The Next Chapter
2011 – 2015

Wigan Library Service providing customer choice and value for money through modernisation and integration.
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1 Executive Summary

Since 2004 Wigan Library Service has embarked upon a significant improvement journey, delivering on key goals set out in the service’s 2005 - 2015 Vision.

Six years into the Library Service’s Vision, it is now time to review and consider the next steps for the service. The continued changes in society and the pace of technological advances have altered the way in which customers wish to access services. This context set alongside the current public finance challenges, mean that it is time for Wigan Library Service to move on to The Next Chapter of its improvement journey.

The challenge of the library service budget being reduced by 27%, a decrease of £1.1 million per annum, has come at a time when the service has been exploring how it can modernise and improve its offer.

The Next Chapter highlights the need to further embrace the technological revolution and extend the library online offer so that services can be accessed 24/7, from home, remotely and in the library. It will further enable the expansion in self service provision in libraries which will in turn maximise the public opening times. The Next Chapter will continue to provide a quality ICT resource with 186 public access computers in operation across libraries in the borough. This substantial resource will be targeted at those who have no or limited IT access, reinforcing the digital citizenship agenda and reducing the digital divide, where 8.7 million of the UK are currently digitally disadvantaged, by supporting those who are not ‘born digital’.¹

Despite improvements to the majority of library buildings across the borough, there are still library buildings that are not well located, are in need of investment and present significant ongoing costs both to WLCT and Wigan Council as the landlord. Smaller libraries proportionally cost more to deliver than larger libraries, due the staff, building and stock costs compared to usage. Of the 1.3 million visits to the borough’s libraries in 2010-11, 40% were made to just three out of 18 libraries (Wigan, Leigh & Ashton). Financially it is best value to retain fewer, well-invested sites, spread geographically across the borough, providing the full range of library services with extended opening hours. Yet, we know that local communities value local library provision and not all customers (particularly the old and young) are able to travel to access library services.

The Next Chapter will aim to provide four different tiers of library services, which reduce the expenditure associated with having services delivered from multiple sites, whilst simultaneously improving locations and the accessibility to facilities. This will be achieved by co locating with other customer facing public services, sharing building costs and integrating or sharing staff with partners.

Wigan Library Service’s *Next Chapter* will creatively embrace technological solutions and partnership opportunities, to modernise the service whilst providing access to library services in localities. This can be achieved within the service’s reduced budget parameters and maintains the service’s improvement journey. *The Next Chapter* provides sustainable next steps for the Library Service; however, this is perhaps only the next step in the Library Service’s transformation. Library Service provision will need to be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure the service is delivered in the most appropriate and sustainable operating model.
2 Current Position and Challenges

The Library Service within Wigan borough is a statutory service, which is delivered by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust on behalf of Wigan Council. The Public Libraries and Museums Act\(^2\)'s general duty of library authorities' states:

'It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'

In 2010/11, Wigan libraries had over 1,320,000 visitors and issued over 1,312,000 items. Currently the library service is made up of 18 libraries; two of these libraries will be combined at the new Wigan Library in the North site of the Wigan Life Centre scheduled to open in January 2012. The service is also delivered through two Mobile Libraries and a Home Delivery and Talking Book Service.

In 2005 Wigan Library Service commenced an improvement journey following a comprehensive re-visioning exercise. Improvements were made in capital assets, marketing and branding, opening hours and programming and planning of events and activities. This resulted in performance improvements, with visits per 1,000 population showing an improvement in CIPFA\(^3\) rankings in comparison to a deterioration in the national average, having moved from 197 to 170 out of 208 authorities over four years. Adult library user satisfaction remains high at 91%. In terms of cost per visit, Wigan has a lower cost per visit than many other Local Authorities and is ranked 83 out of 208 (208 being the most expensive) according to the CIPFA 2009/10 returns.

2.1 Moving towards The Next Chapter

The Library Service in Wigan, despite relatively low funding in comparison to other Library Services nationally has undergone substantial improvement since 2004. Of the 198 library authorities which provided information on revenue expenditure per 1,000 population in the 2009/10 CIPFA returns, Wigan is ranked 163\(^{rd}\) (with 1\(^{st}\) having the highest spend) with a budget of £15,591 per 1,000 population.

As a result library services in Wigan are relatively lean, with low levels of spend in comparison to other library services of a similar scale, as evidenced through benchmarking exercises\(^4\).

The financial challenge of providing comprehensive and good quality library services has further been heightened following the Coalition Government’s 2010

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2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
3 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
4 A Shared Bibliographic Project in June 09 compared the cost of 14 North West Library Service Bibliographic teams. Wigan’s full time equivalents per item procured in 2008/09, was the lowest cost of all 14 authorities
Comprehensive Spending Review of Public Services and the subsequent need to reduce the service’s budget by £1.1 million.

Since 2005 Wigan Library Service has changed the way it delivers library services, working with partners to make the most of resources and opportunities to improve buildings or enhance outcome to residents. Two libraries are now co-located with schools, and two children’s centres are co-located with libraries. Partners such as the Police, HMRC, and Local Life Centres deliver their services from libraries within the borough. Two libraries are run by volunteers, with Hope Community Library being particularly successful as part of the Grange Community Complex and Hope School.

The array of partnership working has provided a blueprint for potential future partnership opportunities, the partnership experience to date allows the service to identify key success factors and risks involved in partnership delivery.

Wigan Library Service has piloted many of the technological solutions available to assess their relevance to library services and potential to improve the library offer or accessibility. The service now needs to embrace the technological solutions and products available and provide excellence in its digital and ICT offer.

