growing refugee community there is a real need to provide resources for these groups. The libraries have no publicity material in other languages, no book collections in other languages at any other libraries than the Central Library and no special support provision. Some excellent work was taking place with a book club with the Refugee Reach programme but this seems to have stopped.

The work that teams deliver from the centre is somewhat isolated from front line delivery and local staff team members in libraries do not as a matter of course get involved in the planning and delivery of activities. Many staff would be keen to do so but time is limited and a lack of understanding for line teams about their role in following up with the participants and providing encouragement to further develop their interest in reading.

There are too many initiatives to respond to and a lack of prioritisation. Where resources are limited, choices need to be made about the areas to focus on whether it is literacy, children and families, older people or the visually impaired. Also, there is again a sense that team leaders are struggling to demonstrate the value of what they do without using proper impact assessment tools but most importantly without having a strategic champion to articulate these offers into the Borough Strategy.

A key issue is the lack of funds to target at development activities and seed corn activities which need to be delivered in partnership with a small investment to support this. Whether this is paying for an author visit or purchasing high quality publicity materials, these smaller investments are needed to support new initiatives and to enable new target groups to be reached. So much resource is needed to keep the infrastructure afloat that there is little spare funding to support much needed and valued interventions.

**Reading is not a mission for *all* of the library staff, from front line to back office. The value of literacy and its link to learning and skills should be embedded in the organisation as the name of a seaside town in a stick of rock. This mission should be the unifying factor that creates a sense of values and an ethos that supports all of the work with the customer.**

**There is no clash between this and the delivery of customer services, as the belief that libraries are the place for help and information of any kind is fundamental to good customer service and every visitor is a potential reader. This mission and the associated values have not been cemented together between the customer services and the library specialist managers and staff.**

## **Opportunities**

### **The Borough Strategy**

The Sustainable Borough Strategy includes a number of priorities that public libraries at their best could make a significant contribution towards. These are listed in **Annexe A** but focus particularly on worklessness, educational attainment, basic skills and learning. In addition the focus on community cohesion and satisfaction with opportunities in the local area are priorities where libraries could provide a significant contribution.

Libraries are about literacy and about encouraging people to read and learn. The opportunities that can be found to have access to learning outside of the class room from small children to adults can be invaluable. The ability to get online and access the world of information, develop new skills and seek for jobs.

**What is needed is a clear strategic approach to embedding library services in those core priorities and creating performance targets that reflect them.**

### **Partnerships**

Doncaster is full of potential for partnerships. The Library teams have already worked hard to form good relationships with a number of other departments and organisations from local colleges, Children's Services, the PCT, Doncaster Rovers, Surestart and many others. There is potential for a lot more, particularly to develop new building programmes and to deliver learning opportunities.

**The Library Service must look to develop a partnership strategy and to articulate its offer to other local providers, so that client groups can access different services more cohesively and more efficiently.**

### **Local positioning**

It has already been recognised by the introduction of customer services provision into libraries that there is a value in locally delivered access to Council services and also in having a local presence. Doncaster is all about its communities and the Sustainable Borough Strategy is all about making them good to live in.

Libraries are traditionally built at the heart of the community, and are a rare freely accessible and social space that is provided by the Council to build people up and offer a range of recreational, learning and information services. If these are delivered in a modern and attractive way, libraries can be a huge asset to the local community.

**Every opportunity must be sought to create or recreate attractive and welcoming spaces that make people enjoy being part of the local community that demonstrate the investment that the Council is putting in to improving local communities and service.**

### **The New Civic and Cultural Quarter**

The creation of a new Civic and Cultural Quarter provides the most exciting opportunity to deliver a flagship central library and the heart of new development in Doncaster and is a significant part of creating a vibrant and dynamic heart to the town centre.

The examples of Norwich and Newcastle have demonstrated what a new Central Library can deliver in terms of not only showcase modernised services but also tremendous civic pride, new business partnerships and increased take up in services.

**This opportunity for a new Central Library needs to be developed with the greatest care and planning for the best contribution to the regeneration and renewal of the centre of the Borough.**

### **Literacy needs in the community**

Section 2 outlined in some detail the profile of Doncaster in terms of basic skills and learning. Across the Borough interventions are in place to support the development of literacy and to encourage people's learning from early years, to increasing school attendance, to adult and community learning.

The Library Service is perfectly placed to offer a safe and less institutionalised learning space where people can expect to come and get help with reading and access to online materials. Successful participation in the Six Book Challenge has already proved that libraries are the place where people can get the support they need.

**Libraries have the potential to get the community reading by providing excellent quality books, a range of activities, support when needed and focusing on children and families to give children the best start in their reading lives.**

### **Children and family priorities**

Libraries already offer a range of provision for children with books and activities, Bookstart, reading clubs and school library services. This needs to be improved and developed, particularly by increasing the number of staff who have specialist skills in working with children but also by ensuring that all staff are recruited and trained on the basis that welcoming families and also young people are a top priority.

**Libraries can help to offer the best start in life and encourage parents to read and learn alongside their children, working closely with other Council and community providers.**

### **Threats**

#### **Public spending cuts**

As the country comes out of recession the next government will be looking to make further cuts in public services to balance the books. Local authorities will be hard hit and libraries are often at the top of a list, being seen as 'non-critical' services with discretionary spend.

There is no easy answer to this, except that there is now a policy statement from government (Empower, Enrich, Inform) that declares the intention to monitor service provision and encourages libraries to be embedded in wider delivery.

In terms of impact and potential, and the proportion of spend, libraries should be able to demonstrate that they provide consistent value for money. The government has made it clear that library closures cannot be done without a plan for service development.

**Libraries need to take every opportunity to provide solutions to the delivery of other Council services and to actively seek to be commissioned to deliver them. The key is to set them in the context of their wider contribution to the strategic needs of the Borough and to have a realistic and modern delivery model that makes the best of limited resources, keeping the customer at the heart of the service.**

### **Political environment**

The many changes to the political environment in Doncaster have had an impact on service delivery. A clear line from the political decision makers to service delivery on the ground should be evident but the picture in Doncaster is confused and cloudy. Decisions about some services or service points being available or not have no firm basis in strategy but are not politically attributable. It is not always clear to management or staff why or by whom decisions have been made.

**Libraries must be led and championed by expert voices who can help all parties to agree that they provide a neutral and beneficial space for all members of the community in local areas and should be encouraged to perform at their best.**

### **External government pressure**

The library services in Doncaster have already been subject to interest from government bodies, based purely on statistical analysis. This is insufficient understanding to make a clear judgement but nevertheless there is pressure to demonstrate significant improvement to services or attract further intervention.

**The key thing is to be able to demonstrate that there has been review and consideration of the performance issues and that there is a plan for improvement and a strategic direction for change in place.**

### **Resistance to change**

The threat to change is both internal and external as staff have to cope with the changes that will be introduced, there may be local concerns and political issues relating to changes in the delivery infrastructure and also there may be concern from customers about what is going to happen.

**Change needs to be managed. Any proposed changes need wide political and senior management support and brave decisions need to be taken. The need for strong leadership to drive this forward cannot be underestimated.**



### **Lack of understanding of role and value of libraries at strategic level**

Discussion and consultation with senior managers, elected members and senior staff from other departments has evidenced a lack of understanding of the core purpose of a library service and its potential to deliver on broader Council targets.

