

Preparation of content strategy

New Central Library, Southend-on-Sea

Final report

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Introduction

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, the University of Essex and South Essex College of Further and Higher Education are jointly developing a site at Elmer Square, Southend-on-Sea, to provide a new Central Library that will offer a modern, integrated centre of learning and research that meets the varied needs and requirements of residents, students, business people and visitors alike. Users are anticipated to benefit from a cluster of learning, research and cultural facilities located in the heart of the town centre served by excellent public transport links. With funding from the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), LISU and the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University were commissioned to advise the partners on the development of a suitable content strategy for the new library.

Background

The number of joint or dual use libraries has increased since the 1980s, before which such facilities were often viewed negatively, with librarians and commentators emphasising their susceptibility to dysfunction and failure. In more recent times, however, opinion has been more positive as the planning, operational requirements, and critical success factors for joint-use libraries have become better understood. Increasingly, joint-use libraries are attractive to institutions trying to demonstrate their value and impact, in both economic and social terms. Savings from shared facilities, personnel, collections, maintenance services, and utilities; increased hours of operation; service from a wide range of professional librarians; and the availability of information in a broader range of formats, have all been cited as advantages of this type of facility. While there are obstacles to be overcome in any venture of this type, there are also strong policy drivers for multi-use public buildings, to meet a wide range of community needs such as enriching lives by fostering lifelong learning and ensuring every member of the community has access to a readily available array of high quality study and leisure related resources.

The development of the content strategy for the proposed new central library for Southend-on-Sea included consideration of the key creation, delivery and governance issues associated with the service requirements of all partners in this unique collaboration. Building a collection which gives access to appropriate information and leisure resources for the different user groups is a challenge common to all joint-use libraries catering for the needs of a range of different constituencies. The stock and media of the library must reflect the curricula requirements of the participating educational institutions and the needs of the local community.

Decisions must be made about procurement, maintenance, replacement and development, so that the needs of all groups are considered. One of the fundamental questions to be decided is ownership of the collection; others include whether the stock should be regarded as one large collection or not and the extent to which the content should be fully integrated. This leads on to consideration of the organisation of the content. Differences in cataloguing and classification systems will need to be considered and resolved, as will differences in library management systems (LMSs). While a better collection for all in terms of quality and quantity is possible, borrowing rights and access need to be carefully thought through, and issues concerning censorship, internet access and filtering must be addressed.

The three partners in this project are building on a diverse but established base:

- Southend Central Library is one of seven static libraries in the borough, and is currently one of the ten busiest in the country in terms of items issued.
- South Essex College offers a wide range of courses at all levels from its Southend campus, including general interest adult education, basic skills training, access to HE courses, and a range of formal qualifications up to NVQ level 4.
- The University of Essex hosts four departments at its Southend campus, and also hosts the Business Hub, a specialist resource for companies of all sizes, which aims to foster and promote economic sustainability, and provides a wide range of support services and contemporary, professional facilities. Physical library services to students at Southend are provided in conjunction with South Essex College.

Meeting the needs of the resultant diverse library client base in a single library facility, and how this will link into the three organisations' aims and objectives, is challenging. An appropriate content strategy for the new library is key to its success.

Methodology

Four key aims were specified for this work:

1. To outline differences and commonalities for all parties in the areas of acquisition, stock control, cataloguing, copyright, licensing and IT systems
2. To identify best current practice and future trends for content requirements and delivery in public, HE and FE libraries and for adult and community learning
3. To understand the partners' initial and longer term expectations for content provision in the new Library
4. To develop options for collaboration through sharing collections and service delivery taking into account available funding.

Following an inception meeting with all project partners, a two-stage approach was adopted to address these aims which focussed on examination of relevant literature and interviews with key stakeholders. A series of site visits was conducted, to understand the different services currently provided, and to investigate key differences and similarities in approach which have informed the final recommendations.

An interim report summarised the results from the first stage of the work, including the identification and examination of similar schemes elsewhere in the UK, and initial interviews with the project partners and other key stakeholders. It was used as a basis for more in-depth discussion with the project partners.

This report builds on the interim report, summarising findings for each of the first three objectives described above. It also provides a range of options for collaboration, derived from these findings.

Partners' current practice

Initial interviews and subsequent site visits enabled us to build up a picture of current practice at the partner libraries, as presented below.

Overview of provision

Southend Central Library

Opened in 1974, the current Central Library building is not ideal for adaption to modern purposes. The layout is largely dictated by the building design and thus is proving impractical to cater to the needs of a modern library service. It is felt that much of the library is hidden away – the cafe, lecture rooms, public notice boards and even the upper floors are not as visible to users as they might be, with users often being unaware that they exist, leaving them underused. Further, the building has become inefficient in terms of energy use.

There is a high level of library usage, but this is not felt to be as high as it could be. The membership of the library is very fluid and the composition of the international communities resident in Southend changes approximately every four years. Individuals who are members of Essex or Thurrock libraries may also borrow from the Central Library.

The collection has c.400,000 books (two-thirds of which are on publically accessible shelving), a good stock of audio-visual material, e-resources and e-books. There is extensive interaction with the branch libraries.

The library is laid out so that the income generating stock (i.e., AV material, loaned for a charge) is near the entrance, just past the circulation desk and barriers. Behind this is the fiction stock which currently suffers from a lack of space for expansion.

Situated on the first floor, directly above fiction and AV materials, the computers provided as part of the People's Network are heavily used. There is much personal use, importantly allowing access to Council services which are increasingly being delivered online. Technical support is provided by the nearby information desk. There are mixed levels of use for e-resources, with some being used heavily (e.g., Ancestry, OED, Justice) and others not so much. Next to the computers is the reference collection, though this is being superseded by online materials.

For children, there is a dedicated space on the lower ground floor. This is directly under the atrium with no barrier against sound travelling upwards to other floors. The children's area houses bookstock and People's Network machines for the use of children only. The pupil referral service uses these computers in term time, as do home educators. The area was designed for under 16s but is mainly used by under 12s, missing secondary school age children.

The Focal Point gallery has two spaces in the Library:, an amateur art/culture space by the entrance to the building, and a multimedia gallery on the top floor which is a very good and well-regarded example. Given the multimedia nature of its offering, the top gallery space has some issues with noise.

Opening hours are Monday to Friday 09.00-19.00, Saturday 09.00-17.00.

South Essex College Library

South Essex College at Southend caters for students studying on a range of levels, from pre-16 diplomas to degree courses. The Southend site houses one of the South Essex College's three libraries. Here, there are over 70,000 books, a large intranet and 100 PCs for student use.

Usage patterns and the library's role have changed in the last few years – issues are down but visits are up. Borrowing has declined over the last ten years, though HE borrowing is starting to increase.

FE students are increasingly using the library as a drop-in centre/place for group work rather than a traditional library. There is more usage of computers and online resources than of book stock. The various student groups have competing needs which can be hard to balance.

The Library also holds a collection of just over 3,000 books on behalf of the University of Essex for use by students at their Southend campus. There is a limited number of computers (11) and a study area reserved for University users in the College library. University walk-in user services for e-resources are not available at this site currently.

Opening hours are Monday to Friday 08.00-21.30 and Saturdays 09:00-13:00 during term time, Monday to Friday 09.00-17.00 at other times.

