Evaluation of Arts Council England's Libraries Development Initiative

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Kerry Wilson
Tamsin Cox
Paul Kyprianou
Kate Rodenhurst

instituteofculturalcapital

CONTENTS

PART 1 - LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SECTOR IN ENGLAND

1.1 The Libraries Development Initiative in context

Arts Council England's Libraries Development Initiative (LDI) was a national programme involving thirteen individual, collaborative projects funded between March 2012 and June 2013. Arts Council England (ACE) acquired strategic responsibility for the development and support of libraries following the closure of MLA in October 2011. The LDI programme was subsequently launched in February 2012 as a proactive initiative designed to encourage greater synergy between libraries and the arts, and to test innovative partnership approaches to library service delivery. The programme was originally structured under four key themes including New delivery models for arts and culture working together; Coordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes; Books and reading; and Commercial partnerships, with applicants asked to bid for funding under one of these key development areas. Across the thirteen funded projects, the LDI has engaged 143 public library authorities, with the direct involvement of 668 library staff and 121 library volunteers; and a total of 217 non-library partners including arts and cultural organisations, commercial publishers, health, education and social services.

The LDI forms part of a wider programme of ACE activities dedicated to the development of its libraries strategy. The collaborative principles underpinning the LDI build upon successive ACE positioning papers on cross-sector strategy and practice. 'Libraries and the Arts: Pathways to Partnership'[1] (2000) points to a 'new paradigm' for collaborative working between libraries and the arts prompted by local cultural strategies and 'best value' policies. LDI outcomes resonate strongly with recommendations made in this paper concerning the strengthening of national and regional frameworks; development of partnerships with arts communities; and building on best practice, particularly where libraries' unique strengths in literary and reader development initiatives are concerned, and applying these successful models to other art forms. A review of research and literature on museums and libraries conducted by ACE (Smithies,2011[2]) describes a number of gaps in the evidence base that are addressed in part by LDI and the work that it has initiated. This includes a scarcity of evidence on partnerships between libraries and creative practitioners, and the role and value of libraries more generally within the creative industries. The review also describes a need to consider more closely the role of partnership working in leadership and workforce development in the libraries sector – another key learning outcome identified by the LDI evaluation.

In acknowledgement of its newly acquired developmental role for libraries (and museums), ACE published its strategic vision for the sector in 2011[3]. The document describes five long-term goals that resonate with LDI aims and objectives, including excellence, sustainability, resilience, innovation and a commitment to a diverse and highly skilled workforce. Most significantly, the 'connecting' capacity of libraries is described as a 'big opportunity for libraries to lead the way in increasing

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[1] Executive summary available from:
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/357.pdf
[2] Available from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/a_review_of_research.pdf
[3] 'Culture, Knowledge and Understanding; Great Museums and Libraries for Everyone' available from:
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/culture_knowledge_and_understanding.pdf

engagement across the cultural sectors'. During the LDI period ACE undertook two complementary, library-specific research exercises, each designed to more pragmatically inform the future development of library services. Firstly, a review of community-led libraries published in January 2013[4] describes drivers behind enhanced community ownership of public libraries including expectations linked to the digital revolution; the added value of joined up services; financial challenges; and service delivery opportunities and expectations generated by the Localism Act 2011. The second (and most significant in relation to LDI) was the 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' project – this is discussed in more detail under section 1.5 of the report.

When considered together, these developments represent a cohesive and coherent intention towards public libraries from ACE, which is both considered and has the sector's vibrant sustainability as its core concern. The council's financial commitment to the sector has been further evidenced by a dedicated 'Grants for the Arts' funding scheme 2012-2015[5]. The evaluators believe that LDI and its learning outcomes present a positive foundation on which to build a future libraries strategy defined by the sector's cultural value, but it would be naïve to overlook the stark operational challenges facing the sector. It is not the purpose of this evaluation report to provide an exhaustive review of the current 'state of play' for public library services in England. It is worth noting however key political and economic conditions currently affecting the sector, especially those consistently referred to by LDI participants as part of the evaluation process, and which have in turn affected the way in which participants have interpreted and shared their own particular LDI experiences. Local authority budget cuts are having a profound impact in terms of branch closures and service reductions – CIPFA[6] figures released in 2012 showed a reduction of more than 200 library service points in the UK during 2011-12. The reality of the sector's economic situation, and the anxieties caused by this, should be carefully acknowledged.

It is similarly important to note however that ACE is not working in isolation as the development body and leading advocate for the sector. In advocacy terms, there is considerable support for libraries from campaign groups[7] and the national media[8], and many of the LDI projects reflect and represent the healthy infrastructure that underpins public libraries on a national basis. This includes the active involvement of professional bodies and associations including the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), Association of Senior Children's and Education Libraries (ASCEL) and The Reading Agency (TRA).

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[4] 'Community libraries Learning from experience: guiding principles for local authorities' available from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Community_libraries_research_2013_guiding_principles.pdf

[5] For more information please see: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/grants-arts-libraries-fund/

[6] 'National survey shows that library cuts have begun to bite' - http://www.cipfa.org/About-CIPFA/Press-Office/latest-press-releases/National-survey-shows-that-library-cuts-have-begun-to-bite

[7] See for example http://www.speakupforlibraries.org/

[8] 'Without libraries, we will lose a mark of our civilisation', The Guardian, 28.11.2010: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/nov/28/library-closures-catherine-bennett

1.1.1 Evaluating the LDI – headline findings

The evaluation was led by the Institute of Cultural Capital (ICC) in Liverpool, in partnership with ICC Associates Tamsin Cox and Kate Rodenhurst of DHA, and Paul Kyprianou from Liverpool's Praxis CIC. The evaluation was launched at the start of the programme and has been completed parallel to project delivery, in full consultation with all stakeholders. There were three stages to the project, using a Realistic Evaluation approach: the first was the design of an evaluation framework mapping the full process against core LDI aims and objectives. Secondly each funded project undertook a tailored self-evaluation, with support and guidance from a member of the evaluation team. Self-evaluations were completed alongside cross-LDI 'milestone' data collection activities led by the evaluation team throughout the programme. These included mid and endpoint interviews with Project Leaders and ACE Relationship Managers; mid-point stakeholder survey; observational visits of individual projects in action; and workshops with all key stakeholders (at launch of initiative, midpoint and end junctures). Data collected at regular intervals and on a longitudinal basis have established a real distance travelled – or measured change – for many LDI participants in both their practical and intellectual understandings of the initiative and its implications for the long-term strategic development of the public library sector. Thirdly, all findings were brought together by a meta-evaluation, synthesising key learning outcomes from individual projects as described throughout the report that follows. For more information on evaluation research methodology, please see appendix 1.

The evaluation has revealed a number of learning outcomes for ACE as it develops its strategic relationship with public library services, and for libraries on the frontline seeking to develop their collaborative cultural offer within the context of key local and national drivers including commercial viability and public policy relevance. Evaluation findings are presented therefore in two parts – the first includes learning outcomes for the strategic development of the public library service in England according to themes used to structure evaluation research data collection and analysis (Collaborative working; Sustainability; Relative innovation; Unique library service contribution) and emerging impact indicators (Professional skills and development; Digital agenda; Leadership and value). The specific characteristics of the LDI programme, and their relative value, are also summarised, including its open, experimental, reflexive approach, and the level of support provided by ACE via dedicated, sector specialist Relationship Managers and Bridge Organisations. Part two summarises learning outcomes for professional practice in public libraries, and includes evaluation summaries for each of the thirteen funded projects, according to project aims and objectives; contexts; delivery mechanisms; deliverables and outputs; and significant learning outcomes. These are then summarised under the four original LDI [structural] themes to enable a comparative profile of projects funded within each area, and the causal relationship between different contexts, mechanisms and project outcomes (appendix 3).

Headline impacts include an enhanced recognition and appreciation of the complementary offers and professional practices between arts and library sectors, leading to the genuine creation of new, sustainable collaborative relationships and products. In this context, LDI funding has worked in a leverage capacity to secure match funding, additional resources, and 'scaling-up' of projects for future funding applications. There is considerable evidence of community co-production in several projects, and of low-cost sustainable methods including effective use of social media and

adaptable/transferable training materials. Such adaptation and re-contextualisation of library services points to several examples of *relative innovation* for the sector, including new activities in libraries, community commissioning models, and different ways of presenting traditional reader and/or information service roles via digital interventions. The pilot, experimental nature of LDI has facilitated positive risk taking in this context, allowing a certain amount of 'creative freedom' not often experienced by public libraries as statutory local authority services.

The unique value of libraries in the context of new collaborative working has been actively considered throughout, with defining qualities such as access, reach and trust being regularly cited, but in a non-sentimental capacity due to the clear impact these qualities have in reinforcing collaborative relationships and engaging a breadth of stakeholders and service users. The 'connecting' quality of libraries therefore both within communities and as central links between different professional sectors emerged as a key asset, including their traditional information and reader service roles, and the specialist knowledge and expertise of library staff. Such 'core' values have been collectively enhanced by LDI in the shape of improved commercial awareness and versatility; evidence of staff skills development including project management and renewed job satisfaction; and significant new and improved partnerships at local and national levels, each enabling real leadership and advocacy potential for the sector. Furthermore, there are several outstanding examples of commercial viability and social impact in relation to public policy agendas (e.g. unemployment and health and wellbeing) from individual projects.

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge and thank all LDI stakeholders and participants for their co-operation and support for the research. As a general observation, the entire LDI programme was approached with abundant enthusiasm and generosity by all involved, which in itself has had a profound impact on the success of the programme as an experiment ground for effective collaborative working.

1.2 Summary of key findings according to evaluation data collection themes

NB All evaluation participants have been assured full anonymity, with interviews conducted on a confidential basis. As such, where verbatim quotations are used, respondents are cited and referred to by project role, i.e. Project Lead (PL) and Relationship Manager (RM).

1.2.1 Collaborative working

The longitudinal evaluation process has enabled a continuous conversation on the principles and practice of collaborative working and its value to the sector. The following indicators of effective collaborative working within and across the LDI programme were consistently quoted:

Collaborative value for libraries

- Greater understanding of 'external' demand for library services and programming
- Reduced duplication of effort within and across services
- Greater connections with service users
- Space to test/demonstrate rationale behind and feasibility of collaboration
- Originality in choice/type of partner
- Enhanced staff expertise
- 'Joined up' thinking and planning

Collaborative value for cultural sector

- Libraries learning from *and* leading on collaborations
- Improved understanding of collaborative advantage [sum greater than its parts]
- Case studies for sector
- Driving more conversations with arts sector
- Domino effect in attracting and engaging new arts and cultural partners/collaborators

Developing new collaborative relationships

Interviewees were asked to reflect upon developing collaborative relationships between libraries and arts and cultural organisations. The LDI programme has incentivised and inspired new relationships to good effect, and is helping to facilitate a greater understanding between sectors of their individual working practices, cultures and objectives, a key condition in any successful collaboration. This includes an enhanced appreciation of complementary skills sets between individual collaborators, organisations and sectors, and how these can be used more productively and proactively in the future:

> "I think everyone's come out of it understanding each other much better, and has a bit more respect for how each other works and the challenges that each other faces." (PL endpoint)

> "…at every event the Librarian who had commissioned it, actually attended the event, which they said they really – they said, "It was really valuable for users to have a Librarian in the room, as well as the Artist 'cause they both occupied different roles in the space." And the kind of sort of interplay between this is the library expert and this is the Artist, they said was helpful." (PL endpoint)

> "…I've come from a kind of arts development background, but within library services and working closely with library services. So it was interesting to see that [in city]… there had been no approaches made in either direction there, and I think now that the LDI has given them a chance to explore that, they've really kind of seen the joint benefit of it. So one of things we're keen to do before the project

wraps up is to have a meeting between [library service] and [arts partner] to see if they can explore other opportunities for working together". [RM midpoint]

"I found it very useful working with [arts partner] in particular, because she has a very good feel for the locality. She's very good at networking. She's very calm, which is useful when this is something that we haven't done before. She's very good at bringing people together, very good about thinking about ideas, has a… wealth of experience in the arts sector… and working with the [arts consortium] has been extremely interesting up to this point… it's now a long-standing relationship… it's made that happen, and that wasn't in place before". [PL midpoint]

"I think it's helped us [to] understand the publishing community even better than we did before and the challenges that they're facing, but also what skills and resources that they actually do have that we can leverage into working with libraries in the future". [PL midpoint]

From a contextual point of view, projects based in regions with an existing or established arts and cultural ecology were at an advantage. It has been helpful however for projects at different 'starting points' within their respective localities to learn from one another, gauge progress made and offer peer support in terms of developing a 'culture of collaboration' with arts organisations. This was observed during workshop discussions and via the networks developed across the LDI community.

"I thought it was really interesting that lots of the library services mentioned that they had no idea how to contact Artists and lots of them also said, "I've never had a bad Artist referred from the arts service." So the arts service was invaluable for libraries to source high quality Artists. But also, Librarians were also going, "Oh, I'd kind of forgotten that that the arts service is always really good and we should always ask them." So we kind of reminded them of it." (PL endpoint)

"… [town] is a good model for this, and perhaps that's partly why it came from [town] in the first place, because they are quite integrated in their understanding of the arts… this will probably reflect why they got it in the first place… they were in a position to understand what the initiative was asking about and respond accordingly". [RM midpoint]

It is important to note that successful collaborations and partnerships have also been formed with a range of cross-sector agencies, not just with arts and cultural organisations. In one example a highly successful collaborative relationship has been formed between a library service, arts partner and social service charitable trust. In other examples, national professional networks have also proved to be helpful in connecting participating services and generating enthusiasm for LDI projects:

"Another major partner has been the [trust], who are a charitable organisation who receive ESF funding to work on a one-to-one basis with jobseekers, so they're an integral part of our [project]… although we applied as a partnership with [arts organisation]… the [trust] has been an equal partner… they've been to all of the sessions… they've used this as an opportunity to learn [different approaches to] working with their clients… So it's been a seamless three-way partnership in that respect". [PL midpoint]

"…I've got the Public Library Health Officer Group, which is meeting quarterly… they've been absolutely invaluable as a consultation and development group… we're reaching a development pot of 63 library authorities… the link between that group and SCL has been really important in getting the national buy-in". [PL midpoint]

Collaborative advantages and challenges

Where strong collaborative relationships have been formed, these have helped to validate the relevant LDI project, and build confidence in its quality and relevance amongst library staff, local authorities, partners and service users, particularly within the context of cohesive, localised cultural offers. Some of the 'collaborative challenges' highlighted by project leads include the usual limitations experienced within relatively short term collaborative projects, including allowing adequate time for consultation and generating interest amongst partners, balancing priorities and managing expectations.

> "…getting personnel in one place to discuss something, that's a challenge, because everybody is stretched… to the limit in many cases… to someone like the Director of [theatre], who is all over the place… and is working with so many agencies and has obviously a whole programme to think about… we're an element in that." [PL midpoint]

> "What the [arts partner] has brought to the project, I suppose, is expertise… our [activities] I'll restate, they're organised by libraries… and sessions are delivered by volunteers and experts from [partners]… I think they've also affirmed the quality of the product… If they weren't satisfied with the service we were delivering, they wouldn't come." [PL midpoint]

1.2.2 Sustainability

The evaluation has also actively considered how the LDI programme and its learning outcomes might contribute to the on-going sustainability of public library services. The following indicators have been consistently presented:

Sustainable value for libraries

- New partnerships and reciprocal relationships
- Enhanced public involvement/engagement
- Cost-savings for other services (e.g. through contribution to preventive health agenda)
- Effective networks providing additional skills and resources
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- New customers
- Multi-purpose venues
- Shared resources
- Enhanced expertise for future grant applications (new funding opportunities ad income generation)
- Enhanced staff skills and capabilities

Sustainable value for cultural sector

- Central and shared cultural positioning within communities
- Raised profile
- Added resilience
- Future-proofing combined services [nationally]
- Effective dissemination of learning
- Influencing policy (evidence-based)
- Attractiveness of libraries as partners/collaborators

Sustainability and cost effectiveness

Inevitably, the issue of funding, and the inclination to focus upon continued access to financial resources when considering the sustainability of projects and library services, featured very strongly in all conversations on this topic, particularly at the 'midpoint' stage of evaluation. There was however a discernible willingness to manage expectations regarding resources within the LDI community, and an appreciation that the LDI programme itself represented real value for money concerning the scale of experimental activity funded and the learning outcomes emerging from it. Within the context of sustainability, a number of cost-effective collaborative benefits emerged as the programme progressed. Projects with a strong community-based co-production element had sustainability at their core via the direct low-cost involvement of volunteers and their capacity to encourage community participation. Other cost-effective examples included shared facilities in the case of libraries hosting arts events, and opportunities for cascaded learning and staff development via the production of training materials and resources. It is recommended that these are taken forward by ACE in a developmental capacity across the council's portfolio, mindful of the political environment and financial pressures facing the public library sector. These should not necessarily be presented as 'best practice' ideals for other services to emulate, but more as part of an extended learning environment that encourages library services to anticipate need, and be responsive to opportunities rather than reactive to change:

> "I think the resource that we've built in terms of the website with lessons on it, came out better than expected. We'd envisaged some kind of a physical book if you like, that would be a physical guide. But I think having the resource there and real step-by-step guides to it, has turned out better than I expected. And I think publishers themselves have learnt a lot about the way libraries operated. They've traditionally been very close to what booksellers do and understanding the way booksellers operate, and there's much more of a commercial imperative for them to do that. But they really haven't been as close to the library sector in that way." (PL endpoint)

> "…we also have a Macmillan Cancer Support Officer working in our library, and there's going to be an author that's survived breast cancer and who writes books for young teenage girls… she'll do one session with children in a secondary school… in the evening she's going to perform to cancer support groups… these kind of events… may be small-scale, but they've been devised by residents… obviously they're up-skilling, because they would be involved in the preparation… and of course it's the promotional side… we don't need to spend thousands of pounds on poster campaigns if these residents speak to their friends… it's the word of mouth that's so powerful". [PL midpoint]

> "…it's supposed to be inspiring the rest of the library sector… a few months down the line you start getting enquiries… and then you can refer them onto the LDI… [to create] a sense of momentum and excitement and change… think about what your service is and how it responds to people's needs… not just responds but leads as well… things that they never thought they could do". [RM midpoint]

