

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The public library as a catalyst for economic, social and cultural development



A STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES 2013-2017



Comhshool, Pobl agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Comann na mBainisteoirí Contae agus Cathoibh
County and City Managers' Association



AN tAONTUINGHEALACHT ÉIREANNACH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

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Opportunities for All - The Public Library as a Catalyst for Economic, Social and Cultural Development.
A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017

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1. FOREWORD

Public libraries play a vital role in the lives of individuals and their communities. For generations, the local library has acted as a vehicle for access to knowledge, ideas and information and as a democratic service open and available to anyone. The public library is a trusted and recognised feature of the local area, but it is also a remarkable national asset and network, with 336 branches covering all parts of the country.

My Department's *Branching Out* public library strategies of the last decade demonstrated the value of and necessity for a strategic approach to the development of the public library service. The advances achieved during the course of *Branching Out*, in new and improved library buildings, opening hours, stock, ICT, staffing and staff training, have provided a solid foundation for a new plan for 2013 to 2017. I am delighted that this new strategy is a joint initiative of my Department, the County and City Managers' Association and the Local Government Management Agency. It is now important that we work together to ensure full implementation of the strategy and to exploit the range of resources available to all within the public library network to best advantage.

The strategy has been developed in challenging times, economically and socially. Ireland's public libraries, a national resource network, physically and online, can promote economic growth, stability and community cohesion. The strategy will position libraries as a key resource in local communities, delivering a broad range of services more effectively to meet a diverse spectrum of people's needs in information, learning, literacy, employment skills, business and leisure.

In the context of the programme for local government, *Putting People First*, local authorities are adapting to meet the new demands. The role of the library service within the local authority offers a significant opportunity for new and strengthened functions in the changing role of local government. This strategy sets out an ambitious programme in this regard to place libraries as the public face of local government in the community. I am confident that the public library management and staff will embrace the opportunity to take on new roles and strengthen existing ones.

The strategy will capitalise on the existing public library culture of cooperation, exploring all potential for developing and expanding shared service practises and structures, in line with government policy. In this, the public library service will take a leading role for local government.

I welcome this progressive programme for the next five years, which will see a concerted action on behalf of public libraries to strengthen and expand their place in the local community, in local government and at national level.

My thanks go to all who helped in the development of this policy document.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Hogan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Hogan, T.D.

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national context

This five year strategy sets out an ambitious approach for the future of the public library service in Ireland. In line with national and local government policy, the strategy proposes innovative measures to manage existing resources more efficiently in order to continue to develop and deliver a library service which meets the information, learning and cultural needs of individuals and communities and, in so doing, contributes to economic recovery and social and cultural improvement.

The current profile of the public library service, according to the most recent statistics¹, is as follows:

- Public libraries provide a wide range of services both physical and virtual, including print and digital lending material, reader development advice, internet access and support, information and reference resources and guidance, learning and eLearning activities, literacy support, cultural promotion and community development.
- There are 17 million visits made to public libraries each year.
- There are 19.3 million books, audio books, CDs and DVDs borrowed from public libraries annually.
- 41% of the books borrowed by adults are non-fiction books.
- There are 1.9 million internet sessions provided on 2,100 internet access PCs and via free Wi-Fi.
- There are 336 branch libraries and 31.5 mobile libraries.²
- Local authorities spent €131.6 million on library services in 2011.
- Local authorities spent €9 million on stock in 2011, an average of €1.97 per capita.
- Public libraries in Ireland are currently run by 32 separate library authorities.

Irish society is undergoing considerable change. 2009 saw the highest ever number of births recorded in Ireland in a single year, while the 65 and over age group grew by 14.4% in the five years to 2011. Both these trends are projected to continue and even to accelerate³.

While levels of literacy among adults in Ireland have improved in recent years, the economic and social need for literacy skills and particularly information literacy in the digital age, is increasing. In the latest OECD PIAAC⁴ survey 17.9% of adults in Ireland have been recorded as lacking basic skills in literacy⁵, ranking Ireland 17th out of the 24 participating countries⁶. The same survey reveals that 25.6% of adults in Ireland lack basic numeracy skills, ranking Ireland 19th out of the 24 participating countries. The 2009 OECD survey *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) found that 1 in 6 Irish students were estimated as having poor reading skills.

The sharp fall in employment levels in recent years has also impacted significantly on Irish society. In 2012, the unemployment rate in the country was one of the highest among EU member states⁷.

1 Local Government Management Agency 2013

2 Cross border mobile library service shared between Donegal and Western Tyrone/Derry regions.

3 Central Statistics Office, Census 2011 www.cso.ie/census

4 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

5 This is compared with 22% in the last International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) results in 1997 - NALA: www.nala.ie

6 PIAAC 2012 <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/education/2012/piaac2012.pdf>

7 Teichgraber, Martin. Eurostat Statistics in Focus: population and social conditions. 2012. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-040/EN/KS-SF-12-040-EN.PDF

The strategic background to public libraries

The Public Libraries Ireland Act, 1855 is the legal cornerstone for the public library network in Ireland and marks the origin of the service as a function of local authorities. The process of monitoring and reviewing the service has been continuous since that period, with the role of national monitoring and implementation of public library legislation falling under the remit of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (the Department).

In 1998 the Department published *Branching Out: A New Public Library Service*, the first strategic plan for the development of the public library service at national level. *Branching Out: A New Public Library Service* ran from 1998 to 2007 and was followed by *Branching Out - Future Directions* from 2008-2012. The *Branching Out* strategies and capital funding programmes delivered improved library buildings, opening hours, ICT, stock, staffing and staff training. They provided the mechanism for stakeholder cooperation to realise a uniformly agreed vision for public libraries and for planned and coordinated development and enhancement of the service.

The development of a new public library strategy succeeding *Branching Out* and engaging with key drivers of government policy including shared services, economic growth and stability and digital primacy is required to achieve a framework for the future.

A strategy for public libraries 2013-2017

This strategy has been developed under the direction of the Committee for the Development of the Public Library Strategy 2013-2017, a steering group established by the Libraries Development Committee, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) (see appendix 7).

The consultation process included formal public consultation, local and national policy makers, discussions with diverse focus groups, public library management and staff, government departments, public bodies and international library authorities.

Policy and strategic purpose

Three overarching national policy themes form the framework for the strategy:

- 1. Economic:** Ireland's network of public libraries will work with the government agenda to build Ireland's economic revival and future stability, delivering information, learning, skills and creativity through a nationwide team of information professionals, guiding access to high quality information, ideas and knowledge.
- 2. Social:** Ireland's public libraries will build individual self-worth, community well-being, community cohesion, identity and confidence by guiding access, physical and virtual, to public, community and government information and by being the local and virtual community meeting place for all.
- 3. Cultural:** Public libraries in Ireland will be essential agents for cultural development and a focus for cultural identity in the community, preserving and promoting national and local culture, providing opportunities for creative development and the collective cultural experience.

Vision

Ireland's public libraries promote community cohesion and well-being, economic growth, and cultural identity. They will enhance self-worth and confidence. Ireland's public libraries will enable learning, deliver information and skills and animate culture, both in the community and online, with a skilled workforce working with citizens and partners, locally and nationally.

Delivering the strategy

The key partners, the Department, the County and City Manager's Association (CCMA) and Libraries Development, LGMA, have consulted and agreed on seven programmes which will deliver a vibrant and relevant library service. The strategy will be implemented by the local authorities, supported by the Department and Libraries Development, LGMA.

The strategy will be achieved in the context of the current economic climate and the government drivers of economic growth and stability. This strategy sets an ambitious agenda for the local authority public library service to deliver significant change in support of the government policy. The full implementation of this strategy is predicated on Ireland's economic performance during this period.

Strategic Programmes

The strategy consists of **seven programmes of activity**:

- 1. The physical space and service provision**
- 2. Learning, skills and enterprise**
- 3. Culture and community**
- 4. The virtual library**
- 5. Workforce development**
- 6. Cooperation, partnership and promotion**
- 7. Research and innovation**

Each programme contains a number of strategic aims and a series of recommended actions. They comprise an ambitious plan for the development and enhancement of the public library service during the period 2013 to 2017.

Key recommendations

Under the seven programmes of activity, there are 43 strategic aims and 68 recommended actions in total. The following are the key recommendations:

The Library in the Community

- The Department will continue strategic direction and will endeavour to provide financial support for the Library Buildings Capital Programme and service development, as economic circumstances allow.
- Public libraries will explore the potential to secure additional funding through philanthropy, enterprise, public-private partnerships and other alternative sources.
- Local authorities will work with Libraries Development, LGMA to undertake a comprehensive and ongoing National Audit of Public Library Buildings and Services to identify current service provision and best practice from which to plan national and local investment and improvement in library buildings and services.
- Public libraries will be the frontline service of the local authorities and lead in community engagement, in line with the changing role of the local authorities and government policy.

Library Services

- Public libraries will further develop the roles of information, literacy, learning and job-seeking support in the community, in addition to the traditional functions of promoting literature, reading and culture.

Universal Membership

- The Department will work with local authorities and Libraries Development, LGMA to investigate models of service provision in terms of value for money and effectiveness with a view to enabling free access to core information, learning and cultural services by 2017.
- The Department, in conjunction with Libraries Development, LGMA will investigate the feasibility of a registration mechanism for universal public library membership for all children born in Ireland.

Shared ICT

- Local authorities, with the support of the Department and Libraries Development, LGMA will collaborate at national and regional levels to develop a single national library management system to maximise accessibility, cost-efficiency, reach and impact.
- A single library management system will enable
 - o One single national membership for universal access to all public libraries and online library services
 - o National access for all citizens to the digital library
 - o National catalogue and database of resources giving access to information on all collections
 - o Potential for development of other national services.
- Libraries Development, LGMA, working with local authorities and the Department, will develop a framework for standards and guidelines for ICT in public libraries and set up a national standards committee to monitor implementation based on an annual audit.

Library Service Organisation and Delivery

- A review of existing organisation structures and service delivery will be undertaken to establish stronger, more effective and efficient public libraries in the context of local government reform, shared services and new opportunities afforded by the strategy outcomes.

Shared Procurement

- A policy for shared acquisitions for libraries will be developed, including a national acquisitions consortium for public library print and electronic resources that maximises the cost-effectiveness of resources expenditure, increases purchasing power and gets the best choice of material to the user in line with government policy.



LISTOWEL LIBRARY, KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The value of a public library

The ethos of the public library is to serve the people and the community, through its civic presence and provision of information, learning and culture. The library provides a safe, democratic space, integrated into the local community and accessible to all.

While the lending of reading materials remains the universally recognised trademark of the service, the scope of the public library encompasses a variety of activities including: acting as a communications, information and meeting centre; providing a gateway to knowledge and information; offering access to the world of creativity and the imagination and curating and showcasing culture and heritage and the cultural memory of communities and society at large. The public library supports and promotes the spectrum of Irish culture showcasing and providing access for the public to all aspects of literature, Irish language, music, arts, dance, theatre.

The public library service has its origins in the Public Libraries Ireland Act, 1855, which empowered local authorities for the first time to levy a rate for the provision of public library services. The current legislation governing public libraries forms part of the Local Government Act, 2001.

The value of the public library service to the Irish people is reflected in the results of the survey of public library services commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust in 2012. The survey was carried out in five jurisdictions: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. On the importance of public libraries, the data shows that overall more than three quarters (79%) of those polled in Ireland said that libraries were 'very important' or 'essential' for communities. This was the highest figure from the five jurisdictions⁸. Similarly, the importance of public libraries was highlighted in the survey *Ireland's Vital Signs 2013*, where 'libraries and reading' were placed in 5th position out of 119 options regarded by the public as most important to them⁹.

The current profile of the public library service, according to the most recent statistics¹⁰, is as follows:

- Public libraries provide a wide range of services both physical and virtual, including print and digital lending material, reader development advice, internet access and support, information and reference resources and guidance, learning and eLearning activities, literacy support, cultural promotion and community development.
- There are 17 million visits made to public libraries each year.
- There are 19.3 million books, audio books, CDs and DVDs borrowed from public libraries annually.
- 41% of the books borrowed by adults are non-fiction books.
- There are 1.9 million internet sessions provided on 2,100 internet access PCs and via free Wi-Fi.
- There are 336 branch libraries and 31.5 mobile libraries¹¹.
- Local authorities spent €131.6 million on library services in 2011.
- Local authorities spent €9 million on stock in 2011, an average of €1.97 per capita.
- Public libraries in Ireland are currently run by 32 separate library authorities.

8 Carnegie UK Trust. A New Chapter: Public library services in the 21st century. May 2012.

<http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/getattachment/b04629b2-aa09-4bd0-bc3a-9b9b04b7aba1/A-New-Chapter.aspx>

9 Cullen, R. 2013. Ireland's Vital Signs 2013: Extended Edition. The Community Foundation for Ireland. <http://www.foundation.ie/images/uploads/file/reports/VitalSigns-Extended-Report.pdf>

10 Local Government Management Agency 2013

11 Cross border mobile service shared between Donegal and Western Tyrone/Dery regions.

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, The Library Council, was established under the Public Libraries Act, 1947. This new body took over the functions of the Carnegie UK Trust and the Irish Central Library for Students. Its principal functions were to assist local authorities to develop library services and to advise the Minister in relation to the public library service.

The inaugural meeting was held on 12th May 1948.

The functions of the Council, as set out in the Local Government Act 2001 included:

- The provision of advice, assistance and services to library authorities in relation to the public library service
- The making of such recommendations to and the provision of such services for the Minister [for the Environment, Community and Local Government] in relation to the public library service as the Minister may request or as the Council sees fit
- Action to promote and facilitate library co-operation
- The maintenance and operation of the central library established under section 2 of the Act of 1947.

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna was dissolved on 31st October 2012 and its functions were transferred to Libraries Development, a new division of the LGMA.



TUBBERCURRY LIBRARY, SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL

National leadership and public library programmes

Ireland's library service has been continuously reviewed at national level by the Department as part of its role in overseeing the implementation of successive public library legislation.

The reviews of the 1950s resulted in the Public Library Grants Scheme, initiated in 1961 by the Minister for Local Government. This provided a 50% subsidy on loans raised by local authorities to fund new public libraries. Grant aid was made available on a case by case basis, rather than forming part of a strategic, planned programme. This resulted in an uneven take up of grant aid and the inconsistent development of the library service across the country. Consequently, when the Minister initiated the next review in 1985-6, it found that, while there had been substantial improvements in the service since the introduction of funding in 1961, there was a low level of exploitation arising from a lack of national commitment to the service and a lack of clear understanding of what constitutes a modern library service, and in particular, its function in the field of information¹².

In 1988, the Department announced the Public Library Buildings Capital Programme which provided up to 75% grant aid towards the cost of the development of new libraries to agreed standards.

It was evident that a national policy underpinned by increased staffing and a capital funding programme was required to deliver a good and consistent standard of public library service in all 32 library authorities. In 1998, the Department published the first strategy for public libraries, a costed and stakeholder agreed plan for a modern service.



DEANSGRANGE LIBRARY, DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN, COUNTY COUNCIL
IMAGE: DÓNAL MURPHY PHOTOGRAPHY

¹² Public Library Service Review Group. Report, January 1987. Stationary Office: Dublin, 1987.



WESTSIDE LIBRARY, GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

Branching Out: A New Public Library Service (1998) put forward a series of recommendations aimed at developing a public library service for the 21st century, including: the provision of democratic access to information, support for lifelong learning and community based support for literacy training and reading. The strategy was devised on the basis of maximising the potential for public libraries to make major contributions to government objectives, particularly in the areas of the information and knowledge society and social and economic inclusion.

Branching Out: A New Public Library Service ran from 1998-2007 and was followed by *Branching Out - Future Directions* from 2008-2012. In its two phases up to 2012, *Branching Out* was successful in developing the service from a low base to a level of parity with similar countries across the EU. The strategies accomplished the following in terms of library service development:

- 95 new or refurbished library branches opened
- 2,100 public access PCs were provided across the service, Wi-Fi, optical scanning facilities and printers
- Self-issue and RFID
- Increased spending on stock
- Online public access catalogues
- Online resources and digitised local studies content.

The *Branching Out* strategies and capital funding programmes delivered improved library buildings, opening hours, ICT, stock, staffing and staff training. During the period 1999 to 2012, the Department invested €131 million in capital funding with matched funding from the local authorities which delivered 95 libraries countrywide. 32 mobile libraries comprising new services and replacement vehicles were funded by the Department. Local authorities continued to invest in new, extended and refurbished community libraries throughout the country. Targets for per capita spend on stock were also introduced. This resulted in the delivery of a broader range of services and increased membership and usage. Between 1999 and 2011, there was an increase of 55% in the total number of stock issues. The number of visits to libraries also increased significantly; between 2008 (the first year during which statistics for visits were collected) and 2011, visits to libraries grew by 15%.

K-Partners

K-Partners is an initiative of Kildare County Council which facilitates joint working across County Development Board projects sponsored by Kildare County Council and across the various sections encompassing Libraries, Housing, Community and Culture. The overall aim of the group is to maximise collective knowledge, contacts and expertise to fast-forward integrated service delivery countywide. It also collectively has created efficiencies by creating value for money projects and services, sharing staff resources and leveraging funding from other agencies. Library participation in Kildare County Council's *K-Partners* has brought substantial dividends leading to the implementation of various library programmes, such as literacy initiatives in disadvantaged communities, IT, educational and mental health programmes.

Libraries in the public service environment

The development of the library service through leadership and innovation, a coordinated strategy and funding support is essential to delivering the economic and social benefits outlined in this strategy. An integrated strategy, with local authorities working together with the Department and Libraries Development, LGMA will deliver an efficient and effective customer-focused service.

In a climate of reduced funding and staffing, this new strategy will require innovation and flexibility. Economic pressures, social change and the technological explosion present both the solutions as well as the challenges. To support economic recovery and stability, as the public face of the local authorities, public libraries need to facilitate all local authorities' services to engage more directly with the community. This creates opportunities for building new partnerships, sharing services, and also sharing the benefits.

Social change calls for strategic planning. Trends in population growth and profile, new patterns in lifestyles, new models of civic service provision, the changing expectations and needs of people must be factored into a plan for the next 5 years if libraries are to increase their relevance in daily life. The social needs of communities will be best served by a culture of sharing and creating together. The model for library services changes significantly in this environment. A number of countries, of a similar scale to Ireland, are coordinating some library services nationally. This is not to take away from their inherently local nature, but to enable scaled modernisation, cost-effective service provision and innovation.

This strategy aims to capture current opportunities and create services suited to the digital, post-economic crisis era. The impact of economic, social and technological change requires a reinvention of the library concept, exchanging information, ideas and knowledge in a shared space, both physical and virtual.

'1 Card 6 Libraries' Initiative

In 2012, Louth County Libraries introduced a joint membership and reciprocal borrowing initiative with Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Library. The aim of the collaborative project is to support the learning, knowledge and cultural needs of the people of County Louth as well as learning from each other's practices. The primary focus of the collaborative project is on ease of access to collections. For Louth County Libraries' patrons, access to the valuable eResources held by DkIT Library is very attractive. The initiative had its official launch in 2012 and to date has been very successful. There is great interest from public library borrowers eager to access the facilities of DkIT Library. Information about academic services, e.g. return to education, evening courses etc. is also promoted more widely among Louth County Libraries' patrons. Staff and students of DkIT are made aware of and can easily access, the resources of all Co. Louth's public library facilities and branch network.

Why a new strategy?

The *Programme for Government*¹³ and the action plan for effective local government, *Putting People First*¹⁴, focus on the reform of local government and the need for efficient and effective service delivery. In this context, local authorities will need to adapt to meet new demands. The role of the library service within the local authority offers a significant opportunity for new and strengthened functions in the changing role of local government. Through their strong civic presence, libraries have the potential to assume a leadership role in local authority community engagement. A new strategy addresses the positioning of the library service for the local authority, as a focal point in the community.