University of Essex Library

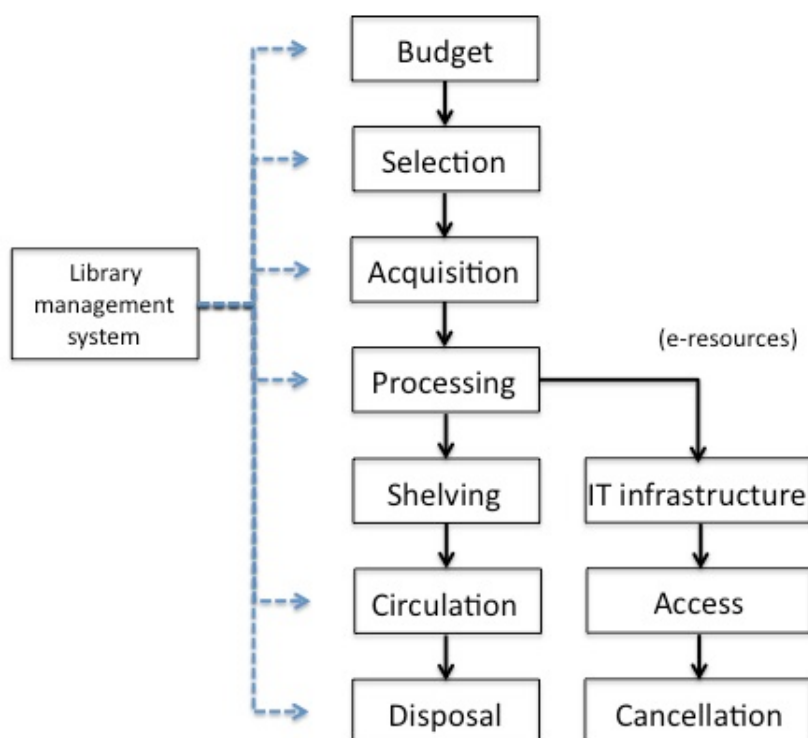
The Albert Sloman Library (on the University's main campus, 40 miles from Southend in Colchester) provides a service to support the University's Southend campus in collaboration with the College library.

Books are purchased by the University Library and delivered shelf-ready from the supplier to the College library. Here, the books are entered into the system and shelved with College stock.

A regular service brings requested books to and from the Albert Sloman Library in Colchester; likewise a transport service from Southend to Colchester is provided for readers.

Specific areas of interest

In order to compare current practices at the three partner libraries, the following model of a resource's lifecycle was used as guide. Each of these areas is considered in turn, below.



Budget

Southend Central Library

The budget is split into specific allocations, generally according to material format (books, AV, etc.). However, as funds are not allocated directly to stakeholder groups, there is flexibility if specific needs emerge.

South Essex College Library

SECL has a library resources budget which consists of a general fund without specific allocation with approximately two-thirds spent on e-resources and the remainder on books, other stock and equipment. The Librarian meets with heads of faculty to ascertain their plans for new programmes etc. and a request is put into the College's funding allocation process for any need for an increase in library budget.

A recent complication is the merger with Basildon & Thurrock College, which means that the library service is now delivered at three sites. One effect of this merger has been to push the new College up a JISC band¹, thus increasing costs and meaning that budgets are less certain.

University of Essex Library

UoEL has a centralised budget with internal subject divisions, but no devolved departmental allocations. This has enabled them to use the funds well without having to have protracted discussions with departments, and allows the flexibility to support particular areas that need

¹ E-resources licensed through JISC are charged according to an institution's size, costed in a series of bands. See <http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/Help-and-information/JISC-Banding/> for further details.

supporting at any given time. They consider this freedom to be important when the available funds are limited. Unusually for an academic library, more is spent on resources than on staff.

Selection

Southend Central Library

Selection takes place in Southend for the authority as a whole, including the Central and branch libraries. There are no direct outside influences on what is chosen, though staff are always mindful of the perceived needs of users and will respond to suggestions. The library service has been trying supplier selection for children's stock in collaboration with Essex and Thurrock, though this has been less than successful, not least because the supplier could not separate out each partner's stock from that of the others.

South Essex College

There are no subject librarians at SECL, with selections being made from reading lists. Working with library staff, academic staff choose the books they want, and from this selection the Library provides what it can. Selection is more *ad hoc* for FE materials, with more input required from the Library.

University of Essex Library

Senior library staff are expected to pre-empt academic needs, but also to work with academics in what is very much a consultative process. The system operates on two-way trust, giving best value for the University. Also, catalogues of US institutions are checked for emerging trends. Alongside large e-book collections, individual e-books are chosen in a highly targeted manner,

Acquisition

Southend Central Library

A joint contract is in place in partnership with Essex County and Thurrock Borough libraries. To date, this is thought to have delivered the best commercial terms possible. Orders for physical stock are fulfilled in the main by Bertram's Books, with specialist suppliers for AV materials.

Southend place orders with Essex who put them on the system and obtain catalogue records. The LMS is not directly linked to the council's financial management system (there is an entirely paper-based link). However, it is hoped that this will change, as it results in two sets of budget figures which do not always tally at present.

South Essex College

Mainstream physical stock for the Southend site is ordered from Dawson Books, with the Basildon and Thurrock sites currently using Coutts (this is under review following merger with SEC). Other suppliers are used as and when necessary for more specialist material, including DVDs and security tags.

University of Essex Library

Titles are ordered through Dawson Books but delivered directly to SECL. Also, reading lists are checked against Netlibrary and ebrary and e-books are ordered if available.

Processing

Southend Central Library

Stock for all libraries in the borough arrives semi-processed at the Central Library. Further processing and repackaging takes place there, before stock is sent out to branches or put out in the Central Library. The extra processing includes applying various colours of tape and other labelling that is specific to the Central and branch libraries.

South Essex College

SECL receives both SEC and UoE stock from the supplier as partially shelf-ready, already having covers and Dewey labels. Reference labels, short loan stickers and tags are put on in-house – a process that they wish to review.

Cataloguing also happens on arrival rather than at the ordering stage. This is very labour intensive and the team is currently under-strength.

Shelving

Southend Central Library

The fiction and AV collections are housed on ground floor, just beyond the circulation desk. The reference collection and most computers are on the first floor, with non-fiction on the second. A third of the book stock is held in a closed stack.

The Dewey classification system is used for the non-fiction collection, however a conscious decision was made to have no numbers on shelf ends, just general topics.

South Essex College

All stock is on open access shelving, ordered according to Dewey (22nd edition), with a small number of items out of sequence. Books are marked as HE or FE but are interfiled.

There is currently an issue with shelf space, exemplified by a recent move of stock in order to make space at the front of library. This necessitated moving every single item to move the entire collection two bays back.

Circulation

Southend Central Library

The Infor Vubis library management system is shared by Essex, Thurrock and Southend. It will shortly be web-based which will enable remote use of the staff side (thus work at home can be supported).

There are many types of user, within four main categories: children, young adult, adult and other. These distinctions are mainly to stop the issue of unsuitable DVDs. Users can use, but not necessarily borrow, all stock. The origin of users can also be determined, if a user registered in Thurrock borrows from Southend, for example.

Holdings have been a problem on the current system, as it is impossible to make stock non-holdable unless it is reference-only, i.e., there is no mechanism for first-come-first-served borrowing. Staff holds cannot be made lower priority than paid-for requests, though this will be possible soon.

South Essex College

SECL is currently upgrading to OLIB 8, an OCLC web-based library management system that will be shared across the three library sites.

There are different categories for stock and users, mainly in terms of HE/FE. HE users can borrow all stock, whilst FE users can borrow any that is not designated as HE stock, though they can use it for reference. There are some complaints from FE students about not being able to borrow this material, but the issue has not emerged as a major problem in user surveys.

Disposal

Southend Central Library

Evidence-based stock management will be in operation in December 2010, which will automate stock maintenance.

South Essex College Library

Weeding/disposal is done as and when appropriate during the year, and this is a library-led process. Academic staff are consulted when library staff are not absolutely sure material can be disposed of. It may be possible to look for unused books on the system though this is not part of the process currently.