**It is essential for senior staff and politicians to grasp the potential contribution of libraries to their local communities and local priorities. If this does not happen, the service that is invested in will not deliver value for money and will continue in a downward trend.**

## 4. Critical success factors

### 4.1. Case studies of successful change

A number of case studies of other library services in English local authorities that have successfully transformed their library services have been studied to identify the critical success factors that made real change happen and improved the take up of library services. There are very clear themes that emerge:

#### **Leadership**

Case Study material shows that successful transformations have been underpinned by clear vision and effective leadership, with buy-in from all areas of the councils involved, an effective communication strategy, and workforce development and reform. **Passion for libraries, the expertise to know what they can contribute to local authority agendas, bringing stakeholders on board, and a sticking to a clear vision and message seem to be the key ingredients in effective leadership.**

In Lincolnshire, the library service review was led by the Assistant Chief Executive. In Staffordshire's review *'the new vision for the service was articulated in relation to the Local Authority's own objectives for culture, education and children's services to ensure that the library service was well integrated into Local Authority structures and seen as a good partner for other organisations working within the Local Authority. Children, Learning and reading was chosen as the strategic focus for the service because it provided a clear description of what cultural services offer through areas of work that were tangible, understood in a Local Authority context and delivering wider impacts.'*

The Head of Libraries and Information Services in Leicester said: *'In Leicester, staff are used to change. The speed of our organisational development has just got faster and faster. The more you change and are able to show that the change is effective, the more relaxed people become about change.'*

**A strong and determined leadership is required to deliver and sustain effective change. The leader needs to be able to deliver the necessary change and articulate the vision at the same time. The key challenge is taking staff and stakeholders with them and sticking to the transformational vision whilst taking difficult decisions, keeping the end goal in mind.**

#### **Workforce reform (encompassing workforce development and remodelling)**

Framework for the Future, the MLA Action Plan for Public Libraries states that the best libraries *'perform to the highest levels and champion continuous professional development, through a workforce that comprises a wide range of talent, competency and skill'* (2008). There are comments on the depleted numbers of qualified staff and over reliance on unqualified and volunteer staff. There is reference to the lack of business and leadership skills within libraries.

Newcastle's case study demonstrates the strongest commitment to staff development: *'Workforce development has been a focus for investment. Professional and technical skills for basic grade librarians – many long standing staff - were prioritised, utilising a 1 day / week course in partnership with Northumbria University. Elsewhere leadership training was commissioned to build on training received through the national library leadership programme and specifically address issues of change.'*

In Kent, where customer services are also delivered through libraries, a model for focusing on the customer was developed. *'In order to understand how the service needed to develop, community librarians were expected to spend more time developing relationships with their communities and building local partnerships. Supporting them were specialist teams, bringing expertise in areas including: family and lifelong learning; IT; and publicity and promotion. Change was only successfully implemented because staff understood the service priorities and were able to focus their reduced capacity in these areas.'*

In Lincolnshire, activities included significant workforce development and regular staff communication. The staff appraisal system was used to identify skills needs, which were cross referenced to the future direction of service. External funding provided bespoke training for library, heritage and learning roles and also customer service and care.

**Without a workforce that understands and engages with the vision for the library service, is recruited to deliver it and equipped through development, success and that vital improvement in customer service will be impossible to deliver.**

### **Communication**

A number of case studies demonstrate the need for effective communication when a service is going through change, and to support ongoing development and improvement of services. Different methods are employed to ensure that staff, customers, elected members, and other parts of the council are kept up to date on what is happening, and crucially *why*, and that there is the opportunity to feedback and to input into discussions.

Lincolnshire developed a clear communications strategy as part of its review of services, to reinforce key messages about the purpose of the change. For the customers, this included a commitment to:

- 'You said, we did', explaining the change in hours was in response to the need for convenience and access identified through the consultation process
- Decisions were backed up with data, to demonstrate how through restructuring opening hours (including an overall 10% reduction, cutting the hours of some service points) the library would be more convenient for more people.
- Flagging up a willingness to review the opening hours should visit figures fall

In Newcastle, the change process was not always easy, and the review process was *'underpinned by consistent communication and information sharing by senior managers, including hard messages about drivers for change (for example stakeholder needs and expectations; peer performance) and challenge to the status quo.'*

**In implementing change to the Library Service in Doncaster, a planned communication strategy to ensure the engagement of staff, senior managers and elected members, and most importantly the customers and potential customers will be essential to achieve success.**

#### **Stakeholder engagement:**

The importance of engagement of elected members is cited in most case studies and is vital for Doncaster. At a workshop to discuss the libraries review, members who attended showed an enthusiasm and commitment to their communities and an understanding of the potential of libraries to contribute to cohesion, family learning and inclusion, but this must be built upon.

In Newcastle, it was recognised that *'a key underpinning element of this success is engagement of elected members and officers across the council...Working to maintain these stakeholder relationships is time consuming, but a critical part of the day job. Monthly meetings are held with the portfolio holder and regular opportunities are sought to brief the leader and deputy.'*

Key stakeholders mentioned across the case studies include elected members, other parts of the authority, customer groups, and inclusion groups, representing for example, people with disabilities and older people.

**A stakeholder analysis and engagement strategy will be essential to successful change.**

#### **Specialist input to change and improvement of services:**

Using specialists from other backgrounds was welcomed by more innovative services and significantly contributed to success. Kent developed specialist teams to support the service which look at; family and lifelong learning, IT, publicity and promotion.

Leicester employed a Participation Manager 'to provide guidance to library staff and make sure all staff were aware of the need to promote participation and had the skills and capabilities to do so.' This was backed up with specific workforce targets for staff.

**Doncaster libraries current structure may need specialist support in areas such as learning and literacy or youth and family work to add their professional skills and develop strategies for engaging and working with new client groups.**

## Collaborations and mergers

The new government policy statement encourages public libraries to seek opportunities to deliver services for other parts of the council or other organisations. Other authorities, like Doncaster, house customer services within their buildings, delivering a joint service.

Partnerships and collaborations across the authority could add value, provide solutions for delivery for other departments and extend the reach of the library services. There are already excellent examples such as the 'information on prescription' service, where libraries are providing health information to customers, and this could lead to further developments opportunities with the PCT. Partnerships with Doncaster College are facilitating free computer training sessions for adults.

'All library authorities should do more to respond to **local authority commissioning**, developing the necessary understanding and skills to identify new opportunities for the library service.' (**All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries: Literacy and Information Management: Report of the Inquiry into the Governance and Leadership of the Public Library Service in England September 2009**)

**However, Doncaster libraries need to re-group and re-focus to deliver core service and its strengths before being in a position to deliver on targets for other departments. The initial focus must be on restructure and renewal of the library service to provide the potential and capacity to deliver more in partnership with others.**

## School Library Services

The School Library Services are a particular example of a 'star' service that demonstrates some of the key factors that could be crucial for the success of the of the library service. The Service has a dedicated team of librarians and assistants and a well stocked resource centre. Funding is delegated to schools and services 'bought in' with a take up of about 70% across the Borough at the present time.

Staff take great pride in preparing bespoke book collections for the schools to support the curriculum and a variety of projects. They offer a 'hit squad' service to schools, where a team of library staff go in and re-model a library. They support reading groups in schools, homework clubs and national literature initiatives

More recently, the service has developed to include a wide range of literature development and outreach activities in schools which are in very high demand as more schools experience their value and the feedback is excellent. There is a real sense among the staff of a shared vision and dedication to the core purpose of enthusing children to read and every child to join their local library.

The service is in demand and there are moves to expand and to begin to offer services across local authority boundaries. There are some key factors which make this service successful which could provide a model for the rest of the library service.

- Treat the services as though your customers were paying because they are, through their taxes
- Have a clear discreet structure with a core service and mission
- Using marketing effectively and look at ways to enhance services
- Work hard to retain customers through marketing, extending reach, responding to new customer needs

**A key success factor for transformation will be to establish these principles across the whole of the service and move from a position where the customer is taking what we choose to provide to a place where services are tailored to their needs and to attracting repeat 'business' from them.**

#### **4.2. Areas of potential**

At a workshop with senior managers an exercise was undertaken to analyse the services provided and those that had potential to add value, grow and deliver on Council priorities as well as those that are current high performers and what makes them so. The Boston Matrix was used as an analysis tool and the outcomes are illustrated in **Figure 9**.

The Boston Matrix is a business tool designed to analyse where an organisation's products fit in the market place and the growth potential of these. However, it can be useful to analyse services in a similar way to look at where the areas for development are and where the potential for growth and contribution to Council targets could come. It is important to note that there is just a line between each of the boxes so if a service was 1% either way they could be turned from a problem into a star, for example. It is a way to look at things but does not explain any subtleties.