The public library network is particularly well placed to engage with shared service delivery and collaborative models through its physical and virtual library network. Cooperation and sharing are cornerstones of effective library provision. By building relationships and synergies within the local authority structure and across local authorities, the library service can provide more cohesive and cost-effective services to the public. Strategic direction identifies new shared approaches in the context of local government reform and shared services.

¹³ Department of the Taoiseach. Programme for Government 2011. http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_Archive/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

¹⁴ Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government. Stationary Office: Dublin, 2012.



DOORADOYLE LIBRARY, LIMERICK COUNTY COUNCIL

The *Branching Out* strategies established a forum for all stakeholders to collaborate on forming a positive, inclusive vision for public libraries and led to a well thought-out and grounded national policy that transformed services, buildings and resources. As the progress made in the two previous strategies has been substantial, it is important to build on the momentum of results and outcomes already achieved. In light of a very different economic climate and the changing face of local government, a new strategy is required to meet new challenges and opportunities.

Leadership at national and local levels is critical to the full realisation of beneficial outcomes and impacts for individuals and communities. In past decades buildings, stock and staff were provided; where this investment delivered the greatest benefits is evidenced by the vigour of the relationship between staff and the local community. While creative community development takes place locally with frequently exciting results, without national consistency and promotion there is no single message about what libraries achieve, so many potential users miss out on the opportunity that libraries offer.

A frequent comment, from public and staff consultations¹⁵, is that many people remain unaware of the total range of library services provided and its full potential is not realised. With increasing competition for people's time, relevance, proactive delivery and active promotion become essential.

¹⁵ "Delighted to hear that computer courses are available for people who never use the library. Libraries need to promote themselves more – newspapers, TV, radio etc" Entrepreneurs consultation. Dublin 26, 27 February 2013

Monaghan County Library Services

Monaghan County Library Services has been involved in a number of partnership projects in recent years. In 2011, together with Monaghan County Museum, Monaghan County Library Services completed a two year Peace III funded project entitled *Hidden Heritage of County Monaghan*, receiving a grant of €134,000 that was part-funded by the EU. This was followed by the *Lady Café Project* under the EU Gruntvig Programme where €18,000 was granted.

The latest project under the EU Leonardo Programme focuses on vocational training of library staff. In partnership with Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania, Austria, Finland and Serbia, Monaghan County Library Services have been granted €18,000 to develop a model for the education of library staff to work with job seekers and the long term unemployed. The project teams will work on the development of a programme of workshops and lectures for staff which will culminate in a conference to present their findings. The project will produce a curriculum and handbook for the training course, which can be distributed to other library service and educational institutions.



MOBILE LIBRARY, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

Tipperary Reads

Tipperary Reads is an annual programme run by Tipperary Libraries since 2008. Funded by the Arts Council, this festival runs from July to November each year.

One novel by an award winning author is chosen as the focus for the festival. People in the local communities read the novel and explore the themes and writing styles through lectures and workshops. The festival ends on a high note with a county tour by the chosen author. Readers enjoy an informed and interactive exchange with the author. This festival is very popular and attracts new readers.



JOHNSTON CENTRAL LIBRARY, CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

4. THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES AND HOW LIBRARIES HELP

The emphasis is on what libraries do, more than on what they house; how they benefit people and communities. Strategic planning for public libraries has moved on from a focus on managing collections and lending books to a needs-based service that responds to certain life stages or circumstances, to the needs of particular communities, designated groups and identifiable localities.

Information

Information is essential in today's global society for using public services, doing business, buying goods, and dealing with personal and family needs. The library has a key position in the information world, collecting, organising and exploiting information, operating as a guide to information for the individual and the community and as a trusted source of access to information of all kinds.

Library staff need to be able to provide the correct information, or access to the relevant information resource, for their communities of users. This is achieved through having skilled information staff, access to books, journals, newspapers and other published information, both online and in print and identifying and sourcing authoritative information resources.

Of the 16 million books borrowed in 2011, 41% borrowed by adults were information books. This is in comparison to 29% in Northern Ireland, 33% in England, 28% in Wales, and 26% in Scotland¹⁶.

The library has a responsibility to collect and make available local community and cultural information to ensure that content rarely collated elsewhere can be accessed in the public library.



BALLINAMORE LIBRARY, LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

¹⁶ CIPFA's Public Library Statistics 2012-13 Estimates and 2011-12 Actuals

'It seems history is to blame': A Cork City Libraries local studies project on 1913-1923

In response to the centenaries of the Easter Rising and the period leading up to it (1913-1916), World War I (1914-1918), and the War of Independence / Civil War (1919-1923), Cork City Libraries launched a decade-long programme in February 2013 under the banner *It seems history is to blame*. This programme is designed to help citizens understand what happened, and why, and to learn lessons for our own time. Although this can be seen as a local studies initiative, the interest is not only in looking back, but in using the coming decade to hold a mirror up to contemporary society. The initiative has two main strands: library based - talks, exhibitions, road shows and other events in libraries around the city; and online - publication of reading lists, background information, talks, records of workshops, blogs, video and photo galleries, podcasts, online exhibitions, etc. at www.historytoblame.ie. It will be a rolling programme, with the focus determined by the centenary in question, but always with the aim of learning about the past, and informing the present.



Education and learning

Learning is an essential life skill for the personal development, self worth and economic and social needs of all. Public libraries support lifelong learning by providing learning support and activities, access to materials, information on learning opportunities and referral services to learning resources in the library and online.

Public libraries have always been central to the provision of learning opportunities and educational support for parents and children, both for formal education and leisure reading and development.

First time in public libraries in Ireland - impressed with range of services and resources; particularly start your own business programme and stock collections. Would like a lot of support in this area - lectures, assistance from expert staff and quiet study space.

Entrepreneurs focus group, Dublin 26 - 27 February 2013

Learning Zone

The *Learning Zone* section on the *AskaboutIreland.ie* website provides content and interactive activities for both primary and secondary school students. The primary students' section has been developed in cooperation with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the PDST Technology in Education. The content is presented according to class group, from infants through to sixth class, and each unit is accompanied by teachers' notes. Subjects include history, geography, science, environment, Irish, English, music and art. The secondary students' section offers a wide variety of content to support the post-primary curriculum and provides students with authentic materials in a range of subjects to support a researched-based learning approach.

Both the primary and secondary sections include a wide range of interactive activities, photos, educational games, maps, animations, audios and video clips. Over 75,000 items on the site can be located using the *Learning Zone* search facility. The strong interactive element to the *Learning Zone* encourages students to learn through exploration and inquiry and has been created to support the development of critical thinking skills.

The *Learning Zone* content has been incorporated into teacher training courses as well as in-service and summer courses in regional education centres. The content is also included as a broadcast search in the national education website, *Scoilnet.ie*. The *Learning Zone* on the *AskaboutIreland.ie* site is now one of the largest educational online resources in Ireland with growing usage by schools; the section attracts an average of 20,000 visits each week.



AUTHOR MARIA BURKE WITH GIRLS READING GROUP IN TRAMORE LIBRARY, WATERFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

UNESCO Cities of Literature: Dublin City Libraries

Dublin City Public Libraries led the successful bid which resulted in Dublin being designated a UNESCO City of Literature in 2010 - a member of the worldwide UNESCO Creative Cities Network. A dedicated office within the city libraries ensures that the permanent designation is used to expand readership, nurture emerging writers, promote Dublin as a literary tourism destination, to encourage translation and to support the publishing industry.

The International IMPAC Literary Award, administered by Dublin City Libraries, is the world's richest prize for a single work of fiction and the nomination process uniquely involves libraries from 120 cities in 44 countries.

Dublin One City One Book is a City Libraries initiative which brings readers across the city together each year to explore a literary work with strong connections to Dublin either via the author or theme or indeed on occasion both. Titles celebrated have include *Dracula*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Dubliners* and the *Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Reading, writing, speaking

These fundamental skills precede all others for people to realise their personal, social and economic potential. Childhood reading is critical for both skills development and play. There are strong associations between functional illiteracy and poverty, crime, ill-health and community strife¹⁷.

In advanced western economies there is a significant proportion of the population who remain functionally illiterate. According to the latest OECD PIAAC¹⁸ survey, 17.9% of adults in Ireland lack basic skills in literacy¹⁹. This compares with 13.3% in Sweden and 13.4% in the Netherlands. The same survey reveals that 25.6% of adults in Ireland lack basic numeracy skills, compared to 14.7% in Sweden and 15.5% in the Netherlands²⁰.

Most adults with literacy difficulties can read something but find it hard to understand official forms or deal with modern technology. Some will have left school confident about their numeracy and reading skills but find that changes in their workplace and everyday life make their skills inadequate. Equally, parents who have literacy difficulties may be unable to support their own children with their reading and writing. Currently in Ireland up to 30% of children from disadvantaged areas leave primary school with literacy difficulties.

(the most recent OCED International Adult Literacy Survey published 1997)²¹.

17 Dr Cree, A. et al. The Economic and Social Cost of Illiteracy: A Snapshot of Illiteracy in a Global Context. World Literacy Foundation, April 2012

18 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

19 This is compares with 22% in the last International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) results in 1997 - NALA: www.nala.ie

20 PIAAC 2012 <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/education/2012/piaac2012.pdf>

21 OECD, International Adult Literacy Survey, 1997 <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/41529765.pdf>

Public libraries work with individuals and communities to develop reading skills and a love of reading for creativity, information and imagination. Ireland's rich culture of words - written, spoken, sung - make this role of the library particularly special, nurturing reading through social and community activity, for the individual or the group. Programmed events from author interviews to major literature festivals celebrate literature and the written and spoken word. Libraries provide resources, classes and information to support child and adult literacy in partnership with education providers and literacy organisations.

Baby Book Clubs: Fingal County Libraries' Early Years Literacy Strategy

The *Baby Book Club* has been rolled out across selected Fingal County Libraries as part of Fingal County Libraries' *Early Years Literacy Strategy*. There are 10 key actions points in the *Early Years Literacy Strategy*, resulting from stakeholder consultation.

Baby Book Clubs are designed to expose parents and their children (aged 0-24 months) to books, thereby encouraging and developing early childhood literacy. A special collection of books has been developed for this initiative. The collection is branded, using custom-made stickers, as being part of Fingal County Libraries Early Years' Collection. In order to create a comfortable, colourful environment for the children, the floor is covered in animal themed play mats and cushions. During the first session of a *Baby Book Club*, a storyteller reads stories to the children and their parents, using both oversized picture books and smaller board books. Other activities include the use of rhymes and songs. The children are very responsive to the storytelling and enjoy exploring the different board books they are given. Music can be played at the end of the session.

Other action points are a core Early Years' Collection called *Early Readers*; a family learning programme in association with the Vocational Education Committee (VEC); engagement with authors and illustrators; development of a *Story Sack* module designed by the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown; an audit of all literacy materials in Fingal Libraries; literacy training to library staff; community storytelling initiative; a leaflet and tip sheets relating to early reading.

Scariff Public Library's Teen Book Club, Clare County Library

I love the book club 'cause I read books I mightn't have thought to read if it was just up to me, and also as it's a lovely place to relax after school. It gives me an excuse to read without feeling guilty that I'm not studying." One of the founding members.

Account from the library staff member who set up the book club:

The teen book club was born over two years ago. I saw a need for the local teens to have a book club of their own and I have to say I enjoy every minute of it from planning, reading the book, to the meetings themselves. I feel so lucky to have a job where I get to spend time with such interesting and inspiring young people. They are a great source of ideas for library development and I look forward to implementing some of their innovative ideas for teens in the library in the future. Our latest project is Teen Picks stickers whereby they select books they love and recommend them to other teens. Teen Picks stickers will be put on all copies of these titles in Clare County Library.

The Six Book Challenge, Cavan County Council's Library Service

The *Six Book Challenge* is a reading initiative for adult learners, commenced at Cavan County Library Service in 2010. This challenge invites less confident readers to read six books over a period of six months. In partnership with Cavan Adult Learning Centre (VEC), it supports and encourages 'the reading habit' and enables tutors to integrate reading for pleasure into their work with students.

The first group of 19 successful participants received a certificate at an awards evening in September 2010. This initiative has now become a regular feature of Cavan County Library Service programming, re-launching every autumn.

Cavan VEC and Cavan County Library Service find that this initiative delivers for all involved, both participants and services.

Participants have responded very positively to this initiative, as is evidenced below.

I had never been to the library in my life. The six book challenge was new to me and so was the library. All this began when I found myself on the Return to Education Programme and we were invited to visit Johnston Central library – to read six books in six months. We were all very impressed by the beautiful paintings and the fish tank. There were so many books to choose from, it was a dream come true. I read lots of books including my favourite 'Not just for Christmas' by Roddy Doyle. It was a challenge to keep reading, but I found the time and when I received my certificate from author Mary Stanley at the library, it was a very happy evening for me and my friends." Cavan Literacy Student on the Six Book Challenge, September 2010.

Digital skills

Learning, work, leisure, culture, community and entertainment are inseparably intertwined today by the technologies with which we experience them.

The need to read is compounded by the need for digital skill and enhanced information literacy. When the number of mobile devices exceeds the population, it is clear that how we learn, communicate, work and do business has changed irreversibly²². Billions of websites, electronic resources, ePublishing and social media and the global scale of communications make this more complex than ever.

22 ADIKAT Mobile Marketing: http://adikat.ie/en_IE/services/mobile-marketing/

New economic and social divides have emerged between those who can exploit the technologies and those who cannot. As generations succeed each other, the digitally confident will succeed the reluctant. This is not only a matter of age however and people who are functionally illiterate will lack the complex skills of digital access. Libraries are in a position to help and support these members of our communities.

A growing need to help people use and get the most out of their latest technological devices is emerging. People need support in adapting to new technologies and this situation will continue as digital technology evolves continually. People already ask for such help. The local library can deliver that knowledge and skill.

Kilkenny Library Service partners Kilkenny VEC

Kilkenny Library Service partners Kilkenny VEC in the provision of computer classes at Ferrybank Library in South Kilkenny. This initiative which commenced in February 2013 is funded by Kilkenny VEC Community Education Service which also supplies the tutor. The venue, PCs and promotion are provided by the library. The classes cover basic IT skills and take place for two hours per week for six weeks.



ARDKEEN LIBRARY, WATERFORD CITY COUNCIL

eServices Roadshow: Kildare County Council Library Service

In 2013, as part of the Kildare Library service marketing strategy, a promotional campaign of online services was undertaken.

The *eServices Roadshow* provided members and non members with an opportunity to have a one-to-one workshop with a staff member to navigate the suite of eServices available. A full colour brochure was produced, outlining each eService available, which was distributed throughout Kildare County Libraries and other agencies. A series of advertisements in local newspapers, libraries and on local radio invited people to come to libraries on select days for demonstrations and information from the eServices team. People were also invited to bring their own eReaders, smartphones, tablets and other devices.

The suite of eServices includes eBooks, eMagazines, eHistory and a vast collection of online courses. With access to over 500 courses in Languages, Entrepreneurship, Computers and Technology, Arts and Music, Home and Garden, Cooking, Exercise and Fitness and many more, library members are offered a unique online education experience.

Kildare Library Service received a very positive response from the public at each branch and has, unsurprisingly, noted a huge increase in the use of the online services. The promotion not only encouraged existing members to use the online service but also attracted new people to the library service. As the library service expands upon the range of eServices, further *eServices Roadshows* and demonstrations will be scheduled.

Enterprise

Public library services provide information to business. In the print era there were few alternatives. In the digital era information abounds and there are even more aspects of business life that the library can support. Growth is now weighted to entrepreneurs, start-ups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). For many, the need for space, reliable Wi-Fi access, information resources and a skilled information manager, make the library an ideal venue for work, meetings, and ideas.

For people who are self-employed, entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs, the library operates as their workplace. Each library service can offer incubation space in their libraries, providing working and meeting space, free Wi-Fi access, information resources, a skilled information manager, online publishing, learner support and 24/7 access to information retrieval expertise.

Local libraries help to create work and to link people with jobs by providing the resources and support to develop employability and job seeking skills.

Library Services for local business and enterprise

An annual *Business Focus* event delivered by South Dublin Libraries includes seminars, talks and workshops delivered across all branch libraries with topics including Business Idea Generation, Sustainable Business Opportunities and Life Coaching. This initiative, delivered in association with the local Chamber of Commerce and Innovation Enterprise (IE) Network, is hugely popular and provides an ideal platform to promote business collections and resources on enterprise support. One event *Check Out a Champion* offers people a chance to spend time with experts in various fields, including business planning, marketing, financial control and social media. As part of this initiative, a survey on access to business information was conducted with local firms and businesses. Local businesses voiced several concerns in relation to finding information – particularly the issue of the currency of the information they find. Many report receiving out of date or incorrect information and find that searching online can be a frustrating experience. Libraries, as curators of information, have a particular skill in the area of information provision and as a result it was decided to develop business specific book collections in all branch libraries and to further develop online resources for entrepreneurs, businesses and people seeking employment.

Health and well-being

The quality of life is determined by various factors.

*Well-being refers to positive and sustainable characteristics which enable individuals and organisations to thrive and flourish*²³.

Such characteristics are only defined in part by income and wealth; they are further determined by life skills, health, work, learning and by an overarching sense of being in control of one's life.

In health matters people want to know more, to feel in charge of their well-being, understanding conditions and being informed about treatments and medications. The library works as a resource and a source of support. The development of books on prescription and the value of targeted reading materials has become an increasingly valued aspect of library provision.



MULLINGAR LIBRARY, WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

²³ The Well-being Institute at the University of Cambridge <http://www.cambridgewellbeing.org/index.html>

Bibliotherapy Programme in Cork County Library

Recent years have seen the setting up of two bibliotherapy schemes in collaboration with the HSE.

In October 2011, Mallow Library launched *Your Good Self* in north Cork working in collaboration with Mallow Primary Care Clinical Psychology and North Cork Child, Adolescent & Family Psychology Services. March 2013 saw the launch of *Do it Yourself - Self Help on the Shelf* in Bandon Library in South Cork, where the library service worked in conjunction with HSE South Lee Primary Care Clinical Psychology Network and Child, Adolescent & Family Psychology Service.

The resources were chosen in collaboration with the clinical psychologists involved, who then reviewed each of the items. Lists of resources, which included books, CDs and DVDs were created and designed for distribution and also made available on the Cork County Library website. Topics covered included depression, bereavement, anger management and parenting. Cork County Library funded the books and other materials while the HSE funded the publicity brochures, posters and banners. The resources are currently on display in dedicated areas in libraries in Mallow and Bandon, but are available throughout Cork County through the request system.

The books have been very heavily used since the services were launched and have been promoted both by Cork County Library and the HSE locally.

As a follow on from the collections, a series of talks *Talks on the Town* have begun in Mallow Library covering topics such as pregnancy and toddlers.

Cork County Library hope to further expand the programme with links in West Cork. This has been seen as a good example of partnership and collaboration with the HSE.

Family

In all its multiple forms and constructs, family remains the nucleus of the community and focus of people's attention, purpose and responsibility. The library supports family life directly. It offers a local civic and cultural amenity, providing access to information, knowledge, learning and culture. Its mix of information, space, activities and expert help makes it the ideal place in the community for adults and children to meet lifelong needs in a family friendly environment.

The modern public library is a vibrant, busy, colourful, attractive place where families can enjoy a range of activities and events. The library promotes intergenerational interaction in a safe, democratic community facility which supports social cohesion and inclusion.



SUMMER READING CHALLENGE PROGRAMME AT GOREY LIBRARY, WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Community

Community may be the place, locality where we live, or it may be a community of interest, or a virtual community. In any community we need ideas, knowledge, a place – physical or virtual – to meet; we need discussions of questions and solutions to problems. The ethos of the public library is to serve the community.