University of Essex Library

UoE stock held at Southend becomes part of the SECL collection. Responsibility for disposal lies with the College, working in consultation with UoEL. However, to date no disposal has needed to be undertaken.

IT network infrastructure

Southend Central Library

There are several different networks serving the Central Library, including the Council financial system, the People's Network and the LMS (including OPACs). As noted above, there are currently no links between the financial system and the LMS. Public access PCs are provided as part of the People's Network for general library users, with a number of dedicated terminals for child users.

South Essex College

The JANET academic network is used, with a large number of PCs for student use. A wireless connection is provided and is especially popular with College HE students who often bring in their own devices.

University of Essex Library

There are dedicated computers in SECL that connect to the University's JANET network in order to access resources, solely for the use of UoE students. There is no wireless connection for UoE students at present.

Access to electronic resources

Southend Central Library

Access to e-resources is through the library website, with authentication by library card number and PIN. The success of this service has been variable, as the resources can be quite difficult for users to find. For example, a recent website change meant that usage dropped instantly as

people could no longer find what they were looking for; this has since been changed. Low usage is a concern in the context of the high cost of e-resources.

Downloadable e-books and audio-books are available through a commercial provider (Clipper) again via a shared service with Essex and Thurrock. These are not linked to the catalogue.

The People's Network, for internet access, has its own separate log-in and needs to be signed-up to separately from the library's e-resources. It is locally managed, with no direct link to the LMS for booking, and there is pressure to charge for the service.

South Essex College

The college operates a single sign-on system for all e-resources and network access, both on and off-site. There is no provision for walk-in use at present and, whilst such access would be possible for some resources, currently there is no call for it.

University of Essex Library

Access to e-resources is through the library catalogue, Shibboleth or by IP recognition. Walk-in access to certain e-resources is granted through a mediated process: a request made/granted, a time set for the user to visit, an educational/non-commercial use declaration is signed and the user is logged on and off. This service is currently available in the Albert Sloman Library in Colchester. Access to the UoE network for University students and staff is provided in SECL via dedicated PCs.

Cancellation

Southend Central Library

E-resources are cancelled on the basis of cost and level of use. Less expensive alternatives are sought where possible (e.g., for law case reports).

South Essex College

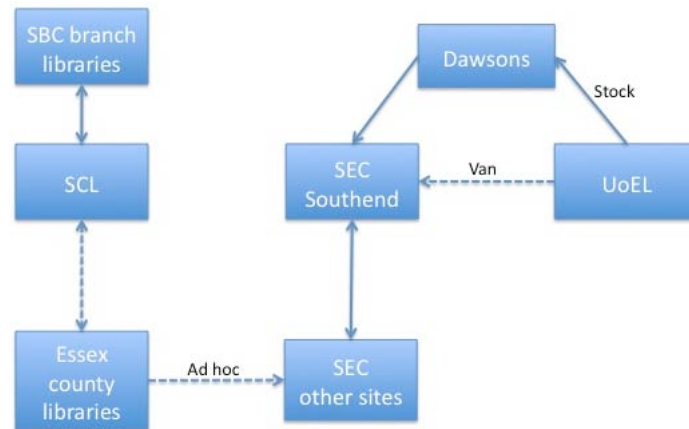
There is a constant juggling of e-resources in an on-going process. Commercial resources are continually increasing in price and some were cancelled recently and books bought instead.

University of Essex Library

When academics ask for new subscriptions, this is taken as an opportunity to review what is already provided.

Relationships established with other libraries

Each library has a number of relationships with other libraries, as summarised in the diagram below:



Southend Central Library

There is interoperability of stock with Southend's branch libraries, and with Essex and Thurrock libraries, with users being able to reserve stock and have it delivered to any library within the partnership. All books are sent back to their home location on return.

There is some transferring of stock between the Central and branch libraries so that stock can be refreshed.

South Essex College

Users can have intra-library loans between the Library's three sites. An ad-hoc arrangement is in place between the Basildon site and the Chelmsford public library.

University of Essex Library

UoE users at Southend can request material from the Albert Sloman Library at the Colchester campus. These books (600-700 per annum) are delivered to SECL regularly by van, quick-catalogued by SECL staff and then loaned to the student. When returned, the catalogue record is removed and the book returned to Colchester. Additionally, there is a weekly transport for visits to the Albert Sloman Library from where UoE Southend students can borrow directly.

Good practice examples

There is relatively little in the way of precedent with regard to joint-use libraries that combine all three sectors of public, higher and further education, nationally or internationally. Accordingly, prior art/best practice in that specific context is limited². There are a number of examples of shared use buildings between two library sectors, most notably between schools and public libraries, but the intention in Southend is to go beyond the simple co-location model.

The following provide some examples of current practice in public and academic libraries which are pertinent to one or more aspects of the Southend-on-Sea Central Library proposals:

Worcester Library and History Centre

One comparable project of interest is that in Worcester, which is at an advanced planning stage. Building work has started, but the completion and opening dates are some way off (mid-2012). Partners in the project are the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council³. Key points of relevance to the Southend project include:

- **Benefits:** the city's library needs a new building, especially as they are *“entering a phase of considerable expansion”*. The University sees a joint library as *“a really good way to reach out to the community”*. It seemed to be a *“good idea to pool our resources and we could get something bigger and better”*. There is a plan to use the building as a showcase for other services. The University's research collections will be in another building, but exhibitions will be put on in the main library to raise awareness of these resources.
- **Management:** at present there is a project board which will become a body that oversees the services in the new building, moving from development to strategic management. Each partner will have responsibility/be the strategic lead for a particular area of the service. There will be no joint content development policy as this did not arise as an issue. Different areas related to content management will be covered under various work streams (e.g. staff, library systems).
- **Integration:** the library is aiming for the same quality of service for all users – they should not be able to tell who is employed by which partner, who buys which book etc.
- **Acquisition of content:** resources will be acquired separately by the partners, with separate audit trails. The 'vast majority' of stock will be integrated on the shelves. Key student texts will need protecting but they are investigating the use of electronic copies to ensure access. There are no plans to combine budgets, except possibly for inter-library loans.
- **Library management system:** both partners use TALIS and are working towards an integrated catalogue. They are also looking at ways of having the system flag up duplications when ordering.
- **Classification:** both use Dewey, but there are some differences (e.g. fiction), though that will be dealt with later.
- **Identity management/IT access:** all users will have to log on to use a computer. Access to academic e-resources will be restricted according to each licence.

² For an excellent overview of issues surrounding joint-use libraries see McNicol (2008) *Joint-use Libraries: Libraries for the future*. Chandos, Oxford

³ <http://www.wlhc.org.uk/>

Other examples of joint-use libraries which may have relevance to this project include:

University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute Library Services⁴

UHI Millennium Institute (UHI) is a Higher Education institution comprising thirteen partner colleges and research institutions and a network of over fifty outreach learning centres, located throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (including Moray and Perthshire). Currently over 6,800 students are studying on undergraduate and postgraduate courses or undertaking postgraduate research with UHI, and these students represent the HE component of the partner institutions. Each institution has a library, and, in most cases, these are joint-use between HE and FE.

In view of the dispersed nature of UHI's academic provision, the emphasis for UHI's library resource provision is on e-resources, document delivery, and inter-site and inter-library loans. UHI has explored inter-library co-operation with the eight local authority library services that cover UHI's area. In one instance, shared stock and collection management was explored, but IT issues from the public library perspective have prevented this being taken forward to date.