#### **Definitions:**

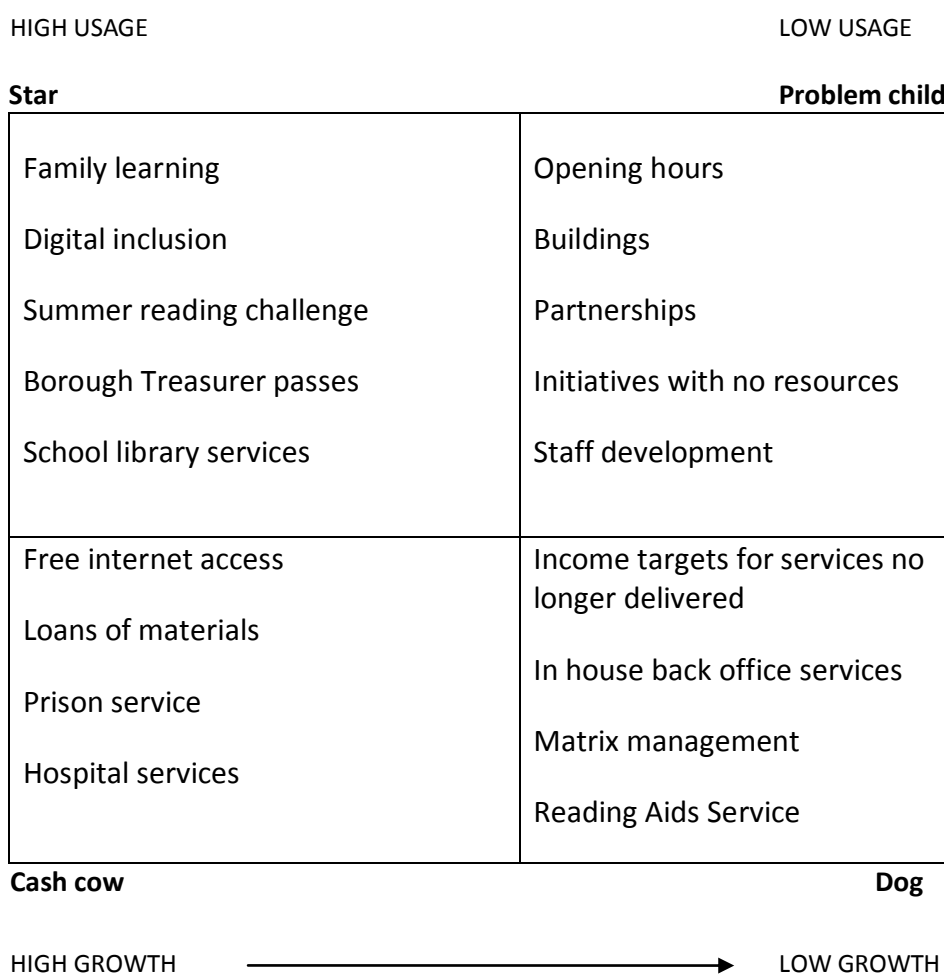
**Cash cow:** the things that keep ticking over at a steady rate, the 'bread and butter' services that generate a steady flow of business. These services are unlikely to grow that much without significant investment but need to be maintained at current levels to secure the required 'turnover' to ensure that other services can be developed and delivered as part of the package.

**Dog:** The elements of delivery that are neither growing nor stimulating development. These are usually activities that expend resources but have a negative effect on the overall services, by neither attracting custom nor saving money. They deliver no wider benefits in meeting Council targets.

**Problem child:** The activities and services that have potential to grow and benefit the customer and to increase take up of services, but have problems attached to them at the moment which need to be addressed to turn them into assets rather than liabilities that could impact on wider Council targets.

**Star:** The activities that are recognised as success stories that bring additional customers and add value beyond the service itself. The investment in these services can be justified by either quantitative or qualitative outcomes. The direct impact on broader Council priorities is demonstrable.

**Figure 9: Boston Matrix**



**Analysis**

In Doncaster’s case ‘**cash cows**’ are the services which are keep people returning or are funded and delivered according to a specific model, including:

- materials loans – but these are in decline As this is the core product, the principal goal must be to reverse this situation as it is the core service and reason for being there and decline in usage makes investment harder to justify.

- Internet access, which boosts visits but has reached a plateau and also a new charge has been introduced after one hour's usage which may discourage visits
- Prisons and hospitals services as they have discreet funding sources

The '**dogs**', activities that are not sustainable or contributing to growth include:

- targets for loans and income for services no longer delivered such as some audio visual materials
- internal back office processes, particularly much of bibliographical services that are staff intensive and could be better served through automation or outsourcing
- matrix management is not effective for the library services - there is consensus from managers and staff that it does not contribute to success
- the Reading Aids Service also comes into this category as it is resource intensive but under-used and more appropriately delivered by a charity or other agency as there is no resource to promote it or sustain it

For Doncaster, there are some services that have the potential for success but are need more investment of resources or would be better delivered in a different way.

These '**problem children**' include:

- opening hours which are not structured according to local community need and may be reducing access for some groups
- the buildings which need a planned strategy for improvement
- partnerships which need more strategic level support to succeed
- outreach and the number of excellent initiatives that need to be resourced but have no available budget

There are some initiatives currently delivered by the Library Services that are 'stars' including:

- digital inclusion and online learning activity
- customer services for the Council providing greater access in local communities
- the Summer Reading Challenge
- School Library Services
- Libraries as access points for new Council initiatives such as the Borough Treasurer passes.

**The key thing is to focus on ensuring that the core business of the library service grows and maintains impetus whilst looking at new potential areas for development and turning problems into advantages through better use of resources.**



### 4.3. Governance

Part of the remit of this review is to look at models for governance and test whether there is any benefit for the customers of libraries in looking at an alternative to local authority management, principally the trust model. There are only a few case studies in the UK where this has been successfully achieved but these have been researched and assessed in order to make a judgment about whether any of the models might work for Doncaster.

Several of the case studies make the point that there is no one approach that fits all, and that each authority needs to decide on what is appropriate to their needs – and this depends on a clear vision and clear leadership. A variety of different governance models appear in the literature and an example of these is below. Three particular examples encapsulate different approaches to governance, two of which are trusts.

#### **Luton Cultural Services Trust**

Luton Cultural Services Trust manages a wide range of cultural services. The organisation has traded from March 2008, having taken over the management of Luton Borough Council's arts, museums and library services. They operate 14 sites throughout Luton and employ nearly 300 people. The work embraces large scale events such as the Luton International Carnival, and venues include the Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton Central Library and The Hat Factory.

The Trust's work focuses on *'advancing the cultural life of the residents of Luton and beyond, improving local services for the people of Luton and ensuring all residents have access to our services and the delivery of better opportunities through our extensive partnership working'*. As a charitable trust with a trading arm, funding is received from Luton Borough Council and Luton Airport as well as external agencies, for example the Arts Council, MLA and, Big Lottery Fund. The Trust also generates income from its own activities, as well as through gift aid, legacies and sponsorship.

#### **Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust**

The Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust was established six years ago. The Trust's most significant investment funding has come from not having to pay business rates. This saving has enabled investment to flow back into services and the Trust saves half a million pounds a year by not having to pay this one cost. The Trust has been able to provide residents with a more efficient and effective library service, including extended opening hours, new stock provisions and increased partnership projects with schools, health and children's centres.

As one of the first cultural trusts in the country, the organisation's management and Board of Trustees had just one year to prepare for ownership. A concordat was set up between the Council and the shadow trust whilst the organisation was being established. This established the rules of engagement and ensured that roles and responsibilities were clear.

Reassuring the workforce that the new structure was a positive step rather than a detrimental one was an important factor, as was establishing a new management team responsible for the day-to-day running of the service and transferring over all 800 frontline staff to the new organisation. That new team has an increased flexibility and a more entrepreneurial management style which enables them to respond quickly to local needs. The establishment of a separate trading company manages the non-charitable services which the trust provides, such as catering across the services the trust provides.