Libraries are a community centre or hub, a place for information and ideas, somewhere to meet, open to all, free and welcoming. They are at the centre of community life alongside and in partnership with, many council and other local services.

Libraries are an open and free communications centre with news, local history, Wi-Fi and /or terminals to access the internet. A family place, community hub, business centre, a place with which the whole community identifies.

Increasing community links at Ballywaltrim Library

For the last two years, clients of RehabCare Bray have been visiting Ballywaltrim Library on a monthly basis to participate in their own book club facilitated by library staff. With the RehabCare centre located in an area mainly occupied by businesses, staff were finding it difficult to introduce their clients to the greater community. Through stronger links with their local library, various coordinators have commented on how much more enthusiastic their service users are about putting themselves in front of their peers to voice their opinions and share experiences. Library staff have also become more aware of the various challenges faced by users of these services which has, in turn, helped them in approaching their work when it involves special needs groups.



TEENAGE BOARD GAMES AT TULLAMORE LIBRARY, OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

Social Media: the 5th Branch @ Carlow Library Service

Local history is brought to life and archives are dusted off on Facebook; current happenings are 'tweeted'; creativity and inspiration are 'pinned'; each day brings a different Tumblr Post; photos can be 'flicked' and a mutiny of sorts is underway on Rebelmouse. Carlow Library Service is utilising various social media platforms to promote its collections, services and activities; collaborate with other libraries and organisations and most importantly, provide new ways of access to printed materials and sources for everyone. Using local history and archive material such as *The Workhouse News*, photographic collections, themed posters and local ephemera all digitized for social media platforms has generated an online community gathering space and engaged new audiences for Carlow Library Service. Engaging current library users in a new way and reaching those who have not yet found their way through the doors of public libraries are the primary objectives of what is considered a 5th Branch of Carlow Libraries. Reaching communities in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Bahrain, the 5th Branch will continue to bring Carlow Library Service to the homes, phones, tablets, computers and screens of an increasing technologically savvy world. In conjunction with an expanding Digital Library, this extra branch reaches beyond previous expectations and physical constraints towards unlimited possibilities and worldwide communication.

Citizenship

Irish citizens are formal members of the Irish community, that is, the Irish community living in Ireland and the Irish community living abroad²⁴.

This gives certain rights and entitlements. Active citizenship builds on this with a range of optional characteristics that involve people taking part in community life where they live, or work or in wider society; in politics, volunteering, helping others.

Libraries facilitate active citizenship, providing information, resources and space for people to take an active part in local and national life.

Libraries are a place where people can exercise their democratic right to information, ideas and knowledge, in a space that reflects their cultural heritage and identity.

²⁴ Becoming an Irish Citizen. Citizens Information. Citizens Information Board
<http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving-country/irish-citizenship/your-right-to-irish-citizenship.html>

Europe Direct: Mountmellick Library, Co Laois

The Europe Direct Information Centre initiative in libraries was launched in 2005. The mission of the Europe Direct Information Centre library network is to distribute information and advice about the European Union's policies, promote active citizenship through local and regional debate about the European Union, allow the European institutions to disseminate local and regional information and give the public the opportunity to send feedback to the European Union institutions.

There are currently ten Europe Direct Information Centres located in public libraries across Ireland for the period 2013-2017: Blanchardstown; Ballinasloe; Dundalk; Gaoth Dobhair; Letterkenny; Mallow; Mountmellick; Tubbercurry; Waterford; Carraroe. Information on news, events and activities and contact details are updated through the central website www.europedirect.ie.

Mountmellick Library participated in the Europe Direct network for the first time in 2013, acting as the regional centre for the Midlands. The library runs a series of events, talks and exhibitions for both adults and children, promoting European Union information, culture and citizenship.

Irish language

Public Libraries are champions of Irish language and culture. In line with the *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030*²⁵, libraries work with Irish language agencies and educational bodies towards creating online language learning resources to support increased emphasis on oral and aural skills in the curriculum. As in other EU countries, eBooks through the national language are generally made available through the public library network, encouraging and facilitating learning and enjoyment of the national language.



BUNDORAN LIBRARY, DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

²⁵ Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030. 2010. <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/20YearStrategyfortheIrishLanguage/Publications/20-Year%20Strategy%20-%20English%20version.pdf>

Kells Town of Books

The Kells *Town of Books* initiative was started by Meath County Council and Library Service in association with Kells Chamber of Commerce in 2012 with the aim of developing Kells as a *Town of Books*. This means that as many shops as possible are encouraged to set up in Kells and trade in new or second-hand books and associated items such as maps, prints, postcards, journals, and antiquarian items.

Kells is being promoted as a *Town of Books*, increasing visitor numbers and all types of business in the town would feel the benefits in footfall and revenue. Kells has a long association with books, the world renowned *Book of Kells* is the obvious example, and it is a very natural development for Kells to work on the *Town of Books* idea and nurture it into a commercial and tourism success for the town and the surrounding area.

The *Book of Kells* shop is a first step in the Kells *Town of Books* initiative and is being well supported by everyone in Kells. Volunteers are kindly assisting with running the shop and all the stock has been donated by the library service at local and regional level and by members of the public. All monies raised in the shop will go towards its upkeep and towards sustaining and progressing the Book Town plan. The library service manages the stock, shop and the volunteers who staff the unit.

The Book Town idea was developed in Hay-on-Wye on the English -Welsh border in the early 1960s. There are Book Towns in Wales, England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Norway, France, North America and Asia. There is great scope for forming friendships between Book Towns resulting in new tourism ventures and increased numbers of visitors for Kells.

Meath County Council library service is delighted to be involved in supporting economic development and tourism in Kells by sharing our professional knowledge and expertise in the world of books as we work with commercial, community and voluntary sector in this new and exciting initiative.

5. PUBLIC LIBRARIES. A FIVE YEAR STRATEGY 2013 – 2017

Local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level - leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably.

A vision for local government in *Putting People First* p.iii²⁶

1. POLICY AND STRATEGIC PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES STRATEGY

- a. **Economic:** Ireland's network of public libraries will work with the government agenda to build Ireland's economic revival and future stability, delivering information, learning, skills and creativity through a nationwide team of information professionals, guiding access to high quality information, ideas and knowledge.
- b. **Social:** Ireland's public libraries will build individual self-worth, community well-being, community cohesion, identity and confidence by guiding access, physical and virtual, to public, community and government information and by being the local and virtual community meeting place for all.
- c. **Cultural:** Public libraries in Ireland will be essential agents for cultural development and a focus for cultural identity in the community, preserving and promoting national and local culture, providing opportunities for creative development and the collective cultural experience.

2. VISION

Ireland's public libraries promote community cohesion and well-being, economic growth, stability and cultural identity. They will enhance self-worth and confidence. Ireland's public libraries will enable learning, deliver information and skills and animate culture, both in the community and online, with a skilled workforce working with citizens and partners, locally and nationally.

3. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

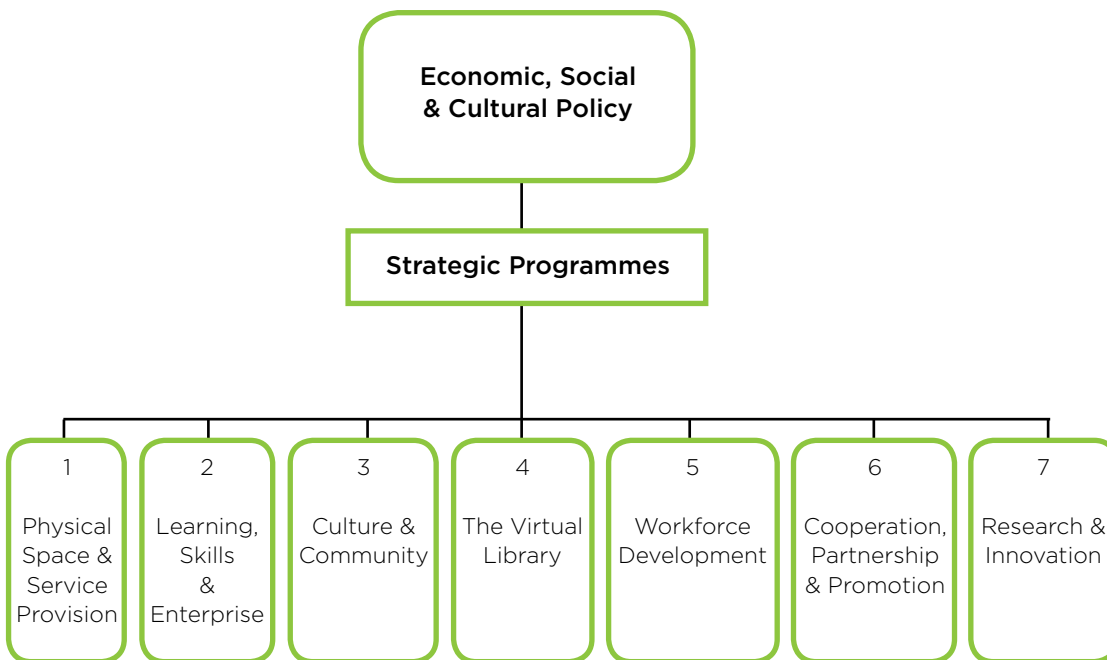
The key partners, the Department, the CCMA and Libraries Development, LGMA, have consulted and agreed on seven programmes which will deliver a vibrant and relevant library service. The strategy will be implemented by the local authorities, supported by the Department and Libraries Development, LGMA.

The strategy will be delivered in the context of the current economic climate and the government agenda for economic growth and stability. This strategy sets an ambitious agenda for the local authority public library service to deliver significant change to support the government agenda. The full implementation of this strategy is predicated on Ireland's economic performance during this period.

²⁶ Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. *Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government*. Stationary Office: Dublin, 2012

4. SEVEN STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES

During the period of the strategy, 2013-2017, Ireland's public libraries will deliver this vision. The seven programmes of activity ensure that the economic, social and cultural outcomes of the strategy are achieved. A complete audit of library buildings and services will establish the baseline for the strategy and the service will continue to be audited on an ongoing basis to monitor progress and identify areas for development.



PROGRAMME ONE. The Physical Space and Service Provision

The physical library is a place of community vitality that is free to enter, non-judgemental and democratic. It is a living space, giving access to information, learning and culture. It is the public face of local government, the centre of community life and well-being.

Aims

- To provide well-located, well-planned, effective public libraries and civic spaces, open and welcoming to all.
- To improve the physical community environment, promoting urban regeneration and sustainable communities.
- To deliver equity of core services to all users and manage resources more efficiently.
- To assume leadership in local authority community engagement.
- To achieve optimum opening hours for individuals and the community.
- To provide equity of access for all through the provision of free core services by 2017.
- In conjunction with the introduction of a free core service, to establish automatic registration for universal public library membership for all children born in Ireland.

1. Action Plan One: The physical space

- a. The Department will continue strategic direction and will endeavour to provide financial support for the Library Buildings Capital Programme and service development, as economic circumstances allow and as provided for in any relevant Department capital programmes.
- b. Public libraries will explore the potential to secure additional funding through philanthropy, enterprise, public-private partnerships and other alternative sources.
- c. Local authorities will ensure that an effective, modern and attractive library service is provided for all citizens.
- d. The Department will revise and issue national guidelines for future Library Buildings Capital Programme and library services.
- e. The Department, in conjunction with Libraries Development, LGMA, will issue revised guidelines to each local authority to prepare the Library Development Programme as required under Section 78 of the Local Government Act, 2001 during the lifetime of the strategy. The guidelines will set out the library service as a focal point for the local authority within the community, working with all other local authority services.
- f. Local authorities will work with Libraries Development, LGMA to undertake a comprehensive and ongoing National Audit of Public Library Buildings and Services to identify current service provision, innovation and best practice from which to plan national and local investment and improvement in library buildings and services, and service delivery.

2. Action Plan Two: Service provision

- a. The National Audit of Public Library Buildings and Services will inform a consistent offer to include: single national membership, universal access in-library and online, in-library ICT facilities through high quality broadband internet access, a per capita stock fund target for a quality assured range, relevance and currency of resources for sustainable levels of use and measurable impact.
- b. Local authorities will provide an agreed core public library service accessible through a networked matrix model of central, municipal and community libraries.
- c. The Department, in conjunction with Libraries Development, LGMA, will investigate new means for developing strategic partnerships and opportunities for funding through the National Advisory Forum for Public Libraries.
- d. The Department will maintain the current per capita stock fund target of €3.77 while recognising current economic constraints and revising it incrementally over the course of the strategy, in line with economic circumstances.
- e. Public libraries will be the frontline service of the local authorities and lead in community engagement, in line with the changing role of the local authorities and government policy.
- f. Local authorities will provide optimum, user-friendly library opening hours.
- g. The Department will work with local authorities and Libraries Development, LGMA to investigate models of service provision in terms of value for money and effectiveness, with a view to enabling free access to core services by 2017.
- h. The Department, in conjunction with Libraries Development, LGMA, will investigate the feasibility of a registration mechanism for universal public library membership for all children born in Ireland.
- i. A national policy for shared acquisitions for libraries will be implemented, including a national acquisitions consortium for public library print and electronic resources that maximises the cost-effectiveness of resources' expenditure, increases purchasing power and gets the best choice of material to the user in line with government policy.
- j. Public libraries will implement age friendly policies based on the recommendations in the report of the Age Friendly Libraries Steering Group for the provision of services to older people.

PROGRAMME TWO. Learning, Skills and Enterprise

Public libraries support the transition from childhood into adulthood; as families, as schoolchildren, as students and as lifelong learners, libraries are equipping people to be active in the world. Moving into jobs and careers, seeking work, undertaking their own endeavours and or becoming entrepreneurs.

Aims:

- To provide opportunities for individuals to develop as literate, informed, articulate and confident citizens.
- To support lifelong learning and return to learning.
- To support parents²⁷ and carers to help children develop their literacy, numeracy and communications skills.
- To ensure that every school child has access to educational support and leisure reading.
- To support children and adults with learning difficulties.
- To promote and facilitate Irish language reading and conversation.
- To act as a support network for those seeking employment.
- To strengthen the role of the public library in supporting economic initiatives and developments, particularly supporting the information and research needs of locally based entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs.

1. Action Plan One: Learning, literacy, creativity skills

- a. Provide high quality collections and creative reader development activities for all to foster reading as a basic skill for life. This will be achieved service-wide through a collections policy and a per capita stock fund target.
- b. Provide access to online and in-library resources to support reading, writing and speaking skills, numeracy, information and digital literacy skills development for independent, life-long learning.
- c. Work with government departments, agencies and national bodies to promote children's and adults' literacy, numeracy and communication skills, through a national service-wide initiative, programmed activities, guidance and resources for children, their parents and carers and through a national service-wide initiative for adults.
- d. Work with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to establish a collaborative approach for the provision of educational support and leisure reading materials between schools, pre-schools and public libraries.
- e. Provide access to targeted services and programmes for children and adults with learning difficulties.
- f. Ensure compliance and implement guidelines on child and vulnerable adults safeguarding.
- g. Continue to support and develop Irish language services in public libraries.

²⁷ According to the 2012 OECD report *Let's Read Them a Story! The Parent Factor in Education*, an average of 1 in 5 parents has never read a story to their children <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264176232-en>

2. Action Plan Two: Employability skills and business support

- a. Support job-seekers through the provision of online and in-library employability and skills development resources.
- b. Operate as a learning, working and meeting place for people who are seeking employment, starting a business, self-employed and entrepreneurs through the provision of information and learning resources, internet access, referral and the support of skilled information professionals.
- c. Work with the Local Enterprise Offices in delivering the local authority economic and job creation objectives.
- d. Work with national and local jobs and self-employment support organisations and agencies to provide skills, information and referral services.
- e. Host networking opportunities for business professionals, fostering an environment for the development of local economic initiatives.
- f. Develop partnerships with other organisations providing business services both nationally and within the local community.

PROGRAMME THREE. Culture and Community

The library is the focus for the celebration of local and national culture and creativity. The library is a cultural space, a meeting place for both people and ideas, creating opportunities to enhance community life.

Aims

- To foster and develop a passion for reading and literary appreciation.
- To support social and cultural cohesion and inclusion.
- To promote pride, confidence and identity in local and national culture and heritage so that people and communities can participate, learn, change, create and improve their quality of life.
- To provide economic stimulus through learning, creativity, easy access to knowledge and reliable and authoritative information.
- To provide an experience in a high quality cultural space, a centre of learning and literature, and an opening to a world of culture and knowledge for local communities.

1. Action Plan One: Culture and information, citizenship and community

- a. Each local authority will ensure that they have a current library collections policy.
- b. The Public Library Service will build on the passion and pleasure enjoyed by readers through literary events and reading festivals, and reading groups in creative literature, the humanities and the sciences.
- c. The public library service will build its role in delivering information through its network of information professionals, collections and resources.
- d. The public library service will build on collections of local studies and family history and promote access locally and internationally.
- e. All libraries will facilitate groups and community activities appropriate to their location, scale and the local community.
- f. Libraries will continue to work with communities to provide a high quality range of cultural programming.

PROGRAMME FOUR. The Virtual Library: Access to Information and Knowledge

The public library exploits new and emerging digital technologies for management, service delivery and creative learning and communications for the economic and social benefit of users and communities. The library service itself responds to and promotes the technological change essential for sustainable organisations and services in the digital age.

Aims:

- To maximise the opportunities offered by digital systems and media in extending the reach, relevance and accessibility of library services for users and local authorities.
- To position the library service as a key digital innovator and influencer in the areas of learning, information and knowledge exchange.
- To achieve the most effective and cost-efficient technological solutions for library systems and services.
- To increase national and local digital collections and to optimise their accessibility and preservation activity.
- To achieve a more interactive and enhanced user experience and greater innovation in service delivery.
- To extend eLearning opportunities available in public libraries.

1. Action Plan One: Shared ICT services

- a. Develop a framework for standards and guidelines for ICT in public libraries and set up a national standards committee to monitor implementation based on an annual audit.
- b. Collaborate at national and regional levels to develop a single national library management system to maximise accessibility, cost-efficiency, reach and impact, transforming Ireland's libraries into a leading edge 21st century exemplar²⁸. This will enable:
 - i. National catalogue and database of resources giving access to information on all collections.
 - ii. National access to the digital library.
 - iii. One single national membership for universal access to all public libraries and online library services.
 - iv. Potential for development of other national services.
- c. Extend Wi-Fi to every library giving universal access to broadband in a supported environment.
- d. Initiate a programme for the introduction of self-service, exploiting emerging technologies, for an improved customer experience and better resources' management.

2. Action Plan Two: Online resources and social media

- a. Continue the digitisation of local studies material and national datasets, and the provision of online cultural heritage, genealogy, environmental, educational and cultural tourism resources at national and local level.
- b. Work towards a digital library and the expansion of online cultural heritage.
- c. Continue the work of the national digitisation strategy *Changing Libraries* to ensure that Irish public libraries exploit best practice in relation to technological developments and digital resource provision.
- d. Create interactive, online courses and learner support in virtual learning environments, supplementing local collections with online and remote learning opportunities. Prioritise support for reading, Irish language, ICT skills, research skills within school education, lifelong learning and cultural programmes.
- e. Develop creative digital development activities for the public in libraries.
- f. Explore the requirements for the preservation of digital content and knowledge management according to best practice.
- g. Develop a common user access policy for local authorities on access to the web reflecting contemporary economic and social needs and behaviours.
- h. Continue to exploit opportunities that social media, mobile and creative technologies offer for engaging with and delivering services to the public.