With the exception of e-resource, website and ILS provision, central UHI funding is divided between academic partner institutions for library provision. The Head of the Library Service at UHI is responsible for ensuring that the libraries are properly resourced from a quality and policy perspective for HE students. This role is made difficult by the devolved nature of funding, and it is felt that centralised funding would be advantageous for the library services. E-resources, however, have a central budget, are centrally controlled, and are considered more straightforward to manage. Access is controlled by institutional computer network account log-in, with only limited e-resources available to FE students.

The experience at UHI is that library users like integration, and that obstacles to greater integration are more likely to be encountered at higher levels within the institutions, where there is a desire by the partners involved to protect their own investment.

North City⁵ and East City⁶ Libraries, Manchester

There is a partnership between Manchester Library and Information Service (MLIS) and the Manchester College (formerly MANCAT), whereby MLIS delivers library services from two college sites in the city. Joint public and student library services are currently provided in Harpurhey Sixth Form College via the North City Library, and in Openshaw via the East City Library. The partnership may also be extended to other sites in the future.

A MLA case study⁷ describes the partnership in detail, and identifies some of the key benefits of co-location and joint provision, including:

- Students benefit from a full range of library service provision as opposed to a purely academic based library service.
- Pooling resources and stock budgets enables a more comprehensive provision of curriculum and career progression related material.

⁴ <http://www.uhi.ac.uk/home/libraries>

⁵ http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500136/local_libraries/820/north_city_library/1

⁶ http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500136/local_libraries/624/east_city_library/1

⁷ <http://research.mla.gov.uk/case-studies/display-case-study.php?prnt=1&prid=287>

- Sharing facilities and resources means it is easier to signpost library customers to the extended learning opportunities available through Adult Education courses and the Sixth Form College, and library users become more familiar with a learning environment.

Library at The Bridge, Glasgow⁸

The Bridge is a joint-use community building comprising John Wheatley College, a Swimming Pool, a Library and Real Learning Centre, and a performance space. The Library combines the Community Library and Learning Centre (a branch of Glasgow Libraries, Information and Learning) with the Library at John Wheatley College.

As well as sharing a building, the college and public library services are fully integrated – with a joint Service Level Agreement, merged staff, a shared Library Management System, and a single catalogue. Various aspects of the collaboration are discussed by McNicol⁹.

Lichfield Library

Staffordshire University, South Staffordshire College and Staffordshire public library service joined forces to provide an integrated library service for students and the wider community on the University's Lichfield Campus in 1997. Although based in an historic building on the university campus, the Lichfield library has much in common with the Central Library envisaged in the current project, in that it provides library services for the public, a further education college and a university. The collaboration was initiated by the University approaching the County Council when the opportunity to develop an existing public branch library on the site arose. The main collection comprises University and College material interspersed with public library stock.

One key lesson to be learnt from the experience at Lichfield, is that the continuation of separate catalogues poses a major stumbling block to operating the envisaged 'one library service'. The collaboration has been working successfully for a number of years, however, and detailed case studies have been undertaken, by McNicol¹⁰ and Shuller¹¹.

Some specific issues

Two specific issues that are likely to be relevant to the needs of the new library are study spaces, primarily for students but also for other users, and after-hours services, to increase the availability of the library service to those unable to access it during core staffed hours. The University of Sheffield and the Norwich Millennium Library show good practice respectively in these areas.

Study spaces at the University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield Library has two contrasting buildings that provide the bulk of library services to the University, the Western Bank Library (WBL) and the Information Commons (IC). The WBL was opened in 1959 and has just been renovated up to modern standards, whilst the IC is a purpose-built study facility that opened in 2007 and was designed to reflect changes in the curriculum and learning styles. The function of the two buildings is distinct, the WBL housing

⁸ http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/residents/library_services/your_local_library/libraryatthebridge.htm

⁹ McNicol (2008) *Joint-use Libraries: Libraries for the future*. Chandos, Oxford

¹⁰ www.ebase.bcu.ac.uk/docs/Lichfield_write_up.doc

¹¹ Shuller (2010), *Co-locating colleges and public libraries*

http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/i/f/ifill_mla_report_final.pdf

the research collection and main administrative offices and the IC housing a mainly teaching-based collection.

In the WBL, the lower floors are dark with no natural light and are filled with late-50s bookstacks, with an atmosphere that could be less than welcoming. Recently, however, the stacks have been partially re-arranged to make room for individual study 'oases', consisting of large desks set around pillars which carry bright, daylight lighting. A number of these desks have PCs provided, whilst others have power and network sockets to accommodate students with their own devices. In addition, there are also group spaces which are partially partitioned using glass walls, but without doors, also with power and network sockets.

In the IC, the emphasis is on study space, including for group work, with plentiful places which are heavily used by undergraduates. The teaching collection sits on low shelving in amongst the study space, ranging over five floors. Lockable glass-walled group rooms are provided, available on a booking system during term-time.

The two buildings are complimentary in terms of space and material provision, the distinct difference being that the WBL has study space in amongst bookstacks whilst the IC has bookstacks in amongst study space.

After-hours service at the Norwich Millennium Library

At the busiest library in the UK for a number of years, a reduced service is available after the core staffed opening hours, from 20.00-21.30 Monday to Friday, 17.00-20.30 on Saturday and 10.00-16.30 on Sunday, situated on the ground floor. Services offered are a small but representative selection of popular fiction and non-fiction books, DVDs, rock/pop/jazz CDs and nine stand-up internet stations. There are two members of library staff on duty throughout this extended period of opening. Four self-issue machines handle issue/return transactions, three of which allow credit/debit card payment of lending charges and fines. Also available on Sunday is the children's area, again on the ground floor of the library. The effect of this is to make the library an increasingly popular place for families on Sundays.

The extended service has been a success, with constant use throughout these after-hours opening times. At first, a later closing time of 10.30pm was in place, with a view to attracting post-theatre users, but there was not enough use to justify remaining open for the extra hour.

Licensing of e-resources

We have been advised by JISC Collections that it would be legitimate to allow walk-in use of e-resources licensed with the JISC model licence by all users of the new central library. This would be:

- at the discretion of the licensee (the University of Essex);
- for non-commercial purposes;
- accessed through an identity management system that complies with the appropriate terms and conditions.

JISC Collections would be happy to advise on any proposed arrangements or assist in negotiations with publishers if a more appropriate solution could be found.

Future trends

This section presents a broad overview of the major trends anticipated in both academic and public libraries in the short to medium term. Likely trends have been taken into account in developing the recommendations in this report.

Public libraries

The policy focus in regard to content management in public libraries is on developing new ways of working to deliver efficiencies and improve delivery. As with other public services, public libraries face the challenge of a tough economic climate in which they must maintain or develop the quality of service with constrained resources. Innovative governance and delivery models are being proposed to respond to economic pressures and deliver efficiencies in content. There is, for example, interest in the concept of shared services arrangements for the procurement of stock. PwC suggested that a collaborative approach to stock procurements by library authorities in England could achieve savings of 35%¹² and both the last Labour Government's *Modernisation Review*¹³ and the new Culture Minister¹⁴ has re-emphasised that library authorities must consider these kinds of new delivery options, working in partnerships across organisational boundaries. Other content management developments include more supplier selection for new mass-market titles, streamlined and common servicing standards, additional RFID functionality and a common RFID system across authorities, and a standard framework for electronic data interchange (EDI).

Another key development which public libraries need to address is online e-book and audiobook download content. Demand for these formats is likely to grow, with CIPFA statistics suggesting that patterns of public library usage continue to change, so that while physical visits to the library declined by 4.3%, web visits increased by 49% in the year 2008-2009¹⁵. There is, however, a range of issues and challenges that public libraries face which must be addressed before adoption can become more widespread, including those of digital rights management (DRM), access through the catalogue or other search facility, platform variation and confusion, packages versus single titles and variation in content between printed and electronic editions of the same text. Nevertheless, more and more library authorities are now providing downloadable e-books, and so a body of good practice and experience is developing to support those introducing these services¹⁶.

