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Youth Libraries Board

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

At the July CTS Board meeting, Members agreed to invite the Youth Libraries Board to give an update on their work to give more young people the opportunity to use and shape library services.

Miranda McKearney, Director of the Reading Agency and Sue Jones, Senior Project Manager-Young People at the Reading Agency, will give a short presentation to the Board. They have prepared the attached report to give Members an overview of the project.

Recommendations

Members to note the background information and comment on potential areas of collaboration between the LG Group and the Youth Libraries Board. This could include:

1. Identifying links with the Future Libraries Programme, and helping to share examples of councils with an innovative approach to involving young people in the design and delivery of library services;
2. An update about the Youth Libraries Board in the CTS e-bulletin;
3. Explore speaking opportunities at relevant LG Group conferences.

Action

Subject to Members' comments, officers to take forward suggested actions.

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Youth Libraries Board

“This has really changed young people’s views of what the library is about”
Shehryar, 15, High Wycombe

Overview

1. The vision of the National Youth Libraries Board is for more young people to be using and shaping library services. The Board has developed the Library Offer to Young People through extensive consultation with young people. This expresses what young people *expect* libraries to provide; we aim for library services to work towards achieving the full Offer everywhere, and for local authorities to recognise and integrate this work.
2. The Offer has emerged from a national public libraries’ change programme for young people led by The Reading Agency and funded by MLA. In spring 2006 the National Youth Libraries Board was established to champion the role of libraries in delivering against key government agendas, underpinned by the principles and best practice established through the programme. The main focus of the Board is now on the Library Offer, and includes work with young people to develop volunteering and create The Big Secret, a new youth-led library campaign.

National context

3. Libraries offer young people safe, welcoming spaces and inspiring learning and reading opportunities. They support young people’s educational achievement, skills, confidence and self-esteem; encouraging them to develop the reading habit through participation and active citizenship. Libraries also support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing targeted services for those at risk of exclusion. Library authorities working towards the Library Offer have developed significant volunteering opportunities for young people, with many participants receiving accreditation and in some cases, going on to employment.
4. This puts libraries in a strong position to play a significant role in emerging agendas like the Big Society, the National Citizens Service and authorities’ “duty to involve”. The Library Offer work can contribute to the Future Libraries Programme.

Delivering the Library Offer

5. The national offer helps libraries develop youth centred services that encourage active involvement in the community and in service planning. The principles of

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the offer have been tested through Reading Agency led work. This starts by empowering teenagers to design library spaces and develops into their community involvement through accredited volunteering roles and input to Youth Councils.

6. The work has happened in 75 authorities across 4 regions - the North West, South West, Yorkshire & Humberside and the West Midlands. 12,581 young people have been involved. Activities included designing spaces, selecting stock, recruiting staff and planning events.

Terms of reference

7. The national Youth Libraries Board works with key stakeholders including libraries, the youth sector, government and politicians to:
 - 7.1 Influence government policy in relation to young people;
 - 7.2 Advocate for the importance of libraries' support for young people;
 - 7.3 Demonstrate the impact of libraries' work with young people at risk of exclusion;
 - 7.4 Support libraries to adopt the full Library Offer to stimulate service change and raise their profile within the local authority.
8. The Board provides support for libraries to empower young people to:
 - 8.1 Get involved in service planning and delivery;
 - 8.2 Volunteer in the community;
 - 8.3 Use library resources to improve their life chances.

Membership

9. The Board is chaired by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and managed by The Reading Agency. It brings together partners from central government, the youth sector and libraries:
 - 9.1 Departments for Education and Culture, Media and Sport;
 - 9.2 Local Government Association;
 - 9.3 Society of Chief Librarians and Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians;
 - 9.4 National Youth Agency;
 - 9.5 North West regional Youth Libraries Board;
 - 9.6 Young person from one of the regional projects and UKYP.

Key actions in the YLB Business Plan 2010 / 2011

10. More young people at the heart of library service planning and delivery through:

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- 10.1 Increased youth commitment to the Offer through the Big Secret Campaign. Focus groups and development of volunteer/campaign roles in the regions through Youth Parliaments;
- 10.2 Development of a clear volunteering offer from libraries including Olympics and Summer Reading Challenge volunteering.
- 11. More libraries adopt and achieve the full Library Offer through The Reading Agency's:
 - 11.1 Support for the library sector with regional and individual authority training and support;
 - 11.2 Identification and dissemination of existing library best practice work with young people through presentations, conferences and media coverage.
- 12. Partners and stakeholders recognise the value and impact of libraries' work with young people, reflected in national policy and strategies through:
 - 12.1 Research to show the impact of youth involvement in libraries work with young people;
 - 12.2 Department for Education and DCMS Board members' identification of funding and partnership opportunities for Youth Library Board consideration.

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