²⁸ As with most technologies this is the subject of continuous change. See overview by Ken Chad "Change will be relentless", CILIP Update, September 2012

PROGRAMME FIVE. Workforce Development: Learning and Professional Development; Service Delivery

Whether it's in the community or on the web, library services need the best in leadership, management and service delivery staff who work with communities to guarantee free access, user and community engagement in support of the best performance and to meet the economic, social and cultural policy objectives of the service.

Aims

- To develop further a responsive, effective, user-focused public service that is part of community and national life.
- To provide leadership, effective management and service delivery skills.
- To ensure that staff are equipped with the skills of the modern library, information and knowledge professional.
- To harness the PMDS and Competency Framework process to promote continual learning and development.
- To develop the culture and skills for collaborative working, service evaluation and planning, and continuous innovation and improvement.

1. Action Plan One: Leadership and management development for library managers

- a. Establish an ongoing programme in leadership development for library managers within the PMDS and Competency Framework, including:
 - i. Strategic leadership establishing a shared purpose for library services in Ireland that reflect local priorities and needs alongside national strategy.
 - ii. Leadership and management development for senior and middle managers to enhance their ability to lead the public library workforce and service delivery, and to collaborate with partners in, and on behalf of, local government.
 - iii. Professional development to enable senior and middle managers to continue to develop their active presence in the community, lead information, reading, learning and cultural services, manage resources, support learners and information seekers of all ages and backgrounds.

2. Action Plan Two: Staff learning and development

- a. Continue to invest and support library staff education and training within the PMDS and Competency Framework.
- b. Identify a national set of learning and development needs, a new skills' set that will be needed by the public libraries' workforce.
- c. Devise and initiate a learning and development programme for public library staff to be delivered during the strategy period.
- d. Provide learning programmes for staff in relation to skills' development and the roll-out of new services.

3. Action Plan Three: Library service organisation and delivery

- a. Review existing organisation structures to establish stronger, more effective and efficient public libraries in the context of local government reform and shared services.

PROGRAMME SIX. Cooperation, Partnerships and Promotion

The delivery of coordinated services based on cooperation and partnership provides the opportunity to take the library service to new levels of relevance and value. In a changed economic climate, the challenge of financial and strategic pressure calls for more cooperation and shared approaches, as driven by national policy and local approaches to shared services. Through these collaboration opportunities and systematic promotional activities, a single national message on the core services offered by the library service will be promoted.

Aims

- To strengthen relationships with other local government services through coordinated and systematic cooperation.
- To deliver enhanced services and efficiencies through cooperation and partnerships with government departments, agencies and national bodies.
- To exploit opportunities in EU and international research and development initiatives, sharing expertise and keeping abreast with best practice.
- To strengthen project-based cooperation and work with comparative services in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Nordic countries and others.
- To provide an effective means to establish initiatives, develop shared services and maximise opportunities provided by natural linkages.
- To strengthen the demand for, impact and value of, public libraries for individuals, families and communities.
- To raise the profile of the library service and promote the core library service provision through the delivery of a national programme of promotional activities.

1. Action Plan One: National Cooperation and Shared Services

- a) The Department, in conjunction with Libraries Development, LGMA, will coordinate the public library role in national policy initiatives with government departments, agencies, national bodies, the National Library and libraries in third level institutions through the National Advisory Forum for Public Libraries.

b) Local authorities, with the support of Libraries Development, LGMA, will continue progress on coordinated and systematic cooperation and shared service development on a local, national, EU and international basis.

Structured collaboration will be strengthened between public libraries and other local authority sections, government departments and other organisations in the areas of:

- I. Local government, to place the public library as the focal point for the local authority in the community, working with other local authority services to drive economic and social development.
- II. Literacy development to support children, young people and adults.
- III. Education and lifelong learning to support early childhood, pre-school, school-going, third level and independent lifelong learning.
- IV. Employment, business and jobs to support job-seekers, entrepreneurs, SMEs, start-ups and people who are self-employed.
- V. Culture to promote pride, confidence and identity in local and national culture and heritage.
- VI. Community to promote individual self-worth, social inclusion, cohesiveness and sustainability.
- VII. Information on community, local authority, government, citizenship, culture, local studies, enterprise, environment, health and well-being.

2. Action Plan Two: EU, UK, North-South Cooperation

- a. Continue to build cooperation and expertise-sharing initiatives with national library authorities and other bodies in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales and in the Nordic countries; traditional leaders in library practice.
- b. Cooperate on project-based initiatives with Libraries NI, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and other comparative bodies in Wales, Scotland and England.
- c. Participate in leading edge innovation and research through EU project-based initiatives.
- d. Share best practice through participation in member state expert forums, international, regional and national expert forums.

3. Action Plan Three: Promotion

- a. Develop a promotional strategy for public libraries.
- b. Local authorities will agree a universal library brand based on an agreed core service, available to every library and promoted nationally.
- c. Libraries Development, LGMA will establish a national programme of promotional activities to raise service awareness, reinforced by local promotional activities and programmes.

PROGRAMME SEVEN. Research Monitoring, Review, Evaluation; future planning leading to better library services

Review, evaluation, and innovation make services sustainable, cost-effective and relevant. Both longer term research and immediate performance measurement are necessary to guarantee ongoing success and value for money and the desired economic and social returns on investment.

Aims

- To keep public libraries at the forefront of best practice in library service provision and workforce development.
- To identify the needs of the individual and the community.
- To inform existing and emerging programmes, ensuring a responsive and effective public library service.
- To ensure programmes achieve economic and social return on investment.
- To generate measurable data on the provision and impact of library services.

1. Action Plan One: Users, communities and national research

- a. Analyse the National Audit of Public Library Buildings and Services to identify current service provision and identify best practice from which to plan national and local investment and improvement in library buildings and services.
- b. Undertake research on individual, family, community and national needs to inform library service development and ensure economic and social return on investment.
- c. Identify the developments most in need of research to inform performance, value, impact and future strategy.
- d. Undertake an agreed set of impact studies to assess the performance of the strategy programmes.

2. Action Plan Two: External and international research projects and innovation

- a. Review and identify external and international research that may serve public libraries' own research needs.
- b. Collaborate with this EU and international research for economies, critical mass and best practice.

APPENDICES

1. **Consultations**
2. **The future and the world around us**
3. **Where libraries are today: a SWOT analysis**
4. **Library Buildings Capital Programme: a broader contribution to urban fabric and economic development**
5. **International experience: public library strategy planning in other countries**
6. **International experience: the skills of the modern library and information workforce**
7. **Lists of members of the committees**
8. **References**
9. **Acknowledgements**

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATIONS

Key stakeholders were consulted in the preparation of this strategy. A formal public consultation was held by the Department on the draft strategy document.

Local authorities

Library managers briefed staff and held discussions on the development of the strategy documents. All library staff were invited to submit their views on the strategic direction for public libraries. The feedback has been incorporated into the strategy and the following is a selection of excerpts from their responses:

Staff member from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Libraries

I would like to see the service develop into a more high profile, cohesive body, which becomes the face of each local authority by working much more closely with IT, community departments and Local Enterprise Offices.

Staff member from Leitrim County Library Service

We should be technology trendsetters, incubators of ideas, learning and innovation. Libraries should be a place where the public can test drive and learn about the latest technology making sure everyone becomes a digital citizen.

Staff member from Limerick Libraries

Public libraries can play a significant role in the national recovery because of their key role in the provision of information and education services...[they] can play a key role in the revitalisation of our town and city centres through their positive role in the provision of quality recreational and cultural services. An example of two new town centre libraries performing this role include Wexford town and Tullamore central libraries.

Staff member from Offaly County Library

Library staff will need to be able to embrace change on an ongoing basis to deal with new ways of working and providing added value services to users, supporting literacy and learning programmes, e-learning and self-learning are now key to the delivery of an enhanced library service.

Staff member from Longford County Library

I would greatly welcome any new technologies which would take over more routine tasks performed by library staff at the main desk.

Staff member from Roscommon County Council Library Service

IT – Younger generations are entertaining themselves in new ways and reading books in the traditional sense is not an attractive option. They have on-demand movies/games/books available 24/7 at the touch of a button. Libraries need to adapt to that generation and the generation after that.

Staff member from Kerry Library

Any services that can be automated should be addressed and then staff have more time for programming and linking with local initiatives. They will also have more time for planning projects and promoting resources which is a crucial part of service delivery to the local user and the extended audience. I would like to see more services available through library websites which in turn reaches out to our Diaspora in other countries and helps forge a link that can be very rewarding.

Westmeath Library Service Staff Team

It is important for libraries to:

- *Consolidate the quality of existing services and facilities.*
- *Deliver best quality services consistently across all library services.*
- *Provide a staff team with adequate numbers at appropriate grades and relevant skills.*
- *Continue capital development during an economic recession.*
- *Bring library buildings and IT to standard.*
- *Raise the national and local profile of library services.*
- *Bring focus on services which contribute to the economy.*

Staff member from Waterford County Council Library Service

[Libraries act as a] community catalyst, enabling and providing opportunities for local groups and bodies to engage, promote and deliver programmes of cultural, educational and entrepreneurial merit.

Staff member from Waterford City Library Service

One of our key weaknesses is our ability to promote the work we do. Partly this can be attributed to the fact that we are often trying to be all things to all people without having a core message. Most people who don't use libraries think of us in terms of books, but our customers think of us as event holders, information providers, facilitators of classes, talks, child entertainers, educational resources and lots more besides [...] We should be adopting a business model, not necessarily in how we do business but in how we let people know who we are. We work with lots of partners in delivering many programmes, but our message often gets lost.

Staff member from Wexford Public Library Services

Cultivate partnerships, send out the message that we are all in this together, that we are here to serve and support our local communities, ask them what they need. We want to help and we are ready, willing and very able.

Cavan County Library Staff Team

Our determination to deliver the best quality library buildings, services and customer care for people with disabilities was the most important departure ever taken at Cavan County Library Service. Our experience of working on accessibility was empowering. It impacted not only on the services we delivered and on people with disabilities but also at the highest level and across all sections of the local authority. Cavan Library staff's contribution to strategic thinking was influential. It has contributed to national success, but more importantly, it has led to fundamental change across the whole organization and impacted on the development of national policies. It has, in turn, changed our perception of our capacity, ability and potential and broadened our perspective.

Staff member from Sligo County Libraries

I would love a national PR campaign which would focus on the value of public libraries to both the individual and the community, where users could read, learn, connect and belong.

Staff member from South Dublin County Library

Information is prolific. It is the role of libraries to filter this information, to point the user in the right direction for reliable sources. In an age where there is such a massive profusion of information, this will become ever more important.

Staff member from Clare County Library Service

At present staff spend most time on circulation duties and I feel that a move should be made towards 'self-service' style check-in and check-out facilities so that staff could have more freedom to provide a more modern public library service.

Staff member from Cork County Library and Arts Service

In the future I would like to see closer interaction between the general council and the library. The public are now being asked to contribute scarce resources to public services and they should be made aware of all the services that are being provided by the council.

Staff member from Donegal County Library

The expansion for electronic resources should be in a collaborative manner across the authorities to ensure economies of scale and value for money.

Staff member from Fingal County Libraries

With increased automation, library staff should get the opportunity to develop projects which aid the service... our online resources can be augmented by a series of video clips or podcasts showing aspects of the service. A 'virtual tour' of the local library can be filmed, showing how much we have to offer. The same can apply, perhaps more so, to specialist service points like local history or a business library. Inserts of how to join, or how to book a computer, or search online are feasible. Edited screening of a typical event, workshop, or a book club meeting can be posted. Festivals like Seachtain na Gaelige, Bealtaine, or Children's Book Week can be highlighted this way. In our increasingly technological world, visual representation is important for promoting a service.

Staff member from Kildare Library and Arts Service

I would like to see growth in community based activities, with libraries central to the support and mentoring of these activities, for example, in the areas of education, active citizenship, health, the arts, personal and community development, culture, leisure and lifestyle. Libraries are key to the provision of resources, trained, highly skilled personnel, buildings and facilities for these activities, components already in place that could be utilized to maximum exposure and capacity by the communities they serve.

Staff member from Mayo County Library

With the introduction of digital libraries, the library profession is changing. Librarians and their staff must prepare themselves for the transformation from an era of traditional librarianship to a new set of technologies with long-term needs and maintenance requirements.

Staff member from Meath County Council Library Service

Continuous professional and library skills training must be normal, routine practice and not occasional or sporadic. A course in library specific marketing should be devised and implemented.

Staff member from Dublin City Public Libraries

Many libraries currently provide online access to local heritage material. This could be improved by all library authorities developing common standards for the storage, retrieval and preservation of same.

Staff member from Louth County Library

Local communities have been decimated in recent years, businesses have shut down, and people have lost jobs. Libraries should be playing a better role in the community; we are not just a place for books and checking emails! We can offer a community venue; we can link with local educational groups, offer literacy classes, creative writing, jobs fairs. Libraries should be seen as a cultural and educational centre, a local resource, a go-to place in the community.

Staff member from Tipperary Libraries

Low staffing levels will mean that in many branches there will be little opportunity for outreach or service development. If this were not the case I would like to see a culture that encourages staff to think innovatively, getting out from behind their desks and getting into the community, engaging meaningfully with other agencies. This is very much how most people work with us and it is encouraged through the PMDS process. I would like to see a further commitment by management to the importance of PMDS for the esteem of staff and how it can drive innovation and shared thinking.

Staff member from Kilkenny County Library Service

The library provides the only public access to a wide variety of books for all ages, to computers, to photocopying services, research facilities and exhibition space for the town and greater area. It hosts two book clubs, children's storytelling, various classes and talks, and a knitting and craft group where skills are learned and passed on. In these times of recession it is important that the public have regular access to all of these cultural and artistic pursuits.

People who are unemployed, those living alone, the retired and young parents on very reduced incomes need access to these facilities for their physical and mental well-being.

Our library staff provide a very efficient and professional service to both locals and visitors. They are an important point of contact and support for many people who otherwise would have limited social contact.

Staff member from Galway County Library

Public libraries offer a great family and community space, we are the space where local communities define their identity and therefore we are also major contributors to the cultivation of a national identity as well as major contributors to our knowledge economy and quality of life.

Users and communities

A number of focus groups were set up reflecting the communities of interest, communities of need and communities of place that would inform the context and represent a view on the future direction for public libraries. These included:

- Parents of young children
- Children
- Entrepreneurs
- Jobseekers
- Multicultural
- Older people
- Adult learners
- Young people
- Adults aged 25 – 35 years
- Writers' group
- Historical society group
- Library Association of Ireland / CILIP members (2013 LAI/CILIP Ireland Joint Conference and Exhibition).

The focus groups were invited to discuss:

- library services they use now
- those that would help them in the future
- those that would help their community in the future.

Parents of young children

Key findings:

- Libraries were identified as playing an important role in the lives of parents of young children
- It was noted that parents of young children would visit their local library more frequently if more activities for young children were offered
- Library events for children were noted as an opportunity for parents to meet other parents in their community
- It was agreed that more guidance on age appropriateness of children's book stock would be useful.



FOCUS GROUP WITH PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN LIMERICK CITY

Parents of young children

How can libraries help you?

Events for children; books organised in categories and by age group to make them easier to locate; coffee making facilities; greater advertising of events; eNewsletter; Facebook page with regular updates of events and services; outreach to youth services in local areas to encourage reading and literacy development; reviews of books displayed in the library; more toddler group mornings; language learning programmes and a 'speaking corner' to practice languages; after-school activities such as story-time, art etc; more computer classes for the elderly; a separate section in the library for young children to run around and be free to make noise; more early reading books for children.

How can libraries help your community?

Providing a place for people to socialise; helping people use computers and the internet; encouraging reading among children through more reading activities; organising intergenerational projects and activities that encourage collaboration between different groups of people; facilitating communication between agencies and services in the wider community; providing skills' support for people who are unemployed; organising activities and programmes that involve younger people in the area.

Suggestions on the continuing development of the library service:

Visit schools to encourage reading; give out a calendar of events to primary school kids in the school; advertise library services in other local services.

Comment from a focus group convenor:

It became apparent also that if their local libraries were to offer more in the line of activities, that they would certainly attend them, as many of the parents would welcome more opportunities to visit the library and interact with other parents whilst there.

Children

Key findings:

- The children generally considered libraries as 'fun' places to visit
- Participants requested more story-time events in the library
- It was noted that there should be greater variety in how space is used and that the space for children should be more vibrant and colourful
- Words which the participants identified as associated with the library included: 'cool' 'books' 'zombies' 'reading' 'fun' 'quiet' 'excellent' 'interesting' 'information'.

Children

'What the library means for me'

A fun place; books; a big space - wish I could play soccer here; my mam brings me on Saturday and we sit down and read separately; zombies; excellent; it's magic and it has loads of stuff; reading; quiet; you can make up stories; fun; interesting; information; facts; cool.

What would you include in your ideal library?

Space to read outside; a hand scanner - just use our thumb print to scan for borrowing instead of having to use a library card that we lose or forget; don't need an adult to use computers; show people around - how to use the library and how it works; strong heat when you go in, especially when it's cold outside; books that you want; a place for older children to sit and read - 8-15 year olds; build another room up towards the ceiling where you can look and listen to the books instead of reading.

Entrepreneurs

Key findings:

- Free internet access was identified as particularly valuable
- Participants' desire for more books on business and finance in the library
- It was identified that more visible and standardised signage would be useful
- Participants suggested that there should be greater variety in the use of space in libraries so that a library would include separate areas for quiet study and for group work/discussions
- Longer opening hours were desired by participants, including Sunday opening.

Entrepreneurs

Suggestions for the continuing development of the library service:

More information on business finance for start-ups; having tea, coffee and snack facilities available; providing library guides and tours of services within all libraries; good signage which is identical in all libraries; development of useful library apps; more sockets in libraries to recharge mobile devices; communal desks in certain areas for group discussions; a quiet room for reading; longer opening hours, for example 10am - 9pm and Sunday opening hours 12pm- 6pm; more lectures e.g. expert speakers and/or one-to-one sessions; more support in language learning; free access to iPads and other new technology in libraries.

Value of libraries for entrepreneurs:

Free internet access, including wireless; email and text alerts; assistance from library staff; space with moveable walls to meet users' needs as well as for events, lectures and meetings.

Other comments:

More stock for men's interests e.g. engineering titles and information on craft industries as stock is currently geared towards women; The physical building is important- fresh air and cleanliness; Libraries need to promote themselves more in newspapers, TV, radio etc.; Value of having mentors - would like mentoring services in libraries to assist with expanding businesses; Good place to meet other people in business; Promotions are necessary for libraries in Ireland as people do not know what they do; Amazon have a great service to assist choice of books, libraries should follow; Value of education fairs to promote library services and business start-ups to teenagers; Citizens information stations, revenue and library services should combine for certain functions - confusion with all the different services; Would like greater interaction with library staff.

Jobseekers

Key findings:

- A greater range of adult education courses was desired by participants
- Participants indicated a preference for greater availability of online services
- Participants suggested that more social events relating to arts and crafts would attract more members of the community
- Upgrades to public access computing facilities were identified as necessary.

Jobseekers

Suggestions for development of services:

Greater promotion to highlight that libraries are more than books and book clubs; extend opening hours; library staff visiting local schools, both primary and secondary, to promote library services; more relevant courses for the unemployed; coffee shop facility for users; social network classes in the library; more meeting space available; library apps for iPhones.

Other comments:

Staff in libraries are generally very helpful and encouraging; Level of noise coming from children's area is very distracting for members of the library who wish to use it for study purposes; I'm not aware of the work library staff do; In general staff are very good; Many people don't even know where their local library is, a public awareness campaign may be needed; All children should be issued with library cards; Library staff being more like teachers or lecturers, pointing people in the right direction.