¹² PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2006. *Better stock, better libraries: transforming library stock procurement*. Available at: http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/publications/~-/media/Files/pdf/2006/better_stock_better_libraries.ashx, [Accessed 13.09.10].

¹³ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2010. *The modernisation review of public libraries: a policy statement*. Available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm78/7821/7821.pdf> [Accessed 13.09.10]

¹⁴ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2010. *Re-modelling partnership to meet the challenges of 2010*. Available at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/ministers_speeches/7223.aspx [Accessed 13.09.10]

¹⁵ CIPFA, 2010. *Children's fiction is major growth area for UK libraries (press release)*. Available at: http://www.cipfa.org.uk/press/press_show.cfm?news_id=60897 [Accessed 13.09.10]

¹⁶ See, for example, MLA, 2010. *FAQs on e-books in public libraries*. Available at: http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/digital/~-/media/Files/pdf/2010/programmes/MLA_e-books_faqs.ashx

The current downward pressure on public library budgets will affect both the level of current services and future developments, at least in the short term. Whilst this may delay some of the more innovative proposals in the Modernisation Review¹⁷, and whilst Government policy is always subject to change, there will be a need for a comprehensive public library service, providing access to resources for information and recreational purposes for the foreseeable future. Partnership working is likely to become increasingly important, for example in delivering services to promote health and well-being. The growth in electronic resources, and technological changes in their delivery, will necessitate flexibility and innovation in service provision.

Libraries in education

As with public libraries, academic libraries are facing increasing pressure on their financial resources. One important current trend is in the move towards increasing the amount of resources available electronically, which may be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the volume of printed material acquired and held. Increasingly, resources for both teaching and research are made available electronically, either by direct purchase or by digitisation of analogue material, and accessed by users remotely from the library building. Academic library statistics show that, sector-wide, the number of annual visits per FTE user to library buildings is falling, although levels of borrowing remain stable, and may even be increasing¹⁸.

Academic library buildings are also increasingly seen as the first port of call for students seeking support on a whole range of university matters, including IT issues, learning and teaching support, and student counselling, for example, but perhaps most importantly social learning space. Changes in teaching style, and the encouragement of group working, have led to a requirement for library study space which enables students to interact with each other and with the available resources in an atmosphere which encourages study. At Loughborough University, for example, a large amount of floor space is now given over to social learning and it is very well used. This change in ideology can be seen in recent similar schemes such as those at Warwick University and, as mentioned above, the University of Sheffield.

Other priorities identified within higher education are better resource discovery tools, personalised catalogues and consortia for e-journals as being targets for innovation, though all are some way off.

Trends in adult education are also moving towards new ways of delivering teaching and learning. It is thought that the whole sector will eventually move to new delivery methods. At present, some providers are acting as trailblazers, for instance at Southend Adult Community College. The College is moving towards using a variety of more sophisticated methods of delivery than those employed traditionally. As with higher education, they are currently experimenting with electronic delivery, self-learning, group learning (access to material, group space). As a result, remote access to learning is becoming more important and common.

¹⁷ http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/libraries/5583.aspx

¹⁸ White, S. & Creaser, C. (2010) *SCONUL library statistics: Trends 1998-99 to 2008-09*. Report to Society of National, College and University Librarians.

Initial and longer term expectations/aspirations

Benefits

Two main benefits of the new library, advantageous to all user groups, are:

- Improved, larger space, with a variety of environments to meet the needs of different user groups.
- Access to a larger number and greater diversity of resources: the provision of a complete breadth of material, from a child's first book to resources for PhD study, available to everyone who has an interest in them.

Integration

There is general agreement that the library should be as integrated as possible. It was suggested that there should be integration except where there is good reason for this not to be the case, and that there is a need to test the assumptions some may be making around this issue. The College and University libraries are "*perfectly relaxed*" with total integration or adjacency of stock, and cannot see a reason not to be integrated, as at present with HE/FE.

However, within the University's Southend campus, academic departments are reported to have differing views about integration – some are in favour and others are against – and these expectations will need to be managed in the implementation of the new library. The academic partners feel that the library should have an identity of its own, rather than being just a PC access area for students. Current difficulties in blending HE and FE students together, with their different levels of noise/different working practices, are expected to be mitigated in the larger space.

Space/layout

The arrangement of resources in the new library has yet to be decided although it will occupy more than one floor. Possibilities offered include:

- A progression through the building: frequently-used books/magazines section and children's books on bottom floor, up to academic on the top floor, with spaces on all floors for people to interact. There would be a mix of noisy and quiet areas (bearing in mind that the public, as well as academic users, like quiet areas).
- Complete integration of book stock.
- Integration of public and college elements, with separate HE services provided for UoE students in a Learning Hub, which will provide dedicated academic study space, but no books.
- Integration is not necessarily a matter of all stock running in one Dewey sequence, as there is an expectation that different types of material will be used in different areas of the library.
- A flexible view to the future – within a couple of years everything may well have moved around.
- Students have come to expect group space; perhaps this could be accomplished by small rooms off the main area.

- A self-contained university collection within the main library, to allow longer access hours for students, although such an option introduces questions of security, cost, and feasibility.
- Space is currently an issue in fiction at the Central Library – bookshop-style tables and display shelving are desirable as additional options for the optimal display and presentation of material.

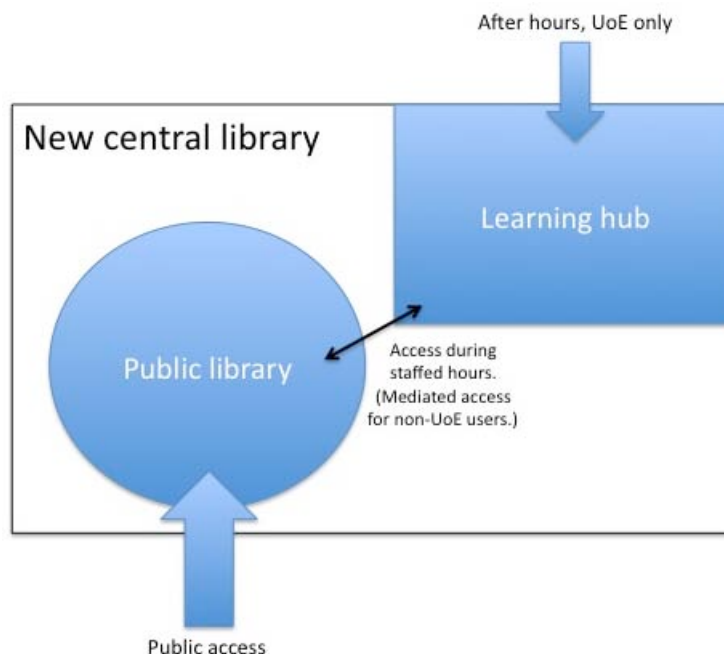
There are two potentially conflicting concerns regarding the feel of the library:

- For the Council, the library must be a space in which anyone can feel comfortable, as much a social space as a library. This would encourage people to come into a learning environment without necessarily identifying it as such.
- For the University, an academic feel to the environment should be maintained to an extent, with a need to avoid a student perception that there is no University library in Southend. International students, in particular, have a view about what a library should be like and this needs to be taken into account; this could be a matter of managing their expectations.

The success with which these apparently conflicting requirements are reconciled will depend to a large extent on the design skills of the architects, as well as on communication between the partners to reach an acceptable compromise.

Learning Hub

The Learning Hub is proposed as a bookless landscape for UoE HE academic study. This will provide access to ~38,000 e-books and 15,000 e-journals of the UoEL collection, along with PCs, a breakout room and social learning space.



