IFLA Public Libraries Satellite

IFLA Public Libraries Satellite: Public library futures in a global digital world

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Library of Birmingham, UK
IFLA Public Libraries Satellite

Keynote: Future city, future library

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Future City, Future Library
Brian Gamble, Library of Birmingham
Birmingham: The City and its people

- Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution
- The ‘city of a thousand trades’
Birmingham - People

- 1 million citizens (city-region 5.3m)
- 36%+ from ethnic minority communities
  - 50+ languages spoken in the city
  - Europe’s second most diverse city – (Amsterdam)
- 40% under 25 – ‘the youngest city in Europe’
- The future face of European Cities
But ...UK city hardest hit by social impact of Recession

- Above average unemployment (young people, long term, concentrated)
- Skills and qualifications deficit
- High levels of functional illiteracy
- Poor health outcomes
- Poor graduate retention
- Challenging image domestically
A city that needs...

- Confidence in its learning and cultural status
- A better image (and self-image) home and abroad
- Improved skills for employability for young people: literacy, numeracy and digital
- Sustained community cohesion
- Healthier citizens
- Engaged citizens
A library that delivers...

- Social capital and community engagement
- Social, economic and health outcomes
- Creativity, innovation and inspiration
- Grounded in
  - Partnership working
  - A clear strategy for digital
  - A more business-like approach
  - A transformed service offer
  - Relationship management
What is a library in the 21st century?

- A knowledge hub...a social learning hub...a cultural exchange...an empowerment centre

- A new partnership – a new social contract - with business, colleges, universities, voluntary sector, creative industries, cultural and arts organisations, writers, performers, schools the community...

- Connecting people to people, people to ideas, ideas to ideas...co-producing services and events

- Library, Archive, Visitor attraction, Event space, corporate venue, social meeting space, business meeting space...
"I think when I look back at the @LibraryofBham opening, the thing I'll remember is how happy everyone seems today"
“Congratulations to the LoB team on their official opening driving the city into a new era. Exciting times for Birmingham”
"Very proud of our new library in Birmingham"
The Public Library is public realm
Cafe
Wi-fi
Retail
Gardens
Foyer
Theatre
Meeting Rooms
• Social Capital

77 Apprentices
245 Long Term Local Unemployed people
26 Homeless People
What sustains LoB?

- Advocacy and influence
- Engagement and co-production
- Partnership
- Volunteering
- Innovation and change
- Digital Strategy for a physical world
- Commercial income, fundraising, sponsorship
• Event rich
• Co-production environment
• Experiential learning
Small steps to change

- Introduced dress code & ID
- Redesigned the organisation
- Implemented the Customer Experience Pool
- Changed working practices
- Shared desk space & welfare facilities
- Technology supported change
Is change for everyone?

The 20:60:20 Rule

- On Board
  - Can be influenced either way
- Opposed

- Work with them
- Work on them
- Leave alone!
!!Work in Progress!!: Lessons Learned?

- Start the change process as early as possible
- Leadership is all important – has to be hungry for change
- Communicate, communicate and communicate – at least 17 times!
- Need external input to inject energy and direction
- Integrate external with the internal team and make best use of skills
- Engage staff in the journey: don’t forget the hearts and minds
- Change will take a lot of time, so be persistent and consistent
- NEVER forget the customer