The changing social, economic and technological environment, aligned with the Library Service’s experiences over the last few years have produced this new approach to Library delivery in Wigan:

- To embrace the technological advances, altering the way in which customers wish to access services, the products available and the way services can be delivered.
- To reduce the Library Service budget by £1.1m.
- To continue to improve the physical access and internal ‘fit for purpose’ of library buildings.
- To improve the quality of customer service.
- To make the most efficient use of resources; employees, ICT and book stock.
- To maximise the potential of partner working and opportunities to join up services in localities, providing several public facing services from one building.

2.2 Income and Efficiency

Exploring and testing the ability of Wigan Library Service to achieve additional income is underway. Realistically, the majority of methods to increase income through retail, providing refreshments, increasing the unit price in book sales and charging for events and activities, will not bring in more than the £10,000 - £20,000 per annum figure which the service’s year-on-year performance has historically provided.

Parallel to exploring opportunities for income has been work to drive out inefficiencies within the service. A range of processes have been reviewed and
updated to reduce duplication and cost whilst enhancing the customer experience. Twelve members of library staff have recently completed NWEGG (North West E-government Group) funded and accredited Business Improvement Techniques Training and are currently implementing a range of projects to improve efficiency across the service.

Work has continued with neighbouring library services to explore additional joint developments and procurement. This work builds on the considerable savings and cost efficiencies achieved to date through the Greater Manchester Stock Procurement Consortium, which Wigan joined in 2004.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust has met the two current private sector operators in the UK market: John Laing Integrated Services, which currently delivers library services in Hounslow; and LSSI which is a provider based in the USA.

2.3 Buildings

As with many other services and sectors, the public usage levels of libraries can be greatly influenced by the location of library buildings.

The 2004 CABE report, *21st Century Libraries; Changing Forms – Changing Futures* stated:

“The developing role of the library has created a set of new and complex challenges for those delivering library buildings and services. The libraries of the 21st Century are no longer simply familiar repositories for books. They have changed and expanded, been rethought and redesigned.”

Wigan Borough has 18 libraries, with the two Wigan libraries being combined in January 2012 as part of the PFI-funded Wigan Life Centre.

Following the 2004-05 visioning process and subsequent ten year delivery strategy or ‘Libraries Vision’, Wigan Libraries have tiered levels of service for the purposes of internal management. Whilst library customers are aware that different libraries have varying levels of provision, the current tiers have not been made explicit to users. The developments at some libraries, over recent years, has somewhat blurred the differential between these tiers.

- **Town Library** – Wigan & Wigan Children’s and Leigh.
- **Area Library** – Ashton, Standish, Tyldesley, Atherton and Hindley.
- **Community Library** – Beech Hill, Ince, Golborne, Marsh Green, Aspull, Shevington, Platt Bridge and Orrell (Lamberhead Green).
- **Outreach Library** – Hope (Winstanley) and Abram.

Since 2005, the majority of the library buildings portfolio has benefitted from investment, both internally and externally as illustrated in Table 1. WLCT has spent approximately £700,000 and worked with Wigan Council and its partners to maximise the potential of other investment funds to improve library services.
• Libraries have been fully refurbished at Golborne, Ashton and Aspull.
• Libraries at Standish, Shevington, Tyldesley and Marsh Green have been part refurbished.
• Libraries have newly opened, co-located with Schools, at Platt Bridge and Lamberhead Green (Abraham Guest High School).
• Libraries across the borough have had “Explore” branding introduced to provide a more modern feel and look.
• Co-location of services has also occurred with Sure Start Children Centres at Standish and Aspull Libraries, Wigan Council services via the Local Life Centre and Skills Shop at Marsh Green and Police at Ashton and Shevington.
• Wigan Adult & Children’s Libraries are set to relocate to the new Wigan Life Centre in the centre of Wigan.

Despite this, significant building challenges remain due to the age and fabric of a number of library buildings, most notably at Hindley Library. A number of buildings have constraining access issues, which need considerable investment to resolve, primarily those at Hindley and Tyldesley. The scale of the improvement works necessary at the Turnpike Centre, which incorporates the library at Leigh, results in any refurbishment and building works being high cost, a recent feasibility study undertaken identified this cost at over £2 million.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Investment</th>
<th>Minor Investment</th>
<th>Major Building Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relocation / full refurbishment</td>
<td>Mini refurbishment</td>
<td>Hindley – major water ingress and poor accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £100,000</td>
<td>Under £50,000</td>
<td>Ashton – age of building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golborne</td>
<td>Tyldesley</td>
<td>Tyldesley – accessibility and age of building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashton</td>
<td>Hindley</td>
<td>Atherton – poor location, age of building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platt Bridge</td>
<td>Standish</td>
<td>Ashton – age of building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamberhead</td>
<td>Shevington</td>
<td>Leigh – scale of investment to make fit for purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>Aspull</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marsh Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 6 outlines the Council’s 2011 assessment of building costs, maintenance backlog, access, suitability and sufficiency and capital receipt potential for each of the current library buildings where the landlord is Wigan Council.

In addition to this information there have been recent maintenance issues at Hindley Library in relation to severe water ingress. The initial quote to resolve the water ingress and install urgent pigeon proofing is £8,000. This does not include

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5 The Leigh Turnpike Centre Redevelopment Feasibility Report 2010 – John MacAslan & Co
the costs associated with a full inspection of the roof to prevent future water ingress.

The five libraries that still present the Library Service and Council as the landlord with significant costs following an assessment in 2011\(^6\) are identified in Table 2.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Suitability*</th>
<th>Sufficiency*</th>
<th>DDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashton</td>
<td>High in excess of £150,000</td>
<td>Good - town centre</td>
<td>Good - over 60%</td>
<td>Good - over 60%</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atherton</td>
<td>High in excess of £150,000</td>
<td>Poor - out of town centre</td>
<td>Fair - over 50%</td>
<td>Fair - over 50%</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindley</td>
<td>High in excess of £150,000 - current critical issues</td>
<td>Good - town centre</td>
<td>Poor - less than 50%</td>
<td>Poor - less than 50%</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>High in excess of £150,000</td>
<td>Good - town centre</td>
<td>Good - over 60%</td>
<td>Good - over 60%</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyldesley</td>
<td>Medium under £150,000</td>
<td>Good - town centre</td>
<td>Fair - over 50%</td>
<td>Poor - less than 50%</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Suitability and sufficiency assessments are defined in Appendix 6.