It is proposed that a member of UoE library staff (information assistant/librarian or similar) will be based in the Learning Hub to help students with e-resources, liaise with academic and central library staff, give talks/training and mediate walk-in access to e-resources for non-UoE library users, but not to issue books.

IT

Views regarding IT are generally forward thinking. The new library needs the ability to adapt, as new technology becomes more widely used. Mobile devices are seen as becoming more important; it is thought unlikely that ranks of PCs will be required in ten years' time. However, desk-based equipment will not disappear altogether, and power sockets will still be needed for portable devices.

The internet is key to access, as resources are increasingly made available online. Password access to these would continue, but perhaps on computers that present different interfaces depending on the type of user.

A dual network system will probably be necessary, the academic network (via JANET) being very important but unavailable to the general public. It remains to be seen whether issues will be encountered with IP identification for e-resources. Wireless access is also assumed to require at least two networks, academic and public.

However, there is a concern that IT issues have not been sufficiently thought through and, in particular, that some have an awareness of the infrastructure but not of how complex it can be and how much investment is needed. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect to the project. It seems likely that more money than expected will have to be spent in order to provide the necessary IT infrastructure. Relevant staff at the partner institutions (e.g. the Director of Information Systems and Services at UoE) will need to be involved in detailed discussions to achieve the most appropriate solutions.

Access

There will be greater public access to the library's collections by virtue of proximity – the new library will be in a more immediately accessible place in the town centre than the current Central Library.

All partners aspire to longer opening hours, with one suggesting that it would be a way to achieve a good return on the substantial investment in the new library through increased use. There are various suggestions regarding these extra hours:

- earlier in the morning to allow the public to access services before going to work
- evenings for students and the general public
- Sundays
- RFID could be an option to provide lending outside normal hours

The extended hours for students are very important for the University. They need to offer students access comparable to that in the Albert Sloman Library in Colchester (even without support from the Council), and they hope that the Council is willing to extend hours appropriately. There are ways to increase opening hours without much extra cost, e.g. Norwich Millennium Library has a largely self-service area with extended hours, offering access to a representative cross-section of stock whilst the main collection is closed.

There appears to be little disagreement regarding access to physical stock inside the library. This will be reciprocal – students will have access to public stock and vice versa. It has been pointed out that students are members of the public too. The University Library is not concerned about the public preventing student use of HE books; if this became a problem, the solution

would be to be to buy more of the heavily used text books. With regard to academic provision to non-academic users, it is expected that the library would have an equivalence of service with the Albert Sloman library, at the Colchester campus, including access to e-resources for walk-in users, via the Learning Hub. It would be part of the Learning Hub information assistant's role to help with such requests; UoEL propose to monitor the level of demand before considering any development of this service.

It is assumed that there would be no borrowing of HE books by non-HE users. They would be available for consultation within the library only. A significant percentage of public book stock is reference-only at present and it is thought that the public would probably be comfortable with HE/FE books as reference only. However, explaining different borrowing rights could be less than straightforward and these differing rights would need to be communicated clearly to all users.

Budget

Each partner felt that they were getting best value for money in their present buying arrangements. There was willingness to reassess this if necessary but with an understanding that economies of scale might be lost by combining budgets in the new library and potentially losing the favourable terms currently enjoyed by Essex Libraries and the University of Essex. Importance was placed on continuing to be in the best position to provide the resources needed in a timely and efficient manner, as at present. Electronic resources appear to be the most likely area of budget collaboration, although the benefits would need to be proven.

The different needs of each of the partners' users would seem to negate the need for a joint collection development policy, especially as stock selection is very specific to each user group and catered for satisfactorily at present. There is, however, a need for the partners to learn about each other's selection processes, as they are quite different (see above).

Collection

Integration, particularly in respect of printed resources, appears to be something all partners want, and therefore this should be the starting point. It is thought that there is little duplication between the collections at present and that any future overlap of collections is likely to be small. This could be managed through integration.

A joint catalogue is not a certainty. It is thought that whilst there could be one 'front end', there may be insufficient time and budget to properly merge the three catalogues. Merging catalogues would be expected to raise questions from College staff as they are generally happy with the current position, and protective of their stock.

Ideally, the final processing of stock that currently takes place in the Central Library could be undertaken before it reaches the Library, thus freeing up space. The Library could cope with books straight from suppliers, with small changes to current procedures.

There is a need to know who owns what in case of de-merger. Public clarity is also thought necessary in the area of who is providing the various resources in order to manage public expectations about access to FE/HE materials, for example. This issue appears to be managed well between the College and the University at present, and this may provide a model which could be expanded to include the public.

The interaction of the library with the various public branch libraries will need to be considered. There will be much more moving around of public library stock than commonly occurs in academic libraries. A clear view is needed of what is going into the building and to which sector the material relates.

Licensing

Whilst universal access might be the preferred option, current licensing terms make this unlikely. The University Library has stated that it is always happy to make e-resources available, through its mediated service, to a wider user group if this is a) permissible and b) the necessary procedures and safeguards are in place to reduce the likelihood of database misuse. All material is password-protected and access to many resources may already be possible under walk-in user provisions, through a mediated service as currently offered at the Albert Sloman Library (see above).

Staff

Staff knowledge is a valuable resource and there should be a mix of generalists and subject specialists. Staff mediation in use is important with regard to enhancing access to the collections, especially for e-resources/walk-in use. Also, different levels of computer literacy are expected amongst users, with more support being necessary for those who are less comfortable with IT.

General issues

There is a need to deal with library content in a way that maximises its value for all three user groups. Forward thinking is evident, especially in regard to electronic provision. There was a suggestion that it would be useful to map what life will be like in new library for staff/students/public, but also that it is quite late in the overall project to be thinking about joint policy/strategy/operations.

From an academic perspective, the current arrangement between the University of Essex and South Essex College is seen as a good relationship which should continue. This is an encouraging sign for extending the partnership to include the public library service in the new central library.

The user perspective

Many of the issues investigated in this report concern the internal arrangements for content management in the new library. Although different user groups may have different requirements for library services, in terms of content management, these are remarkably similar – seamless and timely access to the resources they require. The recommendations of this report (see below) are designed to achieve this for all users, in the most practical way for the partners, given their current starting positions. Differences between user groups are thought to centre on the 'look and feel' of the library – quiet space for individual study; space for group study; child-friendly facilities for families; ease of access for browsing – and the location of relevant resources within the different spaces provided.

The public consultation¹⁹ found that members of the public wanted improved space, more resources of all kinds (books, AV, online), access to academic resources including a range of specialist subjects, more computers and wi-fi access - there was concern expressed over internet access being taken over by students. Students were not consulted *per se*, but those who participated in the public consultation wanted more resources in one place. Key points from our report which concern content management aspects of the user experience at the new library are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1: The user perspective

All users:

- are expected to benefit from the co-location of learning, research and cultural facilities
- should be able to use, but not necessarily borrow, all physical stock
- are expected to like an integrated library, with a single membership card, common catalogue, and single shelving sequence for stock
- are expected to benefit from an ID management system, based on their single membership card, for controlling borrowing and access to electronic resources
- will benefit from the increased access to resources made possible by extended opening hours

All students:

- will benefit from a full range of library service provision as opposed to a purely academic based library service

HE students:

- will have a dedicated area for study – the Learning Hub
- will have access to appropriate stock with reserved borrowing rights

FE students:

- are expected to use the library as a drop-in centre and place for group work as much as a traditional library

General public:

- will become more familiar with a learning environment, being easily signposted to the extended opportunities available
- will have improved access to academic e-resources via mediated walk-in arrangements at the Learning Hub

¹⁹ Eye (2009) *A New Library for Southend: Findings of a Programme of Partner, Stakeholder and Public Consultation*

Conclusion

There is a need to act on the goodwill that is evident, and to work together. Including the management of each partner organisation in the development process is key to integration, persuading them by demonstrating benefits and giving them reassurance. The expectations of the various partners also need to be articulated exactly – what is negotiable, what is not – and compromise is essential.