Overall, for the more successful projects and especially those with a national remit, it is the cost-effectiveness of the LDI programme itself that should be celebrated, especially when considering the relatively modest investment in individual projects and the return on investment made:

> "[ACE] did believe in it and invested in it at a really critical time… which has been fantastically useful. And I think, interestingly, one of the less – one of the more hostile of the press, I think it's the Telegraph, said, Well, you know, how much funding have you had?" And when we said we'd had £19,000… there's not much they could say about that, really. 'Cause it was a very small investment

and I know we then topped it up, but for a very small investment we achieved a huge amount, actually." (PL, endpoint)

Sustainability and mutual benefits

There is also evidence to suggest that LDI project collaborators are facing similar challenges in terms of their own sustainability and business survival. It is important therefore to acknowledge the mutual advantages of collaboration in this context, and what libraries and different sectors can learn from each other especially in relation to creative practice, expanding audiences and shared resourcefulness:

> "…what's clear is that the publishers are going through an equally challenging time… about being able to maintain their frontline service… one of the very rewarding things is actually seeing the full range of where libraries [and partners] are at… and each one being able to move up by learning new things". [PL midpoint]

> "…strategically it's about changing perceptions of what a cultural institution does… why should there just be performance in a theatre? Why should it just be books in libraries? And that's what we're kind of interested in, smacking down these perceptions that we are solely for one purpose… in terms of sustainability I think… we can talk about keeping libraries open for longer and whatever, [but] who's coming into them? And it's about sustaining an audience and the core audience that we've got in libraries… isn't necessarily sustainable." [PL midpoint]

> "I know that if we all work together, we would have a much more… holistic approach to working with people in the city… and the realisation that the only way we can all be sustainable is by collaborating now… and in a way the natural role of the library is a kind of signposting information broker, putting people together and building networks. So it's something that we're very comfortable with'. [PL midpoint]

There have been other significant advantages relating to the raised profile of participating library services within their own local authorities, and the attention generated by ACE funding and new cultural sector collaborators:

> "It's certainly raised the profile of the libraries in [city council] no end. It's a project which has had a very high profile directive, which is important to us. And we're within the Leisure and Culture Directorate, so it sort of cements that together". [PL midpoint]

> "…it's generated interest across the board in [town], certainly amongst the borough council and our colleagues there. It's created a sort of synergy between departments – which we never had before". [PL midpoint]

1.2.3 Relative innovation

In all discussions concerning evidence of innovation within the LDI programme, responses were given with the caveat that it is difficult to give a single, comprehensive definition or example, given the complex nature of the sector itself, and varied levels of practice and impact between library authorities - what is incredibly innovative within one library service may be standard, mainstream practice within another. It was decided in consultation with LDI stakeholders that *relative innovation* was a more relevant and useful descriptor, capturing initiatives and practices that are innovative

within the context of LDI and the environments in which individual projects were being delivered. Frequently cited indicators of innovation included:

Innovation in libraries

- Multi-purpose venue opportunities
- New service models
- Resourcefulness through minimal [financial] investment *should* inspire on-going innovation
- Developing [non-traditional] skills, capabilities and confidence
- Incentive to take risks
- Piloting of ideas and sharing of good practice through action learning
- Enhanced social media use
- Springboards for future development

Innovation in cultural sector

- Testing local appropriateness
- Integrated cultural offers
- Co-production
- Community activism
- Reaching wider audiences
- Instrumental outcomes
- Improved partnerships
- Extension of arts role and influence
- Network of regional partners
- Empowered local people

Relative innovation was subsequently represented and expressed by the creative ways in which LDI projects were managed, presented and marketed, and the ways in which established library activities, or activities and practices that have been undertaken by libraries before, were adapted and re-contextualised:

> "…you kind of think we're going to do something totally different, when actually, there's not a need to do something totally different. It's just doing what you'd already do and doing it slightly differently and that in itself is a good innovation." (PL endpoint)

> "I suppose the thing that I felt was quite innovative was the way that we worked behind the scenes to try and unpick what we were doing. We had that series of workshops and I've never done that before. It's always – I think one of the weaknesses of the cultural sector is that we often focus on delivering and you'd need feel that you're delivering; you can't be reflective. And we were very reflective because of the funding and actually spending time thinking about our different strengths and weaknesses and, you know, Artists as problem solvers and libraries perhaps seeing themselves more as enablers, those sorts of ideas…" (PL endpoint)

> "… the [project] is innovative insomuch that it's an area where you wouldn't ordinarily have [arts] activity and you're asking the community to decide what that activity is. But in terms of having [arts] activity happen in libraries, it has happened before, but it's always been in pockets and it's [usually] in more urban or metropolitan areas". [RM midpoint]

> "…[project] brings so much together in a way that hasn't been brought together [before] in a really useful way. It's very dynamic… It's like a community of practice that's being created… it's going to be a jewel… the bang for the buck with that is just fantastic… the whole Project Management approach is very entrepreneurial, it's very what can we do now, what more can we do?" [RM midpoint]

"We haven't invented the model. The model was invented in Wales. There's been loads of good practice crossing that. You know, what this is, is about building on best practice to create a shared approach that does it more efficiently and more effectively and with greater economies of scale." (PL endpoint)

The LDI has also encouraged the same rethinking of more traditional library enquiry skills and services, especially with respect to working with arts partners:

"I [traditionally] manage an enquiry service, but we don't have a specialised enquiry service. We don't have specialised staff, so the [project] is a different way. What we're doing in the [project] is answering enquiries from [client group]… that we would normally and traditionally have done in the library itself. So we're actually repackaging our service in a different way, and working with organisations like [arts partner] helps us to do that". [PL midpoint]

The innovative nature of the LDI programme in itself, including the 'permission' granted to experiment and reflect across a range of public library agendas proved to be beneficial and has had a real galvanising quality in some cases. The programme has acted as a positive incentive – or 'excuse' – to innovate in this context, and its impact upon changing the mind-set of participants, including library staff, partners and community volunteers, with regards to creating such space in the future will be an important outcome to consider:

"…[ACE is showing] national leadership and enabling innovation… they allow libraries to take the risk when budgeting is so tight, and build up confidence that what they are doing is good quality and innovative… so something like the [project], showing the value of that on a national level within that kind of [public policy] prevention agenda… so it gives an opportunity to really demonstrate the value of what the libraries can do". [RM midpoint]

"I think a lot of them went over and above what was expected of them. And again, I think they'd committed to the project and wanted to see the project succeed. And I think the libraries in particular really saw this as an opportunity to gain something that they wouldn't get elsewhere and that they didn't – it was going to require time and effort and taking them out of their comfort zone, but wasn't going to cost them loads of money to do. And I think, as I said earlier, there's probably not enough contact between publishers and librarians and I think there is a really craving for that mutual understanding and physical contact to come together and work together, that this was a real opportunity not to be missed." (PL endpoint)

"I think it's great that … there's an investment being made in just trialling some stuff out… a lot of funding is very much about here's a programme, these are the expected outcomes… what's the thing that usually goes? It's actually time to think about stuff and test stuff out… what everyone should be doing. I think it's also a mind-set that libraries have to get into". [PL midpoint]

"…particularly working with the [community], we've been very impressed so far with their huge energy for the project… the excitement that this money has brought to the locality, and the fact that they are using their local knowledge to hopefully bring events and activities… to target groups in their communities. They've all thought very carefully about people that perhaps don't use the library… They haven't for example, wanted activities that… they themselves would wish to attend... there have been very high levels of enthusiasm for the project from volunteers and staff. And they have really shown a willingness to spend time considering how bringing arts and cultural activities into their library could best be achieved… and I think that's been something very noteworthy actually." [PL midpoint]

1.2.4 Unique library service contribution

Despite the LDI's clear objectives regarding enhanced collaborative working between libraries, arts and cultural sectors, it has been vital to consider throughout the extent to which the unique contribution of libraries has been identified and promoted. This is important in defending the sector's independent professional value, but also in enabling other sectors to understand libraries' value to them in collaborative contexts. Invariably, when asked to describe or define the library service's unique selling point (USP) in relation to LDI projects (and more generally), indicators reflected core values such as accessibility and community relevance:

USP of library services

- Accessibility – demographic inclusion and reach
- Proactive service development
- Role and impact of library staff
- Community relevance
- Trust in library services
- Hub for reading and literacy activities

USP in cultural sector context

- 'Other' activities demonstrating added value [beyond core services]
- Demonstrable library relevance and responsiveness (e.g. to new partners)
- Promotion of library as civic place
- Improved advocacy for sector

The imperative to promote and defend its USP will not come as a revelation to the library service, as this is a frequent recommendation of research in the sector. Similarly, its esteem as a 'trustworthy' public resource is regularly regarded as a significant unique value:

> "Research on what the public want from libraries recommended that libraries should communicate more about their unique services, such as activities, genealogy software and support, and the fact that borrowing books allows people to 'take risks' on new authors and to get hold of expensive reference books; it also suggested libraries have a strong brand to build on, with high levels of public trust (Woodhouse, 2010)" [quoted in A Review of Research and Literature on Museums and Libraries, 2011]

The 'reach' of library services in relation to the people and communities that they serve, and the loyalty that is shown to them, was viewed as a particular strength within and across LDI projects, both as a stand-alone service, and one that can be potentially 'sold' to future partners and collaborators as an incentive to increase their own audience figures. Projects with a strong community remit, such as co-production activities and community commissioning, had real potential to reinforce and promote this particular value:

> "I think [what's] particularly unique about our offer is the links, the local community links that we have. All of those links built up over ages with local schools, with local groups, and also that really powerful image that the library has within the community. I think that's our particularly strong point, the face we are embedded within the community so well and have these really strong links". [PL midpoint]

> "…where there's a lot of community involvement and the… co-creation kind of work, because I actually do think if you were to talk about the inherent… innate, sort of USP and what libraries do that other people can't do, I do think that whole question of community involvement and community engagement and empowering people [is at the heart of it]." [RM midpoint]

The 'reach' that library services have therefore is considered to be a strong selling point, especially when combined with the sense of trust established between library services, their staff and users. When put in a professional context, and compared to other public services, this helps to create a consistent, powerful narrative on the value of public libraries on local and national scales, overcoming the 'cosy' images usually associated with terms of reference such as loyalty and trust. This 'reach' can be furthermore translated into powerful demographic knowledge and expertise, another asset that would appeal to a range of public and private sector collaborators. The professional knowledge, skills and aptitude of library staff are integral to this:

> "I think the [project] is obviously the trusted face and that kind of deep community engagement and the relationship with professional librarians… on an individual basis, the relationship they've got with [project officer], I don't think you would have got that level of engagement if [project] was held in a Jobcentre or even in the community centre… and with [other project] that's something to do with the power of numbers in the library network… if library services can come together, they can make a unique offer… have a unique reach as well as the work that they're doing in the way that very few organisations could. Even if the NHS ran [project] themselves, it wouldn't get the kind of reach and penetration that the library service can get". [RM midpoint]

> "…[libraries have a] huge amount of knowledge and awareness of demographics, and demographics that aren't always immediately thought of by publishers… focusing on working with young people [for example], the sort of next generation of readers… because the market for publishers has been so disrupted the last couple of years… the library is bringing expert audience knowledge across a specific demographic that publishers aren't automatically exposed to on a day-to-day basis". [PL midpoint]

Rather than unique individual selling points, the LDI was instrumental therefore in showcasing the collective, universal value and strengths of the public library service. The process has helped to reconsider and redefine the service's core offer within the context of dwindling public spending and other contemporary conditions including collaborative opportunities and community ownership:

> "I think it's probably… showing what a library can offer… the strong community links and access to communities are key in both of these projects… [LDI] really does reinforce… the diversity of libraries in terms of shape, size, access and what they offer." [RM midpoint]

Other interviewees were keen however to remember its unique *professional* value as a knowledge and information service, and recommended that broader LDI objectives should accommodate and reflect all professional aspects of the service. In the case of LDI projects with a strong digital component, and those contributing to information-dependent public policy agendas, the programme has in fact helped to reinforce this traditional role and USP:

> "…we have been approached by other partners, like Jobcentre Plus, to help them with their digital training as well. So, although the council has got some exciting IT development that's going to be coming up, I think we are doing a lot more than probably other departments… for actually passing those skills to the public, and that's always been a role with the library service." [PL midpoint]

"…the partnership with IAPT [Improving Access to Psychological Therapy programme]… is going to be particularly productive… IAPT are talking about using our core reading list… they're also talking about what other health information resources they could channel through libraries… … and also a sort of joint referral system." [PL midpoint]

1.3 Summary of key findings according to emerging learning outcomes

1.3.1 Professional skills and development

The LDI programme has had a considerable impact in building confidence and awareness (in some cases) concerning staff skills and capabilities within participating library services. On a pragmatic level, these include project management skills, enterprise and associated business acumen; the programme also had the capacity in some project examples to raise and promote commercial awareness within the public library sector, complementing the more generic management and business acumen skills. This was especially true in projects with a commissioning component. On a slightly more philosophical level, the programme has also improved self-confidence and belief in the public library service from within. For library staff directly involved in LDI project delivery, there is evidence of enhanced job satisfaction, empowerment and personal confidence, especially in frontline staff trying new things and working with different people. The value of such improved confidence and job satisfaction should not be underestimated given previous reports of 'low confidence' in the sector in relation to professional recognition (Smithies, 2011).

> "…there's interesting stuff around the model they've developed in terms of community engagements, and some of the impact that's had on staff skills. And also, interestingly I think, particularly the impact that it seems to be showing in terms of then building up a, you know, a resource of community skills and helping to up-skill people in the area". (RM endpoint)

> "…someone like [project lead] is actually surprisingly driven and business-like… maybe there's something in that as well around… building a confidence [in] library services, that they actually are offering and managing these projects really well." [RM midpoint]

> "…it's been a very positive experience for me… I've certainly learnt a lot coming along to do it… I think I've grown in confidence… I've done a lot of things that I hadn't done before… I've never stood up in front of a group of people… I was thinking last night, this time last year I probably wouldn't have done that… all those people I've met, sort of selling the course to them, I was slightly worried about doing that… I must have come across okay 'cause people have been coming along!" [PL midpoint]

> "…it's really connecting it up to the delivery agents that are going to make this work and bring libraries into a new relationship… libraries have never had these national partners before to support their health work… what will be absolutely instrumental… will be developing the local commissioning models that are going to provide the sustainable business model for it". [PL midpoint]

> "…our main role is actually that brokering of partnerships, as I was saying earlier on about us being able to introduce the library service to the wider cultural partnerships at a local and regional level. I also think there's a lot of value in libraries themselves having the confidence to see that they can do that and they can be the hub, the cultural hub in the communities in the same way as they can be a digital hub." (RM endpoint)

More specifically, the programme has enhanced understanding around the ways in which public libraries may commission or be commissioned by external organisations, and effectively sub-contract services in the future. Other commissioning models of particular interest include those with community consultation mechanisms and co-production activities. The quality of the commissioning process became more professional in one example, ultimately improving the quality of the commissioned product/arts experience. Within the context of core public library values, LDI participants have also begun to appreciate their competitive position within a shrinking public

service sector, and to understand the need to articulate and sell much more clearly the service's competitive offer. Linked to this, there was some evidence of enhanced capacity-building and resourcefulness with respect to community involvement and the use of volunteers, a key finding as the future sustainability of one project in particular will be dependent upon on-going volunteer support:

> "…that idea of actually being able to go out to Commissioners, speak to them. And I think it's a really interesting model they've adopted, you know. It's not just kind of sending out a generic, here's what we do, who want's us? It's actually going to speak to Commissioners, understanding their particular needs in that particular area with the particular target audience they work with, and then being able to model a service for them using all of that added value that the library brings and the partnership between a library and the Arts Practitioner." (RM endpoint)

> "If you work in a library, I think you have a public service ethic behind you… what we've had to realise in the last few years, is there are any number of other agencies, other organisations… who are our competitors, and it took me a while to see other people as our competitors. So I think we probably have to be more business-like, more commercially minded, in the way we offer our services, we need to know what else is out there and we really have to be sure about the offer that we have". [PL midpoint]

> "…as the project's evolved… I've gained a real understanding of… a much broader range of issues than the standard… ones we started with… understanding the context really in which this is going to work… so I think that's been really helpful… because I've now got a real sense of where this fits within wider policy frameworks". [PL midpoint]

> "I think we should be able to demonstrate [the] use of local resources, whether that's information, partnerships etc. I think that will be interesting, certainly our use of volunteers, I'm sure we'll be able to evidence some interesting learning from that… It would be quite nice if we… report to other [communities] in the county about what we did and how successful it was, so that other community groups within the county might think… this is something we can get engaged and involved with". [PL midpoint]

The LDI was also recognised as a platform for developing the more generic 'essential' library and information skills that have been identified via the 'Envisioning…' consultation exercises. This should not be underestimated as a critical component of LDI, as in some cases, the development of such skills within relevant library services will also be critical to the sustainability of individual projects. This enhanced knowledge does not apply however across the board – in one project with an explicit commissioning remit, it has proven difficult to work with library staff through a lack of common purpose and understanding, highlighting the need to carefully consider and extract learning outcomes in this context for the benefit of the full sector:

> "I have had conversations in borough I'm working in, where I actually feel like I've not been able to make the… lead person in the libraries understand what we're trying to do… She just fundamentally does not understand commissioning." [PL midpoint]

> "…the potential for new skills and leadership opportunities could be emerging from these kind of projects… a lot of things we were hearing from the consultation were around the new kinds of skills that library services would need, and library staff would need, to deliver the kinds of services that would be relevant in [the future]… it's digital engagement, it's events planning… outreach skills." [RM midpoint]

1.3.2 Digital agenda

The contemporary role and value of public libraries within digital strategies is conventionally understood in terms of digital inclusion, both for digitally excluded groups who do not have private access to the internet due to financial means, and for those engaged in informal lifelong learning activities[9]. LDI has reinforced this role as digital service providers to a certain extent, creating opportunities for ACE to align libraries with other digital arts and cultural agendas. The 'traditional' role therefore of libraries as trainers and facilitators with regards to ICT is integral to the development of a shared digital agenda, and should be regarded as a powerful asset when considering the cultural implications of new and emerging technologies such as advanced smartphones and tablets. Traditionally the public library service also has a long history of adapting to technological development, and having quite sophisticated technological infrastructures, even if this is not immediately obvious or the service does not appear to be especially dynamic. In terms of content design and production, the library service also has relevant information and knowledge management expertise that would be of high value. Culturally and professionally therefore the service has a strong tradition and infrastructure to build upon, and in the case of one LDI project, this expertise was being highlighted and recognised once more:

> "I think for me the main [success] is the workshops on the smartphone training, because we've had about 86 people who've gone through so far on that training. They've been very enthusiastic. I've got some nice quotes that I've got for that, and they want more. It's clear that this needs to be rolled out to all the libraries in [city] because all of the people on it were over 65." (PL endpoint)

> "…it's been the bread and butter [service], getting people on to the internet, getting them setting up email accounts… because there's always these assumptions that, well, a) everyone has access to this technology, and b) that they know how to use it… that's where libraries can assist in terms of helping people and being that… more neutral space". [RM midpoint]

> "I often think that libraries are seen are being behind the digital curve, when actually they have achieved quite a lot, when you think about the Government's Race Online agenda, what they've done to kind of bridge that digital divide gap". [PL midpoint]

> "…even if they don't have what in the digital environment would be seen to be a very good website or this, that and the other, they actually have very powerful Library Management Systems, and some of these are more interactive than others, and it's an area that I'm not sure that publishers are really fully aware of". [PL midpoint]

> "…what's great about the project is that they're actually beginning to phone me up and contact me because they're seeing us as people who know about this sort of thing… one of the… knock-on effects of the project is that it is raising the standard of library services, libraries within the council as a whole… they're beginning to look to us again as perhaps leaders in new technology". [PL midpoint]

As a whole, the digital agenda provides another lens through which to focus the full cultural offer of libraries, building upon the four key areas used to structure the LDI programme. There is evidence from individual projects for example regarding the use of social media to engage library staff, communities and co-creation of cultural experiences. The initiative is also prompting thought and

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[9] DCMS (2010) The Modernisation review of public libraries – a policy statement. Available from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultation_responses/modernisation_review_public_libraries.pdf

discussion on a national collaborative digital strategy for libraries, which projects with a digital focus can potentially help to shape and inform:

> "…we piloted here a book trail using QR codes and then we took that trail out to different libraries. And I think when library staff saw that you could put a QR code within say crime, which was an interview with, say, Peter James, you know, the Author, they realised that that was something that was really interesting." (PL endpoint)

> "…up until that point, they had never had to make a business case for having any technology support or having access to a lot of the facilities, you know. So they had to actually, you know, fight quite hard to even get access to Twitter, and they had to have some training in corporate marketing and what they could and couldn't say, and all that kind of thing. So, to see them start the ball rolling on getting more of a pathway, to have a voice to, sort of, talk to people direct, I think it was really helpful. And it's given them a lot of ideas". (PL endpoint)

> "…we shall have some very interesting things to share with people around the value of community decision-making… We shall also, and I think this is new, be able to demonstrate our use of social media and using ShapeYourPlace and how that engaged the wider community." [PL midpoint]

> "…it's got publishers really excited… they really want to help build a vibrant future library service… they've been talking about the need for a national kind of digital vision for libraries, that brings together perhaps a new coalition of partners". [PL midpoint]

There is also evidence to suggest that the LDI programme is encouraging a more rational approach to using digital resources in library service management, and attempts to overcome some of the bureaucratic and logistical barriers typically found within local authority settings. These include considerations on how 'free' digital resources can be used to greater effect and for different purposes, and thinking of digital options in relation to service marketing and promotion rather than direct delivery. This is shifting discussion away from some of the more problematic digital concerns (associated with e-lending) around licensing and publishing rights:

> "…some of our libraries are on Facebook, but that's something we're now going to definitely start using Facebook. I've just signed up; we used to have a PDF newsletter that we would email out, but now I've signed up to MailChimp and we'll be doing it that way, much more technological. We want to sign up for Twitter." (PL endpoint)

> "… the stuff around… digital and social media… that was very innovative because it kind of makes sense doesn't it… it's getting libraries to see the point and again overcoming those kind of local authority IT issues, where they can just make the most of it… [improving] the libraries' understanding about things like social media and how to use it effectively rather than it just being something that you feel you should do for the sake of it". [RM midpoint]

> "…a good amount of energy and effort from this project has been as much about trying to… lobby local authorities… to access certain programmes… being able to access SurveyMonkey to conduct an initial survey… through to Skype and Google+ and all those things… I think the interesting thing is that at a time when libraries are strapped for cash, free resources are going to have to play an increasing role… a lot of thought needs to be given to how that's almost made policy across the board… this is very much about… digital communications and projects rather than e-lending, but that has come up as an issue". [PL midpoint]

"…the elephant in the room is e-lending… there can be quite a lot of friction because of that… we need to think] outside of just the practicalities of learning how to use the stuff, into actually thinking a bit from a library perspective, thinking more creatively of what they could add". [PL midpoint]

1.3.3 Leadership and value

From a developmental perspective, the LDI programme has impacted upon leadership effectiveness from both operational and strategic perspectives. Individual Project Leads have commented on their own leadership efficacy, both in making sure that projects are completed and delivered to the required standard, and in enabling and supporting colleagues to directly learn and benefit from the experience. Partnerships with national agencies in particular were seen to be enhancing the sector's profile, particularly within public policy agendas, enabling pervasive levels of access, engagement and advocacy that would be difficult for any stand-alone library service to accomplish:

"I thought that my role would just be to set the parameters and let people go off and do it… it's changed over the course of the project… they haven't understood the issues, and so I've needed to… be more directive ad more challenging about how people are delivering their projects, 'cause if they weren't thinking about how they were working… taking the time to be thoughtful about what their interactions across libraries and arts were, then it merely becomes a series of creative activities". [PL endpoint]

"In terms of other sectors, I think that the health [project] is a good example because the national leadership on that has allowed all kinds of access to different areas that an individual library service wouldn't necessarily be able to access… the [partner national agency] is so well clued up… talking to all different Government areas… that's been quite an eye-opener. I know a lot of individual library services struggle to get that high-level access and advocacy, so I think having national leadership on that project is really helpful." [RM midpoint]

"…it's being able to offer the support for those on the ground… delivering the services… and the time and the space to actually say 'right, I've got a great idea, how can I move that forward'? And I think there is a gap around… those kind of leadership opportunities… actually giving someone the autonomy to say 'I've got a good idea. I've got the capacity to deliver it or experiment with it. Let's do that'.'' [RM midpoint]

Effective strategic leadership and advocacy is integral to the ongoing fulfilment of all LDI aims and objectives, especially sector resilience, sustainability and the promotion of libraries' unique values. Respondents were optimistic that outcomes of the LDI programme, when positioned alongside other ACE library initiatives, will help to consolidate and communicate a shared vision and the leadership role of ACE in taking the sector forward under increasingly difficult and stringent circumstances:

"It's not necessarily the library services that you have to convince… it's all [about] advocacy and education about what it is that libraries can do and deliver". [RM midpoint]

"I think there's still a bit of a lack of clarity around the role of Arts Council and libraries. I think LDI does help in that it goes right across the breadth of what libraries do… I think it's unclear whether [ACE is] meant to be leading… advocating or be a development agency… at the end of LDI and when that's backed up by things like Envisioning… I think it will help to clarify that picture." [RM midpoint]

"…there are millions of pounds worth of cuts hanging over us over the next three years as an authority… if we can point to an evidence base that is saying that… we're moving in the right direction here, then that gives me as a senior manager a lot of ammunition for advocacy". [PL midpoint]

1.3 Value of LDI programme: operational characteristics and strategic benefit

As discussed within the 'Relative innovation' summary above, the experimental nature of the programme has proven to be invaluable to participants in creating the time, space and 'excuse' to trial new working relationships and practices, and to critically reflect on the experience. This can be largely credited to the leadership and support provided by the LDI management team, via the encouragement and reassurance offered via one-to-one support from Relationship Managers and group activities including the three scheduled workshops. The pilot, experimental nature of the LDI programme also has a demonstrable value in the way in which it has pump-primed or led to the spin-out of larger projects and initiatives in some cases:

> "…with having had the Arts Council money to do the development work, we can go to the Department of Health, but we wouldn't have been able to go to the Department of Health without having done that first piece of work". [PL midpoint]

Project Leads were appreciative of the operational structure of the programme, including guidance from Relationship Managers and (where relevant) Bridge Organisations. It must be noted that in some cases Relationship Managers went 'above and beyond' what was perhaps expected of them in terms of project delivery, for example in helping with the practical running of events and activities that should have been more appropriately resourced by the [funded] project teams. This was at the discretion of individual Relationship Managers however, and does not necessarily undermine the effectiveness of the overall management of the LDI process by ACE. There has also been considerable 'goodwill' time and investment from Project Leads and partners on the more productive projects, which should be acknowledged in any assessment of scalability based on size of grant.

One shortcoming for some Project Leads was the 'requirement' to attend the three full-day workshops in London. This was regarded as an unnecessary obligation for some colleagues with limited time costed into the grant to deliver the project. Informal conversations with some Project Leads have also illustrated that the purpose of these events was unclear, which only adds to the frustration of taking a full-day away from the workplace, especially for those participants required to travel some distance. It is recommended that ACE consider the appropriateness and usefulness of such a commitment for future schemes of this nature, especially for relatively small projects.

> "I spent two full time, two full days, which I could – you know, I certainly personally I haven't felt have helped me in any way to take forward my project so that I – you know, that felt like an obligation, like a bit of an onerous obligation to go along to take part." (PL endpoint)

It was also observed that perhaps more could have been done to facilitate greater synergy between projects (aside from networking opportunities at scheduled workshops), although this is not regarded as a serious limitation of the programme:

> "I think the Arts Council had the ambition that we'd all, sort of, like, work together perhaps a little bit more or see how they was overlapping a little bit more. And I don't know why that didn't happen; that could be our lack of contact with others. But I didn't feel like it was pushed enough from the Arts Council." (PL endpoint)

Interviewees were also asked to reflect specifically upon the impact that LDI is having upon the library sector's strategic collaborative relationship with ACE, including the opportunities created and

risks presented to ACE as the sector's new national development agency. Responses indicate that the main collaborative opportunities created for ACE include the strengthening of links with other relevant national organisations, and the active demonstration of the council's strategic commitment to public library services. In a developmental capacity, the role and contribution of Relationship Managers throughout the LDI process has also been especially helpful and beneficial to Project Leads in shaping their own understanding and appreciation of their library service's strategic relationship with ACE:

> "…strategically we've built some relationships that weren't there originally, so maybe in the longer term for us [ACE] it's helped cement those relationships with TRA and ASCEL that perhaps we wouldn't have had". [RM midpoint]

> "I think we have a much better understanding of what the Arts Council is offering; what the new opportunities will be for the future. It's really good to make contact with people like [Relationship Manager], who are local development people, within the Arts Council. I think it's the knowledge that people within ACE are there for support as we need it, support and help. So I think it's been really good… in that you're working *with* ACE as they take up the library role." [PL midpoint]

Potential risks to ACE included the prospect of LDI becoming 'lost amongst' other council activities and various organisational changes and restructures. In this context, LDI learning outcomes will also be useful in informing and shaping on-going ACE programmes and strategic interventions with the public library sector (and should be actively used as such), including the dedicated Grants for the Arts programme, both in practical examples of how to work with arts organisations and communities on the ground, and in supporting long-term strategic relationships:

> "I think there is [value to ACE] and actually to the sector as a whole as well… if we had Grants for the Arts [projects] that wanted to do something similar, we've got the learning from this about how you engage with the arts organisations or how you engage with your communities…" [RM midpoint]

1.5 LDI and Envisioning the Library of the Future

As discussed in the introduction to the report, the LDI forms part of a suite of ACE initiatives designed to inform its libraries strategy. The most significant of these has been the Envisioning the Library of the Future[10] project. The research followed a three-phase consultation process involving various stakeholders including relevant professional groups and the general public. In summary, 'Envisioning' corroborates many of the opinions of LDI stakeholders and learning outcomes of the evaluation, in concluding that libraries are trusted and highly valued public assets that face many challenges in continuing to legitimate their publicly-funded status. In response, ACE has identified the following four priority areas for development:

Place the library as the hub of the community

This objective will encourage a re-think of the ways in which library spaces can be more creatively utilised; greater synergy between physical and virtual library spaces; and more integration between

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[10] For more information please see: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/library-of-the-future/

libraries and other community assets and services. There are connections with specific LDI projects under this development area – Derby ArtWork and Books on Prescription projects for integration with public services; Cambridgeshire Arts Alive and Fresh Horizons Cinema in Libraries for creative use of library spaces; and Digital Skills Sharing and Bournemouth QRacking the Code for integrated virtual and physical library spaces.

Make the most of digital technology and creative media

Specific aims of the digital priority area are to improve quality and consistency of virtual library experience; develop an open, innovative ICT infrastructure; and to enable the lending of full range of e-books. Although 'digital agenda' was not a specific strategic priority for LDI, there are a number of learning outcomes from relevant projects that act as useful case studies for ACE in developing this priority. Most significantly these include Digital Skills Sharing and QRacking the Code projects.

Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable

In ensuring that libraries are resilient and sustainable, ACE will enable communities and individuals to become more actively involved in the design and delivery of library services; encourage new approaches to governing and managing libraries; equip libraries to commission library services, and be commissioned to deliver other public services. LDI projects such as Cambridgeshire Arts Alive and Richmond upon Thames Targeted Arts Interventions present relevant case studies for this development area, particularly in the areas of commissioning and co-design of services.

Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

This priority relates to the professional development of library staff to ensure that they have the right skills to fulfil other priority areas, including the creative and innovative use of library spaces, and the skills to develop and respond to digital developments. There are several examples of cross-LDI learning outcomes that could help to inform this strategic objective.

Part 2 of the LDI report includes detailed summaries of individual project evaluations, which will furthermore substantiate the relevant learning outcomes for ACE in relation to 'Envisioning' strategic priorities.

PART 2 - LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The LDI programme was originally structured under four key themes, which were collectively intended to inspire enhanced collaboration between public library services and arts and cultural sectors, using innovative approaches that capitalised on existing resources and opportunities on both local and national scales. Library services and collaborating organisations were originally invited to tender or submit project proposals under one of these four themes:

- ➢ New delivery models for arts and culture working together
- ➢ Co-ordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes
- ➢ Books and reading
- ➢ Commercial partnerships

Part 2 of the evaluation report contains summaries of all 13 individual LDI projects, which are grouped according to the theme listed on original funding applications. Authors acknowledge that many LDI projects can be categorised under (and therefore have learning outcomes for) multiple themes. The purpose of this section of the report however is to capture programme impact and outcomes according to original statements of intent, both for ACE as the funding body and for individual projects funded under the scheme. Each individual project summary therefore is structured using the following headings, which reflect the methodological approach used throughout the evaluation:

1. Project aims and objectives
2. Project context
3. Project delivery mechanisms
4. Project deliverables and outputs
5. Summary of main learning outcomes

Summaries of headline 'contexts, mechanisms and learning outcomes' for each of the 4 LDI structural themes are also presented in table form to enable the effective, comparative 'snapshot' capture of what worked and why (appendix 3). It is hoped that this level of information may be useful for ACE and stakeholders in informing the development of any future interventions and funded programmes, both in terms of their design and funding decisions. Similarly this may also be useful for library services and partners seeking to participate in future programmes of this nature, or to build their own independent collaborative practice with arts and cultural sectors.

Project title: QRacking the Code
Lead applicant: Bournemouth Libraries; Bournemouth Borough Council
LDI theme: New delivery models for arts and culture working together
Original grant value (as per funding application): £5,000

1.   Project aims and objectives

The broad aim of this project was to enhance the reading experience of existing and new library users, and to furthermore engage them in a wider, city-wide cultural offer through the use of smart phone technology and QR codes. Specific objectives included:

- Introduce new and existing library users to a new reading experience
- Use QR codes to promote major local initiatives and the wider cultural offer in Bournemouth
- Provide training to library staff and the public in how to utilise smart phone technologies, in part through the use of volunteers
- The further development of collaborative working between arts and cultural services in Bournemouth, with the library service taking the lead and being at the forefront of innovation
- Create locally commissioned original content showcasing local authors, literary and arts events, works of arts and heritage sites with the active participation of local Further and Higher Education students

2.   Project context

The project was motivated by the growth in ownership of smart phones, projected to increase to 90% of population by 2013/14 and interest in the potential of new technologies within the library sector. At the same time there was an appreciation that QR codes offered a way of promoting interest in the wider cultural offer and local tourism. The library service could take the lead in this development, which would help change perceptions about the library service both within the local authority and with arts and cultural sector partners.   The area has a high percentage of retired people and introducing older people to social technology would help to bridge the 'digital divide' and also demonstrate new ways of accessing and using the library service.

3.   Project delivery mechanisms

The project received support from Bournemouth's Arts and Culture Board; a project Board comprising cabinet portfolio member, Head of Library service, Senior Librarian (IT specialist) and Area Manager (also acting as Project Manager) had overall responsibility for the project. A steering group was formed with project partners including tourism, museums and arts services to help facilitate the project, although in practice the Project Manager had most responsibility for project delivery. The demands on her time were more significant than originally envisaged and the Head of Library service was unable to fully compensate for this by reducing her commitments in other areas. This was also hindered by operational savings the service was required to make, as with other council departments involved in the project.

Local Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors were engaged in the project with the aim of getting students involved in developing online content on local heritage, as well as being volunteers to train people in the use of smart phones and QR codes. Work was also undertaken with Tourism staff and Sea Front services, and the Arts Development team was involved in creating a virtual QR journey as part of the 'Arts by the Sea Festival' and the 'Streets of Bournemouth' heritage trail. Original content was created in respect of these including audio and video clips accessed via QR codes. While mobile phone companies expressed some interest in the project and one appeared willing to provide training, this did not materialise within the dedicated LDI project timeframe.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

106 library staff undertook smart phone/ QR code training along with more than 80 members of the public, all of whom were over 65 years of age, with 10 'tech-buddy' volunteers involved in delivering training. All of Bournemouth's 12 libraries took part in the project, which resulted in 33 new library memberships directly attributed to involvement with the project. The project has developed a library service blog and the use of Facebook, with the intention also to run a Twitter account. In total 898 downloads of QR codes were recorded during the course of the LDI project.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

- The project was able to further develop the partnership between arts and cultural services in Bournemouth with the library service adopting a leading role, demonstrating the potential that social technologies could play in enhancing the town's cultural offer.