Table 2 highlights the library buildings that are least fit for purpose, whilst presenting significant ongoing costs. Hindley Library presents the most critical challenge of all the library buildings. Opportunities to improve each building identified in Table 2, need to be carefully considered as part of this modernisation strategy and future phases of development of the service.

### 2.4 Staffing and Volunteers

The Library Service employs a range of skilled and dedicated staff, who are committed to their communities and customers. Library staff are champions of reading, learning and inclusion. In addition to providing core library services such as loan of books and provision of IT, staff support the achievement of important outcomes on key borough priorities through the delivery of:

- Reading initiatives, - reading groups, children and adult summer reading challenges, author events.

\(^6\) Wigan Council 2011 Library Buildings Review
- Information - enquires service, Ask About Business, community information, access to online resources.
- Adult learning - English conversation classes, basic IT courses, job clubs.
- Children - under five sessions, baby rhyme times, homework help and family activities.

Over the past eighteen months, the Library Service has focused on improving its approach to customer service. Many library staff have achieved NVQ\(^7\) Level 2 in Customer Service and the Library Service as a whole, with the other Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust Cultural Services, achieved Customer Service Excellence\(^8\) in November 2010.

In 2005, the service developed the capacity within some teams to develop and improve delivery against key thematic areas of service, such as working with children and young people. Over time, this focus has changed from thematic teams delivering customer facing services and activities to a role of supporting and embedding provision into the roles of frontline library staff.

Currently lone working policies, or the peaks and troughs of public usage, result in the need for two members of library staff to be available at all times, even in the smallest of libraries to ensure quality customer service. However, much of the time, in smaller libraries, public usage of the service does not warrant double staffing. There is potential to make more efficient use of staffing resource.

In 2006 the Library Service developed “Get Involved,” a volunteering programme with support from Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. As a result, there have been as many as 71 volunteers within the service in a year providing 3,455 volunteering hours. Volunteering is now a fundamental part of the service, supporting and enhancing library services for the benefit of the public. In return the service has been able to provide volunteers with a supportive environment to fulfil their interests or gain experience and skills. A particular success is Hope Library, which is completely run by volunteers; however, this example is also unique and it is acknowledged that not every community has the capacity or capability to run their own library service.

2.5 Conclusions - Current Position and Challenges

In the last five years, the Library Service has made significant improvements in a range of areas. Working in partnership, co-locating services and with volunteers has provided experience that will provide a clear framework to progress to The Next Chapter for Wigan Library Service.

\(^7\) National Vocational Qualifications
\(^8\) Customer Service Excellence (CSE) is a framework for embedding improved customer service delivery in organisational culture.
3 Modernisation and The Next Chapter

The need to modernise Wigan Library Service, despite the successes and improvement journey of recent years, has been significantly accentuated by the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review of public services and subsequent reduction of £1.1 million in budget. The Library Service consequently needs to take stock and think creatively and collaboratively to enable the service to provide customer choice and value for money.

3.1 New Technologies

Maximising the potential and efficiency that new technologies present, is pivotal to The Next Chapter for Wigan Library Service. Embracing the technological revolution, extending the library online offer so that services can be accessed 24/7 from home, remotely and in the library.

3.1.1 Self Service

In recent years, we have witnessed the retail sector begin to shift away from rows of staffed tills and instead towards the use of self-service technology. Libraries have begun to adopt this self-service ethos too, enabling staff to spend less time stamping books and more time with their customers, helping them to find books or to help them with the computers, supporting their access to information. Fines and fees can similarly be paid at self-service terminals and consideration of shifting this aspect online is already underway.

Self-service puts library staff on more of an equal footing with their customers. This is the direction in which Wigan’s libraries have been heading with three fully self-service libraries operational at Wigan, Lamberhead Green and Hope Community Library. Self-service can support a library being open for longer, allowing staff resources to be spread across more hours or freed up to provide additional customer support and to deliver events and activities.

Similarly, the advent of self-service computer booking options is a straightforward and cost effective mechanism which enables the library user to access People’s Network computer terminals without the need for face-to-face staff interactions. Efficiencies are clearly realised from this technological advancement.

This modernisation strategy will see self service implemented in all libraries, with the aim of ensuring that the staffing resource which the service can afford is used as efficiently as possible. This allows a focus on providing the

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9 Since 1998, public libraries have provided access to the internet via library PCs as part of the People’s Network
maximum opening hours possible and continued provision of higher value activity such as children’s activities and learning.

3.1.2 The Online Offer

Transactions and enquiries of all natures are experiencing a channel shift, moving from face-to-face and over the phone towards greater use of the online medium. Wigan Libraries’ online presence as the nth library takes advantage of the communication tools afforded by the web, which allow it to do everything a physical library does. The social value of a library is one of its greatest benefits: a true online library provides that benefit by using social media and opening communication channels to satisfy the diverse needs of its user base. Wigan Libraries’ nth library will be agile and dynamic in its use of social media and other online technologies, reflecting the rapid pace with which new services rise and fall, matching its content and services to appropriate channels and user groups.

The rise of ebooks is inexorable, and it is something for which we think Wigan’s library service is almost ready. Feedback received during the four month, 2010-11 public consultation process indicated that a number of our users are familiar with ebooks, but the issues holding us back – licensing costs, the formats used by ebooks and the compatibility of other libraries’ ebook lending schemes with popular hardware such as Amazon’s Kindle – were still unresolved.