Future scenarios for content management

Scenario 1: full integration

In this scenario, the new library would have a distinct budget line for content, contributed by the three partners. Stock selection, and disposal, would be undertaken by the library, according to agreed criteria, and the material purchased from the most appropriate supplier. It would be processed to a uniform standard, with no outward distinction as to the intended audience. Users would identify relevant material via a single catalogue access point, with all users able to borrow age-appropriate non-reference material. Access to e-resources would be open to all, within the constraints of licences.

Such a scenario is likely to require a management structure for the new library which is largely independent of the three partners, although having formal agreements with them, and a board on which all three are represented. A content management committee, comprising representatives of the central library and the three partners, would oversee this area of activity; other similar committees would deal with other aspects of the library's operations.

This may be desirable as a long term goal, but, given the current starting position, is unlikely to be achievable in the short term.

Scenario 2: co-location

In this scenario, the partners would continue to work much as at present, co-located in the new building. Such co-location would provide much needed additional space for both the Southend public library and South Essex College, and may bring cross-over use, but the separation between public and academic purpose would remain.

Whilst achieving some of the objectives for the new Central Library, this scenario could be seen as wasting the opportunity for new and innovative models of service delivery.

Scenario 3: a hybrid model

In this scenario, which is a dynamic one, the new Central Library would be set up with a certain level of integration, which could be built on as circumstances allow. The three partners would retain control of their own budgets, and stock selection/disposal, with an element of consultation to avoid unnecessary duplication. Stock would be identified as to its 'owner', but shelved in a single sequence, accessible to all, processed to a uniform standard. Borrowing restrictions may be applied to some material (e.g. FE/HE textbooks), although a single unified catalogue would cover all material. Electronic resources would be accessible to all users throughout the library building, with an ID management system to control access to permitted resources for individual categories of users, with additional access through a mediated service provided by UoEL in the Learning Hub. Additional provision might be made for academic users, which could be available outside the public opening hours.

This scenario envisages an integrated appearance for the user, while maintaining a degree of independence for the three partners. As with scenario 1, a Content Management Committee would be appropriate, to formalise consultation processes, although this committee would have fewer responsibilities than under scenario 1.

This scenario is proposed as the best option for Southend, and the recommendations detailed below suggest ways in which it could be achieved. The dynamic nature of the scenario is such that it could be implemented in stages, as resources allow, and the eventual position determined according to experience.

Key questions and recommendations

The best possible long term outcome can be best achieved by aiming for flexibility from the start of the joint service and taking a view that change is inevitable as the service settles into daily life. If change is anticipated and planned for then it will be easier to make the changes when required in the future. Thus, some recommendations will be temporary measures designed to provide a smooth running interim service. There are also some questions which we feel have not been clearly articulated. It may be that there is agreement on some or all of these issues; others may not have been discussed or considered. Clarity and good communication are essential to a smooth transition to the new service arrangements for both staff and users.

Key questions:

- How far have the partners committed to integration, beyond the libraries?
- How can an integrated service be best presented to users and potential users in the new library?

Recommendation

- The proposed Governance Working Party should have a specific remit to oversee issues relating to integration

Budget, selection, acquisition and disposal

Questions:

- Would it be useful/possible to combine budgets into a single fund?
- How should liaison take place on selection?
- Can the acquisition process be streamlined?
- Can an LMS system for disposal be developed?

Each partner has well established and effective procedures in these areas, such that there appears to be little to be gained from combining them. However, there are opportunities for the partners to have close co-operation with their parallel processes.

One obvious area is that of stock duplication, though even here there are benefits from some overlap (for example, copies of a popular book that is available to general users with protected copies for academic users). Liaison over stock purchase when the new library is up and running will help identify needs, such as purchasing public copies of FE/HE books that non-FE/HE users want to borrow.

Better awareness of each other's collections should develop, but a joint collection development policy is not necessarily useful. The main difference between the academic and public libraries is maintaining support for the curriculum offered at the College and University, compared to a wider recreational brief at the public library.

A small budget could be useful for joint resources such as physical reference stock (though this is diminishing).

Licensing makes non-duplication more problematic for e-resources, though there could be some scope for the College to cancel some more general reference subscriptions if the public library could or does provide access with greater cost effectiveness.

There may be benefits in combining the clerical aspects of this area, for example when ordering stock. There may be some gain in having a unified ordering system, perhaps where SCL bills SEC for the stock ordered from its selection. This could also have some benefits for processing (see below)

Disposal and cancellation are associated with selection and budget so it would be sensible to keep these responsibilities together for each partner to deal with fairly independently.

Recommendations:

- Keep separate systems for budget, selection and acquisition, at least initially
- Set up a formal mechanism for ongoing consultation and co-operation in potentially overlapping areas of stock selection and disposal
- Investigate combined clerical work and the possibility of feeding SEC ordering into SCL system for physical stock.
- Implement a LMS-based system to find unused material to inform stock disposal decisions.

Processing

Questions:

- How should materials be processed, and can a common system be agreed?
- How can the catalogue best be populated with records?

At present, both SEC and SCL receive partially shelf-ready stock from their suppliers. On arrival, there is extra processing to be done before the stock can be put into circulation, especially additional labelling. Any reduction in this workload would release staff time for other duties.

In order to help the library work as an integrated unit, a simple and unified scheme for all physical stock could be devised and implemented, one that can be delivered entirely by the suppliers.

There is a difference between SEC and SCL in terms of cataloguing – at present, SEC catalogues to minimum standards on arrival of the stock. SCL records come from external sources at the point of ordering and are to common bibliographic standards.

By unifying the ordering process, including the sourcing of catalogue records, common standards would be applied. However, with separate LMSs, this may be unworkable and unnecessary. The Southend system is run by Essex County library service which also sources the records – transferring them may be problematic.

Recommendations:

- Agree a unified labelling scheme, which can be delivered by suppliers
- Investigate, and if possible implement, external sourcing of catalogue records for all acquisitions

Shelving/study space

Questions:

- Should stock be integrated?
- How should stock be classified and signposted?
- How should space for users be provided?

The question of the arrangement of stock appears to be relatively simple. Where the two collections coincide, there is a similar classification scheme in use, i.e. DDC. A simple solution would be to merge the two DDC collections, maintaining the SCL demarcations of fiction, AV, non-fiction and reference, with all books in a familiar sequence for all. The academic collection is likely to have more specialised books that do not obviously fit into the current broad category labels used by the public library on their shelf-end signage. Adding DDC numbers on shelf ends would be helpful, and may be expected by academic users.

Separate HE/FE shelving areas go against the common aspiration for integration so should be discounted, the provision of specific study space being more important. Further, the benefit of intermingled stock in terms of exposure to a wider range of material would be lost.

The recent move of SEC stock by a few metres necessitated moving every book off and back on to the shelves. In order to maintain flexibility, especially through the early stages of the project, it would be worth investigating wheeled shelving. To be totally thorough, such shelving could be designed to fit in service lifts, enabling large amounts of stock to go anywhere in the building very easily.

In order to allocate space according to need and to allow for physical stock management, it would be instructive for the partners to measure the length of shelving that houses their current collections. Measuring the physical width of new stock as it arrives, and of stock discarded, would assist with monitoring and management of free shelf space.