- The library service successfully presented itself as being at the forefront in knowledge and the application of social media and relevant technologies, which were subsequently adopted by other departments in the local authority. This has resulted in new joint working, which is continuing to develop beyond the lifetime of the project. Proposals in development include the library provision of access and training in the use of new technologies for welfare benefit claimants and potentially in relation to NHS initiatives. There is every indication that this initiative will therefore be sustained beyond the lifetime of LDI and that it could be adapted by other library services.

- The training provided to library service staff was key in encouraging colleagues to appreciate the potential value of social media/technology and how these can be used to enhance the core library offer, demonstrating new ways of accessing books and information.

- The project helped demonstrate the continued relevance and value of the library service to local politicians and the role it can play in relation to new technologies. There is a continued commitment to the library service by Councillors, with no current reduction in the number of Bournemouth libraries or their services.

- The project was innovative certainly within its local context and possibly at a national library service level. As such there were some organisational and cultural barriers that had to be overcome with the introduction of new ways of working – in one example "council bureaucracy"

provided an obstacle with a Senior Officer blocking the attachment of QR codes to street signs, despite strong political support for the project.

- Cultural assumptions that older people will not be interested in social media/ technologies were undermined based on the experience of this project. The training provided by the 'tech-buddies' was important in enabling people to make use of the technology and also represented a positive inter-generational 'added value' to the initiative.

- The time demands on the Project Manager were considerably more than had been envisaged, particularly as this was only one area of her work. While efforts were made to adjust workload to accommodate this, any similar project would benefit from having a dedicated full-time manager.

- There were imaginative ideas about how to involve FE and HE students in the project. Ultimately these proved difficult to fulfil in practice, due to delays with completion of online content and in the production of a project website. More detailed consideration and planning therefore may be required in similar future projects in relation to complementing existing academic timetables and course requirements, in order to fully realise the potential of FE/HE collaboration.

Project title: Arts Alive in Libraries
Lead applicant: Cambridgeshire County Council
LDI theme: New delivery models for arts and culture working together
Original grant value (as per funding application): £19,450

1. Project aims and objectives

The LDI project in Cambridgeshire aimed to enhance the local arts and cultural offer in rural and remote settings using the public library network both as physical locations for new activities and as an active community participation and engagement platform in the planning and commissioning process. Three key objectives were identified at the outset of the project, including:

- To improve ease of access to cultural activity through the development and animation of library spaces
- To create an innovative mechanism to enable local communities to choose high quality cultural activity to take place in library spaces
- To pilot test a scalable and transferable model of accessible high quality cultural offer with active community involvement

2. Project context

Four Fenland library locations – Wisbech, March, Chatteris and Whittlesey – were identified in the first instance as relevant county areas with little or no arts and cultural facilities, and limited opportunities therefore for community participation in creative activity. The Fenland area more broadly has significant socio-economic concerns, including low educational attainment; low value employment and increasing numbers of incapacity benefit claimants, alongside limited infrastructural support such as a minimal public transport network. In this context, the project actively responded to a perceived gap in local provision with the potential for real, relative social impact. The project also acted upon practical opportunities presented by existing local initiatives, including the development of CS3, a cultural sector consortium representing Cambridgeshire and Suffolk (formal LDI project partner), and responded directly to regional library policy and cultural strategy initiatives including Cambridgeshire County Council's *21st Century Vision for Libraries* and *Making a Difference*, the 'vision statement' for arts and culture in Cambridgeshire.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project took advantage of existing resources and local infrastructures in terms of project delivery. Most significantly these included the proactive development of a strategic partnership with CS3, and the effective engagement of existing library friends groups and social media platforms to create a community-based commissioning model. This furthermore resulted in clearly defined briefs – in 'menu' form - for bidding arts organisations, based on the relevant needs and interests of participating libraries and communities, designed to target specific demographic groups. Successful bidders subsequently became part of the CS3 consortium. The effective use of existing mechanisms

therefore has resulted in a streamlined commissioning process, ensuring that the 'right' arts activities were commissioned. Above all, the use of library spaces as arts venues has proven to be the most effective existing mechanism, and the LDI project has enabled useful experimentation regarding the physical use of local libraries for different arts activities (e.g. live performance; participatory activities). It should also be noted that the project required considerable input from library staff, especially in the delivery of events, which was mostly provided on a goodwill basis.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Via the staging and production of commissioned arts activities in four local libraries (Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech), the project has facilitated the active engagement of three arts organisations (including 14 artists), reaching a cumulative audience of 2,964 across all age ranges. Activities and events included live poetry, community TV, comedy clubs, theatre performances and manga drawing workshops (36 in total). The project as a whole has facilitated the direct involvement of 11 library staff and 28 volunteers, who participated in 10 training sessions. Activities have been promoted and disseminated via YouTube, Shape Your Place websites and associated social media platforms (e.g. Facebook).

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

The Cambridgeshire project has demonstrated effective democratisation in arts programming using the public library network, reflecting the ethos of public library services. This was dependent however on the creative and innovative use of a strong existing local infrastructure, which in experimental terms has been a success. The project team note that ideally more time and resources would have been invested in the planning stages, especially with regard to the consultation process with libraries and communities. Co-ordinating the project to fit with existing Friends group meetings for example resulted in delays to the programming schedule. The project has also pointed to a need to understand more about the characteristics of participating voluntary groups in terms of expertise, skills and aptitude, and any relevant training and/or support that may be required in order to provide a sustainable arts and cultural offer using existing resources.

Arguably the project has proven to be cost-effective in ensuring relevance of the commissioned product, and ensuring that the new arts and cultural offers were filling an existing gap, and were therefore more likely to engage new library users and audiences with little (if any) prior experience of arts events.

Arts Alive has enhanced collaborative working in the region through careful management of the project - commissioned arts organisations for example were required to formally join the CS3 consortium, enabling sustained networks and regional capacity building. There is further evidence of enhanced capacity building in terms of staff and volunteer skills, especially around event planning and hosting. Other unanticipated outcomes include the more effective use of social media platforms amongst project participants including library staff and Friends groups (e.g. the Shape Your Place website). Arts partners are also demonstrably more appreciative of the value of public libraries to their work, and of the

advantages of cross-sector collaborative working. In this context, the LDI project has acted as an effective pilot experience in both the operational management of arts activities in local authority settings, and of effective communication with different professional and voluntary groups. Libraries now continue to be used as arts venues, with future events in the planning stages.

Project title: Cinema in Libraries
Lead applicant: Fresh Horizons, Huddersfield
LDI theme: New delivery models for arts and culture working together
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The Cinema in Libraries project aimed to develop a local cinema offer in three areas in Kirklees, where people find it difficult to access cinema either because they live in a rural location or because of financial restrictions associated with visiting a large multiplex. The cinemas were located in community buildings, one which also housed the local library, and the project sought to identify whether there were benefits to co-locating cinemas and libraries, and whether cinema could be a driver for increased engagement with reading and the library service. Three film-making projects would recruit cinema attendees and others, teaching them the skills to make their own short film. A co-ordinator was appointed to use this project as a starting point for the development of a wider arts and cultural network in the Ashbrow area of Huddersfield, which would act as a mechanism to bring together a range of arts and cultural organisations to co-ordinate activity alongside the local regeneration partnership, working towards engaging more residents in arts and cultural activity, and improving perceptions of the local area.

2. Project context

The project was largely based in the Chestnut Centre, a community resource centre managed by social enterprise Fresh Horizons, which includes a library, children's centre, meeting spaces and advice surgeries. The library is managed by Fresh Horizons, which also employs the library staff. As a relatively new library adjacent to a children's centre, it has a high proportion of young members. Adult membership numbers are low, and this is perceived to be linked to the lack of a culture of reading in the local area. The project also worked in two rural areas, partnering with community organisations to test the practicality of volunteer led cinema provision.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project had a number of different funders, the LDI grant provided by ACE was spent on the purchase of capital equipment, specifically a cinema 'kit' for the Chestnut Centre including blackout blinds and cinema style seating, and a portable cinema screen and projector to be used by the two rural venues. The funding also covered the cost of commissioning Open Cinema, a London based charity which specialises in the development of film projects with socially excluded groups, to manage the licensing and programming of the cinema. Match funding from a range of other agencies funded the salary costs of a co-ordinator for the Creative Ashbrow Partnership, and costs for community film-making projects. Other partners in the project included Kirklees' local authority library service, whose reader development team have developed complementary provision at the Chestnut Centre, and two voluntary organisations who managed the cinema screenings at each rural location.

4.   Project deliverables and outputs

There were 133 cinema screenings during the project, some targeted at general audiences while others were marketed to older people in the community, or to children, and around 370 people accessed the cinemas, some becoming regular attenders. It has taken longer than anticipated to develop film-making projects, and one has so far been completed, a documentary about gun and knife crime made by young people.

The project appears to have had a demonstrable impact on the library, as a result of the decision taken to link access to the cinema directly to library participation. Cinema attenders have to be members of the library to access screenings, and can choose to make a small donation or to take books out of the library instead of making a payment. There have been 438 new library memberships taken out since the cinema opened, many of which are attributable directly to this project, and book loans have gone up by over 10% at the Chestnut Centre's library, during a period where library loan rates dropped across the borough. The challenge for the project team is to use the cinema as a catalyst for active engagement with books and reading, and with the support of the local authority's reader development team, steps are now being taken to build on this success. A reading group for older people has met three times so far, with some cinema attendees also attending the reading group, and children have been encouraged to write reviews of the books they have taken out of the library, using a similar methodology to the Summer Reading Challenge. At the instigation of the ACE Relationship Manager for the region, Fresh Horizons staff had an initial training session to develop their thinking about the potential of libraries to support the organisation's social inclusion objectives, and have met twice since to progress plans to boost the library's reach into the neighbourhood.

5.   Summary of main learning outcomes

The project has demonstrated some of the potential benefits and pitfalls of working collaboratively. On the whole, partnership working has been successfully established across a wide network of local organisations. However there have been issues in two areas. It took time for Fresh Horizons to develop an effective working relationship with Open Cinema, as their area of specialism is developing cinema projects with very specific client groups such as homeless people. This project, which sought to attract a general audience across a geographical community, required a different approach. The project developed two cinema projects in rural community centres, working with local voluntary organisations, and found that this process was much easier where the local partner had paid staff and a more stable organisational structure. The entirely voluntary group struggled to manage the administration of the cinema, and the additional tasks such as monitoring and evaluation of audiences.

There are examples of community cinema in all sorts of unusual spaces, and cinemas have been occasionally co-located with libraries (for example in Great Yarmouth). However cinema in the library as a concept was completely new to Kirklees, and the additional elements of the project, such as linking cinema attendance so closely to library membership and book lending, were new.

As all of the equipment is now purchased, in the main Chestnut Centre (urban) location and one of the rural locations the project appears to be sustainable. However, one of the key learning outcomes from the project is that the successful management and promotion of the cinema required much more hands-on management from Fresh Horizons than originally intended. Sustainability has been shown to rely on staffing, and the project worked more effectively when paid members of staff were available to manage the screenings. Library staff had limited involvement in the screenings themselves, with some taking place on days when the library was unstaffed and the self-issue machine was available. It has therefore taken time for the connection between the cinema and the library, and its benefits and future potential, to be developed.

Continued funding for the post of co-ordinator for the Creative Ashbrow Partnership has been secured for a further twelve months, and she is working on a range of projects to take forward, including the older people's reading group, which has already met three times, an older people's choir, and a neighbourhood-wide arts week. The project does therefore appear to have been successful in acting as a catalyst for pulling together a more co-ordinated arts and cultural offer across the neighbourhood. This does represent a new delivery model for Fresh Horizons, who have done little arts focused development work before. There is a general feeling that there is a good synergy between libraries and community cinema. The project's wider focus on developing a creative partnership for the area is also drawing the library into a wider network of provision across the neighbourhood and the city.

The project identified the importance of matching content to audiences, and the need for consultation, enabling audiences to feedback and make requests via suggestion boxes. An early programme of screenings based on literary adaptations did not attract audiences in enough numbers, and the mainstream, popular programming worked best. There is potential to introduce more challenging films and linked activity such as reading groups and film-making projects once the cinema has established a regular audience.

The project has started to create innovative and diverse arts provision at the heart of a community which was considered to have low levels of provision and engagement. It has demonstrated to Fresh Horizons that the arts can support wider community development outcomes, and that the library service can have a valuable role in this process. There is much potential for the cinema in libraries model to grow and develop over time, operating as a 'hook' to draw local communities into a wider range of cultural activity.

Project title: Cultural Commissioning for Vulnerable Adults
Lead applicant: Newcastle City Council
LDI theme: New delivery models for arts and culture working together
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

Library authorities in Newcastle and Manchester worked together on this pilot, which was designed to test the potential for library services to take on a role in brokering cultural commissioning for vulnerable adults. The project sought to develop a model for cultural commissioning which worked in each city, taking local circumstances into account. The main objectives of the project were to test how well the two library services could broker access to a universal integrated cultural offer for vulnerable adults, looking in particular at:

- the development of strategic partnerships between relevant local authority departments and external organisations, including local cultural organisations funded by the local authority;
- the appropriateness of libraries as a venue for commissioned cultural activity;
- the steps needed to make the commissioned activities accessible to vulnerable people;
- the potential for cultural commissioning to reduce demand for other services;
- funding models for future roll out of cultural commissioning, including the use of personal budgets.

2. Project context

The project in both cities emerged from concerns about existing provision for vulnerable adults, particularly the offer within day care centres. There was concern that given the financial pressures faced by local authorities, the day centre model may not be sustainable in future, and in both cities, closures were under consideration. Both services had recently invested heavily in library buildings, and there was a perceived contrast between the quality of environment provided in day care centres, in comparison to that available in the newly refurbished libraries. The move towards personal budgets also suggested a need for local authorities to diversify the offer which clients were able to choose from in planning their leisure activities and their care, with a likelihood that many people may choose to access universal services if appropriate support could be provided.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

Manchester: In Manchester the project was led by the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Directorate in partnership with the Community and Cultural Services team and other partners including registered social landlords. Most project activity was based at the Forum, a multi-use community centre in Wythenshawe which includes a library, leisure centre, doctor's surgery, pharmacy and café as well as multi-purpose community rooms, and is a hub for the local community. The project built on an existing weekly activity, branded as The Grand Day Out, which targeted older people at risk of isolation, encouraging them to attend a weekly event where they could access a range of activities. The funding from LDI was used to enhance The Grand Day Out through commissioning of three series of workshop sessions from arts organisations: Venture Arts ran a photography course over ten weeks, fine artist Amanda Garry ran a series of mosaic workshops, and Dance Initiative Greater

Manchester ran six weekly taster sessions to build on the popularity of the Grand Day Out's existing tea dance.

Newcastle: This city ran their project from within the library service, and delivered a smaller offer than Manchester, focused specifically around creative workshop activities. They ran a tender process and selected a consortium of arts organisations led by Tyne and Wear Museums to deliver eight workshop sessions, split into blocks of five sessions in two libraries. This offered an opportunity to contrast delivery in two very different libraries, one Newcastle's recently refurbished large city centre library, and the other a community based library in the High Heaton area. Arts organisations worked in pairs to create innovative workshops offering a range of creative activities including music, dance and animation, all loosely themed around 'My Home Town'. There was a deliberate attempt to avoid the common 'female friendly crafts' approach and try something new which would appeal to men and women. New technology was integrated into some of the sessions.

The role of the council's Adult Social Care team was to advise on recruitment methods to ensure that the project reached its intended audience. The project reached smaller numbers of people than was originally hoped, and this highlights the need for Adult Social Care teams to be at the heart of the project, ensuring that staff know about the scheme and can signpost appropriate clients to the events. In Newcastle, the team was experiencing an extensive restructure during the project which had a negative impact on their ability to contribute. There was buy-in at senior management level but this did not filter down to teams working on the ground.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Manchester's project was successful in reaching large numbers of people. 540 people have registered as members, with attendance for an individual day usually falling between 60 and 95 people. A number of case studies of individual attenders point to highly positive social outcomes, and the team running the project are confident that it is working effectively to reduce social isolation. Plans to extend the project to other neighbourhoods are underway. Despite lower participant numbers in Newcastle, the project was received very positively by participants, and some have gone on to visit cultural venues for the first time as a result of their contact with library staff.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

In each city, the project focused on older people, particularly those who were isolated or at risk of becoming isolated, although this approach was thought to be potentially valuable in working with other client groups, such as adults with disabilities, and refugees and asylum seekers. It was not possible within the timescale of the project for either of the cities to make significant steps towards piloting the project with participants with more complex needs, for example those who use day care centres or other similar provision. There was a feeling in both pilot projects that the model needed to be tested and refined, and venue staff trained and prepared adequately, before this cultural provision was extended.

While each project operated a very different model, there were common findings around how best to deliver this type of activity in a library setting. Both projects identified the importance of consultation in developing programming, and of working in a way which made less confident participants feel comfortable, while continuing to encourage participants to try something new. Some activities worked better than others, and this was in many cases dependent on the 'comfort zone' of participants. Manchester applied for funding to buy in yoga sessions as a result of feedback from participants, and will programme more dance in respond to demand. Newcastle identified that

one group of participants was much more confident and willing to engage than another, and artists had to adapt their approach accordingly.

In both cities, there was a strong belief that the accessibility of the library as a venue, and people's confidence in the library as a public space which anyone can walk into, had enhanced the success of the project. The type of library was also identified as a factor, and in Manchester the Grand Day Out worked much better at Wythenshawe Forum, where several key services are co-located under the same roof, than in another neighbourhood where different activities took place in separate buildings. In both cities the libraries' services were under-utilised within the project, with one interviewee stating that she 'would have liked to see the integration of books into the project'. Manchester provided a silver surfer IT session with support available for those who needed it during the day. There is potential to build more literature related content into future programming, through reader development activity and the further involvement of library staff in delivery.

The importance of marketing the sessions via word of mouth, and putting in place support to enable people to attend, was highlighted in both projects. Manchester made use of partnerships at neighbourhood management level to enhance the project: for example local volunteers provided a welcome desk and support at each event, community transport was available to participants to make it easier for them to attend, and members of staff across the neighbourhood who were in contact with possible attenders, such as the mobile library team, promoted the project. However in both cities it was apparent that a longer lead-in time is needed to engage with harder-to-reach participants.