Comments from focus group convenors:

There was a strong desire to see the availability of downloads which would include books, movies and music, as well as upgrades to public access computing facilities and online services; Almost all who filled out the surveys would like to see a wide range of adult education opportunities and courses made available for the unemployed as well as social events such as arts and crafts.

Multicultural

Key findings:

- Greater promotion of the services available in libraries was noted as necessary
- Participants indicated that a wider range of events related to the needs of the local community would encourage more people to use the library
- More information available on the job-seeking process was desired
- The provision of a wider range of language learning facilities for learning English was also identified as an area which could be further developed.

Multicultural

Which library services are most helpful to you?

Grammar books; free internet access and Wi-Fi; public lectures; photocopying facilities; computers; meeting rooms; language learning resources; quiet study areas; story-times for children.

Suggestions for development of services:

Providing more scientific books; arranging language classes and group conversations; providing meeting rooms for different purposes; having separate areas for quiet study and for group meetings; promoting the library services more; more cultural events; providing a business library in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland, local colleges, County Enterprise Boards, Chamber of Commerce, IBEC, SFA, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and other government departments; reviewing acquisitions and subscriptions to provide [...library users] with wider access to international journals and magazines; more biography books and non-fiction books; providing more opportunities for the community to come together and interact e.g. cultural activities, discussion groups and board games; providing information on the library services in English language schools.

Comments on how libraries can help the local community:

Libraries already help the community but they have to be known; Many people are not aware of the existence of libraries, especially non-Irish nationals; Services for people who want to access the jobs market and find a job; Improve the area for reading/studying; Libraries play a vital role in access to education and information, also in access to business information and market data and statistics.

Older people

Key findings:

- The public library was identified as the only inside public space that can be used by everyone in many towns
- Participants emphasised a need for more active promotion of the services available in libraries as they noted that many people are completely unaware of the range of services
- There was a desire for libraries to have separate, designated spaces for quiet reading and for social meetings
- Participants indicated a need for clearer signage in libraries.



FOCUS GROUP WITH OLDER PEOPLE IN SOUTH DUBLIN

Older people

Views on the strengths of libraries:

Professional staff; self-issue services; having something for everyone; the range of activities; availability of intergenerational services; warm comfortable building; location beside other local facilities; open to all; lots of activity; accommodating; welcoming; free services; pleasant environment; non-judgemental space; informative staff; displays of art exhibitions and crafts; a place to make new friends and bring grandchildren; a community space.

Views on the weaknesses of libraries:

Unclear signage; not enough promotion of services; sections of book stock which are outdated; reduced opening times; limited provision of seating and social areas.

Suggestions on how libraries can further develop to help the local community:

An open day to encourage new users; an 'introduce a friend to the library' week; publicising that libraries are much more than books; more information about activities occurring in the locality or region.

Other comments

Libraries do not promote themselves enough - there should be a national campaign (TV, Radio, Newspapers); More variety of DVDs and ebooks; All libraries should have Wi-Fi; The library is the core asset of the town. It is a vital resource that must be maintained; We would love to see the library open 24/7- it is a huge asset to the community; Libraries are a natural source of information and should maintain that support; The library is probably the only 'public building' in the area; It is a core asset of the village and its environs; Need to provide more support around e-services; More social groups for people of all ages; Give information on how books are categorised; Would love to see self-help DVDs; Comment cards on books that are good/bad/difficult to hold attention; TV screen should display what's available to learn, social or otherwise - more instant information; DVDs on how to learn to type; Reading and writing support.

Adult learners

Key findings:

- The majority of participants in the focus groups with adult learners were unaware of the range of services that libraries offered. Greater promotion within local communities and via social media was identified as a requirement
- Promoting a modern image of the library service was identified as participants noted that many people have a very traditional perception of library services
- A need to keep stock more up-to-date was identified.

Adult learners

Comments relating to the further development of the library service:

If people were able to tick what topics they were interested in and were added to a mailing list, this would be useful for promoting library events; I think libraries need more social activities, book clubs, tea mornings and such; I think the library needs to sell itself more, not enough people know about how good the services are; More involvement with schools to encourage young kids to read; Just more things to do; Advice on children's reading would benefit my child immensely; The story-times, rhyme-times etc. for children seem so valuable; Taking pre-school children in for story-telling is a great service; Courses for the unemployed are needed; If people realised it's not just books that are available; Kids used to go to the library but seem to have grown out of it as teenagers.

Comments from focus group convenors:

Most people were unaware of all the services library offered; [There is] a need to get better at marketing library services in order to make people who don't use the services aware of them; Need to promote and use social media (Facebook and Twitter) more; Need to change the image/perception of public library services, for example some adult learners mentioned they were unwilling to 'admit' [...] they were a library member.



FOCUS GROUP WITH ADULT LEARNERS IN COUNTY DONEGAL

Young people

Key findings:

- A minority of participants in the focus groups with young people stated that they read for pleasure
- The majority of participants were unaware of the range of services available in their local library beyond book lending
- Library charges for late returns was noted as a strong deterrent to using the library
- Modern, bright, spacious buildings and friendly staff were considered important in order to encourage more young people to visit libraries
- Greater availability of designated spaces in libraries was desired, including quiet, study areas and social areas
- Participants indicated that they would like greater availability of ebooks and library apps
- It was noted that library staff should include young people in the selection of book stock.



FOCUS GROUP WITH MEMBERS OF THE WEST END YOUTH CENTRE, LIMERICK CITY

Young people

What comes to mind when you think of the library?

Work; sleep; learn; boring; old; scary; amazing; judgemental; quiet; reading; books; dull; dark; confusing; awkward; friendly; quiet space; lazy; computers; study; friendly; relaxing; lots of noise; lacking; resourceful; nice; fun; not bothered; small; stuffy; unfamiliar; old-fashioned; comfort.

How would you like libraries to further develop?

Modern, bright, spacious buildings; more services for young people; new books; better book choice for teens; more copies of the Driver Theory book; more study spaces; more eBooks and full text articles; separate reading / project rooms; app that allows you to scan the barcode on your phone [so that there is] no need for cards; more links with youth services; more workshops, particularly during summer.

Comments following one group's first visit to the local library:

The library was not like I had imagined, I didn't think there would be Facebook and DVDs and stuff; I always thought the library was for pure swots and old people; I didn't think they would have any books that I like.

Other comments:

Better interaction needed between staff and teenagers – staff perception is that [we] are only making trouble; Needs to be separate social/hang out space and study space. At the moment some [people] mess where others are trying to research or study. Need to decide what is space for; Online catalogue very useful; Libraries should involve young people, volunteering, book selection, Gaisce, workshop development; Create a teen council in libraries to organise events for teenagers; Lack of privacy at computers for researching personal problems online; Make sure all books in series [are] available in each library.

Comments from youth group leaders:

Need events and activities focused on teens – author visits, workshops, movies, film-making, poetry, art, music. Summer time is best, cross reference with local youth services to avoid duplication; Competitions for teens; Teens don't want to use children's card or fob (picture of children on it); Need to promote catalogue more; In most branches [the young people] felt that staff were unfriendly and stern to teens - less friendly to them than other members of the public; Some branches not flexible if you don't have [a] card, others flexible [and] will lend book without card; Only one out of the group was an active library member. The others had been library members whilst in primary school but didn't renew those memberships once they started secondary school - it was through their [primary] school they were joined; They weren't aware of the many services offered by their local library and believed that the only service libraries could offer them was the issue of books; Charge for late returns [...] a huge deterrent for them.

Adults aged 25-35

- Information and books relating to employment skills and the job seeking process were identified as particularly useful
- Social events for younger adults were noted as a means of encouraging them to visit their local library
- Greater focus on literacy development programmes was recognised as important.

Adults aged 25 – 35 years

What comes to mind when you think about public libraries?

Education; entertainment; use of computers; learning for children; school work; books; older people; computers; children; quiet; worn books; children's place; new buildings; arts; social area; point of knowledge; place to relax; study; place where you can come and go at your leisure.

What new things could libraries do to help you?

More help with book suggestions; language learning facilities; books to support distance learning courses; evening social activities; new book release events; more author talks for children; news resources.

How do you think libraries can help your community through existing services or new services that could be developed?

Literacy and IT literacy services; providing a safe place for people to come to classes; after-school homework clubs and shared reading; services for people who are blind - braille books; jobs' skills - advice on doing CVs, preparing for interview etc.

Writers' group

Key findings:

- Participants noted that libraries need to engage more with new technologies
- There was a desire for different types of specialist workshops to be held in libraries in the evenings
- Participants believed that libraries need to engage more with a wider range of people in local communities
- A need for libraries to provide a greater range of resources related to mental health awareness was identified.

Writers' group

What comes to mind when you think of public libraries?

Books; information easily accessed; community; equalising technical abilities; comfort; library of my childhood; fines for late returns; new books; information; comfortable place to read newspapers; courses and knowledge; social meeting place; relaxation; workshops; fun; colourful educational books; pleasant surroundings.

How do you think libraries should further develop?

Being quieter and more comfortable; providing quiet writing and reading areas; further develop eBook lending; talks on career opportunities and career guidance days; computer courses for senior citizens; providing a quiet area where you can also buy tea/coffee and snacks.

Other comments:

I do not know enough about what is already on offer here; Libraries are an ideal place to have information technology demystified for everyone; Libraries should be unbiased - encouraging their community in all its manifestations; The thing I find most helpful in the library is recommendations for good fiction literature. Some staff members are very knowledgeable and well read. This is very useful; My son is in a wheelchair and really enjoys the social aspect of visits to the libraries. Ours is a new, large town library - the wheelchair access, spaciousness and the building is most useful and vital; I would like to see more youth activities in the library i.e. activities/reading groups for ages 11-16 and information on fiction reads for this age group I would love to see a history of art course set up.

Historical society group

Key findings:

- Greater variety in stock was identified as necessary
- Participants noted that there should be much more promotion of library services and events
- It was indicated that a wider range of events should be held in the library
- Tea and coffee making facilities in libraries was desired
- Participants believed that libraries need to engage more with new technologies and have laptops and eReaders available in libraries.

Historical society group

How could public libraries develop to be more useful to you?

Sending text messages for upcoming events; providing IT advice; providing tea/coffee; making more oral histories available online; providing a scanner for large documents (A3 size); more variety in the books about art and artists; providing more access to old newspapers.

How do you think libraries can help your community through existing services or new services that could be developed?

Providing eReaders and laptops for loan; providing a place for the local community to come together; having three or four designated days in the year when people bring in memorabilia/records/photos which could be photographed/scanned/copied and stored for future generations; having courses/lectures for people who are unemployed; providing more classes and talks such as on music, gardening, chess etc; providing an online resource for sharing local information.

Other comments

Library staff require one key trait - enthusiasm; Libraries make [...] a socially active community - something that an urban [area] struggles to accomplish; [The library is] a marvellous facility for the town - an excellent venue and great support for community gathering and building.

Library Association of Ireland / CILIP members

(2013 LAI/CILIP Ireland Joint Conference and Exhibition)

Key findings:

- Libraries were identified as supporting and facilitating learning, personal development and well-being, skills' development, information retrieval, research, cultural tourism, creative industries and literacy development through free, guided access to services and the provision of a safe, socially inclusive community space.
- Suggestions for library service innovations included 24/7 access to online library resources, a universal membership card, greater cooperation between library sectors, a single library management system, consortia-based purchasing and national standards for service delivery.
- Skills in ICT, customer service, change management, communication and marketing were the most frequently cited areas for workforce learning and development.

Library Association of Ireland / CILIP members

(2013 LAI/CILIP Ireland Joint Conference and Exhibition)

What do you think libraries contribute to society and the economy?

Informal opportunities for learning; ease of access to services for everyone; providing opportunities for people to build personal confidence; supporting job seekers returning to the workforce and/or people making a career change; dissemination of knowledge; supporting and promoting community well-being; providing a link to the past through local history resources and services; enabling people to find the information they need; a place of security in the community; lifelong learning and research opportunities; access to specialised information; a community space; supporting entrepreneurship; contribution to cultural tourism; skills' development; contribution to creative industries; reader development and literacy skills' promotion; providing a neutral learning space; providing free and guided access to technology; creating cultural capital; socially inclusive space; building social capital of the local community; supporting the needs of the local community; a space for community activities; free access to online resources; business support; supporting people's capacity to reach their potential; a learning centre.

What should be the most significant innovation in library services in the coming years?

Technological advances allowing 24/7 access to online learning resources; a universal membership card; greater cooperation between all library sectors; a single LMS [Library Management System]; consortia purchasing of materials and services; a benchmarked level of library service, delivered nationally.

Aspects of workforce learning and development which will be most critical in the next three years:

ICT skills' development; leadership skills; customer relationship building and management; RFID; change management skills; 24/7 access to eBooks; developing outreach; developing use of social media linked to library services; communication and interpersonal skills; marketing of services; developing online resources including independent online learning tools; literacy skills' support; research skills.

APPENDIX 2: THE FUTURE AND THE WORLD AROUND US

The world has changed dramatically especially in economic, social and technological terms.

While we work to put in place conditions necessary to support a general recovery in economic activity, we must also ensure responses from our education and training systems that are effective and appropriate to changing labour market conditions. There are currently 7.5 million young people across Europe who are not in employment, education or training. This represents almost 13 per cent of our fellow Europeans, aged between 15 and 24. I continue to believe that this is simply unacceptably high, and that we must act urgently. It has been clearly shown that youth unemployment can have lifelong effects.²⁹

Statement by the Taoiseach on the Meeting of the European Council, Dáil Éireann, 13th March 2013

The economy and Europe

The Irish economy, in conjunction with most of Europe and much of the world, has suffered a huge economic crisis. This has led to a banking collapse, fiscal crisis, unemployment and unprecedented cuts to public spending. The property collapse, in particular, has had a significant impact with large debt burdens, falling incomes and greatly reduced access to credit³⁰.

Foremost in transforming economic performance are measures to safeguard debt sustainability, accelerate growth and job creation³¹. The Government has identified that economic growth and growth in employment will depend on issues such as knowledge and innovation, a domestic business environment which encourages enterprise start-up and growth and the transformation of public services³⁰.

Local government change

Local government reform is a central plank of the Government's strategy for recovery, aiming to use the process to modernise and improve. The Government's plan is to make the public service leaner, more efficient, better integrated and deliver maximum value for money, while ensuring services continue to be delivered, albeit with significantly reduced staff numbers; citizens and businesses expect a modern public service to continually improve and deliver services better and more cost effectively. Local government achieved €839m gross savings and efficiencies between 2008 and 2012 and the workforce was reduced by 24% in this period from mid-2008. In the action programme for effective local government, *Putting People First*, the Government's strategy speaks of doing more for the economy, enterprise and the local community³².

29 Statement by the Taoiseach on the Meeting of the European Council Dáil Éireann, 13 March 2013 <http://bit.ly/XA3pl8>

30 Statement of Strategy 2011-2014, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation http://www.djei.ie/publications/corporate/2012/Statement_of_Strategy_2011-2014.pdf

31 Programme for Government 2011 http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_Archive/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

32 Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government <http://www.enviro.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentReform/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload,31309,en.pdf>

The action programme identifies the functions of local government as being strengthened in the following areas in particular:

- An enhanced and clearer role in economic development and enterprise support
- Close involvement in community and local development
- Devolution of specific functions from central level and delegation of greater authority or relaxation of specific central controls on local authorities
- Widening the reach of local government by using its capacity to undertake functions with or on behalf of other sectors and performing a coordination and leadership role locally.

A central assumption of this strategy is that libraries should be integral to the future of local government provision.

Partnerships: Donegal County Library Services

Cultural Services is a core function of Donegal County Council and library staff work closely with colleagues in Archives, Arts Promotion, the Regional Cultural Centre, Public Art, Museum and Heritage in the Cultural Services Division. The *Cultural Connections* strategic plan identifies 5 common goals which the library service and all other cultural services work on together. This integrated and partnership approach to delivering services is important in Donegal and is particularly evident in the Bealtaine, Earagail Arts Festival, Heritage Week, Wainfest and Culture Night programmes, amongst others.

The library service also works closely with other local authority colleagues participating in Social Inclusion Week, One Donegal month, the Gathering and more recently on the Donegal Diaspora project to mention just a few initiatives. Through involvement in CDB Fora, the library service initiates and becomes involved in projects with external partners which raises the profile of the library service.

Partnerships with Libraries NI have been in place for almost 10 years now. The EDIC (Europe Direct Information Centre) network in Ireland is firmly established with the support of the European Commission. A new transnational reading project incorporates Donegal, Derry and Boston.

It is important to retain the library service's independence, while also developing partnership working at local, national and international level.

1. Social change

Considerable changes in the economic situation have had a strong bearing on social change in Ireland in recent years. The sharp fall in employment levels is particularly significant with the number of people unemployed in 2012 at 316,000 and long-term unemployed accounting for 59.9% of all those who are unemployed³³. In 2012, the unemployment rate in Ireland was one of the highest among the 27 EU member states³⁴.

The economic recession has had a serious effect in particular on small local industries with many towns and villages seeing the closure of local business. This trend has had a direct effect on the cohesion of central municipal locations; in many communities, the public library is the only remaining civic space.

The total for the population enumerated on Census Night, 10 April 2011, was 4,588,252 persons, compared with 4,239,848 persons in April 2006 representing an increase of 348,404 since 2006, or 8.21 % over the five year period³⁵.

The surge in birth rate is also significant with the highest ever recorded number of births per annum, 75,554, in 2009. The population of pre-school children aged 0-4 has also increased accordingly; the 2011 census showed an increase of 17.9% since 2006, this can be compared to the 8.2% increase in the State's population as a whole³⁵.

The population of primary school aged children is projected to increase by between 87,800 and 100,300 by 2021, before falling back slightly in 2026. This represents an increase of between 17 and 20% on the 2011 figure of 502,300, or between 8,800 and 10,000 each year up to 2021³⁵.

The secondary school aged population of 13-18 year olds is projected to increase by between 105,700 and 116,800 by 2026, with the fastest increases expected between 2021 and 2026. This represents increases of between 31 and 34% on the 2011 figure of 342,400³⁶.

The continual increase of the 65 and over age group is also notable; between 2006 and 2011 the population for this age group increased by 14.4%. The population of the 65 and older group population is projected to increase very significantly from its 2011 level of 532,000 to between 850,000 and 860,700 by 2026, and to close to 1.4 million by 2046³⁵.

The continual development of a multicultural society in Ireland is also evident from the 2011 census, despite falling levels of migration to the country. The Census highlighted that 12% of the population are non-Irish nationals and includes 196 different nationalities³⁵. The growing number of different cultures, languages and religions presents both opportunities and challenges for Irish society.

33 Central Statistics Office Quarterly National Household Survey, Q4 2012. http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/labourmarket/2012/qnhs_q42012.pdf

34 Teichgraber, Martin. Eurostat Statistics in Focus: population and social conditions. 2012. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-040/EN/KS-SF-12-040-EN.PDF

35 Central Statistics Office, Census 2011 www.cso.ie/census

36 Population and Labour Force Projections, 2016-2046: <http://www.cso.ie/en/newsandevents/pressreleases/2013pressreleases/pressreleasepopulationandlabourforceprojections2016-2046/>

2. Technological change

The world has changed dramatically, especially in economic, social and technological terms. The web has altered everything we do in government, in business, in personal and community life.

The technological change that has revolutionised life in the last decade is open, creative and communicative. Unleashed, it is a power for good and a catalyst for universal communications. It now drives both the economy and much of society. It demystifies hierarchies, removes social divides, and powers new products and services. It therefore feeds directly into economic need and brings new good to society.

New technologies are integral to the library service provision with their roots in knowledge sharing, new ideas and individual learning. In order to obtain the most value from the opportunities new technologies provide, change is required in how these technologies are sourced and organised. Such change can only be managed by national coordination that allows the library service to keep its local character, remain locally delivered but capture the global opportunity that digital technology offers to information provision, learning, business and culture.