In terms of physical space, there are several different needs to be catered for: specifically, stock, study space and IT. Aspirations are to have different spaces, perhaps with a gradual change in atmosphere as the user progresses through the floors. Providing a variety of different spaces has shown benefits at University of Sheffield.

Recommendations:

- Shelve all physical stock in a single sequence, based on the current Central Library classification sequence.

- Add DDC classifications to the shelf ends for non-fiction stock.
- Provide a graduated range of different study/reading spaces within the main library, for the use of both students and the general public

Library management system – circulation/membership/catalogue

Questions:

- Can existing LMSs feed into an integrated service?
- Should there be a common experience for discovering information about the stock for all groups of users?
- Which mechanism will provide the best interface for users with the LMS?

There are two different library management systems in use, Vubis and Olib each having the same essential functionality and each interacting with other sites/services. Options for integration would be to maintain both systems running in parallel but with a unified public catalogue, or to merge the two. The former would prove easiest, certainly in the shorter term whilst the latter would require a much more involved integration process but potentially have additional benefits in the long term.

One aspiration is to introduce self-issue machines, which would enable services to be provided outside core staffed hours. With a dual LMS solution, such machines would need to be configured to feed into both systems to maintain the integrated front to the library and to remove the need for an unnecessarily large number of machines. Obviously, if there is a single LMS then this would not be an issue.

At present, SEC/UoE students need a separate membership of SCL to use its services. For an integrated service, a system of single membership would be preferable, though this may not be possible if the LMSs are kept separate. However, assuming the different barcode sequences are compatible, using a single public library or student card to access both systems would give the user the impression of total integration. It would also help to differentiate those with differentiated borrowing rights (e.g., students, children).

Automatic registration of SEC/UoE users for SCL membership, using the same card could be relatively simple, though data protection legislation would apply to any transfer of personal details.

When the library is established, a re-assessment of borrowing could be undertaken, looking towards the possibility of having universal borrowing, perhaps with certain restrictions to protect student use (for example, priority recall for academic books, shorter loan periods for non-HE/FE users). It is suggested that this should occur no sooner than one full academic year following opening. However, if the LMSs remain separate, this would mean accepting public users onto the SEC system so it may not be possible (or desirable).

The catalogue is a point at which the integration or otherwise of the new library will be very apparent. Having to search two or more different systems is undesirable, therefore a single catalogue that uses live information feeds from the two LMSs is recommended. This would enable each LMS to work as now, including maintaining external relationships without complication.

Differing cataloguing standards are not an issue if systems kept separate, though SEC could consider buying in records for new purchases and upgrading their existing records in the future.

The current provision of e-books should be brought into the catalogue if at all possible, giving users greater awareness and wider immediate choice.

Recommendations:

- Start the service with both LMSs working in parallel.
- Implement a top level integrated catalogue for users that links to all available content.
- Investigate options for providing one borrower card per user, and plan to implement this in a timely fashion.

Relationships with other libraries

Questions:

- What procedures should be adopted to ensure efficient movement of stock between the different service points of the partner libraries?
- How can the present arrangements with external partners be integrated into any new systems?

If systems were to remain separate, the relationships with other libraries could continue as they are. There will be immediate potential benefit to SECL and UoE users from the extensive interoperability of SCL with Essex Libraries.

Books do move around the services, therefore if a book is used to support a specific purpose, a method of restricting it to the new library may be required; however current procedures for returning material to its 'home' library may be adequate.

The management of these relationships, along with inter-library loans from further afield, is an area that could be undertaken as a single integrated service.

Recommendations:

- Provide a joint service for stock movement to and from the library
- Build in provision for existing networks if and when a joint LMS is considered

IT infrastructure/access

Questions:

- What are the minimum and desired requirements for IT infrastructure?
- How can users be given appropriate access to IT and electronic resources?
- How should wireless access be provided for both public and academic users?

The problems and complexities associated with provision of IT infrastructure can be underestimated. Therefore, priority should be given to planning this, in order to inform the design stage of the building project. The partners therefore need a clear idea of requirements and how they might be met as soon as possible.

Similarly, the design and building of a common front end for users' access to electronic resources may not be straight-forward, given the different underlying systems that it would have to accommodate. The design should be as simple as possible, with no unnecessary complexity that might prevent users from accessing services they may find useful.

Each partner provides wired PCs and wireless networks. Infrastructure could easily be shared for joint use by all users, with council and JANET networks serving the different user groups.

A joint identity management system would enable different users to have access to the resources which they are entitled to use. The wired PCs could have login diverting users to the appropriate network, UoE, SEC or public, with authentication being derived from a user's home institution. When logged onto the appropriate network, access to e-resources would happen as it does at present.

Wireless provision could be via two separate networks, public and academic. Eduroam²⁰ is the obvious choice for the academic network as it requires no local authentication (this is done via the home institution) and would allow easy access to any academic visitors.

SCL may wish to upgrade their login requirements to something more secure, if possible/desirable, because at present details can be guessed if the login format is known.

Recommendations:

- A detailed plan should be drawn up for the implementation of IT provision as soon as possible
- A simple integrated front end for electronic resources (including the catalogue) should be designed and built as soon as possible.
- Implement a joint ID management system that uses shared physical infrastructure to deliver appropriate materials to each user group
- SEC adopts Eduroam as soon as possible so that this can form a single academic network.

Next steps

The next stage for the content strategy strand of the Elmer Square development project is to develop an implementation plan, bearing in mind that work is ongoing and the goalposts keep moving.

In the short term, the following issues appear to be the most pressing for action, as they will affect the design and layout of the building:

- IT infrastructure
- Integration and layout of stock
- Provision of study/reading spaces

In the medium term – i.e. before the library opens – consideration needs to be given to the following issues:

- Promotion of the benefits of an integrated service to users and potential users

²⁰ <http://www.ja.net/services/authentication-and-authorisation/janet-roaming/joining.html>

- Promotion of the benefits of an integrated service to library staff
- Processing and other stock management issues
- Integrating the user experience

Potential issues which could be left for the longer term, once the library is operational and working practices have been tested, include:

- Consideration of a single catalogue and LMS
- Integrating arrangements with external partners

In order to achieve this, a strong management team is needed to drive the implementation, with relevant skills to understand the issues as they affect each partner.

Appendix: Individuals consulted during the project

We would like to thank the following for their assistance:

Southend-on-sea Borough Council

- Simon May, Head of Library Services
- Mark Murphy, Strategic Projects Manager
- Chris Hayes, Head of Information and Resources
- Marion Brooke, Central Library operations manager

South Essex College

- Ian Franklin, Head of ILT and Learning Resources Development
- Penny Thacker, College Librarian
- Val Brown, Basildon Site Librarian

University of Essex

- Robert Butler, Librarian
- Nigel Cochrane, Deputy Librarian
- Emma Wisher, Assistant Librarian
- Bob Mack, formerly Dean of Southend Campus
- Christine Bartram, Campus Manager, Southend Campus

Southend Adult Community College

- Ali Hadawi, Principal

Focal Point Gallery

- Andrew Hunt, Director

Museums Libraries and Archives Council

- Sue Hughes, Regional Manager for the East of England
- Liz Johnson, Area Engagement Advisor, MLA East

Renaissance Southend

- Giles Tofield, Head of Regeneration

University of Worcester

- Judith Keene, Assistant Director of Information and Learning Services

University of Highlands and Islands

- Gillian Anderson, Librarian (Head of Service)

JISC Collections

- Liam Earney, Head of Licensing and Customer Service

University of Sheffield Library

- Clare Scott, Arts Faculty Librarian

Norwich Millennium Library

- Catherine Wymer, Locality Manager

Loughborough University Library

- Ruth Stubbings, Head of Academic Services