The pilot has created links between libraries, adult social services and arts providers in both Newcastle and Manchester which did not previously exist, and the commissioners have been impressed by the potential of arts providers to work in partnership, to work outside their own venues, and to create content which meets the needs of a very specific client group. There has been lots of learning around how to develop and market an offer which is appealing to older people. Both cities are planning to continue the project in some way. In Manchester, the Grand Day Out is rolling out to other neighbourhoods, with a core offer to be supplemented by additional cultural programming as and when funding is available. Newcastle partners are planning to submit a funding application to ACE Grants for the Arts for a new programme in 2014. While the project in itself did not make headway in testing how libraries and cultural programming could play a role in the emerging agendas around adult social care and personalised budgets, there is considerable opportunity and impetus for this to happen in the future as a result of this successful pilot.

Project title: Artwork
Lead applicant: Derby City Libraries
LDI theme: Co-ordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1.   Project aims and objectives

The Artwork project sought to enhance an existing Job Club initiative run by Derby City Libraries in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and The Shaw Trust. The existing service was focused upon providing functional support for people seeking employment, including job searches, writing job applications and CVs. Working in partnership with Derby-based arts organisation QUAD, Artwork aimed to enhance this offer by running complementary, stimulating arts workshops designed to build confidence, self-esteem and presentation skills.

2.   Project context

The project team had therefore identified a gap in their existing services for job seekers, and an opportunity to address this need in collaboration with a leading local arts organisation with a proven track record in developmental workshops (including employability training) for targeted groups. The existing partnership-based Job Club provided a solid foundation on which to build an enhanced and complementary offer, and an established participant group with the opportunity for additional referrals. The project also responded to local concerns and policy agendas concerning relatively high unemployment figures and low skills attainment. Derby City Libraries have a broader responsive remit to actively contribute to this agenda. As such the Artwork project provided a timely and innovative intervention of local significance, which would be of interest to a range of cross-sector services and stakeholders.

3.   Project delivery mechanisms

The partnership with QUAD was sensible and appropriate given their experience and expertise in developmental arts interventions, and their established profile in and knowledge of the Derby area. The QUAD collaboration provided an added value to existing partnership working between Jobcentre Plus and The Shaw Trust, who continued to support the Artwork project. QUAD took responsibility for delivering the arts-based workshops in Derby central library, at times when the library was closed to the public in order to cause minimum disruption to the sessions. The LDI grant was used therefore to commission QUAD and cover the direct costs of arts activities, and most significantly to fund a part-time library-based Project Officer role. This staff member took responsibility for co-ordinating the workshops, recruiting participants and acted as the main point of contact throughout.

4.   Project deliverables and outputs

The Artwork course consisted of three individual sessions (two-hour arts-based workshops), and was delivered to four cohorts of up to 12 participants. Individual workshops included a

practical digital animation session, whereby participants were encouraged to work in teams to explore their creative skills by identifying current barriers to employment; a participatory drama workshop covering networking and verbal and non-verbal communication skills; and an interview skills workshop that used forum theatre techniques to rehearse mock interviews and consider elements such as body language, dress and presentation. All sessions took place within Derby central library. A total of 33 jobseekers took part in the programme, drawn from existing library Job Club groups and associated networks.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

The project has had an impressive impact upon participants in terms of their own self-development, which is credited to the creative approaches undertaken, and the degree of trust and self-assurance provided by the library service, both in terms of staff support and the congeniality offered by the physical library space. Self-evaluation results show a four-fold increase in self-rated presentation skills by participants before and after the course, with similar outcomes in relation to interview skills and personal confidence. From an observational perspective (during one interview skills session), participants were fully engaged with the activities and seemed to be enjoying taking part on an entirely voluntary basis. 40% had gained temporary or permanent employment after participating in the programme.

The role of the designated Project Officer was integral to the success of the project in terms of co-ordination and pastoral support to participants, proving that the grant has been intelligently invested. This role was undertaken to a high standard, with the staff member also reporting considerable personal impact including skills development, improved confidence in working with different service user groups and enhanced professional confidence.

The Project Lead also demonstrated considerable expertise both in terms of leading the project, and knowledge of environmental issues helping to identify the gap in the field and potential contribution of the project from the outset. Contextually speaking, the project was fit for purpose and provides an intelligent example of the LDI's contribution to public policy agendas.

The Artwork model, using arts-based interventions to achieve defined social outcomes with a particular client group, is now being used by Derby City Libraries to inform ongoing developmental projects including homework clubs and providing support for benefit claimants (Universal Credit). Thus the transferability of the project as a business model for the library service is established, and has garnered support from within the local authority including elected members.

The library service continues to have a collaborative relationship with arts partner QUAD, having identified a real complementary value. This includes additional projects funded by Derby Adult Learning Service and future plans to extend this work. Furthermore the Job Club scheme continues to expand.

Operationally there have been a number of learning outcomes that will inform future work in this area, primarily relating to recruitment and retention. One issue proved to be sustaining participant commitment to the three sessions (i.e. the full course), with several only attending the first workshop. There are identified steps that can be taken to improve this in the future, including communication methods (for example participants prefer to be contacted by text message rather than email); limiting recruitment time to approximately one week prior to start of course, otherwise participants are reluctant to commit in the hope that they will be in employment; optimising relationships with partner organisations as trusted sources of referral.

Project title: Shared Books on Prescription Scheme
Lead applicant: South Gloucestershire Council (on behalf of Public Library Health Group)
LDI theme: Co-ordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes
Original grant value (as per funding application): £19,900

1. Project aims and objectives

Building upon the experience of existing Books on Prescription (BOP) schemes, the project aimed to create a national scheme, endorsed by the Department of Health (DoH) and quality assured through standardisation and engagement with health professions, and available across all local authorities in England. In addition, the project aimed to bring together the usual offer of BOP schemes (with self-help books) with mood-boosting books and social and creative reading opportunities, such as book groups. Overall, the project sought to position libraries with the necessary resources and support to engage with local health partnerships, and build upon the existing public health offer of the sector.

It was anticipated that the project would support economies of scale across library authorities (remove the duplication of multiple schemes which were already running), as well as enabling libraries to improve their potential sustainability, through their contribution to health targets and relationships with service providers and commissioners. In engaging in BOP and an associated creative reading offer through a coherent national scheme, the project also sought to support libraries in engaging with each other to share practice and raise the profile of the work, and more widely in building the evidence base for the value of such activity.

The period of the project which is funded by the LDI grant aimed to work with regional library clusters, key stakeholders (such as the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)), and a group of health professionals to develop a national scheme, create support materials and gain sign-up for the roll out of the scheme in the year following the LDI grant (2013/14). Commencement of a pilot with 63 authorities was anticipated prior to the end of the LDI period although this was changed following plans for national roll out across England.

2. Project context

The SCL and The Reading Agency (TRA), in their work with libraries to develop a public health offer (one of four SCL 'national offers'), already have a structure with nominated representatives from 63 local authorities in seven regional clusters, constituting the Public Library Health Development Group. Through this engagement, and with reference to existing research about the value of reading activities, a health toolkit and a public library health and wellbeing offer advocacy toolkit had already been developed to support libraries in their public health offer. Through these routes, a range of strategic activities has been scheduled to support libraries in providing a coherent response to both health needs and the changes in structures following the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

MLA commissioned significant research in 2010 to review the range of public library activities in health and wellbeing areas[11]. This research indicates that BOP schemes, in which a patient is prescribed a self-help book which can be accessed at a public library by a health professional, are currently offered by 81% of library authorities. Individual libraries have their own books lists and supporting materials, but have sometimes found it difficult to build the necessary relationships with health commissioners. There is also an absence of standardised evaluation on the effect of BOP

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[11] Hicks, D., Creaser, C., Greenwood, H., Spezi, V., White, S. and Frude, N. 2010. *Public library health activity in the areas of health and well-being*. London: MLA.

schemes, but evidence of the effectiveness of the value of reading relevant texts as part of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approaches. In addition, there are existing examples of social and creative reading activities, including TRA's Mood Boosting Books scheme.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The application for the project was led by South Gloucestershire Council, by the Cultural Communities Services Manager who is also a member of the executive of SCL, on behalf of the Public Health Library Group as the steering group for the project, which met quarterly. TRA effectively provided project management, managing accountability to the Arts Council and the budget, and operating as the primary project resource for the phase covered by the LDI grant. A sub-group of key individuals liaised more regularly throughout the project.

Engaging Libraries
Libraries participating in the development of the scheme – and therefore in the year funded by the LDI grant – were asked to work within a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering both the R&D phase of the project, and the subsequent delivery phases. Those authorities who had indicated their willingness to be involved as pilot authorities for the scheme completed an initial short survey (70% responded). The majority of those with a BOP scheme reported using a prescriber model, in which a health professional prescribes self-help reading which is available on the open shelves, and that GP partnerships were the most common referral relationships which libraries had. Libraries were also consulted and informed through workshops at an SCL seminar in May 2012.

A consultation paper was put together in July 2012, to gain responses from libraries to specific proposals. The 'open access prescriber model' was identified as the best potential approach for the new scheme, and it was anticipated that the creative and social reading elements would emerge initially through signposting to existing schemes, such as current lists of mood-boosting books and existing reading groups. Libraries and others were also consulted on a range of issues, including the right distribution model, on the approach to materials and tone for the scheme; whether prescription pads should be used, or a suggestion card instead.

Positive responses from libraries and other stakeholders early in the project enabled plans to be made to aim to roll the scheme out nationally, rather than a limited pilot, in June 2013. Further research into libraries response to concessions was undertaken in Autumn 2012, indication that the most feasible universal concession would be free reservations as part of the BOP scheme. The survey also helped to reveal some areas of potential future development which might be required, such as support for developing local commissioning models and a formula for working out potential need within a locality, to avoid the scheme being limited by the extent of library's own resources.

Engaging health professions and agencies
Early commitment from individuals in key posts in health agencies was important in enabling the project to ensure involvement and support from health professions and agencies from the beginning of the project. Engagement with the Department of Health's Clinical Director of Mental Health, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, the Royal College of Nursing, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), the British Psychological Society, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, MIND and the Strategic Health Authorities Library Leads used a range of routes, including:
- Gaining commitments for strategic endorsement and advocacy
- Contribution by seven of these agencies/organisations to a critical friends group, specifically to develop the quality assured reading list

- Signposting and profile

The development of the book list through the critical friends group enabled the project to build a cross-profession consensus, and to reference existing evidence bases for different kinds of approaches and book choices. Complex issues included:

- Agreement on approaches where only a limited evidence base – in some cases the experience of professionals rather than, as yet, research studies – was available, whilst maintaining the importance of a list which carries the quality assurance of referring specifically to National Institute for Care and Excellence (NICE) guidelines.
- Consideration of the inclusion or removal from the book list of conditions where self-help without supporting therapy may be harmful.
- What potential areas of wider literature could be considered for a second year, rather than in this first year of development.
- The accessibility of different books for certain groups, including the availability of alternative formats.

An unsuccessful bid was submitted in September 2012 with the University of Nottingham for a research project involving a clinical trial of the Books on Prescription scheme. Subsequently, an impact research project with focus groups, looking at both Books on Prescription and creative reading group activities, was able to proceed.

Developing the business model
In July 2012, SCLs agreed a print and distribution model similar to that used by TRA for the Summer Reading Challenge – in which print was commissioned centrally and then could be purchased by libraries, and distributed by them to health partners. Subsequently, an additional successful application was made to Arts Council England for £20k to support the development of the design and costs of producing materials and website content.

In developing plans for the longer-term sustainability of the scheme, funding was sought (unsuccessfully) from the Department of Health's Voluntary Sector Investment Programme, for subsidy for three years of funding (£240k) in September 2012. A contingency plan to ensure that the first year of national roll-out could take place was developed, based on costings for printing materials (patient and prescriber leaflets and posters), and enabling a core resource based at TRA to continue to support the scheme, but deferring (at this stage) further development activity.

When the book list was confirmed, a meeting with a number of publishers supplying books on the list was arranged, exploring availability of texts in different formats and languages, supporting digital content (e.g. author podcasts) and opportunities for cross-marketing.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Within the period of the LDI, the key deliverables and outputs from the project were:
- A core book list – 30 cognitive behavioural therapy titles covering 16 common health conditions, in line with NICE guidance, supported by a paper on book selection protocol and the endorsement of key health partners.
- Supporting materials – leaflets for health professionals and patients, posters, FAQs on the scheme, a web presence through TRA's website, library staff handbooks, template launch pack and press releases and template letter to GPs and CCGs
- Signposting to mood boosting books and reading groups, beginning to link creative/social reading activities to CBT reading.

- Scheme branding which balances a core brand with some local flexibility – including space for local branding/logos, and allows for authorities to signpost their own collections (in addition to the 30 books on the list).
- Take-up by 84% of library authorities in England – by April 2013, 127 authorities had signed up (representing 2,995 libraries) and c. 1million leaflets ordered; additional book stock of 30,000 books, through purchases from the core book list by participating authorities.
- and agreement from a significant proportion of libraries to core concessions which support the scheme including easy library joining and free reservations
- National health partners endorsement and future engagement – particularly with significant potential referral routes:
  - GPs, through the Royal College of General Practitioners
  - Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWPs), through the DoH Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Programme.
  - Counsellors and therapists through BACP and BABCP
- Significant profile and support for future advocacy, including national media coverage of the scheme through the SCL universal offer launch, and a national launch event planned in June 2013 with presence from DoH and DCMS ministers, signposting through NHS Choices and as part of the IAPT programme and toolkit.
- An emerging business model – a tried and tested distribution model for key materials, ongoing commitment to refresh the core book list, a net cost model for the first year's roll-out (with a small surplus to support activity to find future funding) and funding strategies to support seeking investment for further development.
- Emerging opportunities for local commissioning partnerships – a commissioning guide, to support library authorities in discussions with local commissioners, evidence that some library authorities are already gaining opportunities to present the scheme themselves within local settings, including to Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- Plans to develop the evidence base – a national evaluation methodology in development, identifying measures of success approaches to producing/collecting data and potential areas for further development of the evidence base.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

Building upon existing schemes, experiences and knowledge: the reach of this project has been substantial, particularly because it has built upon existing BOP and Mood Boosting book schemes and reading group lists, upon discussions and a committee structures already in place, and upon significant work exploring the value of BOP and other reading schemes in the context of mental health. The individual expertise of staff at TRA has also been an important factor in achieving the deliverables from this development year. The value of this project within the LDI period is largely in the co-ordination of expert views and supporting voices, the clarity and quality of supporting materials produced and the profile gained, rather than in entirely new activities or ways of doing things.

The value of research, consultation and negotiation: much of the activity in this project has been 'behind-the-scenes' activity, surveying libraries, reviewing existing evidence, setting up and consulting through a range of formal channels and negotiating the different requirements of different agendas – local versus national, different health professions, different local capacities. This kind of activity is not necessarily resource-light, and the range of endorsement from national partners and the take-up from library authorities suggests that this has been time well-spent, and highlights the value of investment which supports such processes. In some areas, there is still further negotiation to take place, particularly with those library authorities who have successful existing

BOP schemes. Essentially, this has been a research and development project in the context of the LDI grant.

This is the beginning of the opportunity, but more work is required: this project sought to explore ways in which libraries might be made more sustainable, and furthermore provides a foundation for library authorities wishing to increase or improve their public health offer. Some of the areas of future development, such as book lists for other areas, local commissioning partnerships, the long-term business model, more integration of creative and social reading opportunities and improving the national evidence base, were outlined in this year but will require additional work to move to fruition. However, the structures and ongoing commitment from both libraries and health agencies and professions suggests that – if the required investment can be found – there are significant opportunities for development in all these areas. The LDI project has put in place guidance, signposting and draft plans in these areas, and so this year potentially paves the way for future developments.

Project title: Targeted Arts Interventions in Libraries
Lead applicant: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
LDI theme: Co-ordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The broad aim of this project was to test the value of structured, library-based artist-led activities in meeting the key social outcome requirements of commissioners, exploring throughout the unique contribution of libraries to participatory arts. Specific objectives included:

- To produce a rigorous evidence base of the effectiveness and value of arts interventions in library services for health, social care and education commissioners
- To develop an understanding of the complementary practices of librarians and artists in working together on delivering participatory arts
- To examine how different governance arrangements for library services impact on the delivery of this type of initiative
- To build lasting and robust relationships with health and social care commissioners

2. Project context

The project represented a partnership between the library services of Richmond upon Thames, and those of Merton, Kingston upon Thames and Wandsworth and arts services in Richmond and Wandsworth. New governance arrangements for library services were being adopted encompassing an outsourced Trust, as well as continued local authority provision. At the same time the commissioning of services was a relatively new experience for library services and to some extent also for participating art services. For some library staff understanding the relevance and importance of commissioning to the library service was a challenge, each creating a number of challenges and learning opportunities relating to established and changing organisational cultures.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

An experienced consultant was appointed to develop and manage the project; working with library and art staff across the four councils she produced a work-plan and timetable, including specified evaluation activities. In each local authority target audiences and outcomes for commissioners were identified. There was a focus on evidencing outcomes and impact of running the sessions within a library setting and reflective learning. Four workshops were held for librarians and artists to assess the value of the sessions and working between librarians and artists, with all key staff interviewed. A final report was written by the consultant including case studies, other evaluation data and recommendations.

Time pressures on librarians and art service staff had a major effect on their ability to work together, including difficulties in providing staff to cover contracted work and service responsibilities for those involved in the project. Two of the arts services were effectively unable to be involved because of this challenge. It was envisaged that each library service would have a degree of autonomy in delivering the project; in practice the consultant often found staff referring decisions back to her. At the same time one area adapted its own approach to part of the evaluation which partly reduced the overall consistency of the evaluation.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Eight artists delivered a total of 31 creative sessions between July and December 2012 within libraries across the four local authority areas. A total of 161 adults and children, including people with disabilities, mental health problems and English as a second language took part in the project. The different sessions included drawing and painting, creative music workshops, creative writing and book making and reluctant reader workshops. More than three-quarters of adults reported increased confidence as a result of their participation, with a similar number saying they had developed new skills. A small majority of parents also reported their children having improved confidence and self-esteem.