A number of common factors exist in the two case studies including:

- The trusts **included culture and leisure** as well as libraries and potentially lack critical mass on their own. Services were not in any kind of crisis but **performed well before trust status** and were considered an asset fit to be part of a new entrepreneurial organisation.
- A considerable **investment** in setting up costs was required by the councils involved as well as ongoing revenue support. It is not a solution to divesting investment.
- If services are part of a cultural trust they must have **assets and services** that perform well, something to contribute to the business.
- Much depends upon the **size of the organisation** and what savings can be released from the business rate. In Wigan's case, there were **minimal savings from libraries**; however, libraries have been able to benefit from the exemption of the business rate on the leisure centres, which are also part of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's mandate.

It is clear that there are a number of internal and environmental factors that contributed to success that would **not** apply to Doncaster's Libraries at the current time and it would be difficult to offer in the library service to any plans for a cultural trust as an asset to that development.

**The Library Service is not currently in a position where core purpose is well defined, where the ground work has been done to identify potential savings and where staff and management are prepared for change. There are no identifiable commercial opportunities related to the library service and although there may be some areas where this could be investigated, the core service needs to be made fit for purpose before enhanced services can develop.**

**In the future when the service is functioning in a more cohesive way and it is fit for its articulated purpose, then it may be time to consider this option.**

Peter Gascoigne, head of the Trust in Wigan had these thoughts on whether other councils follow Wigan's example and go into Trust status. *'Whilst it has been the right decision for us, I think it's important that authorities make that decision in context of their own situation. It's very easy to think that all your problems will be solved by setting up a Trust, but a whole range of factors have to be in place.'*

## Commissioning/provider model

Suffolk is particularly interesting in its commissioning/provider model, which is also embedded across all local authority services. It provides a useful way in which the service is able to focus on outcomes and contribute to the wider council objectives. Suffolk started from a place of a **high performing service**.

The starting point for the commissioning strategy was the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, of which Suffolk was an early developer, compiled by the Council's Research and Intelligence Unit, with the two Primary Care Trusts, and the Mental Health Trust. This needs assessment informed the directorate and its partner's vision for the next year, consistent with geographic and community need. It is used by the county council and by health to establish strategic intentions about how the county will develop.

There has also been some 'arms length' research from a marketing company with more marginalised or priority customer groups ( such as people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, older people, family carers) to explore their experiences and perceptions about library services. The research identified barriers to use, what those key audiences wanted, and what needed to change.

The commissioning model separates strategy and delivery. Services across the council are now a mix of internal delivery agencies, arms length bodies, and outsourced contracts. Commissioners develop local strategic priorities based on area needs assessment and projected demographics, with gap analysis, from within the strategic centre.

There is then a negotiation with the library service on how they can contribute towards these with existing and new pieces of work, articulated through a commissioning plan. This has created a greater performance focus and opened up a more entrepreneurial approach and encouraged delivery services to contribute more tangibly to the bigger picture and to the wider strategic priorities.

Suffolk has an 'expert commissioner' – with a background in libraries - which gives an informed understanding of the potential of library services to deliver in this new environment. Not all commissioning structures adopt this approach.

The negotiation process begins each autumn for the following year. Once agreed, targets are jointly agreed and performance is monitored through these. Suffolk's library service currently has five targets which are reported to the corporate management board. These are carefully focused to address the challenges of prevention, signposting and participation:

- Light touch core service indicator, agreeing a standard of performance. It was accepted that the service was being run very well so these were not detailed performance and improvement targets.
- Physical and electronic visits

- Use of community information resources ( developed and hosted by the library service for the council)
- Participation in information on prescription service
- Engagement per week in Top time initiative (activities for older people)

This new way of working has challenged long standing working practices and governance structures across the council. People have had to build, and agree a shared understanding of the role of the commissioning; both commissioner and senior library managers have developed a vision and an identity for an internal delivery agency and built new relationships. Here are some of the tangibles:

- Activities such as the Top Time free weekly activities for older people were piloted, and have now been extended.
- The At Home Library service offer has been developed and housebound reading groups established.
- A programme of workforce developments partially funded by the health budget has been implemented, training frontline staff in inclusion and communication skills to support users with mental health or learning disability.
- Alongside this the arms length consultation with customer groups researching what it felt like to use library services was taking place to inform the future shaping of services for target audiences.

To meet Putting People First priorities for older people, the information expertise of library staff was commissioned to develop a community directory which includes information on opportunities, activities for people who may want to spend their personal budget more creatively, for people who want information on care and for people who want to retain their ordinary life as long as possible.

The library service has also been commissioned to lead and deliver an information prescription service for people with long term conditions, and an information service for people with mental health issues, using pooled funding from the mental health trust and the county council.

This is still a relatively new model of strategy and delivery. The library service is delivering against its targets and after the first year of success the council is still investing in the services it is offering. However, it is still too early to understand the longer-term implications.

### **Conclusions for Doncaster**

At the current time, the library services are **not fit** to become part of a trust model. Trusts are not a solution to problems but a way to grow and develop services, and there are major improvement issues that would stop any group of trustees from sensibly taking on the libraries until these are resolved.

However, once these problems are solved, there may be value and synergy with a cultural trust that would provide an enhanced customer focus and also provide more opportunities to look at creative ways of funding new developments and initiatives. Once the Library Services are fit and delivered from a sustainable model, it may be worth investigating being part of a trust again.

In terms of the commissioning model, although it is a more untried way of operating, there are some **elements** that would be an excellent part of an improvement plan for Doncaster's Library Service. In particular, by focusing on the core library service and then identifying key areas where there is a direct contribution to shared priorities, there would be both identity and clarity for the Library Service.

It is possible to identify the core library service and then to 'commission' or articulate a shared relationship to deliver **for example**:

- Customer services for the rest of the Council
- Books on prescription for the PCT
- Digital learning and job support for Adult Services
- Family learning and children's activities, initiatives for schools and for looked after for children for Children's Services

Public libraries are a local service, paid for by taxation which is raised locally, that are valued and prized in their own right. But they are also assets through which the Council can deliver local priorities. With the right investment and development, libraries can become fit to deliver services for other departments and provide an essential front line delivery model.

**However, at this time, the focus needs to be on ensuring that the core Library Service is fit for purpose so that it can then offer to deliver services that meet broader priorities in a more structured way. To achieve this, there must be an understanding at a strategic level of what is on offer and the skills and attitudes at the front line to deliver it. This should be a core objective built into a plan for change.**

## 5. Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the analysis of the Library Service and its performance articulated earlier in this report. Change and development is essential and the areas for priority have emerged clearly as a result of the work that has been done to assess the current state of the Service.

Without the implementation of significant change, the Library Service will continue to try to sustain an outdated delivery model and will continue to decline. These recommendations can be the beginning of addressing this situation and delivering a service truly focused on the customer. They take full consideration of the new Government Policy Statement, **Empower, Enrich Inform** (2010) but most importantly focus on the identified needs of the Borough and its communities.

### 5.1. Develop a vision and strategy for the Library Service in the context of the Sustainable Borough Strategy

An improvement plan for the Library Service will have no basis without a clear vision of what it is there to do, who it is for, and what the contribution is that it brings to overall Council priorities. Any tough decisions and major changes can only be justified in this context. The vision must be agreed by all key stakeholders, particularly elected members and senior managers, but must also be shared with customers and consulted upon more widely.

The vision and mission must articulate what the Library Service can do to support the Council's priorities but overall what it is here to do for the customers. The words that sum up the vision need to be developed with internal engagement, but it is strongly recommended that in the context of the Sustainable Borough Strategy and the shared priorities, the Library Service should focus on the following externally facing and internal priorities:

For the customer:

- **Helping everyone to read**
- **Supporting children, young people and families**
- **Supporting learning and skills, including digital inclusion**
- **Supporting communities and vulnerable people**

The external areas for focus are recommended based on both strategic fit with wider local priorities and also the core purpose and social contribution of libraries. The analysis of local need in Section 1 highlighted literacy and worklessness and the needs of families as high priorities, as well as localities and a sense of belonging. It is absolutely right to emphasise **reading** as the core purpose of libraries as it has such a high impact on people's lives and ability to gain work, cope with life and access information. It should be a matter of priority and pride that the Library Service articulates its core priorities in this way.