Teething problems such as these are being faced nationally and are in the process of being remedied. There is work going on at a regional level to adopt a consortium approach to ebook procurement, which will ensure that Wigan Libraries get the best possible value for money. Compatibility and format issues are expected to be resolved by the end of 2011.

Library content has been shifting online for many years. For example, The Oxford English Dictionary is the most comprehensive reference work on the English language. The print version of the second edition runs to 23 volumes, but the forthcoming third edition will only exist online. Many of our traditional resources will only be available online in the future.

3.1.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Resource

To maximise the relevance and potential of technology both in accessing library and other public services, it is critical that libraries play a role in developing digital literacy and closing the digital divide. This role hinges on providing access to key ICT resources and supporting Wigan residents to become digital citizens.
Far from replacing the library, the internet has enabled Wigan Library Service to radically extend and enhance the services it provides. Internet access on library computers has encouraged people, who otherwise could not afford it, to go online and stay in contact with their families, pay bills and find important information. The unique IT learning sessions have proved extremely useful particularly for those ‘not born digital’ and have also brought a new social dimension to the library.

Wigan Libraries has significantly enhanced its use of modern customer-facing technology in the last six or seven years. Specifically, it has installed 186 modern, free to use computers across all sites, which were updated in 2010. This resource will very much stay at the heart of libraries’ core offer.

Supporting the Library service ICT offer across the service has been the ever popular ‘My Guide’ free introductory IT courses. ‘My Guide’ in its infancy in 2006 was rolled out across 3 libraries and can now boast 7 regular courses with in excess of 200 people completing them each year. Supporting residents and groups to make the most of the ICT resources in libraries will continue to be a key objective of the service.

3.2 Book Stock and Resources

The introduction of supplier selection in January 2012 will streamline the process of getting books onto library shelves and into the hands of customers, employing the specialist knowledge of our library supplier to develop our book collection in the most cost effective and efficient way. Wigan Library Service will also continue to work within the purchasing consortium to extend its membership, increase its buying power and ability to provide value for money, in-demand stock across all libraries.

In addition, the introduction of downloadable content in the form of ebooks and audiobooks will permit 24/7 access to our stock, broadening its appeal to sections of the community that may not be attracted by traditional library services.

Wigan Libraries will aim to introduce ebooks from 2012. Audio visual stock and magazines will be reviewed and provided in the larger libraries. The emphasis will be on providing up-to-the minute stock, which meets customer needs and is delivered in the formats, and to the time scales, that best meet those expectations. Declining issues of music on CD, coupled with the increasing ease with which music can be downloaded, suggests that interest in the format is dwindling and that provision may need to be reviewed.
Every effort is made to optimise the value for money of the stock purchased, including obtaining online reference resources rather than as previously a hard copy for each branch.

In order that customers get more choice, some genre stock will be placed on stock rotation, which means that it spends six months at one library before moving onto another library.

Maximising the potential of the Library Management System to ascertain the kind of stock that our customers are interested in will ensure that budget is not wasted.

### 3.3 Improving Customer Focus

In recent years, the Library Service has restructured its management team to enable greater focus upon the delivery of improved customer service.

Specifically, a Customer Service Business Manager was appointed in March 2010 with the direct aim of enhancing the customer experience of the library visitors. This is in line with local and national feedback.

The MLA report, *What People Want from Libraries?*\(^\text{10}\) noted:

> “Alongside good customer care from staff, a good choice of books is the biggest driver of satisfaction with libraries”

Changes in the Library Service’s management and staffing structure will further develop the focus on customer service and performance, whilst providing autonomy at a local level to respond to individual communities’ needs and demands.

### 3.4 Partnerships

Since 2005, Wigan Library Service has improved its strategic focus on partnership working. Public, private and third sector agreements have incorporated co-locations with schools, community centres and the Wigan Life ‘Joint Service’ Centre to name but a few.

*The Next Chapter* identifies further opportunities for collaborative partnership working. This includes co-locating further libraries with partner organisations and, where appropriate, integrating services or sharing staffing.

\(^{10}\) What do the Public want from Libraries? MLA 2010
Co-locating services can reduce the revenue costs of individual libraries, sharing utility and maintenance costs. From a customer’s perspective it makes sense for a number of services they may wish to access to be located in one building.

Further co-location opportunities have become apparent through consultation with partners and the development of this strategy, which could resolve some of the remaining library building challenges, as outlined in section 2.3 of this report.

Section 5.3 later in this report evidences why certain libraries need to change their operational models, due to scoring lowest against the five key criteria. Scoring was carried out for each library in its current operating model. In working with partners we have prioritised opportunities that might improve the libraries that currently score lowest.

Opportunities to relocate libraries include:

3.4.1 Hindley Library

Relocating Hindley Library to Hindley Day Care Centre. The day care provision would be rationalised, some People Directorate staff would continue to be based in and deliver some services from the current day care building. For the Library Service this opportunity provides significant improvements in the accessibility of the building, reduces the running costs and provides a building that does not have the severe maintenance and building fabric concerns. There are opportunities to work with People Services to provide a community café and ensure that day care users take full advantage of library services.

3.4.2 Ince Library

Relocate Ince Library from its current building to the Health and Community Centre run by Douglas Valley Community. This opportunity would result in several public-facing services being located in the same building including a community centre, café and Local Life Centre and library. The proposal is to share resources with the Local Life Centre, which would reduce the expenditure on staffing in addition to building and revenue costs.

3.4.3 Atherton Library
Relocate Atherton Library to the 14-19 education site due to open on the current Hesketh Fletcher site in September 2012. This opportunity would provide an improved building close to Tesco, to reduce revenue costs by co-locating and would present opportunities to reduce expenditure through shared staffing. The library resource would be available both to members of the public and to students.

