

The sessions at the conference will look at partnership working with range of organisations beyond local authorities and how public libraries can work with them to deliver improved services.

Session 1

Windows of opportunity – promoting the public library service

Elizabeth Elford, Public Libraries Advocacy Manager, British Library

In 2008 the Society of Chief Librarians and the British Library joined forces in a new initiative to promote and advocate on behalf of libraries at a national level. Elizabeth will lead a session on how libraries can raise their profile at both local and national level. What are the key messages that will win the hearts and minds of the key stakeholders, how should this message be conveyed and what can public libraries do at the various levels of government to help raise the profile of the public library service?

Session 2

Transfer windows – community managed libraries

Speaker: Lesley Noblett, Head of Libraries, Archives and Information, Cambridgeshire County Council

When Cambridgeshire proposed closing ten of its smallest libraries, all of the communities wanted to retain access by running services themselves. The resulting Library Access Points are managed and staffed by volunteers, in partnership with the county's library service. Lesley will explain the background to the decision, what the benefits have been to both the Council and the local communities and some of the issues that were faced with this strategic approach to managing a library network

Session 3

Through the looking glass – services for people with sight loss

Speaker: Pat Beech, Manager, RNIB National Library Service

Three million people in the UK have a sight problem or print reading disability. 96% of books are not available in alternative formats. *Reading Sight* is a new website providing information and resources for frontline library staff about all aspects of providing an accessible library service for people with sight loss. Pat will explore with delegates how the web site can be developed with library staff to ensure that those with a visual impairment can be supported in accessing library services.

Session 4

New windows - libraries engaging with young people (Members session)

Speakers: Claire Styles, Senior Project Manager, The Reading Agency, Sue Wilkinson, Director of Policy and Sustainability, MLA and Cllr Paul Crossley

Alex Mangnall, age 15, student at St Gregory's Catholic High School, Warrington and Alex Pendlebury, age 15, student at Woolston Community High School, Warrington

What should young people expect library services to offer? This is the question that the National Youth Libraries Board, which The Reading Agency is part of, has been working to answer. Find out more about the services libraries can, and should, be providing for young people and how teenagers can get involved. Alex Pendlebury and Alexander Mangnall, age 15, from Warrington, share their experience of leading the emerging Big Secret library campaign and getting active through their library youth council. Hear about the Library Offer to Young People in action through HeadSpace and other models, and ways in which members can help make the Offer a reality within their authorities.

Session 5

Open windows – strategic commissioning in libraries

Speaker: Paul Bristow, Senior Policy Adviser: Communities & Local Government, MLA

Behind many of the recent developments in local government, including Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements, lies the idea that public authorities and their partners should be focused on, and organised around, the delivery of outcomes and that the more complex and challenging outcomes can only be tackled by organisations working in partnership. The sharper focus on outcomes is leading to the reorientation of public services around a commissioning model which has been used by various Council services (e.g. health and social care). In culture and sport, reforms over the past two decades have resulted in providers that, to varying degrees, operate at arm's length from the council. Less attention has been paid to the commissioning of culture and sport and to the sector's capacity to influence and add value to strategic developments beyond service boundaries. In this session Paul will discuss the concept of strategic commissioning; how it relates to library services and how libraries can engage better with strategic commissioning based on the discussion paper from the IdeA *Improving strategic commissioning in the culture and sport sector*.

Session 6

Window tax? – Use of developer contributions for library buildings

Speaker: Martin Elson, Emeritus Professor in Planning, Oxford Brookes University
Many areas are experiencing housing growth or regeneration and as a result existing library buildings and library services need to be upgraded or replaced. There is a range of sources of possible funding for such developments and one of the key opportunities to mitigate the impacts of new development is the use of planning obligations. In 2008 the report *Public Libraries, Archives and New Development: A Standard Charge Approach* was prepared for the MLA by Martin Elson. It explores the standard charge approach, as recommended by the MLA, for libraries and archives. In this session Martin will explore how authorities can ensure that this valuable source of funding is maximised and some of the issues that need to be considered.

Session 7

Broken windows, broken lives – services to Looked After Children

Speaker: John Vincent, Co founder, The Network: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

Over the course of a year, around 90,000 children will spend some time in care (Every Child Matters website, 2008). Most Looked After Children (LAC) achieve well below their potential in education. Many Looked After Children have few, if any, books of their own, or opportunities to share books with the adults who care for them. Libraries, where books, resources and a wide range of informal learning opportunities can be had for free, can offer enormous benefits for LAC of all ages and for their carers. This session will highlight the important role libraries can play in the lives of the young people, in influencing other departments and what has been learned from projects such as Right to Read. It will explore how services to Looked After Children could be mainstreamed into library services.

Session 8

Window box - Public Library Partnership with the BBC

Speaker: Elizabeth Waite, BBC Library Partnership Manager

Lord Reith defined the purpose of the BBC as "to inform, to entertain and to educate", a similar statement could be used to describe the role of the public library service. The formal partnership between the BBC and libraries enables both organisations to use the strengths of each to deliver on key national agendas. Libraries are able to use the mass market reach of the BBC to support delivery of key priorities shared by both organisations. These have included campaigns such as the RAW campaign and Breathing Places. The session will look at what the BBC partnership has achieved and plans for the future, it will highlight the benefits of joint working between a national organisation and local authorities.

Session 9

Books as Windows: how shared reading helps us to look out and in

Speaker: Jane Davis, Founder and Director, The Reader Organisation

Following on from the 2008 PLA Conference we are pleased to welcome back Jane Davis. The project runs more than 120 weekly read aloud groups across Merseyside, reaching over 600 people, in libraries, schools, GP surgeries, hospitals, Day Centres and workplaces as part of the Get Into Reading (GIR) project. It is a charity dedicated to bringing about a Reading Revolution - this means great books reaching everybody – their mission is to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in sharing a wealth of literature. They believe that reading is a force for social good that can build community and enhance lives. Jane will lead an interactive session exploring GIR practice in which you can experience for yourself the power of shared reading. Using examples taken from real life groups Jane will discuss why GIR has been so successful in reaching 'hard to reach groups' and answer your questions on the development of GIR in conjunction with the NHS and other agencies.

Session 10

Looking through a new window: private sector delivery of libraries

Speakers: Tim Grier, MD and Claire Griffiths, General Manager, John Laing Integrated Services

The London Borough of Hounslow is the first local authority to outsource the management of its libraries to the private sector, as part of the Library, Arts, Heritage and Parks Portfolio. John Laing Integrated Services has been successfully delivering this contract since July 2008, managing 11 libraries across the borough. In this session, Tim and Claire will discuss the private sector experience and the benefits this has brought to the delivery of library services in Hounslow.