There needs to be a completely new emphasis on services for children and families. This should be led by an expert and be planned and coherently delivered and articulated as part of the offer across the Council as a whole. A **strategy for children and young people** should be prepared in consultation with children other parts of the Council and other providers, and where skills do not exist in these areas, they need to be recruited to the service, whether library professionals or those skilled in working with children. With these tools, there will be a coherent offer to Children's Services, children's centres, Surestart and schools and a proper welcome for children and families in all libraries.

**Learning, skills and digital inclusion** are vital to jobs and work for local people. So much is already being done to support people in this area but it needs coordination and promotion at a strategic level to facilitate the kind of partnerships that can support the development of services and signposting for the customer. Recognition of the work that the Library Service is doing in this area will improve access and break down barriers to partnership working that will benefit local people.

Libraries are all about **supporting vulnerable people**. There is much already being delivered for older people, people with disabilities and other groups, but there are gaps in provision and some basic needs not being met. The Library Service must demonstrate how it works to support all groups in the community, particularly those who are isolated and vulnerable, and desperately in need of information and support. There must be equality in provision and recognition of the local needs of minority groups.

#### **Internally, for the Service:**

- **Customer led and driven**
- **Local and accessible**
- **Efficient and effective**
- **Delivering services for other Council departments**

The Library Service needs an articulated mission about the kind of Service that it wants to be, to create a sense of purpose and values for the staff that will remove the uncertainty that has led to a standard of service that is no longer acceptable.

**The library service must re-focus on the customer, not on the mechanics of customer services but on putting the customer at the heart of all decisions made about services.**

There needs to be **consultation and involvement** in service development. More fundamentally, the Library Service needs to be focused on making the customer experience the best it can be, satisfying customer needs so that they continue to come back, and attracting new customers with proactive marketing and services designed to fulfill expectations.

Vital to this is defining the welcome that customers get, the core offers and the enhanced local services, modernising choices in terms of access and stock available and ensuring that the library environments that they are visiting are attractive and welcoming.

Local and accessible services do not mean a dedicated library building on every corner, but access to services in the places that people go and when they want them to be there. It is also about a philosophy that everyone should be able to access all services at local level, without having to go to the Central Library, or to go to a library at all if that is not possible. It is about **services designed around the customer**.

Efficient and effective services are essential to future sustainability and to delivering best value for customers. **Resources should focus on the front line**, and all investment should be justified in terms of return against targets. There is far more to libraries than loan figures, and whilst visits and increased number of borrowers are blunt tools for target setting, they are a start in terms of highlighting to all staff and stakeholders what libraries are here to do.

Libraries must be set **challenging targets** but these must be in the context of the resources provided to deliver them and the impact that change will have on services in the short term. Tax payers and elected members have the right to expect a return on the investment that is being put into Libraries but must recognise that to become efficient requires **significant changes that require time and resources**.

A priority for the Library Service must be to position itself at the **heart of delivery of Council objectives** as it is increasingly recognised that priority areas of need can be met through the libraries. This begins with customer services, but goes beyond that into the areas articulated as external priorities above. However, these must be championed and negotiated at a strategic level, through a clearly articulated plan.

## 5.2. Develop a plan focused on the customer

There must be a clear strategic plan in place to justify the changes that are necessary to make to the Library Service. There is more than sufficient evidence in this report to justify the need for radical change. Where difficult decisions have to be made, the reasons for these must be clearly articulated, or the issues that arose for The Wirral could arise in Doncaster.

The key elements of this plan should be:

- **Short medium and long term goals and targets**
- **Restructuring and rationalising the service to focus on the strategic priorities and customer need and divesting of non-core services**
- **Developing the workforce to focus on the same priorities**
- **Consulting and engaging with customers**



**Short term plans to be developed and delivered in the current financial year should include the following:**

- **Consulting** with customers and stakeholders to raise expectation of change and promote new vision of the library service
- Removal of negative elements of customer services that undermine the promotion of a positive and welcoming library service immediately, for example charges for internet access. The goodwill and publicity generated by these '**quick wins**' will far outweigh the loss of income
- Introducing **customer services delivery to ALL libraries** as part of core services
- **Removal** of libraries from the **matrix management** structure and replacement with a re-structured coherent service that can demonstrate its core offer
- Implement **new library management system**, better management of stock that provides enhanced services and 24/7 access
- Developing an **infrastructure plan** for services and a full assessment of buildings against set criteria
- Creating a programme of **workforce reform** including new job descriptions, training and recruitment of appropriate skilled staff
- Buying out of negative and de-motivating **income targets** that cannot be achieved. This will have to be offset against the book fund but new strategies to ensure more high performing stock should offset the reduction in revenue and created significant added value in motivation and achievement of targets
- **Develop a strategy for work with children and young people**

These issues will be addressed in more detail below.

**Medium term plans, in the next two years as opportunities arise, should include the following:**

- Develop and implement a **plan for library buildings** and negotiate new partnerships for new builds and partnership delivery points
- develop **new partnerships and commissioning contracts** for services for other Council departments
- develop a **marketing strategy** for the new look Library Service and actively target new borrowers

**Long term plans should include the following:**

- Investigate the option for joining a cultural **trust** once services are stable, robust and high performing
- Deliver a new and dynamic **central library** that helps to regenerate the town centre and is a flagship of library provision

### 5.3. Consult and communicate with the public and with stakeholders

*'Local authorities should publish a **code of customer engagement** giving a clear methodology for informing, consulting and involving their users and non users in the planning of service provision.'* (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries: September 2009)

*'Consultation and engagement is not consistent across the Borough and more needs to be done to engage with hard to reach groups.'* (Sustainable Borough Strategy 2008)

Apart from the legal obligation, there are two key reasons to involve and consult the public in service development and delivery:

- **To ensure that local views and needs are taken into account in developing new services**
- **To raise awareness and expectations about the Library Service that allows the more effective management and rationale for change**

For local authorities this is always problematic as there will be many opposing views and decisions have to be made. However it is useful to bear in mind the following:

- There has been considerable consultation of existing customers about satisfaction with services, but since we know that only 16% of the population are using their local library regularly, new ways of consultation with the broader public need to be identified.
- It is necessary to build a picture of what is proposed and ask specific and structured questions about what people might want. We know that overall interest is low, so it would be useful to create a picture of the possibilities, a menu of options to choose from.
- Opening hours are very difficult to consult on as most people will want access whenever suits them, so again a menu approach with choices that narrow down options is preferable.
- When a consultation exercise has taken place it is essential to feed back to those consulted about what was said and decisions taken. Any consultation strategy must include this element of communication.

The tax payers have elected members to take decisions in their interests but it is essential that when doing this, they are informed by customer and non-customer views and can demonstrate that these have been considered.

The Library Service could provide the perfect pilot for the Council's new consultation strategy and could become a model for the way that services can be transformed and delivered in consultation with the public.

#### **5.4. Retain the current governance structure within the Council but remove matrix management and create clear management lines for the Service**

It has been demonstrated that the current management structures do not support the effective delivery of either a good library service or a comprehensive package of customer services. Staff teams across the Service are confused about their role and purpose and not all libraries offer the same services. There is an urgent need to create a sense of **one cohesive whole** that works together.

The analysis of governance models in Section 4.3. makes it clear that the Library Service is not currently in a fit condition to be part of a trust or arms length body, but could be in the future. There is also potential to create an effective commissioning model but the fundamental is that the Service needs to be one service, with clear leadership and management lines and a structure that facilitates improvement and customer focus.

Stakeholders and potential partners need to understand what the Library Service is and what it can do. By defining a core Library Service and articulating what can be offered, libraries will be in a good position to be commissioned to deliver for other departments and to forge new partnerships based on local, community and customer focused services.