Librarians and artists reported having an improved understanding of one another's professional practice, with all participating artists indicating that their practice had improved as a result of their involvement in the project. While both worked to widen people's experience, there was a key difference in librarians' sole focus being on supporting users, while artists were in addition concerned about the artistic excellence of their work. By the end of the project all those involved had a better understanding of commissioners' priorities and stronger relationships had been developed with them. However, there were differences in how comfortable they were in allowing commissioners to determine the audience and outcomes for their work; this was more of an issue for artists than librarians.

There was a shared appreciation that libraries represented a safe and inclusive space, which had a sense of community ownership and could provide access to a diverse audience for artists. In addition artists felt inspired by libraries' capacity to combine accessibility with informed and reliable service delivery; all the artists were enthusiastic about working in a library and adapted their practice accordingly, despite the operational difficulties previously identified.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

- Engaging commissioners at the outset of the project was innovative, and illustrated the value and importance of library services being proactive in approaching commissioners to establish existing priorities in terms of both targeted audiences and desired outcomes. This enabled a considered proposition on how the library service could address commissioners' requirements.

- There was a significant lack of understanding about social commissioning however amongst librarians and to a lesser extent arts services; this was accompanied with a gap in skills in respect of calculating management costs and full cost recovery for commissioned services. The project would have benefited from more consultation and training in this context at the outset, creating a greater degree of consistency between internal and external communication and engagement.

- Building in the opportunity for librarians and artists to reflect on their shared practice was both valuable and innovative; short-term projects of this nature rarely have the chance to do this. Successful joint working between librarians and artists requires each sector to understand the others' practices and conceptual understanding of their independent and collaborative instrumental value.

- The project was able to take advantage of the perceived unique features of libraries as safe, inclusive spaces that provide a sense of community ownership.

- In testing the value of delivering artist-led activities in a library setting the project has led to the commissioning of further activities, demonstrating sustainability beyond the funded LDI period.

- To ensure the robustness of evaluation activity where different partners are involved, it is important that an agreed and consistent approach is adopted; in practice this may mean giving one person central responsibility for this task.

- The project was not able to sufficiently consider the impact that changes in governance structures for participating library services may have had upon the delivery of commissioned activities; this was an ambitious aim in the context of a relatively small-scale and short-term initiative. Although relevant structural changes do not appear to have had an adverse effect on the experiences of those taking part, it may be useful to monitor this relationship in relation to any future collaborative, commissioned work.

Project title: Young People and Libraries – Developing Volunteering Opportunities
Lead applicant: Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
LDI theme: Books and reading
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The aim of the project was to create and support a year-round national programme of volunteering opportunities for 11-19 year olds within the context of the Universal Reading Offer. Based on a model of co-production, specific aims were to train library staff, develop new partnerships and to help establish youth-led steering groups. The rationale behind the project was to increase voluntary capacity in reading activities, encouraging libraries to work differently with the public and young people. The forging of new partnerships with arts organisations would similarly contribute to the development of more integrated local cultural infrastructures.

2. Project context

ASCEL initiated the development of the project based on a desire to encourage and enable more young people to co-produce library services within the context of local authority spending cuts and a pressing need to re-energise library services and delivery models. This included a two-fold desire to engage young people but also to support library staff in generating and sustaining more inclusive ways of working with the public. As well as the Universal Reading Offer, other existing initiatives from partner organisation The Reading Agency (such as the My Voice youth co-production programme) provided a rich contextual foundation from which to build a concerted national programme of activities designed to encourage co-produced reading activities for young people. As ASCEL and TRA are national organisations with extensive professional networks (including library authorities and range of potential partner organisations), the project acted as an 'added value' catalyst for enhanced collaborative working.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The TRA was effectively commissioned by ASCEL to deliver the project, with a designated Project Lead in both organisations. Project costs covered the delivery of ten events, which also made use of extensive ASCEL, ACE and TRA networks, including library authorities and ACE bridge organisations for venues and event planning. The designated ACE Relationship Manager for this project was also instrumental in its design and delivery – arguably more so than any other LDI project based on observations made by the evaluation team. A range of guest speakers and facilitators from various case study projects and ASCEL network members also provided 'in kind' support for the active delivery of events. Events were also supported by the ACE LDI project team and other Relationship Managers.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

This was an event-led project, launched with a national Creative Development Seminar held in London in September 2012, and followed by nine regional events within and across England in late 2012/early 2013.

The Creative Development Seminar (half-day event – 61 participants) acted as a starting point for defining what is meant by co-production and for gathering input from a range of participating stakeholders on how the project might fulfil its objectives. This included presentations by young people from case study projects, and interactive group discussions on professional implications for library services amongst other relevant issues.

The bespoke regional half-day events brought co-production and volunteering into sharper focus in relation to existing reader development programmes and event calendars for young people, and also included examples of local projects and initiatives. These events had more of a workshop orientation, with the aim of acting as a catalyst for ongoing co-produced reading activities in the regions. They were attended by 138 ASCEL members in total, along with 23 arts, youth and education sector organisations.

Following the event series, training and development resources are being collated and made available via ASCEL and TRA websites: http://readingagency.org.uk/young-people/resources-for-librarians/ascel-library-development-initiative-resources.html

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

The project was effective in advancing the debate on co-production, volunteering, youth engagement and the various implications for library service delivery ad collaborative professional practice, including challenges, opportunities and required support and resources. Following observation of one regional event, participants were fully engaged and enthusiastic, especially regarding opportunities surrounding the existing reading event calendar.

In this context, the infrastructure in place via TRA initiatives and ASCEL networks was invaluable, and the 'added value' function of the LDI project was evident in harnessing thinking around co-production and how this can be actioned. It would be fair to say that this is mostly about potential rather than actual outputs/outcomes at this stage.

It is therefore difficult to judge the return on investment with regards to the LDI grant in comparison to other projects, as this relied so heavily on existing contexts and resources. There were also significant 'in kind' contributions from a range of stakeholders, including the designated ACE Relationship Manager.

Regardless, the feedback from event participants is mostly positive, and the series served its purpose in re-energising debate on the value of co-production. Its true legacy should be revisited by ASCEL in terms of continuation by regional ASCEL groups and meetings; ASCEL's engagement and relationship with the development of national reading offers; the volume of co-produced reading activities involving young volunteers that are inspired or initiated by the project in the coming months/years; the continued updating of available online resources and their usage.

Project title: BookFest and Community Networks
Lead applicant: Portsmouth Library Service (Portsmouth City Council)
LDI theme: Books and reading
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The broad aim of this project was to create an inclusive and innovative annual 'BookFest' [literary festival] by piloting a co-production model with other cultural service providers that would, beyond the life of the festival, help to develop a sustainable and resilient library service. Specific objectives included:

- To substantially increase the level of partnership working between the library service and the cultural sector as a means of reaching and engaging audiences that reflect the diversity of the City

- To develop a model of co-production with other cultural service providers and with residents who would not normally access libraries or other cultural services

- To make the library service responsive and relevant to people's needs through a community engagement process that enables real community involvement in the development of libraries

- For BookFest to address the literacy and numeracy challenges Portsmouth faces through book related and wider cultural experiences, becoming in itself an inclusive, innovative and sustainable event

2. Project context

The project was motivated by a desire to increase participation in an existing, established annual book festival within the context of city-wide cultural, social and educational objectives linked to standards in literacy and numeracy within and across diverse population groups. It was envisaged that the project would also contribute to a wider city-led strategy of culture-led regeneration and a desire to reposition Portsmouth as a "Great Literary City". Previous initiatives designed to fulfil this objective had included the issuing of library cards to all local authority pupils, and successful 'reading challenge' and 'Portsmouth reads Dickens' events, each giving the library service a relatively high profile within the City.

Two previous BookFests have been self-financing, in part taking advantage of the increasing trend of authors making personal appearances as part of commercial book promotions. A key partner in this element of the festival is a local independent retailer, the Hayling Island Bookshop. LDI funding provided the opportunity to provide more free events, to go beyond the available commercial publishing promotions and offer more artistically-driven events. It was envisaged that the LDI project would help to demonstrate the continued relevance of the library service and its ability to deliver an enhanced service in the context of reduced public spending. The planned engagement with new and more diverse communities would also potentially facilitate a new generation of service users and advocates for the library service.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project was managed by the library service Learning and Engagement manager and a BookFest steering group. It built upon partnerships developed with the cultural sector during previous BookFests to include the New Theatre Royal, the Aspex Gallery, the museum service, as well as The Reading Agency and local community centres. As cultural sector venues are nearly all based in the south of the city, the use of branch library and community venues enabled a more even distribution of events and greater opportunities to engage with a more diverse audience. LDI funding in this context helped to improve access and participation for people with disabilities and for groups reliant on public transport, particularly the elderly.

The employment of a part-time Community Development Worker (0.2 FTE over an 8 month period) represented a new approach to engaging residents not simply as service users, but as co-producers with the intention of making the library service more responsive and relevant to local needs. The resignation (for personal reasons) of the person appointed, though replaced, was a considerable setback and curtailed community involvement in co-production of events for this year's BookFest (2013). A group has been formed to work on this key objective for BookFest 2014.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

BookFest ran between 16th October and 4th November 2012 and attracted 2,500 members of the public. There were 31 'meet the author' type events and of those surveyed over 50% of the audiences had never been to a previous BookFest event. Ten libraries (including one early year's mobile service), 30 library staff and 42 volunteers were involved. An established children's author in residence worked with up to a 1000 primary and secondary school children and their families to develop creative writing opportunities. In addition there were a dozen interactive workshops ranging from graphic novel writing with the Aspex Gallery to rehearsed reading involving young people and the New Theatre Royal, as well as targeted book giving prior to events.

One of the key successes of the project was a co-produced event organised by a small group of young people, recruited via The Reading Agency's 'My Voice' initiative. The audience attracted to this event was the most diverse of all audiences. Another instrumental success was an event where an author talked about her personal experiences of breast cancer to a group brought together by the library service's dedicated MacMillan Cancer Support officer from the north part of the city.

LDI funding enabled BookFest to effectively use social media in a marketing capacity; the BookFest Facebook advertisement for example was seen by 22,922 people. Similarly the BookFest website had 4051 'hits' and 7148 page views, with a quarter of viewers returning on one or more occasions.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

- BookFest was able to engage new and more diverse audiences both through the partnership between the library service and cultural service providers, and by employing a community development approach. Feedback from individuals in the targeted 'hard to reach' groups

suggests they are now seeing libraries as relevant; this perception is reinforced by the level of interest being expressed in the planned 2014 BookFest.

- The aim to develop co-produced events with groups of residents who had no previous involvement in BookFest was ambitious not only because of limited staff time, but also due to the lead-in time necessary to commission work and the need to develop the skills and confidence of those involved. However, the work undertaken has laid sufficient foundations for this to happen in 2014, with groups of diverse and enthusiastic residents already engaged in planning for this event.

- Co-production applied not only to BookFest, but the development of associated library services represents a significant shift in the relationship between the service as provider and the library user as passive consumer. This innovation could be seen as threatening to library staff, but it also provides the prospect of creating a more relevant and sustainable service by addressing the needs of the communities it serves.

- The success of BookFest within a climate of austerity has successfully promoted the value of the library service within the local authority and its relevance not only to the cultural sector but also to the city's wider regeneration programme. The library service is now situated within the Regeneration Directorate and is seen as a key part of the City's cultural offer that can also make an important contribution to improving the skills and employment opportunities of residents.

- The project successfully developed the library service's partnerships with cultural sector organisations in the city, who were furthermore enabled to successfully engage more diverse audiences through BookFest events.

Project title: Literature on your Doorstep
Lead applicant: Writing West Midlands
LDI theme: Books and reading
Original grant value (as per funding application): £9,043

1. Project aims and objectives

Literature On Your Doorstep aimed to build relationships between libraries in the West Midlands, and writers and publishers based in the region, creating a range of positive outcomes including continuing professional development for librarians, an enhanced offer to library service users, and promotional opportunities for writers and publishers. The mechanism for achieving these outcomes was the delivery of 13 events across seven different libraries. However the lead partners were clear that the long term legacy of the project would be in the development of mutually beneficial relationships between publishers, writers, libraries and regional agencies.

Specifically, the project aimed to support libraries by training staff in how to organise and promote events, building both skills and networks of contacts. Librarians would improve their knowledge of the work of writers and publishing companies based in the West Midlands. They would be able to build on and promote their existing reader development activity through the creation of new events, and test out how best to programme events for their local audience. For writers and publishers, the project opened up a new way of promoting their work beyond literature festivals and large bookshop events. For audiences and library users, the project offered something new, events in their local library which introduced them to the work of less familiar writers. The project was led by Writing West Midlands, the literature development agency for the region, working closely with West Midlands Readers' Network, which supports reading through the development of readers' groups, events and new commissions.

2. Project context

The impetus for the project came from Writing West Midlands and West Midlands Readers' Network, who saw the opportunity to join the dots between their existing events programmes, their connections with publishers and writers, and library services. The project emerged as a response to an identified gap in the 'market', as author events tend to be held in bookshops or major libraries as part of promotional campaigns by the large publishers. This project would enable smaller libraries to host author events for their local readers, and support library staff to participate fully as partners in the process.

The West Midlands is considered to have a strong infrastructure for writing and reading development, and the project was building on strengths and opportunities rather than addressing weaknesses. Libraries in the West Midlands are currently facing significant cuts, which at present are manifesting in lower budgets for new book stock, reduced opening hours and the development of community managed and co-located facilities, rather than programmes of closures. ACE hoped that a closer relationship between library services and the more entrepreneurial agencies for readers and writing would be of benefit to library services given the wider pressures they face.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project took place in seven libraries, each within a different local authority area. Between them they hosted thirteen events (one library joined the project late and therefore only hosted one event), ranging widely in format and genre. Some events were extended versions of existing reading groups, opened up to all, while others were marketed 'from scratch' to a new audience. Each library identified a member of staff whose role was to lead on the development, marketing and management of the event, working closely with the other partners. For some librarians this was an opportunity to build their event management and reader development skills by working with new partners and doing things differently, while for others the project offered a chance to develop a completely new skillset.

The project's partners each took on a distinct role in the development and management of Literature On Your Doorstep. Writing West Midlands were the grant applicant, and led on project management and devised a marketing strategy for the events, creating a brand and suite of adaptable marketing materials, and producing a guide to events marketing for librarians, which covered traditional and social media strategies.

West Midlands Readers' Network liaised with libraries and publishers to create bespoke events which best matched the audiences in each specific location. They supported librarians with the practicalities of setting up and managing the events. While West Midlands Readers' Network have run events in libraries before, this project was much more collaborative in its approach, and rather than libraries simply offering a venue, their staff were fully engaged in every aspect of the events.

Publishers were the main contact point for individual writers, who were paid for their appearances, and collaborated in the development of themes and content for the events. Most publishers also took on an active role in the marketing of the events through their own social media channels, particularly Facebook and Twitter. They were able to recoup some of their investment of time and support for the project through book sales at events. In addition, the project bought book stock from regional publishers which was given to participating libraries and often featured prominently in library displays.

ACE's Libraries Relationship Manager for the West Midlands championed the project within senior library networks, especially through updates to the Society of Chief Librarians group in the West Midlands, ensuring that the project was understood and promoted as a strategic intervention despite its limited budget and scope. The Relationship Manager also took a significant role in the early days of the project, brokering relationships between Writing West Midlands and local authority library services in order to encourage participation in the project at a time of staff shortages.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

The project attracted an audience of 281 people across the thirteen events. The audience feedback from the events was positive, with over 90% of audiences surveyed rating the events as excellent or good. The approach taken to marketing was successful, with 40% of the audience attending a writer event for the first time. The project was also met its aim of creating better understanding and good

working relationships between regional library services and regional writers and publishers. Library staff had been pleased with the quality of the events they had run, and through the support provided by other partners they had been able to take more risks in their programming, choosing to work with writers and genres whose work might be considered difficult or challenging by their audience. They were confident that they would be able to attract authors to events by using their contacts in publishing companies. In turn, publishers emerged from the project confident that libraries still have a value as spaces to engage with enthusiastic readers, and that library staff would be able to create high quality events and attract an audience to them.

There were three steering group meetings held through the project, which were opportunities for all of the partners to share ideas, to evaluate progress to date, and to reflect on lessons learned. The discussion at these meetings clearly identified that there was mutual benefit in the partners continuing to work together. However at present, time commitments and staff shortages in libraries mean that the network will not be able to continue in its current form, as librarians cannot be released to attend meetings. A number of alternative, less time intensive options have been suggested: round robin emails to share contacts and news; and invitations to publishers to join the West Midlands Readers' Network, which already has some membership from regional library staff, may enable the conversations to continue.

5.   Summary of main learning outcomes

While the project was intended to be a time-limited, one-off intervention, the success of the events and the creation of the Literature On Your Doorstep brand has led the partners to think about further activity. The key project partners are currently looking into the potential to submit a funding application to Grants for the Arts to expand the programme, bringing in new library services and working with more challenging subject matter, for example through the programming of contemporary poetry. Librarians are under pressure to meet income targets while working within very limited events budgets. The steering group is therefore discussing how future events can be self-sustaining, for example through ticket sales, book sales, and writers accepting a percentage of the take from these rather than an upfront fee. It will be a delicate balancing act to create self-sustaining events which are beneficial for all the partners. The project has created a model which can be rolled out at low cost through grant funding, or potentially with no upfront investment of cash, provided that partners can continue to support it with in kind resources.

Beyond continued events programming, the project will leave a positive legacy in the participating libraries. Library staff have developed their event management and marketing skills. Library managers are interested in this outcome because these skills are transferable to other activities, such as health and wellbeing events, which meet wider Council agendas. New contacts have been added to library mailing lists, and reader and literature development activity has been revitalised at a time when budget cuts might have made it more difficult to deliver.

Project title: Feasibility study and pilot for a shared home delivery service
Lead applicant: London Borough of Camden
LDI theme: Commercial partnerships
Original grant value (as per funding application): £12,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The broad aim of this feasibility project was to enhance and expand the library home delivery service by the provision of a premium fee paying service, through a partnership between Camden, Islington and Hackney library services. Specific objectives included:

- To conduct Initial market research to establish whether there were financially viable numbers of customers willing to pay for a premium delivery service
- Over a four month period to pilot a premium service to 250 users paying for the delivery of library stock to locations they specified and available outside of normal library opening times
- To identify and recruit a private sector partner to take responsibility for collection and delivery
- To see if the premium service could generate a surplus to subsidise and expand the current free domiciliary service for mobility impaired individuals

2. Project context

The prospect of being able to provide an enhanced service that was either revenue neutral or generated a surplus had obvious attractions. This was particularly true in the context of a reduction in current opening hours and closure of some libraries that the premium service could potentially help to 'offset'. It is relevant to note that one of the reservations of people surveyed in the market research was that this initiative might actually provide a rationale for reducing opening hours or the closure of libraries.

