

London Library Change Programme

Phase 3: Making Transformational Change Happen

Bulletin no. 4: December 2009



1. What has happened so far?

Supported by Capital Ambition, the London Library Change Programme began in 2007 with recognition of value for money issues, followed by a feasibility study. It is part of the London Cultural Improvement Programme (www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/networks/lcip/programme) 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.

Moving forward, the Programme aims to make a substantial change in the structure of London Libraries in order to achieve these aims within the current and forthcoming financial landscape for local government.

2. What is happening now?

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

The aim is to develop and implement Local Authority action plans and a strategy for change, both at service and structural level. The focus will be on shared working practices, and the strategy will include governance and projects that trial or further develop existing ways of working across services.

The Programme Board is currently discussing options for establishing a delivery vehicle to manage shared services on behalf of boroughs and is seeking support for a set-up period, during which detailed business modelling, potential structures and a funding formula for boroughs will be developed.

3. Why is the emphasis on collective pan-London rather than individual service improvement?

We would agree with those who say there is scope for individual borough service improvement, and we advocate it. However, this programme is focusing primarily on shared services across London. While changes should happen on an individual borough basis – and we will put in place mechanisms to facilitate peer support in relation to this – that alone is not enough to secure a positive future for London's library services and their users. The funding landscape and context for local government has changed significantly even since the Programme started. Without this approach, library services will continue to be vulnerable to cuts determined by other priorities, rather than a strategic assessment of the future needs of communities.

4. What decisions need to be made?

Considering our future options starts with realising that we need to change both the way we do our work (working practice, technology) and the way we organise our work (management structures, job roles). If we are to realise the full gains, we need to see these changes in terms of how we adapt our structure:

- Front-end services: improving the management of our public libraries, with better customer service processes, better use of technology to track customer demand; this could, for example, tie into wider developments around improving customer access to local authorities.
- Back-end services: the sharing of services across libraries, realising economies of scope and scale by having common functions performed fewer times with better deployment of expertise and technology.

The reports consider options in terms of local, sub-regional and regional options, with a range of possible models currently being discussed, and have shown that significant savings can be made.

5. 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 in any further in shared services or structural change. All London Library services can currently draw on advice and support from MLA and the London Cultural Improvement Programme about individual service improvement.

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

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.

7. What has been the feedback from Capital Ambition?

The Capital Ambition Board has been fully supportive both of the Programme and its progress, and agrees with the assertion that change must come from CEO and political level.

8. What is needed to implement change?

- A recognition that change is necessary given the current and future landscape and funding constraints
- Borough commitment to reaching best practice standards
- Library leadership for London – real political will, public support and shared determination
- An appropriate body or structure to manage medium to longer-term change
- Willingness to consider all options and make hard decisions

9. Who is currently on the London Library Change Programme Board?

- Andrew Holden (Programme Sponsor and Chair), Interim Director, MLA London
- David Brownlee, Head of 2012 Olympics, Culture and Sport, London Councils
- Rosemary Doyle, Head of Library & Heritage Services, LB Islington
- Diana Edmonds, Assistant Director of Culture, Libraries and Learning, LB Haringey
- Cllr Lucy Ivimy, London Libraries Nominated Board Member, LB Hammersmith and Fulham
- 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
- David Ruse, Director of Libraries, LB Westminster
- Caroline Stanger, Capital Ambition (ex officio)

10. Who is the Project Team?

- 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

11. Who has been on Working Groups?

Inter-Library Loans / Common Standards:	
Judith Mitlin	Library Services Manager, Bexley Library Service
David Brockhurst	Assistant Director Libraries and Lifelong Learning LB Bromley SELPIG
Ted Rogers	Head of Libraries, Archives and Information, LB Hackney
Madeline Barratt	Policy and Strategy Manager, LB Enfield
Nikki Copleston	Service Manager (Stock and Support Services), LB Harrow
Mark Blair / Paulo Pisani	Front Office Development Manager, LB Newham
Gareth Morley	Library Service Manager, LB Redbridge
Pat Chamberlain	LB Westminster
Alison Townsend	Reading Resources Manager, LB Kingston
Manny Manoharan	Libraries Development Manager, LB Waltham Forest
Clare Stockbridge Bland	Stock and Community Services, LB Lambeth
Kate Pitman	Library Development Advisor, LB Tower Hamlets
Workforce Benchmarking:	
Ailbe McNabola	Museums, Libraries, Archives Council
Madeline Barratt	Policy and Strategy Manager, LB Enfield
Tom Pike	Head of Libraries, LB Barnet
Judith Mitlin	Library Services Manager, Bexley Library Service
Lorna Lee	Head of Libraries, LB Waltham Forest
Susan Doyle	Development and Improvement Manager, LB Hillingdon
Pauline Deakin	Library Project Manager, LB Sutton
Alexis Wainwright	Head of Libraries Community Dept, LB Newham