Choices about which directorate the Service should be part of will need to be made based on the closest match with priorities and potential future plans. Factors which may also affect this are synergies with adult learning, leisure services and museums.

#### **5.5. Restructure the service to align with strategic priorities and modern delivery**

A 'root and branch' renewal of the Library Service structure is needed to do several key things that are critical to success including:

- **Creating a clearly defined leadership structure**
- **Embedding core priorities and service champions in management**
- **Bringing in new skills and areas of expertise**
- **Removing outdated back office delivery, focusing on the front line**

Whilst all roles and responsibilities cannot be detailed due to current uncertainties about budgets and changes in staffing, a proposed new structure model for the Library Service is included as **Annexe D**. It prioritises the key areas in the strategy including community and local delivery, children and families and learning and skills. It creates customer focused delivery for the Central Library and a small performance team to manage back office functions. It embeds services to vulnerable groups in community delivery and brings children, schools and families into an integrated outreach service.

This structure requires new senior expert posts that can only be funded by the removal of significant numbers of back office posts that are no longer justifiable in the current climate and are not linked closely to front line delivery. This is a tough decision to make, the means must be found to allow for this essential restructure.

Senior management posts will require a level of expertise that has to be demonstrated in both experience and qualification and the section below on workforce reform will focus more on this. Senior champions for children and families, learning and vulnerable groups are essential to driving forward and embedding the broader priorities of the Council in core services.

## 5.5 Re-train, reinvigorate and re-vision the workforce

*‘Staff should be helpful, knowledgeable, welcoming and well-trained. They should be involved in a workforce development programme. Staff in front line customer service roles should be supported by specialists in service planning and promotion, leadership and management, and those areas of service delivery requiring specialist skills and expertise.’ (CILIP 2009)*

The level of change that is required to deliver service improvements has to begin with every member of the team understanding the new vision and the role that their specific post plays in delivering it and success cannot be achieved without this.

Some of the proposals in this report will be very difficult to accept, but if the vision is communicated and at the same time there are opportunities for new roles and investment in the workforce in terms of training and development, it is possible to bring staff through the change successfully and to reinvigorate people to deliver.

Key elements of workforce reform must include:

- **New job descriptions and person specifications that focus on library skills, customer service ethos and working with children.**
- **A training programme to reintroduce core library skills and the library ethos into all front line and back office staff**
- **Management and leadership training**
- **A performance management scheme that focuses on the link between personal targets and customer benefit**
- **Reinvesting resources in the expert roles that are needed to deliver excellent library services**

In terms of job descriptions focused on library skills, customer services and children, the level of requirement will depend on the nature of the role, as to whether it is demonstrated in potential, attitude or actual experience. Some suggestions are given in the proposed departmental structure in **Annexe D**.

## 5.6. Redevelop the infrastructure of buildings and service points

This report has highlighted how the buildings infrastructure of the Library Service is in many cases inadequate, outdated, and not fit for the purpose of delivering a modern library service. A complete review is needed to ensure that buildings are fit for the future with priorities to:

- **Identify the right distribution model for library buildings**
- **Modernise well used and correctly located buildings**
- **Develop partnerships for new provision in areas of need**
- **Develop a strategy for opening hours that is based on local need and consultation with the public**

The current distribution model for libraries cannot be sustained long term and needs to be rationalised, but these decisions **MUST** be made according to strict criteria that will satisfy both government and local stakeholders. If condition of the building and cost of maintenance were the only criteria, this would not be difficult, but there have to be clearly articulated cases for change for each building. It is an internal matter to decide on the areas for priority and but to assist this work, a list of **key criteria** has been developed and is included as **Annexe E**.

A model could be created focusing on ensuring that communities more remote from the Central Library Services have a good community library or are well served by mobile services, and there could be fewer libraries in the central square mile, allowing investment in high quality buildings that retain current customers and bring in new. There is precedent for rationalisation and case studies suggest that fewer better libraries can maintain and even increase usage if a wider range of quality services are offered from a more attractive building.

This change will require a high level of political commitment, a strong and well developed rationale and a tightly focused customer consultation strategy.

There are very few local authorities that can create new capital programmes for standalone library buildings and nor should they want to, as this can isolate libraries and disconnect them from broader Council service provision. In order to achieve redeveloped or new places to deliver services, it is essential that the right **partnerships** are formed in Doncaster, beginning with LIFT and Building Schools for the Future but looking more widely at private and voluntary sector opportunities.

The **Champion** for the Library Service must be operating at the strategic level that ensures that there is an opportunity to put the case for library redevelopment for any community where there is a plan and a need. There must be a clear plan of where those needs are and then actively seeking partners to help to meet them.

Library **opening hours** should move from a prescriptive pattern focused on a general model to a model focused on local need and local community. This does **not** mean increasing opening hours across the board but opening at the right times. There also needs to be time to release staff to engage in outreach activity.

It is important to consult customers and potential customers about times that the library might be used IF it were open. This has to include seven day opening and more evenings, but the message can be clearly communicated that there are choices due to budgets and that Sunday opening would restrict weekday opening hours.

## **5.7 Develop a customer focused performance management culture**

One of the issues raised in this report is about the inconsistency of message to staff about who they work for and what their priorities are. It is essential that a strong message is sent both internally and externally that the customer in the local environment is the priority and that all staff should be focused on this.

The key things needed to deliver this will be:

- **Performance management systems with clear targets owned by teams and individuals based on the vision and mission of the service**
- **Local targets for libraries that reflect an assessment of local need and are based on clear understanding of current performance**
- **Agreed service wide standards for customer service, priorities for increased business and areas for development**
- **Recognition for achievement on a regular basis**

Performance targets should be set in consultation with those who deliver them and should be deliverable and realistic, but should be clearly linked to what the Library Service is trying to achieve. Staff at the front line should be able to take ownership of their own and their collective performance.

There should be a standard for delivery of library services across all service points and departments that is agreed and developed in consultation with those who deliver the service and personal targets set against these. One basic model for what this might look like for a community library is included in **Annexe F** as an example but there are excellent staff training packages and performance tools that can have a transformational effect on front line delivery available.

A new culture of feedback and recognition needs to be introduced into the Library Service. Statistics giving feedback to the public about how the library had been used were only available at one library visited and staff teams across the service have not been receiving basic information about performance. It is not just about usage, it is about the way services are delivered and the learning that people are gaining from successes and failures.

It would be useful to introduce peer review and exchanging ideas, such as team visits to other libraries to assess the look, feel and welcome and to feedback to the staff who work there. This can be sensitive but if staff are involved in setting the standards, there will be more engagement with the performance assessment.

There should also be regular recognition of excellence in delivery for both individuals and teams across the service, whether this is for increased visitors, excellent customer feedback, successful initiatives and events, or new ideas and activities.

## **5.8. Develop marketing and outreach strategy for the Library Service and an engagement strategy for vulnerable groups**

The Library Service needs a strategy that is guided by consultation with the wider public and designed to attract back lapsed users and generate new ones. However, it can only work when the offer to all groups in the community is clearly articulated and the service is fit to deliver on the promises it makes. It should include:

- **Marketing to non-users with incentives to join or return**
- **Include customer services as an enhanced offer**
- **Targeting specific groups in the community**
- **Services for vulnerable groups building on good practice**
- **Releasing funds to support initiatives**

There are many examples of excellent marketing activity undertaken by library services that have a high impact on visits and figures, from offering free loans of DVDs or talking books to cross marketing partnerships with other departments to offer incentives such as free swimming. These do not have to be complicated activities just the right things that will raise awareness of services and attract users.

Some initiatives that have worked in terms of bringing back custom include:

- Writing to all registered borrowers who have not used the library for a year and inviting them back
- Publicising the services on buses, tickets and in supermarkets
- Defining the specific activities for children and families and marketing these specifically, such as offering incentives to parents who become members with their children for the first time
- Creating a publicity strategy that raises the profile of the Service in the local press

The extra value that is provided by delivering customer services enquiries and information should be capitalised upon in marketing strategies that emphasise the range of information that can be sourced locally at the library.