The project also offered a potential model of three local authority library services developing a joint initiative at a time when councils were being urged to collaborate to find revenue savings and to use these to maintain 'front-line' services. While all three councils were Labour controlled, there were inevitably differences in their priorities e.g. Islington's commitments in respect of its Fairness Commission meant there were particular sensitivities around charging for services. There were also different management and organisational arrangements affecting decision making processes and timings: partnership working would therefore represent a challenge.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

A steering group comprising of the senior library leads in each authority and the officer responsible for developing and implementing the project was established. Camden managed the project through a seconded Strategy Support Officer; when this secondment finished in September 2012, this post was filled by a Strategy and Development Manager. In either case the project only represented a part of the officers' overall workload.

It was not until late August that consultants (Red Quadrant (RQ)) were appointed to undertake the market research and delays were experienced in finalising and agreeing the methodology. A significant limitation of this study was that it mostly only engaged existing library users, with only a small number of non-library users involved. The methodology was in general not robust. Two focus groups of people either under or over 50 took place, with a mix of participants from the three areas. In addition on-line surveys using existing consultation mechanisms were organised in each local authority; this elicited responses from 400 people. Differing response rates between participating local authorities, and minor differences in consultation questions in the case of one council, made effective comparison of findings relatively difficult. The consultants draft report was produced in January 2013.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

The market research established that there was no significant demand for a premium service: "*the overwhelming conclusion from most participants was that a premium home delivery service was not relevant to them….to run a pilot for this service would be difficult to justify*." (Red Quadrant draft report January 2013).

The low numbers of people who might be interested meant that a premium service would not have the economies of scale to make it financially viable; the requisite charge for the service would be significantly beyond what respondents indicated they might be willing to pay. An assessment of the charges that a sample of possible commercial partners would make for delivery, including the Royal Mail, further established that this was not a realistic option.

The market research did however provide information about the on-going level of support and demand for libraries including the ability to physically browse books. It also indicated limited knowledge about the full range of services that libraries currently provide (e.g. e-book loans) and established that there was interest in the possibility of an enhanced domiciliary service for those currently not eligible. Each council's library service is now exploring how it might enhance its own domiciliary service including the provision of e-book readers. However logistical and operational differences between each local authority may work against the development of an integrated service. Market research has also encouraged greater consideration of how best to address public knowledge about the full range of library services and practical issues such as providing training in the use of e-books.

The project lead felt a unique feature of the initiative had been the preparedness of the local authorities to consult with service users on piloting the project. In contrast they commented on the numbers of failed initiatives that had not previously been scoped or tested before implementation. The decision not to proceed with the project had been based on empirical evidence, which resulted in financial savings. The LDI project has furthermore improved the working relationship between the three participating library services, and could result in additional future collaborations. The project has also resulted in closer working relationships between different departments within Camden, which could potentially facilitate future joint working and innovation.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

- The delays experienced by the project were in part a consequence of having to get agreement from each of the partners within the context of their varying political agendas, timetables and ways of working. Having the three Heads of Service involved did speed up decision making, but it was inevitably more time consuming than having to deal with just one local authority. Partnership working not only requires a shared commitment to joint goals, but also agreed working arrangements including, as appropriate, delegated decision making to ensure effective joint working.

- The proposed enhanced service represented an evolution rather than a more radical and up to date development: "*I feel the libraries are kind of missing the point here, we live in an ever more digital worl*d…" (RQ focus group participant). However, the research did demonstrate an appetite for the library service to offer e-book loans and digital content and that the service has a role in helping people learn how to access these.

- Market research has to be robust in respect of its methodology; a significant weakness was the failure to engage non-library users to establish their views about the initiative. Amongst existing library service users the study did show a continuing commitment to the traditional aspects of libraries as places where you can browse and select books free of charge. It would have been of interest to gain non-library users' perspectives on this as well, though it is acknowledged that there were resource constraints in engaging non-users in the study.

- The risk assessment undertaken prior to commencement, in addition to the reading of a similar RQ feasibility study undertaken for another local authority, indicated that it was unlikely that a commercial partner would be found for the project. The Project Manager also had serious reservations about its commercial viability. The inclusion of this element within the proposal, while relevant to LDI and the development of commercial partnerships, was at the very least optimistic.

- Without LDI funding it is unlikely that the market research would have taken place; while the envisaged pilot was not implemented the research has revealed ways in which exisiting domiciliary services can be enhanced including for example providing e-readers and e-books on pen drives.

Project title: Digital Skills Sharing
Lead applicant: Publishers Association
LDI theme: Commercial partnerships
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The Digital Skills Sharing programme, led by the Publishers' Association (PA) aimed to respond to the impact of digital media on the ways in which readers are developed. Building on the experience and skills of publishers who are already producing digital content and using a range of social media platforms to engage readers, the project sought to provide a mechanism through which these skills could be shared with libraries. The project had two elements:

1. A series of six pilot projects, partnering library authorities with publishers to develop activities for the public
2. A series of events and resources developed for the wider library sector, taking the learning from the pilots and bringing in best practice examples from the libraries sector, from publishers and from digital specialists.

Through these activities, the project aimed to:

- Extend an existing model – the Reading Partners business model – into a new area, with a particular focus on digital opportunities
- Develop capacity in the library service through a mutually beneficial partnership with commercial organisations
- Understand how the market for reading can be developed through collaboration between libraries and publishers in support of digital activity
- Explore how arts and culture partners might be involved
- Disseminate learning and practical examples from the programme
- Bring benefit to library users, through an improved digital offer

2. Project context

PA and the Reading Agency (TRA) were able, in this project, to build upon existing partnerships and networks, such as the Reading Partners scheme which brings libraries and publishers together and encourages publishers to share free resources with local library services. They were also able to build upon existing evidence: TRA's 2011 report on libraries and digital activity[12] includes a survey of libraries, and reveals that only a few have digital strategies, that almost two thirds would like help in using digital media, and that common barriers are staff skills, policy restrictions and potential resource issues. In addition, the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) were in the process of developing four universal offers from libraries, one of which was to be a digital offer, providing a strategic imperative and opportunity for the project.

The project undertook a baseline survey with a small sample of libraries (10) to understand what the current state of engagement with digital platforms and mediums was. 88% of respondents said that their library did not have a digital strategy; only few respondents reported often using a social media platform or network in a professional capacity; half of respondents had access in order to upload

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[12] The Reading Agency, 2011. *Libraries and Digital: Research into the use of digital media in libraries to develop audiences for reading* London: Reading Agency.

content to their library's website; 80% of respondents identified time as a barrier to developing a digital offering, and 70% identified a skills gap; other key barriers were infrastructure (e.g. web access) and policy. Some of the individual libraries were experiencing particular contextual changes which were relevant to their projects, such as restructuring of library services or, in one case, a new building. Many had existing connections with members of the public through specific groups, which they were seeking to build upon as part of their project.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project had a steering group with representation from PA, TRA and SCL. PA were the applicant partner for the funding, but commissioned TRA to run the programme; TRA engaged a freelance project manager to undertake this role, providing a single point of contact and dedicated part-time resource for the duration of the programme.

Six Pilot Projects
Library authorities were invited, through SCL's Books Group, to make a short proposal for a digital engagement project; a selection was made, and PA selected publishers to pair with them. The six teams of 'skills sharers' then met for the first time at a launch event of the overall programme in April 2012, including:
- Gloucestershire with Bloomsbury Granta and Profile/Serpents Tail: seeking new library users through creating a Twitter Book Club
- Nottingham with Penguin and HotKey: targeting young people, through local schools, through a competition in which they had to create digital content to promote a book, with a prize to be a Publisher for a Day
- Triborough (Fulham & Hammersmith, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster) with Little Brown and Hodder: looking to widen readers' traditional engagement with an online reading group called Text Tribe
- Lancashire and Halton with Raintree and Faber: working through a range of social media platforms to encourage families from their Reading Families project to share reviews and preferences online.
- Leeds and Wakefield with Random House Group and Love Arts Festival: encouraging people to share and talk about the books which make them happy, using a range of social media platforms
- South Tyneside with Cannongate, Headline and Pan MacMillan: targeting both general readers with a Big Read and young readers (through schools) with a Teenage Reading Project, with author events, book giveaways and using a range of social media platforms to encourage feedback and discussions.

Some projects specifically built upon existing public engagement routes – e.g. reading groups, Job Hub groups who already meet in libraries, parents attending regular Baby Bounce and Rhyme (BBR) and Toddler Time sessions, etc. Others sought to target and build relationships with new library users and with young people, with some using schools or the youth service. The different pilots focused on using different social media platforms; across all six projects the platforms used included: Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, Pinterest, Eventbrite, Flickr, Skype, Wordpress, Tumblr, YouTube and Storybird. Some of the library services had an existing social media presence on which to build; others did not, and some found that their local authority policy discouraged individual accounts or would not allow certain sites or applications to be accessed and used by library services. A significant element of some of the projects was, therefore, advocating within local authority structures to be enabled to setup a social media presence, or access a site.

Techniques and approaches used across the six pilots included:

- Using book giveaways to drive engagement, or as competition prizes
- Focus around an author, or a small number of authors, from the publisher partners
- Engaging readers directly with authors, including author visits/talks, 'twinterviews', skype talks and Q&As, videos of talks being shared online, and more general encouragement of linking authors with readers and libraries via social media platforms (e.g. tagging in Twitter)
- Encouraging readers to use social media platforms to share their reading, review books, highlight favourites, and exchange views and engage with other readers.

Learning and resources programme

The learning and resources programme had three events throughout the year, which were attended by both libraries and publishers (including the six teams from the pilot projects), and which served as opportunities to:

- Support the six projects, enabling them to get together, work on ideas and share their learning
- Showcase existing good practice and expertise, from within libraries, from publishers and from a range of expert speakers (e.g. Bill Thompson, Claire Armistead from the Guardian Children's Site, Gerald Breatnach from Google)
- Producing resources for future use, by videoing presentations and presenting these online
- Sharing this learning and good practice with the wider sector, both through the events and through the website, enabling them to be available for the longer term.

In addition to the events and the resources created through them, the Digital Skills Sharing website (http://readingagency.org.uk/digitalskills/) was launched in July 2012, sharing the material from the events and the six projects and publicising the events themselves. Some original content was also commissioned specifically for the website, including 'Getting Started' guides to different platforms and applications, and examples of digital media use from across the library sector, publishers and other relevant partners (interestingly the LDI project from Bournemouth, 'Qracking the Code', is one of the case studies on the site).

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Six Pilot Projects

All six projects could report and evidence public engagement, with many establishing followers or subscribers to social media accounts which they are continuing to use. Several of the projects established accounts or a social media presence on a particular platform or platforms for the first time, and in doing so had encouraged their ICT and/or communications department to alter their policy. Some of the projects also created online content, such as videos of author events, which again are contributing to a longer-term presence. As noted above, some projects also delivered events, and one had a mini festival.

All the projects succeeded in maintaining a partnership between one or more publishers and one or more library authorities until the end, and some report plans to discuss future possible partnerships. There was some drop-out of publisher partners in some projects, due either to changes in personnel (a committed individual leaving their post in a publishing company) or because of the time-consuming nature of the projects. Libraries had brought different levels of experience with social media to this project, so some were able to report learning brand new skills as part of the project, whilst others were extending their use of social media. For publishers, the particular benefit was understanding the libraries sector better, and exploring different ways to engage the public, particularly in specific areas (such as with debut authors).

Learning and resources programme

The three events were well-attended, with 257 attendances across the events; those for which there was data to indicate the type of attendee show a good mix of libraries, publishers and other interested parties. The three event evaluations show that attendees felt the quality of speakers was very good, and found the events useful, and that there would be interest in further such activities.

The website now has 30 items of content in the resources section, and had received 1,195 views of video resources in March 2013 (before all content was available). 45% of the digital skills sharers reported finding the website 'reasonably' or 'very' useful, and 46% said they found it 'a little' useful. The website was promoted at the events, through the Reading Agency website and newsletters and through other partnership routes, including SCL and CILIP.

Overall, the project has also gained some coverage through trade press and media, and was given an Edge 2013 Award [Virtual/Digital] in March 2013, which seeks 'to recognise positive achievements and promote outstanding library based initiatives which celebrate the value of libraries'.

5.   Summary of main learning outcomes

- **A modest but concentrated, supported programme has embedded changes in participating libraries**: across the library participants there are plans in place already to share the skills gained through the projects more widely, through social media champions (Gloucestershire), creating online skills workshops (Triborough), presentations to senior team at Service Development Meetings (Leeds) and plans for training more staff across several of the libraries. Individually, some library services now have social media accounts and presences where they previously did not, particularly supported by the impetus and profile of the project; staff have new skills, and are keen to use them further; staff have gained confidence in engaging with digital media; some libraries have new or improved relationships with reader groups which they will continue to develop and for whom they have specific plans; and some are exploring formalising their commitment to digital engagement through creating new strategies.

- **Digital skills sharing teams have tested new approaches to reader engagement, and have learnt lessons from these**: some libraries reported good local profile and press as a result of their project; many report understanding more how different readers engage or prefer different platforms; specific models which combine lending with in-person and online activities have been trialled, with lessons learnt for things to repeat, and things not to repeat; libraries have learnt about the volume and type of content which is required and works on different platforms, to create ongoing engagement; and there is no immediate commercial benefit to these kinds of activities for publishers.

- **This specific model of pilot projects for the programme is not necessarily replicable/ transferable:** the projects require significant time and input from both libraries and publishers, and in some cases this led to drop-out; those projects with multiple library authorities were challenging, because of different levels of digital experience, skills and existing presence; there were particular challenges around the timing of the programme, with summer being a pinch point for libraries, and Christmas a real challenge for publishers;

- **But a lighter touch model might work in the future:** the success of the events, and the enthusiasm from both library and publisher pilot participants, and event attendees, suggests that transferring these resources online and continuing to add to them may provide a sustainable way of continuing to build the capacity of libraries in this area. The relative cheapness of many social media platforms is important in removing a potential barrier, but survey data from the participants indicates that time and skills are still the main barriers to libraries progressing further in this area.

- **One of the significant challenges for libraries in engaging more with digital media will be negotiating infrastructural and policy issues:** in supporting libraries to continue to make the case internally for the value of digital engagement, it will be important that good examples are available to help demonstrate useful activity in this area, and that there continues to be opportunities for libraries to seek investment to further innovate in this area.

Project title: Digital Vision (Library 21)
Lead applicant: The Reading Agency
LDI theme: Commercial partnerships
Original grant value (as per funding application): £20,000

1. Project aims and objectives

The digital vision project application originally came from Studiolift, a communications and technology agency, on behalf of the Reading Agency's Reading Partners' Digital Strategy Group, and a partnership which included the Reading Agency (TRA), SCL, publishers and trade association. The aim of the project was to test and develop the feasibility of a digital platform through which publishers could share their digital assets with libraries (and potentially others in the arts and cultural sector). This testing would include considerations of what kind of business model would be required, and what kind of technical solution could be proposed.

The project was taking place at a time when the policy landscape for such a proposition was developing quite rapidly, including the Sieghart review of e-lending (published in late March 2013) alongside the Arts Council's 'envisioning' process of consultation and vision development for libraries [summarised in part 1 of the LDI evaluation report]. The project was re-scoped, following discussions through the Reading Partners forum (which is led by The Reading Agency and brings together the UK library network and 43 publishers) about how the partnership between the two key sector groups might work to bring about change in the public's experience of libraries' reading service, through digital development.

The re-scoped proposition, re-named Library 21, proposed a research and development project to consider some key issues and opportunities, including consideration of what kinds of agreements or partnerships might be required to help libraries to bring about this change. The project specifically did not consider e-lending (which is being covered by the Sieghart review).

The project intended to consider how libraries could become 'a thrilling space' for readers through bringing together digital content with physical reading experiences and exploring what kinds of arrangements could be reached to enable public access to publishers' digital content to an extent that had not been previously possible. The project looked at:
- The needs of different groups (readers, libraries and publishers)
- The kinds of digital content currently available
- What kinds of business and delivery models might be tested and appropriate
- Whether support can be gained from across the system to take this proposition forwards.

2. Project context

The project was able to build upon a range of existing or developing policy, strategic and scoping work looking at libraries and digital opportunities, including the LDI Digital Skills Sharing project, the Arts Council's work to develop a vision for libraries, the digital element of SCL's universal offer, TRA's report on libraries and digital activity (previously cited) and the Sieghart review of e-lending in public libraries. The project was able to directly connect with the 'envisioning' process being run by Arts Council England with libraries following the re-scoping, and acknowledge and reflect upon emerging findings from that process as the project was taking place.

The work built on previous work done by The Reading Agency and consortium of libraries and publishers, which identified that:

- Publishers have digital content which could be disseminated more widely to readers.
- Libraries would benefit from having access to digital content.
- Publishers would benefit from tapping into libraries' access to readers.

More widely, the context in which digital content is being developed, shared and used was also developing as the project progressed. The project included a desk research process specifically to look at a range of existing examples and case studies, not only those relating to reading but from other sectors and art forms, to understand what kinds of models and approaches already exist. Consideration of examples was given not only to those from the UK, but also examples of approaches which had global reach, or which had a national focus outside the UK.

3. Project delivery mechanisms

The project was led by staff at the Reading Agency. A 'Vision Group' was created, with four senior publishers, three representatives of the libraries sector (including Society of Chief Librarians and Arts Council representation). The group was treated by the delivery team as a 'critical friend' for the research process. An external freelancer was also brought in to run parts of the research and contribute to drafting the final report.

The research project sought to answer a broad and ambitious research question: 'how can we make public libraries the most thrilling places to go for readers?' Within the scope of this question a proposition was developed for testing through the process, which included ideas for new partnership arrangements and some kind of digital platform (as envisaged in the original LDI application) which would enable readers to access and navigate a range of material, both copyrighted and not copyrighted, within the physical library space itself.

