IFLA Public Libraries Satellite

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

12-13 August 2014
Library of Birmingham, UK
Keynote: Thinking innovatively, acting collaboratively and managing creatively

Janene Cox
Past President, Society of Chief Librarians, England
“Thinking innovatively, acting collaboratively and managing creatively”

IFLA Public Libraries Satellite: “Public Library Futures in a Global Digital World”

13/8/14

Janene Cox
Commissioner for Tourism and the Cultural County
(Staffordshire County Council)
Society of Chief Librarians
SCL: Who are we/ what do we do?

- Drive Development
- Shaping the agenda
- Knowledgeable
- Drive Improvement
- Heads of Library Services
- Leaders
- Experts
- Influencers
- Networked
The Brief for Today

• “Provide a view of the current landscape which Public Libraries are operating within – The challenges and the opportunities – and the response from the sector which has been led by SCL”
• “It was the best of times, it was the worse of times”

Charles Dickens
Where are we now?
The National Picture

• The Deficit
  – The public sector will be 25% smaller in financial terms by April 2014
  – Potentially a further 25% by April 2018.

• Localism and Personal Responsibility
  – Devolution to Councils and Society
  – Local political leadership ‘member led’

• Accountability
  – Accountable to communities not Central Government.
Where are we now?
Libraries

In England since 2006/07 ……
• Book issues have fallen by 17%
• Visits have fallen by 17%
• Net expenditure has fallen by 11%
• Total fte staff reduced by 26%
• Since 2009/10 – 244 service points have been closed
• According to CIPFA 290 libraries in England are now operating as community managed/ community supported/commissioned community libraries in 2012/13.
And the good news.....

- At least 24 people visit a library and 17 books are borrowed every second.
- We are the top rated service in the public sector for satisfaction.
- We supported 2 million people online.
- There are 22,187 volunteers within the public library network.
- During 2013 Liverpool and Birmingham opened new libraries and Manchester will follow in March of this year.
- Many more will be re-furbished, re-sited and their service extended.
So what do our communities want?

By 2033 communities want to be:

- Healthy and well enough to enjoy life
- To be ‘connected’ to friends and family
- To be able to afford the lifestyle that they believe they and their family deserve.
‘LGA Funding Outlook for Councils 2010/11 – 2020’

Support for the Vulnerable
The four Universal Offers cover the four key areas of service which our customers and our stakeholders see as being integral to a 21st century library service.

**Digital offer**
- Recognises that the development of digital services, skills and access underpins so much of a 21st century library service – and it supports and enables the delivery of all of the Universal Offers.
- Free access to the Internet for every customer (for a minimum period of time)
- Clear and accessible online information about library services
- Staff trained to help customers access digital information
- Ability for customers to join online
- Ability to be contacted online via email for answers to customer queries
- 24/7 access to services through a virtual library presence
- Ability to reserve & renew items remotely via an online catalogue

**Health offer**
- New national strategy expressing public library contribution to the health and well-being of local communities
- Books on Prescription
- Provides a network of local hubs offering non-clinical community space
- Community outreach supporting vulnerable people
- Expert staff with local knowledge
- Assisted online access
- Public health promotion activity

**Reading offer**
- This is a strategic planning framework which enables us to develop, deliver and promote reading services within libraries. This offer sets out what public libraries will offer in order to provide a modern reading service within a local community.
- Builds on public demand for a lively and engaging reading offer with reading groups, challenges, promotions and author events, alongside public engagement opportunities services for specific audiences such as families and the blind and partially sighted.
- Offers free books and reading resources
- Offers free community space
- Provides supported online access
- Provides services for targeted audiences

**Information offer**
- The focus of the offer is on libraries role in supporting people to access information and services online in life-critical areas such as careers and job seeking, health, personal financial information and benefits. Central to this offer is helping people to use vital government online information and services.
- Supports people to access information and services online in life-critical areas such as careers and job seeking, health, personal financial information and benefits
- Brings together government and non-governmental sources of information, which have been researched by information professionals in public libraries, giving a level of quality assurance to the user.
- Ensures that public library staff and volunteers are continually developing their skills to provide help to people accessing information and services.
Key Successes

• E-lending Panel/Pilots
• Health Offer/Books on Prescription
• Information Offer/Workforce Development
• Digital Leadership Skills
• Digital War Memorial
• Relationship Management
The Universal Officers
What they do for us:

• A vision for the future

• Demonstrate our contribution to those wide public policy objectives

• A shared platform to develop new initiatives, skills and expenses of the workforce and share costs and resources.
What are the opportunities?

- To share best practice
- Library leaders at the forefront of the emerging localities agenda
- William Sieghart’s independent report:
  - Digital
  - Advocacy
  - Workforce development
- Public Health
- Assisted Digital/Digital by default
“Advocacy isn’t a campaign it’s a way of life”