It is important to specifically target groups for different kinds of outreach activity and some of this will be about very hands on work including visits in liaison with other Council departments, for example to older people, unemployed people, children's centres and other vulnerable groups.

It is essential that the Service both buys into national initiatives such as the Big Read, Six Book Challenge and Bookstart, but the resources have to be available to undertake the outreach and promotion, form the relationships to ensure success and release people to work with groups who could benefit from them. This means tough decisions about where funds should be identified but investing in targeted services to vulnerable groups is essential in addressing the vision for the Library Service.

## **5.9. Develop long term partnerships for sustainable services**

*'All library authorities should do more to respond to local authority commissioning, developing the necessary understanding and skills to identify new opportunities for the library service.'* (Empower, Enrich, Inform, DCMS 2010)

In the longer term the rejuvenated and redefined Library Service should be able to make offers to a range of other providers seeking solutions to local delivery of support for the community. This depends on being able to:

- **define the core offer and the local offer**
- **stick to offering services that align with core business**
- **have demonstrable areas of success and impact**
- **focus on the priorities in the Borough Strategy**

Some excellent partnerships already exist between the Library Service and other Council departments, the PCT, the local colleges and other providers, but the ability to develop these further has been undermined by the issues of an inconsistent infrastructure and delivery model. When the Library Service is in a position to offer to deliver through its network in a consistent way, the existing partnerships can flourish and new ones develop.

However, what will not work is to *stretch* the offer so far beyond the scope of the core and local offer of the Library Service that it moves away from its mission and values and tries to deliver services that have no strategic fit, distorting its mission and goals.

There is an opportunity in the next year as the Library Service is transformed, to embed current partnerships through effective communication with partners about the added value that will come from the changes and also to demonstrate clearly success so far. It is essential that the current partner relationships are managed through what may be a difficult time of change.



Library Services overall must contribute effectively to the targets in the Sustainable Borough Strategy and this report has identified how the Service needs to be transformed to make these top priority. If the changes can be implemented and partnerships developed that focus on these areas, there is a real chance to demonstrate the potential contribution that an efficient and effective service can make, delivering the vision and mission:

- **Helping everyone to read**
- **Supporting children, young people and families**
- **Supporting learning and skills, including digital inclusion**
- **Supporting communities and vulnerable people**

## Public Library Standards performance

PLSS No.	Description	Standard	Doncaster 2008-9	Met?
1	Proportion of households living within a specified distance of a static library.	95% within 1 mile, 100% within 2	84% (static)	No
2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries.	128 hours	186.32	Yes
3	% of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the Internet.	100%	100%	Yes
4	Total number of electronic workstations with access to the Internet and the libraries catalogue available to users per 10,000 population.	6	12	Yes
5(i)	% of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	No return	Believe yes
5(ii)	% of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	No return	Believe yes
5(iii)	% of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	No return	Yes
6	Number of library visits per 1,000 population	6,000	5548 (2007 was 5959)	No
7	% of library users 16 and over who view their library services as: - Very good Good Adequate Poor Very poor	94% good or very good	94.8%	Yes
8	% of library users under 16 who view their library service as: - Good Adequate Poor	77% good	85.5%	Yes
9	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population. Standard	216 additions per 1,000.	172 (196 in 2007)	No
10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan. Standard	6.7 years.	7.9 (was 6.82 in 2007)	No

## Libraries direct contribution to LAA targets

## Annexe B

The targets identified here are those where there is a specific contribution that the Library Service can make to achieving the outcomes.

Shared priority	Detail	Libraries contribution	Key LAA
<b>1. Reduce worklessness and financial exclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing those not in employment or training (NEETs)</li> <li>• Enabling vulnerable people to access and remain in employment, education and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting literacy and basic skills</li> <li>• Providing a safe and friendly community based environment to host job hunting and skills and training opportunities</li> <li>• Providing access to online technology in the local community to help people help themselves</li> <li>• Providing a wide range of information and access to support agencies</li> </ul>	<b>NI117</b> – 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment
<b>5. Build a dynamic and prosperous town centre which features a strong cultural provision</b>	Continuing to develop a strong cultural offer in the urban centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plans for a new Central Library are crucial to delivering a high profile cultural offer in the city centre</li> </ul>	<b>NI5</b> Overall/general satisfaction with local area <b>NI11</b> Engagement in the arts
<b>8. Increase educational attainment</b>	Raise attainment at all key stages Improve educational achievement of looked after children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting reading and learning through libraries and activities in them</li> <li>• Providing Bookstart, a chance for early development of literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• Providing reading development opportunities for all ages</li> <li>• Providing a high quality library service to schools</li> <li>• Providing homework help and support for young people</li> </ul>	<b>NI78</b> 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE <b>NI79</b> Level 2 qualifications by age 19 Statutory DCSF PIs

<b>10. Build a skilled and diverse workforce</b>	Raising the aspirations of Doncaster’s learners Increasing the take up of learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting literacy and basic skills</li> <li>• Providing access to the Internet and online study resources</li> <li>• Providing information and support from trained staff</li> </ul>	<b>NI79</b> Level 2 qualifications by age 19 <b>NI164</b> Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher <b>NI163</b> Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher
--	---	--	--

Shared priority	Detail	Libraries contribution	Key LAA
<b>Support residents to lead active and healthy lives</b>	Improving the quality of information regarding healthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing up to date and timely information</li> <li>• Delivering partnership activities with health providers, such as health information ‘on prescription’</li> <li>• Delivering library services from co-located LIFT buildings with special health information resources</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for mental health support through meaningful reader development activities and ‘books on prescription’</li> </ul>	<b>NI56:</b> reducing obesity  <b>NI112</b> under age conception rate  <b>NI120</b> all age cause mortality rate  NI122 mortality from cancers  <b>NI123</b> 16+ smoking rate
<b>Increase the independence of vulnerable people and carers</b>	Enabling adults to live fulfilled lives by coordinating key LAA shared priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing services at home including home library services and book bus activities</li> </ul>	<b>NI 142</b> Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

<b>Improving neighbourhoods together</b>	Effective leadership, joint planning and commissioning and effective use of resources. Considering new shared services options. Ensure alignment between neighbourhood planning and the priorities for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a focal point for neighbourhood delivery in partnership</li> <li>• Providing meeting spaces and places for community contribution</li> <li>• Providing meaningful volunteering opportunities for local people</li> </ul>	<p><b>NI5</b> Overall satisfaction with the local area as a place to live</p> <p><b>NI140</b> fair treatment by local services</p>
<b>Shared priority</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Libraries contribution</b>	<b>Key LAA</b>
<b>22. Improve and extend community engagement in service delivery and local decision making</b>	The participation of children, young people and adults in the planning, design and delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a pioneering consultative approach to service delivery</li> </ul>	<b>NI 4</b> % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality
<b>23. Encourage residents to participate in social, community, cultural and environmental activities</b>	Increasing resident's participation in and influence over social, cultural and environmental activities (including volunteering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting reading and learning through libraries and activities in them</li> <li>• Providing reading development opportunities for all ages</li> </ul>	<p><b>NI 11</b> Engagement in the arts</p> <p><b>NI10</b> Young people's engagement in positive activities</p>

## PESTLE analysis

Issue	Analysis	Impact for libraries	Importance
<b>Political</b>			
Sustainable Borough Strategy and LAA targets	Key areas of impact include: Learning and skills Neighbourhood delivery Involving customers	Key priorities which Library service can address can be identified and demonstrated	H
DCMS Empower, Inform, Enrich- modernisation of public libraries review	Latest policy statement from government	Yes, as core and local offer is specified and great emphasis put on local consultation.	H
Oct 09 CILIP report on what makes a good library service	Valuable context, reflects issues between governing bodies nationally and unresolved debate	Recommends engaging local communities in the process of service planning, greater monitoring and assessment of service performance, judgement on the process of service planning, community consultation and performance assessment.	M
UNISON: 'taking Stock' review of library services Sept 2008	Focuses on workforce and professionalism issues. Concerns re erosion of numbers of professional staff.	A context for the changes that have happened in Doncaster and the levels of professional staff which are very low in comparison with national levels.	M
<b>Economic</b>			
Public spending cuts will affect Doncaster MBC	'Discretionary' elements of library budget will be at risk .	Potential severe impact on library services and hence local communities so it is vital to have a plan that articulates the contribution of libraries to overall targets.	H
Recession impacts on local jobs and incomes	Increased unemployment perpetuates issues of worklessness in Doncaster and potentially creates new problems as people lose jobs.	Need for support with jobs and skills will grow and need for free access to services. Libraries can make a direct contribution in partnership with other providers.	H