### 3.4.4 Tyldesley Library

An opportunity that the Library Service has also explored was with Tyldesley Community Education Centre. This is to move the library, in a much reduced form, from its current building to the Education Centre, which has been extremely supportive of continuing library services in the Tyldesley area. Currently it is not the Library Service’s recommendation to move forward with this proposal, due to Tyldesley Library achieving well against the five key criteria; geographically it would be favourable to have a minimum of a Local Library in this location. However should any of the other opportunities elsewhere in the borough not progress, it may be worth revisiting this co-location if Tyldesley Community Education Centre is willing.

### 3.4.5 Beech Hill Library

In addition to the above partnership opportunities, the Library Service is exploring opportunities to develop *drop off and pickup points* within community or public-facing facilities at Beech Hill. A facility has been identified at Orrell for a one of these points and the volunteer run library at Abram will be converted to a drop-off and pick-up point.

Services working together, sharing staffing and optimising resources could provide opportunity for libraries to be open longer than if only library staff resources are available. The libraries where the service will work with partners to share staffing resource include:

- Platt Bridge,
- Marsh Green,
- Potentially in relocated libraries at Ince, Atherton and Hindley.

The partnership element of this strategy is critical to retaining library services in so many communities, despite a £1.1m reduction in budget. Working collaboratively has allowed *The Next Chapter* to retain core services in many communities that would have otherwise been under significant risk.
3.5 Volunteers

As illustrated in this report in section 2.4, volunteering is well developed within the Library Service. *The Next Chapter* seeks to develop further the potential of volunteers in a number of ways.

Firstly, for the Library Service to embrace the potential of the “Friends of” groups attached to particular libraries, working with them to identify ways to enhance and develop further library provision and services. This has been a success at Atherton Library, whose “Friends of” group was established on 2009.

To explore at Aspull whether volunteers can run the library, which was developed to be fully self-service in March 2010. Rather than withdraw the service, which scores poorly under the five criteria, the Library Service will work to identify volunteering capacity to provide library services in Aspull.

To expand and develop what the current Home Delivery Service is able to achieve in providing library services to older and vulnerable people in their homes.

To maximise the potential of volunteers more generally within the service, to support and enhance services to the public. In this aim the Library Service will identify volunteer schemes already delivered within localities that may be drawn on, in addition to develop capacity internally.

Volunteering can be of particular benefit as it is a mechanism for local communities to provide input and decide what is important to them in terms of services.

3.6 Libraries Spaces

Public libraries are traditionally predicated on a Victorian delivery model of “street corner universities” in locations close to residential accommodation.

In recent decades, Wigan has witnessed numerous well established town centres drift away from their locations of over a hundred years ago, moving with new developments and building works, often away from where the library is located. Similarly Wigan, in more recent years, has begun to witness other services shift away from street corners to area-based provision.

A slightly more geographically disparate library model along these lines would concentrate a higher level of in-depth, quality services and activities in one location, providing better value for money and more of a reason to visit and use libraries. Out of town shopping centres have become popular due to the
concentrated nature of their offer; if libraries can adopt an approach which provides more focus on fewer locations, running more events and activities and providing more books and computing facilities, they may see corresponding upturns in usage. Best value and the changes in society would suggest that this is the library offer of the future. However, *The Next Chapter* recognises that a more in-depth offer in fewer locations is currently not right for all communities and residents and several incremental steps taken over time will lead to this future model of library provision.

To continue to provide library spaces in as many communities as possible, it is essential that the way those services are delivered is changed. This will be achieved by co-locating libraries with other customer-facing public services and integrating services and staffing at some sites.

The borough’s libraries are currently split into four tiers of library: Town; Area; Community; and Outreach, with different levels of service at each tier. As part of this modernisation review, Wigan Libraries will continue to be divided into four tiers differentiated by size, operating model and the range of products and services available to the customer. The concept is based on the retail tiering of stores such as Tesco and Sainsbury’s, developed in response to key factors such as local demand, lifestyle needs, cost effectiveness and opportunity.

*Libraries Central* will be the format for the two town centre libraries at Wigan and Leigh. These libraries will have the longest opening hours, broadest range of library products and services. Self-service issue and self-service PC booking technology will interface with staff and customers alike. Wigan and Leigh libraries are both co-located with other public-facing services.

*Libraries Local* will be located in smaller town centres. These libraries will have a broad range of book stock, computers, information provision and some events and activities. Self-service issue and self-service PC booking technology will be available and channel shift encouraged. Many will be co-located or will host other services.

*Libraries Express* are located in other urban areas and communities, they provide convenience in accessing core library services such as books, information provision and computers. These libraries will be co-located with other public and community services and delivered in partnership. They will be self-service only, where the customer issues their own books or accesses computers, with the support of supervising staff when required.

*Libraries Direct* provides access to a range of library services that can be accessed from the comfort of a customer’s home 24/7. These services include online reference resources, reservation of book and audio visual
stock, access to community information, membership, booking on events and activities, access to ebooks. Libraries Direct will also provide an ordering service direct to a customer’s door (older or vulnerable customers) or to an agreed community drop-off and pick-up point. Regular demonstrations of digital technology such as laptop lending through Digital Ambassadors will also be encouraged to entice users online and contribute towards bridging the digital divide. Museums, Libraries and Archives Council pilot work on this is occurring in Devon and Birmingham and we will channel good practice into our Home Delivery offer where feasible.

Though Wigan residents may find changes to the delivery of library services in their locality, this tiering of libraries provides cost effective services whilst maximising accessibility to library spaces and services across the borough.