A range of research methods were used to test this proposition:

- Desk research, including exploring relevant existing/emerging policy and strategic documents.
- Researching and developing nine case studies, specifically looking at:
  - 'cultural curation'
  - the way users experience digital services
  - location-specific access to content
  - existing examples of library initiatives involving innovative use of digital content
- A survey of 509 readers and library users (focusing on those whose reading/borrowing is relatively regular)
- A focus group with a small number (6) of readers and library users
- A focus group with 12 people from the publishing, public and academic library service and information management sectors.
- Face-to-face and telephone interviews with 27 individuals from the same sectors.

4. Project deliverables and outputs

Upon completion of the full LDI evaluation, findings from the Digital Vision research had been written up to produce a report, outlining:

- The background to the project

- The needs for different stakeholder groups, beginning with an analysis of the needs of the public and then working through those of other stakeholder groups
- A vision for how readers would experience a new kind of reading service
- Feedback from different stakeholder groups on this vision and proposal, and on the necessary supporting arrangements that would be required
- Consideration of the feasibility of the proposition, and key challenges
- Recommendations for taking the work forwards.

A range of appendices then provides detail of the research process and findings underpinning the main body of the report. Some consideration has also been given to launching and disseminating the report, and to positioning it with key stakeholders, such as Arts Council England. At the time of writing, this work is ongoing.

5. Summary of main learning outcomes

- **Libraries will require some strategic support and leadership** in responding to the opportunities and challenges regarding digital content. Both the research in this project, and the LDI Digital Skills Sharing Project, have reinforced some of the key challenges for libraries in engaging with digital opportunities: the available time and skills of public library staff are limited, and vary between authorities; local policies and provision relating to ICT usage are often restrictive; and the range of potential challenges relating to copyright extend beyond the capacity of individual libraries and services to solve these. The recommendations at the end of the Library 21 report include a strong emphasis on strategic leadership from across the reading sector (including libraries, publishers, funders and technology and user experts) and on the advocacy to government which may be required to move a proposition forwards.

- **Publishers are interested in integrating digital content more comprehensively into their relationships with libraries,** if security can be guaranteed. They see the value of the library as a 'shop window', building upon libraries as an 'enhanced discovery channel' and enabling publishers to consider further how libraries can support and improve publishers' understanding of readers: publishers committed to this project both through the consultation process, and strategically through the original bid and the Vision Group. There is a commitment to exploring the mutual benefits of a partnership which is, in theory, 'cost neutral' inasmuch as each partner will bring something the other does not have to the table without charging each other for it.

- Pursuing the approach outlined in the draft report will provide an opportunity to **test the feasibility of new partnership arrangements**, which are required to underpin the proposition of a 'new reading service' which combines physical and digital reading experiences supported by an open IT infrastructure, and the **focus upon delivering this service within the library building.** In the context of the wider LDI programme, the future development of this project may help to test how much the unique offer of libraries remains closely associated with the physical space which they offer. However, the research in this project acknowledges the ongoing challenge of pursuing an approach which tethers users' interaction to the library space.

- **There is merit in pursuing further, strategic discussion and feasibility**, based upon the findings of this research, and the commitment of stakeholders to the process. The report makes a clear case for libraries to engage more, and more strategically, with the

opportunities offered by digital content. It also outlines a possible baseline solution, and proposes piloting this in library buildings to take the process forward.

- **Undertaking further discussions and feasibility will require resource and strategic commitment.** Further work is required to undertake accurate costings, test the technical proposition in detail and establish the strategic process and support required to take the proposal forwards. This is likely to require practical resources – time and potentially some R&D expenditure with digital/technology partners – and strategic commitments from key agencies. A range of potential partners for this kind of strategic commitment are identified in the report, and The Reading Agency-led forum of publishers and librarians is identified as a key vehicle for taking the project forward.

Appendix 1 – Evaluation research methodology

As previously described, the LDI programme consisted of 13 individually constituted collaborative projects, that each sought to contribute to one [or more] of the programme's core strategic objectives including New Delivery Models for Arts and Culture Working Together; Co-ordinating Partnerships to Achieve National Policy Outcomes; Books and Reading; and Commercial Partnerships. Arts Council England as the commissioning body was interested in understanding how these objectives would be fulfilled by individual projects and by the full programme as a cohesive whole. The evaluation was also tasked with identifying other learning outcomes linked to the dynamics of collaborative working; relative innovation within and across the programme; and the extent to which the 'unique value' of public libraries was sustained and promoted throughout, especially in collaborative professional contexts.

Evaluation design

Given the operational complexity of the programme and its broad ranging strategic objectives, a Realistic Evaluation approach was adopted. Pioneered by Pawson and Tilley[13], Realistic Evaluation is driven by a desire for greater validity and utility of evaluation findings, via outcomes that are deeply rooted in the contexts and mechanisms of the programme under investigation. The approach encourages evaluators and programme stakeholders to consider the 'social and cultural conditions' that are necessary for change mechanisms to operate most effectively, and how they are distributed within and between various programme contexts. The evaluation was designed therefore to capture the causal relationships that exist between the various contexts and mechanisms that formed part of the LDI programme, and the outcomes achieved by all participating projects. This has enabled a thorough consideration of 'what worked and why', and the identification of learning outcomes that are of applied relevance to Arts Council England in developing their strategic relationship with the libraries sector.

In the first instance, a flexible evaluation model was designed to capture the main objectives of the research process [see figure 1], including an overarching evaluation framework, tailored self-evaluation approaches for individual projects, culminating in a 'meta-evaluation' synthesising both of these key elements. This was discussed and reviewed with LDI stakeholders (including individual project leads) at the inaugural programme workshop held in March 2012. In order to fully evaluate the unique experiences of individual projects, the evaluation model included an evaluation toolkit designed to enable each Project Lead to develop their own specific evaluation approach and data collection methods in collaboration with a dedicated member of the evaluation team. This has enabled detailed, comparative analysis of the operational effectiveness of individual projects and relevant learning outcomes from the LDI process as a whole (described in Part 2 of the report).

Evaluation research methods

Regular cross-programme data collection exercises were undertaken throughout in order to consider and profile the strategic learning outcomes described in Part 1 of the report. Interviews were conducted at mid and endpoint phases with key stakeholders including individual Project Leads and relevant Relationship Managers. Interviews were designed to prompt reflection and discussion on

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[13] Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation.* Sage Publications, London.

the opportunities and challenges of collaborative working; libraries' unique contribution to collaborations; libraries' relationship with the arts and ACE; project sustainability and scalability; contribution to LDI strategic objectives; opportunities and risks for ACE; capture and dissemination of learning outcomes; key project successes, innovations and mechanisms; partnership working, participation and engagement; LDI as a strategic intervention; return on investment; structure and management of LDI programme. Other methods included a mid-point stakeholder survey to capture developing ideas on the value of the LDI programme as a whole; participatory observation of events run as part of individual projects; and facilitation of and/or contribution to LDI development workshops. A quantitative data template was also designed and shared with Project Leads to enable the standardised collection of headline, cumulative statistics such as number of project partners, participating library services and public events.

LDI Evaluation Framework

- **Development of a framework that maps the entire evaluation process against:**
- Core **LDI objectives**
- Understanding **sustainability** for LDI projects and library services as a whole
- Articulation and promotion of a **library service USP**

LDI Project Self-evaluation

- **Each individual project will assess its progress and impact according to:**
- The **contexts** and conditions within which it is being delivered
- Specific aims and objectives
- **Mechanisms** and processes by which these are achiveved
- Project **outcomes**

LDI Meta-evaluation

- Profiles of individual project outcomes, effectiveness and learning
- Synthesis of evaluation findings across 4 activity strands
- Summary of key learning outcomes for LDI and sector as a whole
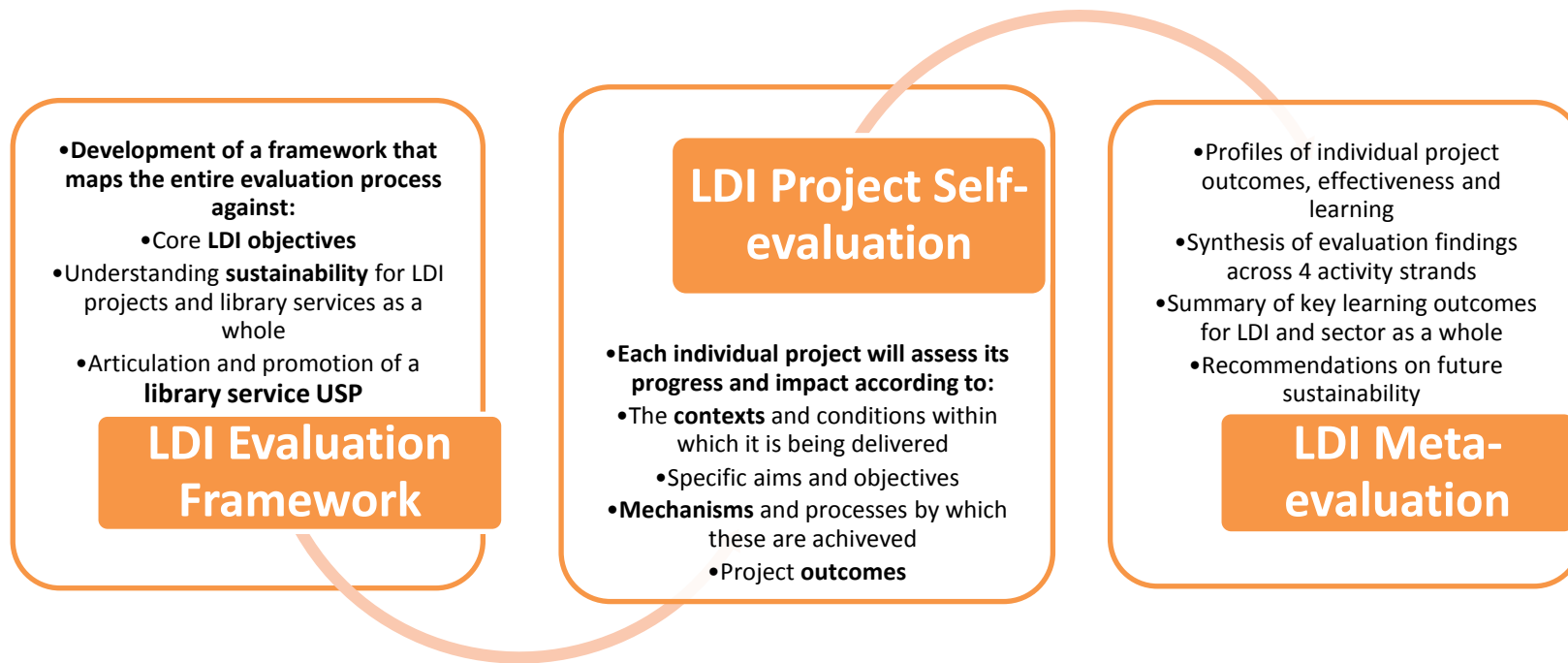- Recommendations on future sustainability

Figure 1 - LDI evaluation model

Appendix 2 – Analysis of cross-LDI Quantitative Data

Methodology

Each LDI project was asked to complete and return a short form to the Evaluation Team. The forms asked for some basic quantitative data about the libraries the projects had worked with, other partners, participants, library staff and activities. In some cases projects have indicated that they have had to estimate numbers. In a small number of cases, the Evaluation Team have had to make a judgement about appropriate categories or the use of data. However, most of the questions were very straightforward, and therefore the majority of data can be treated with confidence.

This analysis is valuable in the context of the overall evaluation; some projects specifically sought to exercise reach, and thus a relatively large size and scale results in certain cases. Others were focused on testing a proposition out, undertaking a feasibility study, or piloting activity with small groups.

LDI operational thematic structure

Work with Libraries and Library Authorities

- 143 of the 152 (94%) English library authorities were involved in the programme through one of the projects. 104 were involved in more than one project, and 32 were involved in three or more projects. One Scottish library authority was also involved in project.

- 3,332 individual library engagements were reported. Some of these may have been engagements by more than one project with the same library, particularly given the very wide reach of both the Books on Prescription project, and also the reach of the ASCEL project.

- Projects themselves ranged significantly in the reach and focus of their engagement with library authorities, varying from engagement with one authority to engagement with 127. Similarly, the number of libraries which projects engaged with varied from 1 to 2,995.

- 668 library staff were reported to have had direct involvement in the projects. Some would have been directly involved in running projects and delivering activity. It seems likely that this is an underestimation of the reach of the LDI to library staff (i.e. the number of staff whom projects are likely to affect or engage with), given the reach of the Books on Prescription project, but is perhaps more accurately a reflection of active involvement within the LDI year itself. In addition 121 library volunteers were involved in the projects. 35 training sessions were specifically run for library staff as part of the initiative.

Non-library partners

Projects were asked to indicate who they had been working with in their project. 217 partners were reported. Of these 217, just under half were arts and culture partners, including several Bridge organisations, National Portfolio Organisations and a range of individuals and small organisations.

Figure 1: Partners involved in LDI projects

Type of partner	Number of Partners	% Partners
Arts and culture partner	97	45%
Health partner	47	22%
Other	33	15%
Publisher	18	8%
Education partner	14	6%
Social services partner	7	3%
Local authority	1	0%
Total	**217**	

Source: ICC with DHA & Praxis

Public Engagement

- Projects reported 3,331 members of the public who engaged in regular activities through LDI projects, and a further 4,454 who engaged in 'one-off' activities. In some instances, it appears that this latter number may be an understatement, as some projects were not able to provide full estimates of engagement through 'one-off' activities.

- 620 activities [engaging members of the public] were run as part of LDI projects. Screenings of films, through a single project, were the single largest group of activities. Other kinds of activities included interviews and focus groups, as part of feasibility consultations.

Figure 2: Activities delivered in LDI projects

Type of activity	Number of activities	% activities
Screenings	133	36%
Creative/interactive workshops	108	29%
Meet the author	49	13%
Other	48	13%
Training with digital technology	25	7%
Performances	4	1%
Reading activities	3	1%
Total	**370**	

Source: ICC with DHA & Praxis

- 2 projects did not run activities with the public as part of their activities. One project ran 136 activities; at the other end of the scale, three projects ran between 10 and 13 activities.

- 16,915 hits on LDI project websites were reported. Beyond this, a number of projects creating digital content or using social media to engage the public reported engagement in different ways. In total, 29,672 digital engagements with this content were reported, including: viewing content, following, posting, commenting , liking, tweeting, hashtagging, messaging, creating pinboards and adding content, and using QR codes. Two projects – the Bournemouth QR codes projects and the Digitial Skills Sharing project – both contributed significantly to these figures with their focus on digital engagement.

Changes in library use

Within the year, some projects were able to report changes either in library stock or in library use:

- 30,856 new books in stock (the majority as a result of the Books on Prescription scheme).

- Two projects attributed 471 new library memberships to their LDI activities.

- Two projects attributed 2,614 additional lends to their LDI activities. One project also specifically stressed that a wider variety of stock was being borrowed.

Appendix 3 – Summary of LDI theme key 'contexts, mechanisms and outcomes'

New delivery models for arts and culture working together		
Contexts	**Mechanisms**	**Outcomes**
Growth in smartphone and digital technology	Collaborative working with arts partner and FE/HE partners to develop new content and training opportunities	Enhanced local, digital cultural offer led by library service
Gap in cultural provision for rural communities	Strategic collaboration with regional cultural consortium acting as provider in community-led commissioning process, with libraries as arts venues	New, innovative and relevant community-le cultural offers hosted by library service
Low library usage amongst adults in converged community resource centre	Investment in cinema equipment and partnership with specialist cinema project workers	Considerable new library memberships and book loans amongst cinema goers
Reduced social service provision for vulnerable adults and introduction of personal budgets	Commissioning of targeted arts projects in converged library/community centre	Active participation of isolated community members and significant social impact
Co-ordinating partnerships to achieve national policy outcomes		
Contexts	**Mechanisms**	**Outcomes**
Gap in existing provision for jobseekers relating to confidence and interpersonal skills; regional public policy priorities in reducing unemployment	Library partnership with local arts organisation with expertise in developmental arts interventions with targeted groups to complement established Job Club initiative	Improved confidence, presentation and interview skills and entry to employment for participating jobseekers
Development of national Public Health Offer for libraries and growing evidence on benefits of reading in mental health care and social prescribing models	Stakeholder group management of research and consultation activities engaging majority of public library authorities and wide range of health services	Creation of national standard, negotiated core reading lists, training and promotional materials for Books on Prescription scheme
New cross-authority governance structures for library authorities providing incentive for targeted socially responsive cultural activities	Consultant contracted to manage testing of arts-based commissioning between different library authorities and arts partners	Time and space for reflective practice and professional learning across sectors

Books and reading		
Contexts	**Mechanisms**	**Outcomes**
Spending cuts and service reductions encouraging renewed focus on volunteering and co-production of library services	Partnership with The Reading Agency enabling consideration of Universal Reading Offer and other reader development initiatives as volunteering opportunities for young people via national events programme	Advanced national debate on value of co-production to library services, acting as catalyst for training and development of young volunteers and library staff
Culture-led regeneration ambitions in local authority including 'literary city' branding based on established book festival	Use of branch library and community venues to increase geographical and demographic spread of festival	Engagement of new and diverse audiences in cultural activity, including co-production of library services
Limitations in existing author-led reader events and campaigns as predominantly take place in leading bookshops and major libraries	Design and delivery of bespoke, local reader events by consortium of libraries, publishers and regional readers network	Creation of commercially viable reader events programme that has successfully engaged new and diverse audiences
Commercial partnerships		
Contexts	**Mechanisms**	**Outcomes**
Desire across three library authorities to develop joint working opportunities and revenue savings	Consultants commissioned to undertake market research on feasibility of a premium library delivery service	Evidence base on opportunities for evolutionary library services including e-lending and the necessary conditions for other commercial ambitions
Existing evidence base on limited availability of digital strategies within and across library authorities	Steering group-led management of six pilot digital engagement projects, each involving library authorities and commercial publishers	Cultural change in participating libraries regarding use of social media encouraging enhanced reader engagement
Desire for greater clarity (and development of business model) on access to commercial digital reading resources through public libraries	Desk-based research and development project building upon existing research and policy directives	Recommendations on cross-sector strategic leadership and government advocacy

Corresponding author: k.m.wilson@ljmu.ac.uk

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