While much digital activity is intuitive, it nonetheless changes by the day so that technology is both elusive and opportunistic. Libraries play an important role in this continually evolving realm of digital resources by offering guidance and support on the relevance and use.

Technology is also where production and employment are growing³⁷ creating a double helix of connections between economy and society. Learning, work, leisure, culture, community and entertainment are inseparably intertwined by the technologies with which we experience them.

What do entrepreneurs need?

Free internet is a great asset in libraries; greater variety of books in a variety of subject areas; more information on business finance for start-ups; tea, coffee and snacks' facilities in adjacent area; lockers are very important; email alerts, text alerts and mobile apps necessary; individual desks; personal space; communal desks ... also for group discussion; quiet room; first time in public libraries in Ireland, impressed with range of services and resources, particularly start your own business programme and stock collections. Would like a lot of support - lectures, expert staff, quiet study space; wireless internet access and lots of seating a major requirement for business start-ups; information for job seekers; should be obvious when you walk into any library e.g. large noticeboard, posters and leaflets; international business; more stock and lectures; need unlimited access to technology; adequate rooms for meetings; good place to meet other people in business; libraries should promote their services more; promotions are necessary for libraries in Ireland as people do not know what they do; libraries should have conference rooms for people to book.

Initial consultation with entrepreneurs. Dublin 27th February, 2013

A dramatically changing world can be an opportunity as well as a threat; creating jobs, building a new creative economy. Today's industries are either built on digital technology or they are completely dependent on it; the knowledge economy is a new kind of manufacturing, while the technology can deliver history, literature, culture, learning or attracting Ireland's worldwide Diaspora back to visit and experience their heritage. Currently online access is unevenly provided across the country, an inequity which is being addressed under the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources' strategy *Delivering a Connected Society*³⁸. The existing levels of broadband access across the public library network could pose a challenge for the establishment of a uniform level of library services provision until such time as a fully connected society has been realised.

Open Libraries

'Open Libraries' describes libraries that are without staff for part of the opening hours, rewriting extended access in addition to the professionally delivered library service. This concept, widely established in Denmark, originated from the opportunities provided by a combination of the development of self-service technology and electronic surveillance techniques. A typical model of opening hours is from early morning until late evening, during some of which the library will be staffed, but the principle behind the model is self-service. It offers flexible forms of service and increases accessibility to the library, where the library space becomes available for a range of activities decided by the users. The open library concept has been widely described as a success in Denmark in terms of growth rates of visits and increasing number of loans. By 2012, it had been introduced to 110 libraries, and very few occurrences of theft or vandalism have been reported.

A PESTLE+E analysis is useful in identifying the key relevant circumstantial factors to the context for the strategy.

The PESTLE+E

P. Political priorities

1. Economic recovery and the well-being of the Irish people through stability, growth and jobs. A key priority is to create employment for people and in doing so rebuild industry and productivity.
2. Ireland will play an active role in supporting the European agenda, benefitting from cooperation with European partners.
3. Reform of the public sector and of local government are two key elements of the national *Programme for Government* strategy, seeking the dual effects of increased efficiency and impact - more with less³⁹.
4. The population of the 65 and over age group recorded in Census 2011 showed an increase of 14.4% from 2006. This adds to increased expectations of health services and healthcare from a shrinking tax base⁴⁰.

38 *Delivering a Connected Society: A National Broadband Plan for Ireland*
<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/1EA7B477-741B-4B74-A08E-6350135C32D2/0/NBP.pdf>

39 *Programme for Government 2011* http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_Archive/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

40 *Census 2011 Profile 2 - Older and Younger* http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile2/Profile2_Older_and_Younger_Entire_Document.pdf

5. The total age dependency ratio for the State increased by 3.5% between 2006 and 2011 and the population of pre-school children has increased by 17.6% between 2006 and 2011.
6. Education represents an investment in well-being today and prosperity in the future. Children must grow up print and digitally literate, numerate, articulate and confident.
7. Improving the tourism product, including the e-capability of the tourism product and developing products in terms of culture, among other areas, is identified as a Government priority under the *Programme for Government*.

The *Programme for Government* has the objective to make Ireland an innovation and commercialisation hub in Europe and a 'digital island' – a country that combines the features of an attractive home for innovative Research and Development-intensive activity for Irish and multinationals, while also being a highly attractive incubation environment for the best entrepreneurs, leading in eGovernment and cloud computing, targeting areas and sectors to create strategies aimed at fostering innovation.

E. The Economy

1. Ireland must play its part in resolving both its own economic challenges and in participating in international collaboration to strengthen the Euro.
2. Ongoing challenge of high unemployment. The unemployment rate for the last quarter of 2012 remained one of the highest of EU countries at 14.2%⁴¹.
3. A key Government route in the pursuit of economic recovery is bringing public expenditure and Government income into line by 2015. This puts pressure on public services both to perform and contribute to the recovery process.
4. Increased hardship for families, especially the vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded members of the community. *The Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2010* observed:
 - a. Average annual equivalised disposable income (i.e. household income adjusted for household composition) in 2010 was €22,168, a drop of 5% on 2009⁴².
 - b. There was an increase in income inequality between 2009 and 2010.
 - c. The ratio showed that the average income of those in the highest income quintile was 5.5 times that of those in the lowest income quintile. The figure was 4.3 times one year earlier.
 - d. The at risk of poverty threshold decreased by more than 10% from €12,064 in 2009 to €10,831 in 2010, following a decrease of 3.1% in the threshold between 2008 and 2009.
 - e. The at risk of poverty rate at state level rose from 14.1% in 2009 to 15.8% in 2010.
5. While Europe consolidates its political, economic and social collaboration the BRICS economies⁴³ grew creating new markets for exports and joint production, requiring even greater innovation for prosperity in Europe.

41 Central Statistics Office Quarterly National Household Survey, Q4 2012

http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/labourmarket/2012/qnhs_q42012.pdf

42 Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2010. Central Statistical Office. March 2012

43 The BRICS economies are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Focus on Growth Markets. Goldman Sachs', Investment Bankers

Social change

1. Sections of Ireland's population are priorities if social justice and well-being are to be sustained. If their quality of life is to be improved, services should focus on their needs while providing a universal generic service for all. An investment in children, in particular, is a valuable investment both for now and the future⁴⁴.
2. Education and the preparation for life is important to ensure that both current and new generations are equipped for work, as self-sufficient individuals, equipped for employment and as active citizens.
3. In health matters people want to know more, to feel in charge of their personal well-being, understanding conditions and being informed about treatments and medications.
4. New leisure patterns and changing lifestyles. Commercial influences on culture, lifestyle, learning.
5. National and community culture and identity. The Gathering 2013 illustrates the interconnected social (identity and self-assurance) and economic (cultural tourism) values of Ireland's heritage.
6. *Digital deficit and information poverty are significant threats to economic recovery ...a national awareness campaign aimed at presenting the compelling case around the benefits of the internet to those not currently digitally engaged... the Irish SME sector is losing business opportunities through its lack of engagement with the Internet - Delivering a Connected Society - A National Broadband Plan for Ireland.*⁴⁵

In relation to demand stimulation, the Government will put in place:

- A blueprint for digital adoption which will support new and existing business and help unlock the enormous creative potential that exists. Particular attention is expected to be paid to the potential of eLearning and eHealth.
- A Digital Champion to spearhead delivery of the Strategy.
- A co-funded national awareness campaign aimed at presenting the compelling case around the benefits of the internet to those not currently digitally engaged. A priority target in such a campaign will be Ireland's SME sector.
- In addition to awareness raising, the National Digital Strategy will also include specific measures to address barriers to the use of the internet by SMEs.
- Support for further measures, from both the public and private sectors, aimed at facilitating increased digital adoption rates by Irish enterprise. The Irish SME sector is losing business opportunities through its lack of engagement with the internet.
- Improvements in the degree of the delivery of public ICT services to citizens, including mandating of online interaction with Government services⁴⁵.

44 Ireland's global ranking in literacy and numeracy, based on PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment. OECD) test 2009. Ireland was joint 17th highest in mathematical literacy and was below the OECD average. On reading, Ireland was 8th highest and was slightly above the OECD average. Measuring Ireland's Progress 2011. Central Statistical Office

45 Extracts from Delivering a Connected Society - A National Broadband Plan for Ireland Department of Energy, Communications and Natural Resources. August 2012. p.9-11

Technological change

1. Nationwide broadband access. Government recognises the crucial importance of a digitally connected nation and the ongoing shift to digital communications.
2. Coexistence of print and digital media. People are using multiple formats and technologies for reading, learning and information.
3. Shift from PCs to mobile devices for internet access and learning. There are more mobile phones in Ireland – over 5 million – than the population⁴⁶.
4. Services and communications increasingly personalised.
5. Growth in the eLearning sector⁴⁷.
6. Pervasive use and impact of social media.
7. Cloud computing and other emerging technologies. Evolution of digital publishing, creative commons, open access to research.
8. Digital creativity; new/ changing cultural experiences, industries and the digital economy.

Legal change

1. Current and impending legislation relating to public library provision by local authorities.
2. Impending legislation regarding the safeguarding and care of children and vulnerable adults.
3. Implications of legislation on intellectual property rights – both commercial and industrial content and for artistic and intellectual creative products - is increasingly complex and litigious but in the world of learning is increasingly complemented by open source and creative commons' movements.
4. Changing legal implications of access to cultural resources on site and online. Purchase and ownership of resources shifts to licensing regimes for electronic resources. Ebooks licensing remains to be resolved while access to academic research resources is moving towards principles of greater access.

Environmental change

1. Ireland has a strong reputation as a country with a high quality environment. The Government's environmental policy priorities aim to maintain this standing through the reduction of GHG emissions, the further enhancement of the water services infrastructure and waste management, and strengthening nature protection⁴⁸.
2. Libraries already are information centres on environmental issues and opportunities for environmental awareness.
3. Libraries should play a lead role, along with other public services, in addressing environmental awareness and education, both in support of education programmes and in the wider community.
4. As a key public-facing service, libraries will need to strengthen relationships with other local government service areas concerned with environmental issues and working with the Government's agenda.

46 There was a 112% market penetration (June 2010); many consumers own multiple phones. http://www.adikat.ie/en_ie/services/mobile-marketing/

47 Enterprise Ireland <http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/News/PressReleases/2012-Press-Releases/>

48 Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Environment/Miscellaneous/FileDownload,30452,en.pdf>

Education and lifelong learning

1. Children in school need to become literate, numerate and develop good communication skills.
2. Young people need life skills that will help them be economically independent, use their imagination and make a positive contribution to their community.
3. Education is a priority of the national *Programme for Government* strategy which endeavours to protect and enhance the educational experience of children, young people and students⁴⁹.
4. In the knowledge economy, change is continuous and technologies evolve frequently and regularly. Continuous learning is essential if people are to keep up with change and remain economically and socially active.
5. Traditional education will need to change if it is to offer the dynamic learning and self-fulfilment desired in the future education market. Entrepreneurs may be singular achievers, but entrepreneurship will become a way of working. Bespoke learning content when needed, remote access to the best educators and local incubation space will characterise future 'education'⁵⁰.

It's tragic because, by my reading, should we fail to radically change our approach to education, the same cohort we're attempting to 'protect' could find that their entire future is scuttled by our timidity.

**Lord David Puttnam, Digital Champion for Ireland
Speech at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 2012⁵¹**

This PESTLE+E exercise informs the core offer that libraries can already make. Taking a national, strategic approach, this can become the norm with access for all people across Ireland, in urban and rural areas, who need to develop their skills at whatever stage in their lives.

These skills will serve them, both in their economic setting and as members of their families and communities.

49 Programme for Government 2011 http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_Archive/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

50 See *The Avalanche is Coming: Higher education and the revolution ahead* Institute for Public Policy Research, March 2013

51 Quoted in *The Avalanche is Coming: Higher education and the revolution ahead*. IPPR, March 2013

APPENDIX 3: WHERE LIBRARIES ARE TODAY: A SWOT ANALYSIS

The public library strategy will be a benchmark from which to initiate and monitor change and improvement; where libraries are today and what features of current library services should be changed, improved, extended or abandoned. The performance of libraries against the strategy benchmark will be observed over the period of the strategy to 2017.

In the previous section a PESTLE+E analysis looked at the wider context in which libraries operate and identified the ways in which libraries can contribute to both national and local needs. In this section a SWOT analysis looks at the present state of the library service. This approach highlights features of the library service in four ways:

Strengths and **Opportunities** - to be clearly identified and exploited
Weaknesses and **Threats** - to be turned around and resolved

Need to get better at marketing our services in order to make people who don't use our services aware of them, and to promote the events/activities programmes that are run in our libraries to everyone ... Need to promote and use social media (Facebook and Twitter) more.

Adult learners focus group. Stranorlar, Co Donegal, 6th March 2013

Increase advertising of events; eNewsletter /Facebook page with regular updates of events/services; Outreach to youth services in local areas to encourage reading and literacy development in young people.

Parents of young children. Cashel, Co. Tipperary, 19th February 2013

Strengths

1. The public library service is perceived as valuable and of very positive community benefit. Visits statistics for the last ten years highlight the growing popularity of the service. Indeed, research shows that library use increases during a recession⁵². Satisfaction levels from earlier Public Library User Survey surveys also illustrate the value of public libraries throughout the country⁵³.
2. Public libraries are positioned as a key service within local communities while operating within a country-wide network. There are currently 336 community-based libraries and 31.5 mobile libraries delivering information, learning opportunities and community activities.
3. Libraries create opportunities for the individual to engage with civic life and enhance their overall well-being through access to a wide range of stock and participation in lifelong learning activities.
4. Libraries create opportunities for the family to socialise together in a safe environment where trained staff help to nurture a love of reading and learning. Libraries are identified as important for children's development and formal education, particularly in the areas of literacy, inquiry-based learning and play. Partnerships with education providers offer further opportunities, for example *Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)* and *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)* in the support of literacy development.

⁵² Library membership in Ireland decreased by 2% between 2001 and 2008 (prosperous years). However, it has increased by 17% from 2008 to 2011 (recession years). Public Library Authority Statistics

⁵³ 93.5% of respondents rated the overall library service as 'very good' or 'good'; 98% of respondents rated the knowledge and expertise of library staff as 'very good' or 'good' <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/aai-files/assets/libraries/an-chomhairle-leabharlanna/libraries/public-libraries/publications/public-library-user-survey.pdf>

5. Investment in recent years has led to new and improved library buildings and facilities. Usage of these new and refurbished libraries has significantly increased, resulting in both an improved social experience for the community and wider rejuvenation benefits for the locality. Examples include Gorey Town Library in Co. Wexford, Mallin Street Library in Wexford Town⁵⁴, Market Square Library in Tullamore⁵⁵.

My son is in a wheelchair and really enjoys the sociable aspect of visits to the library as ours is a new large town library. The wheelchair access and spaciousness of the building is most useful and vital.

Writers' group. Gorey Library, Co. Wexford

I get ideas from the excellent resources and staff for my work with literacy students. I am also encouraged to attend lectures, seminars, writers' groups by the well publicised events in our local library.

Writers' group. Gorey Library, Co. Wexford

6. The continuous development of online content, investment in library digitisation projects and provision of internet access and IT facilities in libraries is strongly used. For example, in early 2013, the public libraries' website www.askaboutireland.ie registered up to 42,000 visits each week. In 2011, there were 2,000 public PCs in libraries throughout the country providing 1.9 million user sessions.

Instrument Lending Scheme

In 2013 Mayo County Library became the first public library service in the country to lend musical instruments to the public. Working in partnership with Mayo VEC, Mayo Community Forum and a number of other bodies, Mayo library now holds a stock of over 300 instruments, which are available to borrow through any branch of the library service. The scheme is part funded by *Music Generation* - Ireland's National Music Education Programme. The aim of the scheme is to make high quality musical instruments available to the young people of the county, fostering a culture of musical creativity.

Askaboutireland.ie

The Ask about Ireland website is an initiative of the public libraries, local museums and archives, originally created as an online resource for local studies content in 2002. Today, this national portal is one of the best used cultural, educational and environmental websites in Ireland. Collections include content from each local authority on Irish cultural topics, primary and secondary schools' resources, a large collection of digitised environmental resources and full access to national datasets such as Griffiths Valuation, O'Donovan Name Books and Letters, historical ebooks from the 1700s onwards, statistical surveys, newspapers and historical mapping. *Askaboutireland.ie* is updated locally by the public libraries and managed by Libraries Development, LGMA.

⁵⁴ The local authority has confirmed their intention to carry out an expansion of infrastructural improvements to capitalise on the cultural and heritage opportunities realised through the Mallin Street project.

⁵⁵ Social and commercial benefits of these projects are very apparent - see Appendix 4

Griffith's Valuation

Askaboutireland.ie includes free digital access to *Griffith's Valuation* – the first full scale valuation of property in Ireland, published between 1847 and 1864 under the supervision of Sir Richard Griffith. More than 1.5 million valuation records of tenants and landlords were assembled and accompanied by six-inch scale maps for the entire country. Following the destruction of The Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922 during the Irish Civil War and consequently the census returns from the 19th century, *Griffith's Valuation* became the only comprehensive mid-nineteenth century census substitute.

Askaboutireland.ie provides full access to *Griffith's Valuation*, searchable by family name or place name. It includes detailed maps with markings for houses, out-houses and ownership boundaries for every townland in the country. The public can also upload their own photographs, information and research findings relating to an individual *Griffith's Valuation* record, building on this important genealogical resource.

Askaboutireland.ie also provides access to the O'Donovan Name Books and Letters published by the Ordnance Survey Office between 1824 and 1842 as part of the first complete mapping survey of Ireland. While these are not specifically part of the *Griffith's Valuation*, they were compiled by Ordnance Survey surveyors in the 1820s and are another very useful local history resource from the 19th century. They include reference not only to the standardisation of individual place names, but also to local monuments, buildings of note, and archaeological sites.

Weaknesses

1. There is national inconsistency in the levels of library service provision across and within local authorities. Such inconsistency could undermine the potential to make the most of the public library infrastructure, staff skills and services. In some instances, variations in services are relevant and appropriate, but not if other communities are losing out where need is greater than the level of service provided.
2. There is no clear message about libraries' role, either across the library service or promoted to the public. This leads to low awareness of many services and resources.
3. The promotion of library services both locally and nationally is currently low-key, thereby further leading to low awareness of services.
4. There is poor market research available from the public library service to inform change. Research evidence of outcomes and the impact of library use is particularly limited.
5. The stereotypical image of the library as, solely, a service which lends books remains in the popular mindset with low awareness of many library services beyond. This dated image is supported where there is lack of promotion, dated stock and library buildings in poor condition. While 95 library buildings have been replaced or refurbished during the *Branching Out* strategies, the remaining 75% of libraries have not benefited from the national capital investment programme⁵⁶.
6. Modernisation of library buildings and services is often a slow process. Many development projects are process-driven with a focus mainly on inputs.

⁵⁶ As a local authority responsibility, others have also been replaced or improved. The proposed Audit will provide an up to date account. Any future investment will further extend libraries' economic and social impact.

Opportunities

1. Libraries have the opportunity to deliver further on key current and emerging needs of local communities including print and digital literacy, skills for employability and the provision of services to support entrepreneurs and SMEs.
2. Librarians and libraries represent a culture of sharing; they make good partners in collaborative ventures. Libraries have the opportunity to develop and establish new partnerships with relevant sections of the local authorities and other sectors and demonstrate mutual benefits of partnership in addressing local and national needs.
3. Libraries are a positive local presence for local government and local public services.
4. The digital era is a huge opportunity for libraries to innovate and change. Librarians are skilled information managers and have the ability to exploit digital technologies and deliver virtual services.
5. Libraries can reflect and serve a very local identity, community and culture yet still be steered by national priorities. Positioned as a core service in local communities, libraries have the opportunity to support communities by actively engaging and responding to local people, providing relevant services and facilities and identifying priorities for new innovations.
6. People have new, increased expectations of libraries following recent investment. Libraries have an opportunity to respond to these expectations by more targeted service provision and promotion.