Issue	Analysis	Impact for libraries	Importance
<b>Social</b>			
Anti-social behaviour	Lack of meaningful activities for people to undertake in the local community can be a contributory factor, as can lack of jobs	Libraries are local and can contribute by providing access to information sources and the Internet and also opportunities to participate in targeted activities in partnership.	H
Ageing population at significant rate	Services for older people needed and increasingly a priority	Information, educational and recreational needs can be met at local level by library services, as well as opportunities to volunteer.	M
<b>Legal</b>			
Statutory nature of library services	1964 Act gives Council's responsibilities for delivering a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service	Libraries have to be delivered by DMBC but 'comprehensive and efficient' is not well defined, though the new DCMS policy statement provides a more current view on Government's expectations.	H
Wirral enquiry	Shows that the Government will intervene	DMBC needs a plan and a strategy for any changes to ensure that they are not subject to government measures.	H
<b>Environmental</b>			
Council's Sustainable Borough focuses on the need to improve the local environment and reduce waste	Local environment includes parks and open spaces but also the places people go and buildings the Council provides.	Libraries should reflect the Council's care for the local environment and the provision of good services from good buildings that welcome people. Libraries can also deliver information re the environmental services and policies of the Council.	M
Size of the Borough	Challenge of the largest metropolitan borough and having high levels of deprivation and also rural areas.	Infrastructure of libraries must be fit for purpose to meet the needs of all communities in the most appropriate ways, in partnership and in consultation	M

**Directorate?**

**Head of Libraries**  
(qualified and expert)

**Performance management and operational support**

**Central Library Customer Services**

**Children, Schools and Families**

**Community Libraries Manager**

Bibs Services team x 3 incl  
1 x qualified as dept manager  
  
Systems and performance x2

All departments and facilities  
  
Qualified 5 x FTE in specialist departments

Children, schools, young people literacy, family learning  
  
4xqualified FTE plus support team

Front line library and customer services teams, home and mobile services  
  
4xqualified staff plus support

This team includes the ICT support for the Service and a streamlined Bibliographical Services Team with the majority of processes automated or outsourced.  
  
One qualified staff member.  
3 x staff team

A Central Library Manager focused on customer services and the building.  
  
5 x qualified staff, 2 for reference, information, local studies, archives  
  
Senior assistants for customer services.

1 x expert qualified champion managing the department  
  
1x specialist children’s librarian  
2 x specialist school librarians  
  
1 x literacy officer story bus officer and support team

1 x community libraries manager  
  
3 x qualified area managers  
Support team of assistants in charge  
  
1 x home and mobile library services manager



## **Notes:**

This proposed structure does not detail all posts but focuses on the new team and senior structure. It injects expertise into the senior tiers of the service.

The Head of Service should be a qualified librarian bringing expertise and experience.

## **Performance management and operational support:**

This small team is the only one that is 'back office', focusing on the systems that keep the Service running. The Bibliographic Services Department could be reduced to three staff, two assistants and one librarian to ensure quality control and management of the relationship with suppliers. This librarian could also manage the support team. The systems and performance support staff would be part of this team, exploiting the link between the library management system and effective ICT support.

## **Central Library Customer Services:**

The Central Library should be managed as a whole with a strong outward focus on Customer Services. The specialist departments, Reference, Information and Local Studies and Archives need expert input from qualified teams. The Central Library Manager should supervise the smooth running of the building and all departments and ensure a high quality of welcome for people. This role does not necessarily need to be a qualified librarian but should demonstrate a strong commitment to quality customer services in its broadest sense.

## **Children Schools and Families**

This team should focus on all services for children and families, and bring together the School Library Service, the children's aspects of reader development work and family learning and literacy. There should be an expert and qualified librarian in charge of this team at senior level, and two librarians for the School Library Service, plus at least one other librarian with skills in children and families work. There should also be a Literacy Officer and support staff as appropriate. This team should have a remit to skill up staff across the Library Services to deliver work with children and families. A coherent development and outreach service should be delivered across the public and the schools teams.

## **Community Libraries**

This team should be led by a manager for delivery in all community libraries who is also responsible for the outreach services to adults including the mobile and home library services, prison and health libraries. There should be three area managers who are qualified librarians and can manage performance and development of libraries in each area. They should be supported by assistants in charge at each library. The current tier of Senior Advisors should be removed in favour of more staff in busier libraries with one person in charge at each library with more administrative responsibility.

## Criteria for library rationalisation


Element	Explanation	Weighting	total
<b>Usage</b>	Above the median of issues for size and hours?  Trend of issues		
<b>Location</b>	Proximity to other libraries or service points? (Old standard was one mile)  Other buildings nearby that could be used as partner delivery points?  In the heart of the community?  New housing developments and any shifts in centre of community?		
<b>Community need</b>	What other council facilities are available? Are these well used?  What has consultation with the community told us?  Is there a need for more or less facilities in the area?  Could the community provide a service elsewhere or a mobile library? (this may be true of a lot of communities but would not be a relevant criteria if the library is well used)		
<b>Condition of building</b>	Can a modern library service be delivered from the building along with customer services? Is the building capable of improvement with appropriate but not excessive investment?		

## Community Library Performance Monitoring Model

Library:

Staff team:

<b>What do we know about the local area?</b>  Population  Facilities  Schools and services for children  BME communities?		
<b>Who are our users?</b>	Number of adult borrowers:	Number of children:
<b>What does the library look like?</b>  New book displays?  Tidy and welcoming?  Posters in date?  Children's area safe and bright?  Well lit?  Faults reported?		

What do we know about usage?	Last quarter	This quarter	
Visits			
Book loans			
Multimedia loans			
Computer sessions			
Groups visiting the library			
Children's activities			

## **Sources and references:**

**Report of the Inquiry into the Governance and Leadership of the Public Library Service in England**  
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries, Literacy and Information Management  
September 2009

**What Makes A Good Library Service? Guidelines on public library provision in England for portfolio holders in local Councils**  
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals 2009

**Developing the local government services market: New ways of working and new models of provision within the public library service – a working paper**  
Department for Communities and Local Government February 2007

**A Local Inquiry into the Public Library Service Provided by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council**  
Led by Sue Charteris  
Department for Culture Media and Sport *September 2009*

**Empower, Inform, Enrich: The modernisation review of Public Libraries: a consultation document**  
Department for Culture Media and Sport *December 2009*

**Empower, Inform, Enrich: The modernisation review of Public Libraries: a policy statement**  
Department for Culture Media and Sport March 2009

**Framework for the Future: An action plan for public libraries towards 2013**  
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council/Department for Culture Media and Sport 2003

**Library Workforce Development Statement**  
Museums Libraries and Archives Council April 2009

**Regional Cultural Agencies in Yorkshire: Background to new co-ordination arrangements**  
Department for Culture Media and Sport January 2008

**The relative impacts of creativity: financial investment and service transformation in enhancing the role of branch libraries in their communities**  
Report for Museums Libraries and Archives Yorkshire and Arts Council England, Yorkshire August 2008

**Taking stock: the future of our public library service**  
UNISON: September 2008

**Written Responses Received by the All- Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries, Literacy and Information Management's Inquiry into the Governance and Leadership of the Public Library Service in England**  
Department for Culture Media and Sport June 2009

## **Case Studies:**

New ways of working in Newcastle: Newcastle library service's transformation programme  
Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT)  
Museums, Libraries and Archives website

**Websites:**

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals  
UNISON