

London Library Change Programme

Phase 3: Making Transformational Change Happen

Bulletin no. 5: January 2010

1. What has happened so far in Phases 1 and 2 of the project?

Supported by Capital Ambition, the London Library Change Programme began in 2007 with recognition of value for money issues, followed by a Phase 1 feasibility study. It is part of the London Cultural Improvement Programme (www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/networks/lcip) and, working with all 33 London Boroughs, has the following aims:

- to bring all 33 services up to the levels of the best
- to reduce overheads and improve services through improved processes, increased efficiency and shared services – whilst retaining local accountability and branding and maintaining or improving the offer to customers
- a systematic approach to having the right staff and skills in place to engage better with communities.

At Phase 2 during November and December 2009 research by consultants on behalf of the London Library Change Programme was considered at events, with over 100 senior library staff and by Elected Members with responsibility for libraries. The research argues that significant efficiency savings and improvement can be released by all boroughs meeting best practice standards and by employing greater use of shared services across London.

The overall aim of the programme is to develop and implement a strategy for change. Over half of the London boroughs have submitted action plans for individual service change, and others are in development. The focus will be on peer support to reach best practice standards and shared working practices, and the strategy will include expanded governance and projects that trial or further develop existing ways of working across services.

2. What decisions have been made about Phase 3 of the project?

The Programme Board has been successful in a bid for support for a set-up period, during which detailed business modelling will take place.

On 12 January 2010 the Capital Ambition Efficiency Board agreed to continue with this strategy of supporting the sharing of services across libraries and of realising economies of scope and scale by having common back office functions performed fewer times with better deployment of expertise and technology. To this end they have agreed to support a set-up and development phase (Phase 3 of the programme).

3. What will be happening during this set-up and development period?

The indicative timescale is:

January – March 2010:

- Recruit project team
- Test delivery models
- Establish a design authority (a small group of experts to work with the programme team to develop a technical architecture plan for London's library services)
- Expand membership of the London Library Change Programme Board

April 2010:

- Project team in place
- Set up and roll out a best practice peer support programme
- Develop a technical architecture plan

May – Oct 2010:

- Options appraisals and business modelling for shared back office services
- Draw down funding for systems trials (subject to additional funding being available)
- Secure funding for transition phase
- Agreements on business models and opt-in to Wave 1 by Members

4. What will be the outcomes?

These will depend on the level of involvement by local authorities; if 15 boroughs opt in, nearly half of London will have centralised back office services around requests and a unified approach to stock management and procurement

This will enable customers to get books more quickly and drive costs down

There will be single systems for renewals and requests

Best practice in deployment of staff will improve productivity, value for money and front line services.

These steps will also help councils to meet financial challenges during a period when library income is set to decline

5. What benefits are sought?

This programme will:

- Raise the standard of all public library services to the level of the best
- Create more effective, cost efficient processes that take full advantage of new technologies
- Release staff from time consuming back office processes to allow more time for customer focussed activities and community engagement
- Improve services and extended choice for customers
- Release the capacity for London's library services to meet wider local priorities
- Allow London's Libraries to reach their full potential

6. What similar work is taking place elsewhere?

The Backbone project is underway in the East Region. It has recently received £50k from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership towards project costs totalling £119k and will progress into an options appraisal as a first stage. Similar work is taking place in the North West of England.

Private sector developments are underway, eg. John Laing Integrated Services is running a seminar on Library Service Delivery Models on 20 January 2010

5 Library Boards (authorities) in Northern Ireland were recently merged into one, retaining responsiveness to local need

In 1998 seven library boards in Metropolitan Toronto united into one library called the Toronto Public Library, with 98 locations, the largest public library system in North America serving a population of 2.3 million

New South Wales has commissioned *Bookends Scenarios*, a project exploring the possible futures for NSW public libraries in the year 2030

Auckland is currently amalgamating 7 public library authorities into one and amalgamating 57 libraries. It is establishing a single acquisitions process and a single technical services unit. It consulted LLCP about London's transformation programme.

In the US a library commentator has recently published an article¹ that:

- Examines trends
- Predicts that there will be a pressure on public libraries to go down the shared service route
- Predicts an increase in e book readers and e subscriptions
- Predicts use of text indices and digital resources
- Predicts this will lead, in the US at least, to smaller book stacks, smaller shop front libraries, more home deliveries

7. Who will decide what happens to my borough's library service?

Participation in the programme rests entirely with elected councillors in each borough. It is they who make decisions about investment and improvement in their library service and whether and when they participate any further in shared services. All London Library services can currently draw on advice and support from MLA and the London Cultural Improvement Programme about individual service improvement.

8. Who have we consulted and who has advised us?

¹ See <http://go-to-hellman.blogspot.com/2010/01/2020-fewer-libraries-more-locations.html>

Engagement and consultation has taken place on a variety of levels with every single London Borough. High level expertise and differing opinions have all been taken on board. The set-up period will provide a business case and offer to local authorities, and wider staff consultations will happen then, in order to inform individual boroughs' decisions going forward.

9. Who will advise during this set-up and development period?

The current board consists of:

- Andrew Holden (Programme Sponsor and Chair), Interim Director, MLA London
- Faraz Baber, Programme Director (World City), London Councils
- Rosemary Doyle, Head of Library & Heritage Services, LB Islington
- Diana Edmonds, Assistant Director of Culture, Libraries and Learning, LB Haringey
- Sue McKenzie, Head of Library, Arts & Heritage, LB Brent & President, London Libraries
- Cllr Geraldine Reardon, London Libraries Nominated Board Member, LB Waltham Forest
- Cllr Flick Rea, London Libraries Nominated Board Member, LB Camden
- Conservative nominee (vacant)
- David Ruse, Director of Libraries and Culture, LB Westminster
- Caroline Stanger, Capital Ambition (ex officio)

New members will be added to this governance group for Phase 3 of the programme

A small group of experts will come together to form a design authority, which will look at the overall technical architecture for London's library services.

10. Who is the Project Team?

The project team currently consists of:

- Sue Thiedeman, London Cultural Services Improvement Manager
- Abigail Moss, Development Manager, Improvement & Innovation, MLA London (programme lead), abigail.moss@mlalondon.org.uk, 020 7549 1702
- Tina Morton, Improvement & Innovation Manager, MLA London

A new team will be recruited to take the programme into this development and set-up phase. We are currently in dialogue with partners about identifying a host organisation or borough for this team. The London Library Change Programme will continue to be part of the London Cultural Improvement Programme.