Libraries are an ideal place to have information technology demystified for everyone.

Writers' Focus Group. Gorey Library, Co. Wexford

We need a central focus - a place that can unite the community - could the library be this place?

25-35 Years Old Focus Group. Co. Tipperary.

The Summer Reading Scheme is a great incentive for kids. There are fantastic services for schools.

25-35 Years Old Focus Group. Co. Tipperary.

7. Libraries have the capacity to serve as business centres for local entrepreneurs by providing basic facilities; Wi-Fi, resources, meeting and work space, staff support.
8. Ireland's libraries work on international / EU projects. For example, a network of Europe Direct Information Centres has been in operation through public libraries since 2005. Public libraries are also contributing to *Europeana.eu*, the European portal for culture.
9. Through physical location and expertise in virtual delivery, the library role in local studies, both in Ireland and across the Irish Diaspora, is unique and substantial.
10. New professionals in the library service are bringing fresh thinking and modern ideas and skills.

Threats

1. Any decline in Government support, either national or local, or in the recognition by local government of the potential of the library service to deliver social and economic policy objectives, would weaken the progression and development of the service.
2. If libraries do not directly address the needs of people and communities, support for and use of the library service is likely to decline.
3. Lack of adequate funding to support the library service, particularly in relation to staffing, facilities and collections development, will inevitably lead to a deterioration in service provision.
4. Lack of clear professional leadership driving library services at local level will likely result in a service that is disconnected from the social and economic needs of the community.
5. Libraries failing to establish links to other public services could lead to missed opportunities for collaboration and ultimately result in a weakened delivery of services.
6. Libraries failing to implement new systems to economise and create new services could hamper progression of the service and diminish public opinion and support.
7. Absence of adequate broadband connection and electronic resources will likely result in libraries becoming outdated and disconnected from community needs in a society so interconnected with the digital world.

APPENDIX 4: LIBRARY BUILDINGS CAPITAL PROGRAMME: A BROADER CONTRIBUTION TO URBAN FABRIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Targeted urban regeneration initiatives have been employed as an approach to the renewal and revitalisation of urban locations through the improvement of the physical environment and the stimulation of local economic activity.

Urban Renewal Schemes which operated from the mid 1980s to 2008 were an effort to alleviate the increasing problem of dereliction and dilapidation which had affected large parts of the inner areas of towns and cities nationally. In many cases these inner areas had sustained population declines as growth and development was becoming increasingly concentrated in the suburbs. The core objectives of such schemes were: to promote urban renewal and redevelopment by promoting investment in the reconstruction of buildings, and the direct employment effects of construction-related activity and their many positive benefits for the local and national economy. A further significant and important aspect of many of the projects carried out under these programmes was that they relied on an initial injection of public capital finance, ahead of private sector engagement and investment.

The Department's Library Buildings Capital Programme, in addition to providing assistance to local authorities for the upkeep of their library buildings infrastructure, also provides, albeit in less obvious a manner, a unique opportunity to assist in the revitalisation of urban communities through its funding investment.

Libraries perform an essential and fundamental community service as centres of knowledge and dissemination of information through the promotion of reading; the fostering of intellectual development; and the creation of opportunities for education and lifelong learning. These interdependent activities are delivered to the community through a library buildings network, the physical presence of which forms a common feature of all cities and major towns throughout the country. Traditionally their siting has reflected the central role they play in the local community, and consequently they principally occupy prominent, key locations within the urban environment.

The characteristics of the State's 336 library buildings infrastructure, attracting 17 million visits annually⁵⁷, offer an opportunity to contribute to the local social and economic well-being, beyond the fundamental provision of a new or refurbished library building resource.

Recent library developments such as those completed in Tullamore and Wexford demonstrate the broader added value that relatively modest levels of capital funding can achieve, acting as they invariably do, as catalysts for these important local government projects. The wider rejuvenation benefits that have resulted from both these and other such projects are very apparent.

⁵⁷ Local Government Management Agency 2013.

The recently completed Tullamore Library, is prominently located at the back of the town's main square, the historical centre and meeting point of the town's population. The library had become out-dated, aesthetically tired, and its significance in terms of function relative to the social experience of the square had become disconnected. With the support of Departmental funding the library has been transformed, now forming a very accessible, modern and animated backdrop to this historical and commercially important town square. The new building now meets the challenges of the town's contemporary necessities, foremost providing a modern, comfortable environment through which new opportunities for education, lifelong learning, leisure and personal development will positively impact on the quality of the lives of the town's population. A broader commercial benefit for the town derived as a direct benefit from the library regeneration project, and its consequential rejuvenating effect on the town square, is that many property owners have quickly become active in carrying out refurbishment to properties on the square. This has encouraged a number of small enterprises to open up onto the square at street level to avail of the new passing trade opportunities. As a positive consequence of both these latter actions, together with the initial library redevelopment project itself, new social and employment opportunities have been generated for the local community.

Wexford Town Library is a further and very recent example of how a modest level of Departmental funding can act as a catalyst, in this instance to support the local authority in the reuse of a derelict brown field town centre location, rather than a less user accessible edge of town location. Unlike the Market Square Library project in Tullamore, the library at Mallin Street is a fully designed and newly constructed building adjacent to the historic old town wall. The library has been knitted into the fabric of the town and now very naturally forms a significant part of a cultural spine which traverses the town. Similar to the Tullamore Library project, the new Wexford Town Library has responded well in its delivery of a modern, comfortable environment through which the opportunity for the promotion of reading, education, intellectual development and lifelong learning will positively impact on the quality of the lives of the town's population.

Similar also to the Market Square project, the new Wexford Town Library has delivered a broader commercial benefit for the town as a direct benefit of the rejuvenating effect this brown field project has had on adjacent commercial areas within the town. Whilst this is a very recently completed development, there is early evidence that local property owners are starting to respond to emerging opportunity and are undertaking some upgrading to properties in the vicinity of Mallin Street. Indications are that a small number of new enterprises are also intending to commence trading due to the substantially increased level of passing trade opportunity created by the presence of the new library development. Furthermore the local authority has confirmed their intention to carry out an expansion of infrastructural improvements to capitalise on the cultural and heritage opportunities realised through the Mallin Street project. These emerging initiatives will further facilitate the delivery of positive social, employment and economic opportunities for the local community and business sector.

APPENDIX 5: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING IN OTHER COUNTRIES

What is the experience of other countries? What is their national perspective?

Common themes from these examples include:

- Close alliance with government objectives
- Cost effective collaboration
- Roles include
 - o The library as an open and free space in the community
 - o Collections management
 - o Access to information
 - o Promoting and enabling literacy
 - o Reading for inspiration
 - o Adopting and enabling access through new technologies.

An overview of some national strategies does identify some common ground to share and inspire.

1. Wales: Libraries Inspire. The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh Libraries 2012-16

Wales has a population of just over three million living in a land not dissimilar in size and character to Ireland. Obviously one of Ireland's closest Celtic neighbours, Wales shares many cultural and historic characteristics.

Today Wales is a largely rural country with an erstwhile agricultural economy and a small number of medium-sized cities and small towns. It is part of the United Kingdom but enjoys partial and increasing levels of devolution and is governed through the Welsh Government Assembly.

The Strategy, *Libraries Inspire* is in two parts:

Part 1. The Framework outlines actions and responsibilities of key stakeholders under each of the action areas.

Part 2. The Delivery Plan aligns *Libraries Inspire* actions with priorities in key strategic Welsh Government's *Programme for Government*.

There is a set of key principles:

- Sustainable delivery models; cross-sectoral
- Resources for all
- Space for all
- Skills for life
- Investing in people
- Attracting the audience
- Delivering quality
- Delivery Plan.

Significant features in the Welsh strategic approach include:

- The strategy is cross-sectoral – public, academic, national libraries planning together
- National funding is invested in modernisation and increasing access
- Library services work to a set of national standards *Maintaining a Valued Service: The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-2014*
- The Strategy is accompanied by a first year Delivery Plan *Libraries Inspire - Delivery Plan 2012-13* and, significantly, a four year marketing strategy *Welsh Libraries National Marketing Strategy 2012-16*.

2. Northern Ireland: Libraries NI Corporate Plan 2011-2015

Since the merger of the library services of six boards into one organisation, Libraries NI has effectively become one department as much as a national strategic body. It operates under the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure. The strategy therefore has the feel and content of a forward business plan, though nonetheless relevant for that. Following a PESTLE analysis of the context the plan sets out its mission, values, principles and key themes. Details of the plan include:

- Promote and enhance understanding of the role and value of the public library service by: increasing awareness ... through effective marketing and communications processes and improving online customer support; developing strategic partnerships with a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations to increase participation.
- Improve the delivery of public library services by: providing library environments that are safe, attractive and welcoming; ensuring that electronic library systems and processes support 21st century services; effective and efficient services in rural communities; ensuring that patterns of opening hours meet customer needs; equipping our staff with the knowledge and skills to deliver high quality services; effective communication.
- Increase participation in the public library service by: providing a range of fit for purpose stock in a variety of formats, including eBooks and other online resources; programmes and activities to engage children and young people, support learning, enhance access to information, encourage reading, promote cultural and creative experiences and encourage an interest in our heritage.
- Ensure effective governance and adherence to statutory requirements.

The Plan lists measures of performance, reporting and accountability and notes the universal nature of the public library service but also of the need to target services at specific groups where the impact might be greatest i.e:

- Children and young people
- Parents
- Retired and older people
- Job seekers and people who are unemployed
- People who are studying
- People who are disadvantaged.

There follows a detailed listing of corporate objectives, success measures, target dates and responsible persons.

3. Denmark: The Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society

Denmark is typical of the Scandinavian countries with their own significant tradition of public library provision; all different but with a drive to be modern, attractive and central to national agendas. Strategic direction and planning is set out in *The Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society*.

The Committee on Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society was established by the Minister for Culture after a period of local government reform which saw library closures. The report is published by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media.

Library usage is high while borrowing of physical materials has fallen;

But the way we use the library is undergoing a change.

This refers to the increased use of electronic services – downloads of books and music for borrowing. However, consistent high level of visits reflect the relatively high level of book borrowing that continues (85% of adult visitors still borrow books) combined with the library as a place to visit for the large number of events, many targeted at non-users.

The committee has chosen to address both the general societal requirements concerning the library and the users' more concrete needs by setting out a number of recommendations for future library developments. Key elements include:

- Open Libraries ... alternatives to the traditional library space, such as libraries that are integrated with other types of institutions, as well as new flexible library services.
- Inspiration and Learning ... further develop[ing] and strengthening the library's learning and inspiration offers based on the users' needs.
- The Danish Digital Library ... establishment of the Danish Digital Library (DDL) ... means that apart from physical materials the library will be able to offer digital media such as films, games, music and literature ... access to new experiences, a digitised cultural heritage and networking with other users via social media. DDL will be a common access to the libraries on the internet ...
- Partnerships ... the library works systematically on establishing binding partnerships in order to create a multitude of offers across the public sector, business life and civic society.
- Professional Development ... a stronger focus on competence and organisation development ... a more strategic and systematic preparation of the library's offers based on the user's needs.

4. Finland: Finish Public Library Policy 2015: National Strategic Areas of Focus

Note: the following is taken from the official translation into English.

In Finland library access is regarded as a right and the strategy is *to ensure access to knowledge and cultural sources in a networking, information, civic and learning society*. Finnish library provision is highly legislated and provides for the right to *cultural education* focus on expertise and an emphasis on quality.

The library is a basic service along with comprehensive education. It actualises the basic cultural rights, as stated in the Constitution of Finland, of each and every citizen. Activities are regulated by the Library Act and Decree defining policy and discretionary funding:

The objective of the library and information services is to promote equal opportunities among citizens for personal cultivation, for literary and cultural pursuits, for continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills, for internationalisation and for lifelong learning. Library activities also aim at promoting the development of virtual and interactive network services and their educational and cultural contents. (Library act 904/1998, P2)

- Strategic programmes include several relevant actions at national level:
 - o Government investment funding in long-term projects that involve the entire country, have a long-term impact to reinforce the foundation of expertise in libraries
 - o Active participation on *The National Digital Library 2008-2011* project of the Ministry of Education
 - o Updating library legislation and creating national criteria for quality
 - o Collaboration between various actors in government will be reinforced and their activities will support the national development of the library network
 - o The patron at the centre, always.
- National volition in the next government programme:
 - o Holistic concept of the knowledge provision of an individual citizen
 - o Essential digital material and services that should be available to everyone free of charge will be defined and made available
 - o ... libraries as organizers and initiators of online cultural content, as well as their part in the chain of producing and mediating information will be made more transparent
 - o Libraries as a central part of the development of a learning civic society.

- Additional value to be achieved from the strategy to 2015 includes:
 - o Reduce intellectual and social marginalization
 - o Equality among residents will improve with the use of online services
 - o Media, information and traditional literacy among children and youth will be strengthened
 - o Participation and community will increase. The quality of life will improve
 - o The library will be an active *third space* that offers alternatives
 - o Everyone will benefit from the solid expertise of library staff
 - o The level of up-to-date expertise and the infrastructure of knowledge provision will increase competitiveness and success of the various regions
 - o Patrons will see ... one service organization where everyone is able easily to obtain the services they need
 - o ... increasingly advantageous ... where regional and national services are well-organized
 - o Quality library network services and national material within reach of small municipalities, sparsely populated areas and small organizations
 - o Support education ... national identity, multi-cultural encounters and internationalism
 - o High-quality library and information services will save time and money and have a long-term impact on society.

5. Norway: Libraries: Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age

Note: Based on the official English language report summarising the Norwegian strategy of 2009.

The report recommends specific initiatives relating to four guiding perspectives:

- The digital perspective
- Collaboration and division of responsibility
- The library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture
- Library services for all.

Libraries help to attain the overriding objectives of the Norwegian Government's cultural and knowledge policy. Libraries strengthen democracy and freedom of expression by:

- Guaranteeing knowledge and information to all
- Mediating and managing Norwegian literature and literary culture
- Mediating knowledge about culture and various social conditions
- Contributing to a love of reading and reading proficiency providing access to technology being a meeting place and social arena for many different groups.

The following objectives are listed:

- Accelerating the collaboration; encourage coordination and joint operation of library services locally and regionally
- National coordination of the archive, library and museum sectors
- Cultivating new skills for library staff
- Digital shared services; developing the libraries' competencies in providing services in the digital knowledge commons
- Public libraries as a meeting place, cultural arena and social actor
- Public libraries as arenas of learning and in particular for the love of reading and reading proficiency
- Improving and developing school libraries
- Developing library services for particular groups.

The paper rehearses national solutions while reaffirming municipal and county responsibilities, adding *municipal authorities should collaborate more on library services*. Voluntary agreements between government and county authorities are *tools for implementing national policy and national initiative programmes and to encourage county and municipal action plans*. It is proposed to harmonise legislation across different library sectors, *interlibrary loan cooperation and the exchange of resources*.

Norway has a need for new skills *particularly leadership development and digital skills ... In such a varied landscape encourage experimentation and testing ... It would be a serious mistake to attempt to stake out standardised solutions when developments and trends call for dynamism, creativity and flexibility*.

The Measures

1. The knowledge commons in a digital age

Norway recognises that the digital evolution will have a boundary-shattering impact on library services. There is a parallel white paper on digitisation. The two reports will overlap.

Biblioteksøk ... the National Library will realise Biblioteksøka, Norwegian union catalogue and user-initiated interlibrary loan ... and encourage the a public libraries to upgrade technological infrastructure to participate in such a service.

Purchasing the release of copyrighted material: The National Library will clarify copyright issues so digitised material can be made accessible. *Bokhylla.no*, the *Bookshelf* of electronic resources can be the model for an extended collective licence for digital material.

National licences ... assess how the work on national licence is to be pursued further ... and ... how to pursue work on licensing and consortium agreements; consider Nordic and pan-European collaboration.

Digital services: evaluate various models for organising and funding such digital services.

2. Collaboration and division of responsibility

Significant weight is given to collaboration – across public libraries, between national government and public library authorities and across different library sectors as well as with related sectors like museums and archives.

Developing new means of delivery ... bolster interlibrary loan collaboration and the logistics system in the library network. Further development of the National Library's depository library.

Guidelines for interlibrary loan collaboration: New, common guidelines for interlibrary loan collaboration have been drafted with consideration given to laying down regulations for interlibrary loan collaboration.

Harmonising legislation ... harmonise the legislation for public libraries and university college libraries to enhance collaboration among these libraries.

Collaboration and coordination ... encourage collaboration and coordination solutions in the library network locally and regionally ... try out various organisation models for creative and flexible experimentation based for example on the host municipality model.

Voluntary collaboration agreements ... agreements on collaboration on library development between government and county authorities as a tool for implementing national policy and encouraging county and municipal library plans.

Competence development ... bolstering and developing the overall competence in the library sector. An overall competence development programme for the entire library sector will be considered.

Evaluating library science programmes ... consider the need for re-evaluating first degree programmes in library science.

Surveys and analyses: A joint effort to perform surveys and analyses of the ALM field to report on the state of the ALM field as the basis for forming future policy.

Norwegian Digitisation Council ... for necessary coordination of digitisation efforts establish a council composed of key players in the ALM field.

Copyright and privacy: Expertise in copyright and privacy issues is to be concentrated at the National Library and the National Archive Services. These centres of expertise to provide services to other ALM institutions as needed.

R&D ... consider collaboration on research and development in the archive, library and museum sectors.

3. The library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture

Library spaces are largely used as meeting places, arenas for learning and social venues. Libraries have changed their role from being spaces for individual in-depth study to being spaces for active community, and the physical library premises have qualities that cannot simply be replaced by digital distribution of information.

Model libraries ... enhance libraries as public meeting places ... set up a model libraries scheme.

Libraries as meeting places ... encourage collaboration and interaction between libraries and the volunteer sector ... dedicated project to bolster public libraries as societal bridge-builders, places for groups that do not participate.

Raising digital skills ... develop libraries as arenas for digital skills.

School library development ... national programme of school library development for 2009–2012. The programme covers reading, skills development, knowledge creating, information skills and statistics, rules and collaboration.

National player ... love of reading and reading proficiency; developing public libraries as arenas for reading and mediating culture.

4. Library Services for All

This relates mainly to the Sami people (the indigenous people of what was commonly known as Lapland). Libraries to work for inclusion through mediating literature and knowledge and understanding the breadth of cultural diversity. The report also deals with correctional institutions and health care institutions.

The Sami perspective ... ensure that the Sami perspective is addressed in national initiatives: Sami bibliography, a Sami purchase scheme.

Diversity ... libraries as contributors to inclusion, integration and cultural diversity, more development and competence-enhancing services.

The Multilingual Library ... a library as a national centre of expertise for library services for minority-language speakers.

Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille ... ensure that the level of production at the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille is maintained and that services develop in step with changes in technology.

Libraries in prison ... complete the plan for prison library services so that all inmates have adequate library services.

Libraries in health care institutions ... transfer responsibility and funding of library services in health care institutions to the health service.

6. New Zealand: New Zealand: Strategic Framework

New Zealand's population across its two iconic islands is approaching 4.5 million. An agricultural economy dependent on major exports to the UK was hit dramatically when the UK joined the EU in the 1970s. Since then economic challenges have continued and New Zealand has experienced an exceptionally high rate of emigration among skilled professionals.

The Public Libraries of New Zealand – A Strategic Framework 2012-2017 was developed by the country's Association of Public Library Managers with Local Government New Zealand, the national body for local authorities.

