



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport



18 January 2016

To: Council Leaders and Portfolio Holders

Dear colleagues

Libraries Shaping the Future: new good practice Toolkit

We are pleased to let you know about the Local Government Association and Department for Culture, Media and Sport Leadership for Libraries Taskforce's new online toolkit. It shows how libraries add value to wider priorities by bringing together case studies and practical information on different delivery models and smarter working to support the locally-led transformation of public libraries

The 3,000 plus public libraries across England are safe, trusted, accessible spaces with more than 225 million visits per year. More people visit libraries than attend football matches, theatres and cinemas combined. Libraries provide over 60 million hours per year of high speed internet access and free WiFi will be available across the library network in England by end of March 2016.

Libraries are increasingly community hubs where integrated services are delivered in support of local authority priorities including health and wellbeing, economic growth, supporting vulnerable people and digital skills. Many councils are already transforming their libraries as part of the wider reform agenda. For example, co-location, shared services, new delivery models such as trusts, involving volunteers and commissioning libraries to help deliver health and social care outcomes. There are also opportunities created by the localism agenda and the continued devolution of services which we need to seize.

We hope the toolkit helps you to further maximise the potential of libraries to achieve local priorities and support early intervention. Please share it widely and let us know any comments and case studies via the feedback button at the bottom of the webpage or by emailing librariestaskforce@culture.gov.uk. We will continually update the toolkit in response to feedback.



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We will continue to keep you updated on the work of the Taskforce. Their first [six-month report](#), which sets out the priorities and achievements to date, was published on 26 November 2015 if you want to find out more about their work.

We look forward to continuing to work with your members, library professionals and communities to share innovation and help keep libraries thriving in a tough financial climate.

Yours sincerely

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy
Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Cllr Ian Stephens
Chairman LGA, Culture, Tourism and Sports Board