Appendix 4 provides further information on the library offer at each tier of Library. Appendix 1 illustrates the locations across the borough of each library under each library tier.
## 4 The Next Chapter Proposals

**Libraries Central** - these libraries will have the longest opening hours, are fully self service and have the broadest range of library products and services. *Approximately 50 - 55 opening hours per week.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Implement full self-service to retain similar opening hours. Co-located with Arts and Heritage Services (Turnpike Gallery and Local History). A range of surgeries delivered by Work Solutions, the Police and HMRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>Wigan Adults’ and Children’s libraries integrated into the north Wigan Life Centre site. Sharing learning space and resources with Skills Shop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix 1 Map 1.1b

**Libraries Local** - these libraries will be self serviced, have a broad range of book stock, computers, information provision and some events and activities. *Approximately 35 – 40 opening hours per week.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashton</td>
<td>A Local Life Centre to be integrated in library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golborne</td>
<td>Day Care services to be delivered from the library, better utilising some of the building capacity for front line services. A Local Life Centre to be integrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindley</td>
<td>To relocate library services to the building currently operating as Hindley Day Care Centre. To share office space with Care Centre staff and work together to maximise use of the library by Day Care centre users and deliver a community café. Hindley Day Care Centre is on First Avenue in Hindley 0.3miles from the current location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamberhead Green</td>
<td>Continue to deliver public and school library services at Abraham Guest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standish</td>
<td>Continue to co locate with the Children Centre that is currently located at the library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyldesley</td>
<td>Continue to deliver a broad range of services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix 1 Map 1.1c

**Libraries Express** - provide convenience in accessing core library services such as books, information provision and computers. These libraries are often co located with other public and community services and delivered in partnership. They are usually self service, where the customer issues their own books or access computers, with the support of supervising staff when required. *Minimum of 18 opening hours per week.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspull</td>
<td>A Children’s Centre is co-located with the library. The proposal is to create a volunteer run library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atherton</td>
<td>To relocate library services to the 14 – 19 education site (previously the Hesketh Fletcher site).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ince  To relocate core library services to the health and community centre with the Life Centre spoke. Ince Library building to be retained to deliver School Library Services - a service providing library resources to schools within the borough.

Hope  Children centre, school and community centre all on site. Volunteer run.

Marsh  Library staff to provide services at current peak times (after school and holiday) and work with the Life Centre staff to provide library services in non peak times.

Green  School staff to support counter and self service, library staff to provide stock and activity support. LIFT Centre, Housing and Children Centre all on site.

Shevington  To continue library services in a reduced capacity at Shevington. Whilst exploring how this might be extended working with the Parish Council and volunteers.

See Appendix 1 Map 1.1d

**Libraries Direct** - provides access to a range of library services that can be accessed from the comfort of a customer’s home. These services include online reference resources, reservation of book and audio visual stock, access to community information, membership, booking on events and activities, access to e-books. Library Direct will also provide an ordering service direct to a customer’s door (older or vulnerable customers) or to an agreed community drop off and pick up point.

**Housebound**  Continue to deliver and expand using volunteers.

**Abram**  Convert into drop-off and pick-up point staffed by volunteers.

**Orrell**  Provide a drop-off and pick-up point staffed by community volunteers at Orrell Post.

**Beech Hill**  Provision of a drop-off and pick-up point is being explored in an alternative location. Library services will no longer be delivered from the current building. Beech Hill is in close proximity to the new Wigan Library as part of the Wigan Life Centre; locally, provision will be provided through a drop-off and pick-up point.

See Appendix 1 Map 1.1e
## Withdrawal of Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Libraries</td>
<td>Withdraw. Cost per visit is over £14. Static libraries below £3. 55% of mobile library users in 2010/11 also used a static library. 1% users identified as having a disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Services</td>
<td>Savings of over 25% through management restructure and withdrawing from current accommodation at Bryn, saving over 60% of current library accommodation costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Developing The Next Chapter

The period 2011-15 will witness significant changes to the Wigan Library service as compared to its existing guise. A range of intelligence has informed our approach to The Next Chapter, ranging from public and web-based consultation through to dialogue with our partners and elected members of the Council.

5.1 Consultation

Between November 2010 and April 2011, Wigan Library Service conducted a broad public consultation exercise. Members of the public were consulted over a four month period via questionnaires, public meetings, and “Have Your Say” sessions in every library, and focus groups with children and young people. In total there were 4,531 questionnaires returned and 564 people were engaged with face to face. In addition to the formal consultation methods, the public made their views known through a range of methods of correspondence. This included nine petitions with 9,519 signatures.

It should be noted that out of the borough as a whole, only around 1.5% of the population responded to the survey, and 9.5% of all active members of the service responded. Whilst a response rate of 9.5% of active members is a good outcome across the borough as a whole, a large number of people did not have their say in the process. This was despite the process being promoted in local press, on regional TV and radio channels and via the service’s own website. Figures from the Sport England ‘Active People’ survey demonstrate the lack of engagement within the borough, with a response rate of 40% of people using libraries in 2010 (NI 9).\footnote{Active People Survey 2010. Sport England NI 9 measured the percentage of adults in a Local Authority area who have used a public library service in the past 12 months. Use is for leisure purposes, including informal learning and studying or research for personal interests. The measure was ended in December 2010.}

A full analysis of the data from the consultation is included in Appendix 7. Key messages included:

- Borrowing books, finding out information & access to computers - top three reasons for visiting.
- Concerns for elderly, very young and disadvantaged communities if services withdrawn.
- Libraries are at the heart of community. If closed they will never reopen.
- Half the respondents said they walk to their local library.
Most frequent suggestions to reduce budget: to reduce opening hours and increase income.

An online survey was undertaken for four weeks, between 17 June and 14 July 2011. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the opinions of current library users in regard to online service provision as it stood at the time, and to inform the planning of online services in the future. Appendix 10 provides detail on the findings of this online survey.

The survey’s 148 responses cannot be used as representative of the whole of Wigan Libraries’ customer base, nor even of those using online services, but they are indicative of the opinions of library users. The most significant findings were that people visit the website to search for, reserve and renew books; that library users would like to be able to download eBooks and audio books, and make payments online as well as interacting with more social forms of online service delivery; and that respondents have access to a wide range of consumer electronics devices, ranging from the prosaic (laptops and PCs) to the less commonplace (smart phones and tablets).

