Museums Libraries & Archives

Using libraries as solutions to budget constraints

Thursday 1st July 2010

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West

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Challenging Times

- New government - priority is tackling deficit
- Means: efficiency savings, better value for money; good return on investment
- Impact on Cultural Services at national, regional and local level
- Want to look at:
  - Positioning the service to deliver
  - Meeting need
  - New governance, delivery and funding models

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Positioning the service as a delivery solution

- 9 Authorities have NI19 as one of 35 indicators; 11 explicitly include within their LAA but not as one of their 35 indicators.
- 29% make reference in their Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy; 38% have a strategic objective or priority that is about or encompasses libraries

- Why? Lack of profile with decision makers; inability to evidence impact; perception that sector lacks strong commitment to achieving priorities other than its own

The role of Museums, Libraries and Archives and Local Area Agreements DC Research LTD

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Positioning the service as a delivery solution: successful engagement factors

- Strong evidence and advocacy skills of professionals and well established "ethos" of culture
- Ability to turn good practice into marketable evidence
- Ability to develop collaborative approaches
- Reputation for and ability to deliver
- Partnerships
- Support of key senior partners

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Positioning the service as a delivery solution

- Top of every CEs agenda is how to make savings. What can public library service do to: deliver savings and/or show how it can deliver outcomes needed cost effectively

- If key message is – economic asset not drain on resources HAVE to show value against local priorities

- Asset comes from understanding convergence between local priorities + strengths of service

- Most common areas seem to be:
  - Learning and skills
  - Increasing social mobility
  - Making places more attractive to live, work and visit
  - Connecting communities

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Evidence of impact

- Requires collection of data; evidence; case studies; testimonials
- Has to be about outcomes and outputs
- Has to be used and disseminated
- Needs to be targeted to local priorities and key individuals
- Needs to answer some key questions: Is it essential? So what? Who cares? Why you? What did it cost? VFM?

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Meeting need

- Participation still a key proxy indicator
- Good libraries have done a lot to focus on understanding and meeting user needs
- And knowing more about needs of non-users – own research and that of others
- Market segmentation increasingly important
- Involving audiences in developing and shaping service
- More focus on disseminating the offer and going out into the community to do so
- New media increasingly important for marketing and understanding need

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Meeting need

"*In the past, museums, libraries and archives have sometimes seen themselves at the centre of partnership arrangements. For partnerships with the third sector to be successful, museums, libraries and archives may need to relinquish this position and see how they can truly support other partners". (response to MLA consultation on community engagement)*

- Challenge for the sector is to move beyond the typical mechanism of 'friends groups" and "user panels" to set up structures that, in a variety of ways, large and small, allow people to become involved in the planning and delivery of services.

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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Partnerships

- Needs to be driven by local/community/stakeholder need
- The libraries sector instrumental to delivering the priorities of others
- Sustainable
- Across services and authorities
- Beyond partnerships

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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New delivery models

- Reducing dependency on public subsidy critical for survival

- Funding mix of public investment, philanthropy, earned income and private investment

- All libraries need to
  - become more entrepreneurial
  - attract other forms of investment
  - develop more efficient service models
  - bring in new skills

- New methods of delivery
  - less buildings based
  - focused on community and public need
  - cross boundary
  - multi service

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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New Models - Structures

- Needs to be Flatter
- Front line focused
- Shared back office/management
- Commissioned services
- Cross authority/sub regional
- Links to private/voluntary sector
- Systems thinking

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New Models - Finance

- Entrepreneurial approach
- Focus on philanthropy
- Mixed economy
- Sustainable
- Investment based on need and necessity

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Director of Engagement West, MLA

New delivery models (1)

Savings from “back office” already achieved in many places. Others need to learn from the best eg

- Bexley, Bromley and Lewisham libraries are working in partnership to deliver e-books and have negotiated a better deal with the US based e-book supplier OverDrive.

- 33 public library authorities in the North West and Yorkshire regions joined together in 2008 to tender for the supply and servicing of library materials

- 23 public library authorities in the North West are working across local boundaries to deliver shared reader development programme “Time to read”

BUT these savings will still not be enough. Most pro-active looking for new ways of delivering services and new partners

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New delivery models (2)

- New delivery partnerships e.g. Public library and university library (Worcester) Norfolk Libraries + Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) to deliver the home library service + safe and well' check.
- Strategic commissioning (Suffolk, Warwickshire)
- Integrated and co-located services (Sport & Culture Glasgow)
- Devolved services (Luton, Wigan)
- Delivering across local authority boundaries
- Shared funding to deliver shared outcomes (Total Place, Birmingham)
- Via third sector
- New sources of funding and investment e.g. PFI investment (Downham Library) Section 106 funding (Shepherds Bush Library)

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New models

- Luton - moved to charitable trust and company limited by guarantee
- Staff feedback is about changed culture; freedom to innovate; feeling stronger sense of shared goals
- " A charity running the services on a not for profit basis has meant resources not available to the council have been accessed and speedier decisions made, meaning the focus has been on providing first class services to customers"
  (Leader of the Council: Councillor Hazel Simmons)

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

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New models

- Paper on governance and delivery models on MLA website
- What the service is going to deliver and to who must be a strong focus for change.
- All models have big implications for workforce.
- Service review has to identify skills needed to deliver new vision and new models and to train staff to deliver.
- Business models are only as good as the people who deliver them

Jon Finch
Director of Engagement West, MLA

“Do you want to be victims of circumstance
or
creators of opportunity?”

Mike Moore, CE Westminster