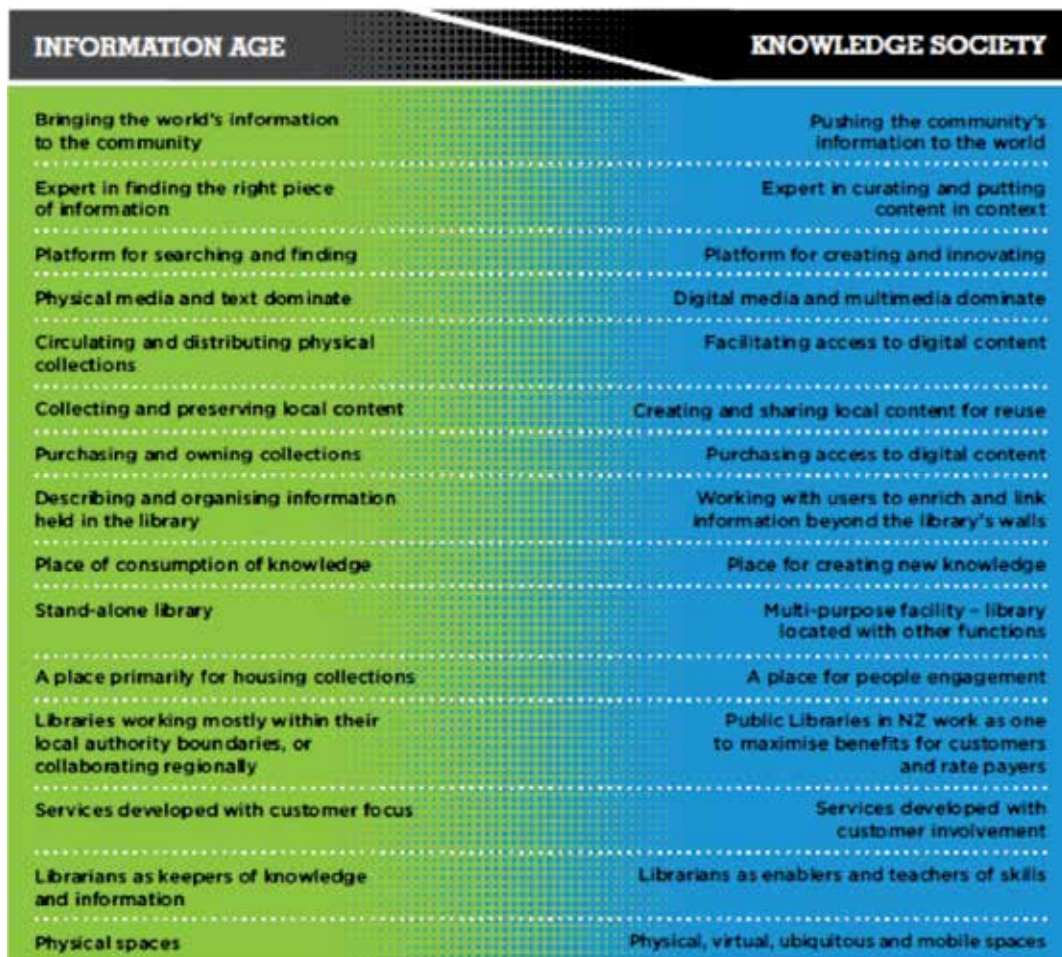
The Framework sets out a refreshed set of “redefined roles” for libraries:

- Collecting, curating and providing access to knowledge, ideas and works of the imagination
- Fostering the joy of reading and supporting the development of literacy in all its forms
- Enabling independent lifelong learning, research and innovation
- Providing community based services for all in places that are at the heart of their community
- Collecting, creating and making available local content and history.

The Framework is informed by an assessment of the wider environment (a PESTLE analysis) plus some basic principles for placing libraries on a national agenda:

- PESTLE
- National and local government working together
- Greater reach through online and mobile
- Linked to national digital strategy
- Sharing services; bridging boundaries
- Redefining the library’s strategic roles.

The Framework describes how libraries change as technology takes the world from the Information Society to the Knowledge Society:



7. National Digital Libraries

a. Denmark: *Libraries as a Catalyst for the Development of Denmark as an Innovative Society*. DEFF Strategy 2012-2016 – Summary

A cross-government collaboration of educational, specialist and research libraries; co-funded by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Children and Education and the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education ... gives researchers, teachers and students access to significant volumes of digitally accessible, research-based knowledge through user-friendly systems. Supports better research, contributing to the training of students.

Many private and public companies lack competences and resources to ensure systematic access to, as well as retrieval and use of, research-based knowledge. DEFF can make a difference:

- A service for all users that makes it possible to join with other users to work on a subject or an idea
- New users, including business academy course participants and teachers regional growth organisations, research parks as well as small and medium-sized businesses and public institutions
- New service offers aimed at researchers, teachers and young students.

Main focus areas:

- DEFF's target group is young students, researchers and teachers as well as employees of private companies and public institutions. The initiative will focus on:
 - o Access to knowledge for all via an optimum digital infrastructure
 - o Competences and services to support teaching, learning and development
 - o Competences and services to support research and development
 - o Competences and services to support innovation and promotion of trade.

b. USA: The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)

The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) launched a beta of its discovery portal and open platform today (April 2013) ... millions of materials to students, teachers, scholars, and the public.

Far more than a search engine, the portal provides innovative ways to search and scan through its united collection of distributed resources. Special features include a dynamic map, a timeline that allow users to browse by year or decade, and an app library that provides access to applications and tools created by external developers using DPLA's open data.

Many decades in the visioning, two and a half years in the planning, with a small steering committee and an incubation hub at the helm, and featuring dozens of great libraries, universities and archives involved in hundreds of meetings, workshops, plenary meetings, and hackathons..., attracting thousands of volunteers backed by millions of foundation and government dollars, today the Digital Public Library of America goes live!

It's a great day for education and progress..... said Doron Weber, Vice President of Programs at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation⁵⁸.

APPENDIX 6: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: THE SKILLS OF THE MODERN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WORKFORCE

Librarianship is an evolving industry underpinning every aspect of life and society. There are librarians – information managers, knowledge managers – in all walks of life from school to university, from business to government. The public library is there throughout life as the common resource for all, whatever the need, whatever the factual simplicity or intellectual complexity of the issue at stake.

Following the massive growth in publishing in the 20th century there is now the digital explosion and the totally invasive impact of the worldwide web. For librarianship this is not the threat it is often seen to be; rather it is the opportunity. Librarianship is a 21st century profession.

Librarianship is therefore both expanding and evolving. It requires a range of conventional skills and insights which need to be updated and complemented with new areas of knowledge.

Examples of Professional Development Programmes

The following references indicate the common threads across countries, sectors and agencies in the skills and competencies required today.

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) is the UK's leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. CILIP provides practical support for members throughout their careers and speaks on behalf of the profession. A key responsibility is the accreditation of a large part of the courses undertaken by library and information workers in the UK.

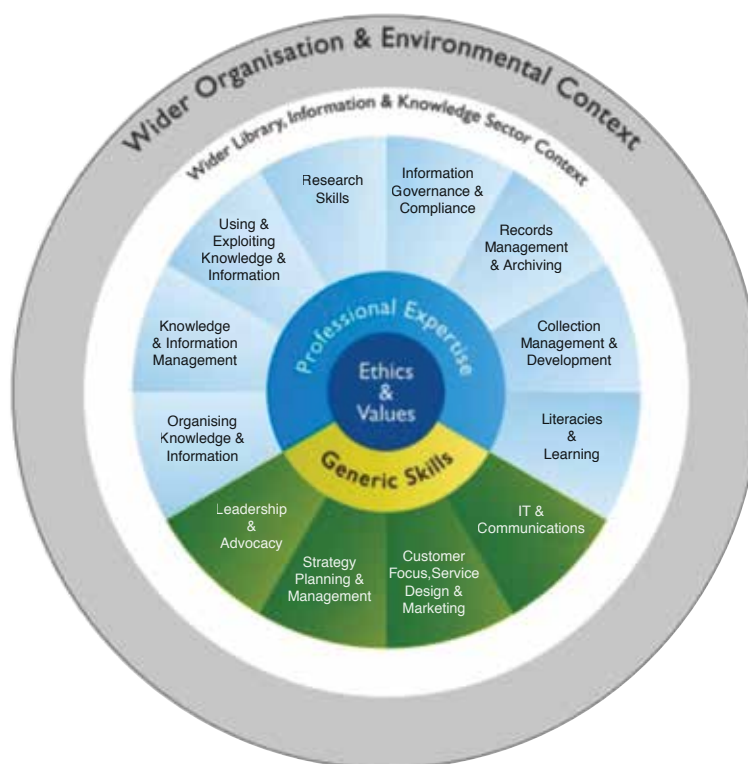
CILIP has recently undertaken a review of the skills of the library and information profession. Its Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB) sets out the most recent assessment of the skills of the modern librarian. Consultation included library, information and knowledge practitioners, teachers of library and information science and employers.

Direct association with information, ideas and knowledge remain central but the digital age requires a shift in emphasis. While the organisation and management of knowledge remain central helping access, evaluate and exploit information knowledge and ideas has grown exponentially as the internet, electronic storage and publishing and social media have created a bigger and more dynamic body of information, knowledge and ideas.

1. Ethics and Values

CILIP's PKSB lists the kinds of skill depicted in a wheel at the centre of which is the Ethics and Values that underpin the work of practitioners in the sector.

Ethical principles will include legal requirements extending to expectations of professional behaviours (shared with other professions) and specialist practice (what would pertain only to a library, information or knowledge professional).



Professional Expertise and Generic Skills are the key sets of knowledge and skills which make the profession unique.

2. Professional Expertise

- **Organising Knowledge and Information.** Organising all types of knowledge, information and other resources including the development and use of tools, strategies and protocols, and enabling these resources to be organised, searched and retrieved effectively. Includes cataloguing and classification, metadata and thesauri, subject indexing and database design.
- **Knowledge and Information Management.** Collecting, organising, storing and exploiting information, data, expertise and other knowledge assets, ensuring these assets remain available for future use. Includes capturing and recording knowledge and data, reflecting on results and sharing knowledge, skills and outcomes for the benefit of others.
- **Using and Exploiting Knowledge and Information.** Combining information skills, information content and knowledge to meet the needs of the user community, for example researchers, academics, communities, individuals, businesses or government. Includes enquiry and search services, research, data mining, bibliometrics, abstracting, promoting collections.
- **Research Skills.** Using research techniques and knowledge of information resources to support organisational, client or personal research projects to provide new findings and data. Includes knowledge of research methods, literature searching, citations, statistics and statistical analysis and report writing.
- **Information Governance and Compliance.** Developing and adhering to policies and regulations regarding processes and procedures for information use, while retaining an appropriate balance between information availability and information security. Includes knowledge of information law, copyright, intellectual property and licensing as well as issues relating to information risk management, information ownership and accountability.

- **Records Management and Archiving.** Recording, organising and preserving information records held in a range of formats in an organisation, and continuing to evaluate them for retention or disposal based on their format, relevance, usage and legal requirements. Includes storage and retrieval of records and collections, digitisation, curation and preservation.
- **Collection Management and Development.** The process of planning, delivering, maintaining and evaluating stock acquisition and management to meet current objectives; builds a coherent and reliable collection to allow for future development of the service. Includes collection management, resource selection and acquisition and planning for continued future use.
- **Literacies and Learning.** Supporting users and teaching them how to work independently. Incorporates information literacy, reading literacy, digital literacy and learning and teaching skills, and includes reader development and training users.

3. Generic Skills

- **Leadership and Advocacy.** Active leadership by inspiring and managing themselves and teams, both inside and outside the organisation and by promoting the positive value of library, information and knowledge services across the organisation and society. Includes leading and inspiring teams, influencing key stakeholders and understanding external frameworks.
- **Strategy, Planning and Management.** Setting long-term goals and objectives, and managing their planning and delivery within financial and legal constraints, while ensuring that strategies and priorities are in line with and support business objectives. Includes knowledge of business, operational and financial planning and management.
- **Customer Focus, Service Design and Marketing.** Understanding user needs, shaping library, information and knowledge services to meet those needs and using appropriate methods to inform customers of accessibility, value and benefit of the resources and services. Includes knowing the customer, identifying and communicating with stakeholders, designing and promoting services and evaluating the outcomes.
- **IT and Communication.** Using a range of electronic information resources and systems, including databases, catalogues, web resources and software. Includes new internet applications and social media tools and providing user-friendly electronic resources and tools. Communication skills include oral, writing and presentation skills, networking and relationship building and working effectively with individuals and groups.

4. The Wider Context

Professional expertise and generic skills are set within the wider library, information and knowledge sector context and the wider organisation and environmental context because it is important for practitioners to maintain current awareness and understanding of the wider profession and have a good knowledge of the world outside their own workplace.

23 Things for Professional Development⁵⁹

23 Things was originally developed by Helene Blowers at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. *23 Things* was devised as a resource for staff learning web 2.0 skills. Issued under Creative Commons it was free to others to use and adapt. It rapidly became a worldwide phenomenon and the concept of *23 things* you need to know became a mantra for learning.

23 Things for Professional Development is a new resource open to all library staff (or anyone for that matter) to develop their skills on a self-programming, independent learning basis.

The *23 Things* 'movement' illustrates how digital technologies, apparently a challenge, can in themselves be the very means whereby library and information workers learn how to manage and handle them.

23 Things introduces a range of tools that can help people manage their own personal and professional development as a librarian, information professional or something else. In 2011-2012 this generated a wave of interest among, especially, new professionals around the world.

Each week an individual would follow a programme to develop a particular skill – blogging, using social media and so on – all taken from:

our list of 23 things and invite you to try it out and/or reflect on how it could help your professional development. Some of the tasks will be practical Things for you to try out straight away, and some of them will be less immediate: ideas to try in the future, or things you can start working towards now and realise in due course or when opportunity arises.

While the programme is no longer actively operating the web resources are still available and the network of library workers, colleagues and friends remains as a testimony to flexible self-directed learning.

23 Mobile Things

23 Mobile Things was launched in April 2013 and is open to anyone wishing to follow the programme. Again a global project developed entirely by colleagues in several countries working across social media, this new *23 Things* is open to everyone and offers a tremendous opportunity for library and information workers to develop their skills on a shared basis and engaging with colleagues elsewhere in an online setting.

23 Mobile Things is a self-paced course that offers library workers the chance to build their awareness, knowledge and skills at their own pace. It is a fun professional development tool that seeks to explore the added potential of mobile devices. The course is freely available to anyone who has access to a mobile device (tablet or smartphone) to participate.

We are interested in exploring ways that libraries and library staff can use mobile technologies to deliver library services, to engage with their communities and for their own professional development.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ <http://plcmc2-about.blogspot.ie>

⁶⁰ *23 Mobile Things*: <http://23mobilethings.net/wpress/about/>

These resources are not simple, although for the librarian they are easy to use. They do however, show how feasible it is to create online learning resources and – importantly – an online community of learners following a shared programme, each at their own pace, towards a common learning goal.

Learning and leadership with the ALA and IFLA

The American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) are the largest professional bodies for librarianship and information science.

Leadership and advocacy are central themes to their programmes. These are not to enable librarians to “compete” with other professions; rather they enable managers and staff to be confident and effective partners in the wider community.

American Library Association

Like CILIP, the ALA recognises the widest range of skills as well as the need to adapt them to today’s environment. The following draws on ALA’s website *Transforming Libraries*. It sets out the needs of today’s *transformed* library; the ideas and language though American, reflect Ireland and other countries. Each section contains information and resources for library workers:

- **Community Relationships.** The new library actively seeks to support the community’s formal or aspirational goals. The new library engages its community and serves as a convener, bringing community members together.
- **eBooks and Digital Content.** The shift from print to digital content is dramatic, now transforming libraries of all types. The ALA’s Digital Content and Libraries Working Group was formed in 2011 to implement recommendations and to continue the work of ALA’s Task Force on Equitable Access to Digital Content. This website is a resource to support libraries in their transformation from print to digital content.
- **Leadership and Management.** In the transformed library, management now serve as team leaders, and technical knowledge is more diffused. Librarians are encouraged to ‘lead from beneath’, to innovate and to experiment.
- **Library Workforce.** Staff circulate within the library, interacting with and assisting users. 21st century librarians are tech-savvy, encouraged to experiment, to learn from successes and to occasionally fail.
- **Physical Space.** The transformed library is not just an architectural statement, but a physical space to reflect new functions and the new forms.
- **Transformation.** Librarians are ‘embedded’ in the community. ‘Digital inclusion’ is important, as one third of the U.S. population still does not have internet access. Libraries support 21st century learning. eGovernment is changing the library, as much government assistance is only available online, the library has become the ‘go to’ place for services.
- **User Expectations.** The user expects library services to be available 24/7. The transformed library focuses on customer service, and attempts to understand the customer experience and how it can be improved.

International Federation of Library Associations

Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs - 2012

IFLA's guidelines reflect the developments in the provision of library and information services in the 21st century. They set the framework for the necessary objectives for library and information educational programmes; the requirements of core and useful curriculum elements to be included in teaching programmes, the faculty, staff and student requirements for these programmes and the need for the programmes to be well supported by information and other resources.

Because of its international nature it is not possible for IFLA to be specific on all skills and competencies. However the core elements of the Library and Information Services (LIS) curriculum would include the following:

1. The Information Environment, Societal impacts of the information society, Information Policy and Ethics, the History of the Field
2. Information Generation, Communication and Use
3. Assessing Information Needs and Designing Responsive Services
4. The Information Transfer Process
5. Information Resource Management to include Organization, Processing, Retrieval, Preservation and Conservation of Information in its various presentations and formats
6. Research, Analysis and Interpretation of Information
7. Applications of Information and Communication Technologies to all facets of Library and Information Products and Services
8. Knowledge Management
9. Management of Information Agencies
10. Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of Outcomes of Information and Library Use
11. Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge Paradigms.

These headers give a feel for the range and complexity of the skills of the library and information practitioner. These emerge variously also in Appendix 5 on national strategies in other countries.

IFLA International Leaders programme

IFLA's programme is for those already playing an active role as a professional leader at regional, national or international level. In that sense it is open to a small number of participants but that should not deter individuals from taking an interest and considering if it is for them.

The *International Leaders Programme* is designed to increase the cohort of leaders who can effectively represent the wider library sector in the international arena, and to develop leaders within IFLA. Therefore it is not a training programme in leadership but rather an opportunity for librarians who demonstrate capacity and interest to develop their leadership capability.

Participants will already have demonstrated their leadership within IFLA and/or a national or regional association that is a member of IFLA, and have the level of experience and knowledge to fully participate in and benefit from the Programme, with the aim of being an advocate at the international level.

APPENDIX 7: LISTS OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES

Libraries Development Committee

Chair:

Michael Malone, Kildare County Council

Members:

Peter Hynes, Mayo County Council

Philomena Poole, Louth County Council

Barry Quinlan, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

Margaret Hayes, Dublin City Public Libraries and Archive

Fionnuala Hanrahan, Wexford County Library

Paul McSweeney, Local Government Management Agency

Chris Gavigan, Local Government Management Agency

Donal Singleton, Local Government Management Agency

Annette Kelly, Local Government Management Agency

Committee for the Development of the Public Library Strategy 2013 -2017

Chair:

Annette Kelly, Local Government Management Agency

Members:

Paul Dunne, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

AnnMarie Farrelly, Fingal County Council

Anna Marie Delaney, Laois County Council

Bernadette Kinsella, Clare County Council

John Breen, Kerry County Council

Fionnuala Hanrahan, Wexford County Library

Margaret Hayes, Dublin City Public Libraries and Archive

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APPENDIX 9: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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