As Wigan Libraries’ online offer is developed further, it is imperative that these findings are taken into account and in some cases – such as the “something else” which people would like to see in the future – more clarity from library users would be useful in defining that offer.

In addition to the public consultation, current library service partners and new potential partners were consulted, including meeting with library “Friends of” groups at Atherton, Standish and Tyldesley.

Library staff and WLCT trustees were consulted on a number of occasions during the formation of the proposals. In addition to this, Wigan Council’s commissioning department, Informal Leadership meeting and Opposition Briefing were involved during the development of The Next Chapter. Furthermore, the proposals have been shared with the regional representative of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, which will integrate with the Arts Council in October 2011.

Complementing the local consultation, direction has been taken from relevant recent strategic publications including: the 2009 enquiry into the Public Library Service Provision in the Wirral; the 2010 MLA study What do the public want from libraries?; and the 2009 DCMS Digital Britain Report12. Local Authority reviews of public sector customer service transformation and efficiency including the 2006 Varney13 and 2007 Quirk14 reviews have also been taken into account.

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12 Digital Britain Report 2009 – Department for Business Innovation & Skills
13 Varney, D., 2006. Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer
5.2 Policy and Strategic Context

The Library Service has made extensive use of national research underpinned by local consultation to define this modernisation strategy.

There are a number of key documents that provide guidance on the provision of library services, these are further outlined below and have been considered in developing *The Next Chapter*.

5.2.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964

Critically the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964\(^{15}\) set out that:

“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons to make use thereof”

5.2.2 The Wirral Inquiry

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council proposed to restructure its Public Library Service in 2008. It proposed to invest £20 million in 13 neighbourhood centres each with a library at its heart, replacing 24 libraries.

This resulted in a local inquiry by the Department of Culture Media and Sport which reported in 2009\(^{16}\). Wirral Council was found to be in breach of its statutory duties because it:

“failed to make an assessment of local needs (or alternatively to evidence knowledge of verifiable local needs) in respect of its Library Services”

The Wirral inquiry in 2009 determined that the ‘comprehensive and efficient service’ that local authorities are required to provide is a balance between meeting local needs using available resources in a way that is appropriate to the needs of the community:

“Consideration of the wide range of those needs caught by the definition of all those who live, work and study in the area, and the specific needs of adults, children and young people of all ages “


\(^{15}\) Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

\(^{16}\) Wirral Inquiry, Charteris 2009
5.2.3 What do the Public Want from Libraries?

*What do the Public Want from Libraries?* was produced by the Museums, Library and Archives Council in 2010 for practitioners in the Public Library sector following extensive consultation and focus group sessions across the UK. It analysed customer perceptions of Libraries in the UK and its main findings are summarised below:

- Libraries are loved and trusted and the Public Library brand is strong.
- Awareness of the Library offer is low. The public think Libraries in the main are about books and reading.
- Libraries should spend more time on motivating people to visit instead of trying to remove barriers.
- Users are not a homogeneous group – they want different things.
- Basics matter – Good customer service and book stock are vital.

5.2.4 The Modernisation of Public Libraries (DCMS 2010)

This was a Department for Culture Media and Sport policy statement which sets out six principles which Public Libraries should aspire to:

- To drive up the quality of Library services by establishing a core offer to all users and to bring all Library services up to the standard of the best
- To increase usage of Libraries.
- To ensure that Libraries are able to continue to provide a good service in times of economic pressure.
- To ensure that Libraries continue to respond to the changing expectations of customers who want immediate access to information.
- To grasp the opportunities presented by digitisation.
- To demonstrate the value of Public Libraries to the public.

5.3 Developing the evidence base

A thorough research and evidence-gathering exercise has been conducted to support the development of *The Next Chapter*. Identifying changes to the library service delivery model, particularly if library service withdrawal is considered, is not straightforward since each library supports its local area, is well loved by its users and is often seen as an essential service in that area. Library service withdrawal often tends to impact hardest on children and young families, students, older people and those out of work.

The result of the Wigan Libraries research and evidence gathering exercise has identified five essential criteria with nineteen sub criteria that support the retention of a library, or identify the libraries in greatest need of change to
improve their achievement against the five criteria. These five criteria are a mixture of community need, public use and cost factors and were agreed by Wigan Council’s Cabinet in November 2010.

The following libraries and associated services, listed in alphabetical order, scored lowest against the five criteria. Scoring was carried out for each library in its current operating model: as such, these libraries are most at risk and need of significant change or review.

- Abram
- Aspull
- Beech Hill
- Hindley
- Ince
- Mobile Library Service

Further information on how each library or service meets the five criteria under the current and proposed model is attached in Appendix 5.

Each of the current libraries has a profile (see Appendix 9), detailing their performance, value for money, costs and the community they serve. This profile also includes the findings from the 2010-11 public consultation. These profiles have been used to assess how each library scores against each of the Council Cabinet approved criteria.
6 The Business Case for *The Next Chapter*

The proposals detailed within *The Next Chapter* will achieve the £1.1 million reduction to the Library Service budget.

The introduction of self-service technology in all libraries in conjunction with sharing resources with partners in some locations will result in a decrease to frontline staffing budget.

Co-locating libraries with other services will reduce library building running and maintenance costs. In particular expenditure will be reduced by moving Ince Library to Ince Community Life and Health Centre, Hindley Library to Hindley Day Care Centre, Atherton Library to the Atherton 14-19 education site and provide a ‘drop off and pick up point’ at Beech Hill rather than the library in its current format.

Restructuring the Library Service’s management and support service staffing will make savings in excess of 25% to this element of the Library Service budget. In addition, these functions will move out of their current Libraries Headquarters accommodation in Bryn, securing up to 70% reduction in central premises costs.

Changes to stock selection and rotation should reduce spend on book stock and resources, capitalising on the best value the Library Service achieves from being part of the Greater Manchester Stock Procurement Consortium, which has expanded to form the North West and Yorkshire Libraries Joint Stock Procurement Consortium with 33 member library authorities.

It is proposed that Mobile Library Services, which currently cost £14 per visit in comparison to less than £3 at static libraries, will be withdrawn. Data shows that 55% of mobile library users in 2010/11 also used a static library. The Mobile Library Service costs approximately £220,000 each year to deliver: this is 20% of the full £1.1 million reduction in Library Service budget. One per cent of Mobile Library users have been identified as having a disability. These customers and those who are infirm or vulnerable will be referred to the Home Delivery Service.

Appendix 2 outlines the costs for each library/service under the current delivery model and *The Next Chapter* recommendations. These costs are indicative and reflect the proposals at this stage. In the implementation of these proposals some reengineering of costs will be necessary within the revised budget following the reduction by £1.1 million.

To achieve the changes necessary to implement *The Next Chapter*, some initial one-off investment will be critical. This funding is necessary to purchase
and implement full self service across all libraries and to fund the set up costs involved in relocating libraries. The amount of investment to facilitate *The Next Chapter* is approximately £250,000.
7 Summary

To ensure the continuing evolution of Wigan Libraries over the next four years and beyond, in conjunction with a £1.1 million reduction in budget, is a challenging task.

While the withdrawal of a number of libraries may be the most cost effective way of reducing the Library Service's budget, this does not necessarily meet the needs of the residents in the borough. However, continuing to deliver across multiple sites, with £1.1 million less budget, without significant changes in the delivery model would have reduced the quality of services to most communities in terms of book stock, its provision for opening hours and programming and planning.

The Next Chapter presents a hybrid approach. It retains library services and spaces in many communities across the borough and provides customer choice and value for money through modernisation and integration.

The new tiered approach, linked to better online access, new technologies and better customer service will ensure The Next Chapter will achieve:

“Wigan Library Service: providing customer choice and value for money through modernisation and integration.”
8 Bibliography


A Local Enquiry into the Public Library Service provided by Wirral MBC. DCMS. September 2009.


What do the Public want from Libraries ? MLA 2010

Digital Britain Report 2009 – Department for Business Innovation & Skills

The Public Libraries & Museum Act –1964

Community Managed Libraries – MLA 2011


Wigan Libraries Public Consultation proposal report – Wigan Council Cabinet 18th November

Varney, D., 2006. Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer

9 Glossary

**Active library member**: someone who was borrowed at least one book in the last 12 months.

**Ask About Business**: an online resource supporting North West businesses, jobseekers and consumers delivered via [http://askaboutbusiness.org/](http://askaboutbusiness.org/).

**Audio Visual**: the term audio-visual or A/V is used usually as industry jargon, describing works with a type of visual and/or audio format such as Compact Discs, DVDs or talking books.

**Author events**: promotional events where authors showcase a publication to a public audience.

**Baby Rhyme Time**: interactive sessions undertaken in public libraries for parents and babies commonly using toys and various forms of literature and music.

**Bookstart**: Bookstart offers the gift of free books to all children at three key ages before they start school, to inspire a love of reading that will give children a flying start in life.

**CILIP**: The Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals. This is the professional body for librarians in the UK.

**Co-location**: the sharing of building premises and services, commonly but not exclusively in the public and voluntary sectors

**DCMS**: the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This government department has responsibility for cultural services.

**Ebook**: an electronic book (also e-book, ebook, digital book) is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices

**Fiction**: stories created from the writers’ imaginations.

**HMRC**: Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs.

**Information and communication technologies**: commonly known as ICT, consists of all technical means used to handle information and aid communication, including computer and network hardware as well as necessary software. ICT also consists of computers and related devices as well as telephony, broadcast media, all types of audio and video processing and transmission and network based control and monitoring functions.
**Kindle:** a handheld electronic device for reading ebooks sold by Amazon.

**Laptops:** a laptop computer, usually called a notebook computer by manufacturers, is a battery or AC-powered personal computer generally smaller than a briefcase that can easily be transported and conveniently used in temporary spaces such as on airplanes, in libraries, temporary offices and at meetings.

**Local Life Centres:** Wigan Council customer access points for Council services.

**MLA:** Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. This organisation has been responsible for the broad strategic direction of library service development, but its functions will be merged into Arts Council England in October 2011.

**Non-fiction:** factual books including hobbies, cooking and travel.

**One Stop Shops:** customer access points for the A to Z of Council and other public services.

**PC:** personal computer, either a desktop PC or a laptop.

**People’s Network:** the People’s Network, or PN, is your network, whoever you are, whatever it is you want to do. It is delivered by England’s public libraries, managed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and was initially supported by lottery funding.

**Smart phone:** a smart phone (or smartphone) is a high-end mobile phone that offers more advanced computing ability and connectivity than a standard mobile phone.

**Social Media:** social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.

**Summer Reading Challenge:** the national Summer Reading Challenge, coordinated by The Reading Agency, is run in 97% of UK public libraries. With 760,000 children aged 4-11 taking part, the Summer Reading Challenge is the biggest national reading initiative. It runs in libraries throughout the summer holidays, with incentives, activities and events designed to create a real buzz around children’s reading. The challenge is simple - to read six or more library books over the summer.

**Sure Start:** children’s centres provide a variety of advice and support for parents and carers. Their services are available from pregnancy to when a child goes into reception class at primary school.
**Tablet:** a touchscreen computer, such as the iPad, which provides an alternative to some of the functionality of PCs.

**Twitter:** a form of social media (see above).

**Skills Shop:** Wigan Council shops in Leigh, Wigan and Marsh Green which support residents into employment and other initiatives.

**Under fives sessions:** activities for parents and young children commonly held in public libraries encompassing interactive reading and fun.