

All for one and one for all



Black Country Libraries in Partnership
approach to a shared library management
system

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BCLiP
Black Country Libraries
in Partnership



Black Country Libraries in Partnership

The four Black Country authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton (BCLiP)

BCLiP's stated purpose is to:

- Use existing resources more effectively
- Develop joint initiatives to attract additional resources
- Share experiences and best practice
- Present a coherent face to other agencies

Current Collaboration

- Successful joint funding bids
- Staff training – including an annual joint staff conference
- Agreed standards of service – Family Friendly Standards introduced before the national offers
- Events and activities – Big Book Fortnight
- Mystery shopping
- Stock purchasing consortium
- Joint Library Management System



Shared Services project

- An initial project in 2011 to look at the feasibility of a single, shared library service across Black Country.
- Project ceased 2012 through lack of cross-region political support
- Libraries received a continuing mandate to continue to develop further collaborative working – specifically a joint LMS

Joint Library Management System

- Key drivers for this project: to save money over the length of the contract and to maximise stock budgets by providing access to a wider stock base.
- As a hosted and managed solution, back-office savings are anticipated, e.g. EDI processing, notice production, hardware/software maintenance.
- There are also benefits for customers in choice and access to a broader stock

Communication

Political:

- A mandate from Chief Executives and Leaders through the Association of Black Country Authorities
- Directors and portfolio holders kept updated on progress

Staff:

- Staff involvement in working groups on Stock; LMS specification/ procurement /implementation; Harmonisation of fees charges and policies
- Briefing notes issued to all staff
- Major theme for 2 staff conferences

Customers:

- Not so much..... as yet
- Occasional press releases
- Members of Friends groups were involved in the procurement process

Staff concerns

- Books disappearing to other authorities
- How far would the “sharing” go? Would staff be expected to work in other authorities
- How would items be delivered from one library authority to another?
- Implication of paying fines and hire charges across authorities
- Standards of service - what happens if a customer is excluded in one authority – especially from using computers?
- Entitlements need to be standardised - joint library card, same loans periods, same fines, hire charges, etc
- Regulations - joint acceptable use policy? local bylaws?
- Corporate branding - would all 4 logos have to be on all publicity? Could there be a Black Country logo?
- Consistency around loyalty cards and special offers, e.g. Christmas discounts on DVDs
- Staff need to be aware of the services offered by all 4 authorities.

Implications for customers



- A single library membership across the Black Country
- Access to stock across the Black Country
- The harmonisation of borrower categories and entitlements
- Return of items on loan to any Black Country library.
- Stock Reservation – differential charges?

Sharing customer data - Privacy impact

- Concept of joint working is not new within the Black Country, but customer information has never been shared before.
- Each authority is required to complete a Privacy Impact Assessment and notify customers (through website, posters, leaflets, etc) that their details may be shared amongst the four authorities.
- Customers may choose to opt out of this, but would then not be able to take full advantage of the shared services, such as cross-authority item requests, access to online resources, etc.

Implications for stock



- Joint Catalogue makes stock across all authorities available
- Harmonisation of stock categories, sequences and classification numbers
- Specialisation – each authority may specialise in a particular area of stock to benefit all
- Logistics - movement of stock around authorities must be effectively managed
- New stock – should not be loaned cross-authority for the first 3 months.

Procurement

- Procurement led by Wolverhampton Council on behalf of the 4 authorities.
- A framework agreement was signed by each authority.
- A working group was formed with reps from each authority to put together the specification, based on the UK Core Specification document, plus items pertinent to each BCLIP member; it included council IT and Procurement staff.
- Specification and criteria had to meet the needs of all authorities
- Each group meeting was attended by Wolverhampton procurement to ensure compliance with EU regulations.
- The invitation to tender was issued in March 2014, with responses by May 2014.
- 6 responses were received (Axiell, Capita, Civica, Infor, Innovative Interfaces, Sirsi-Dynix).

Selection Process

- 6 companies were invited to demonstrate their product to library staff, from chief librarians to frontline, plus representatives from Friends of the Library groups. (45 minutes)
- This was followed by a Q&A session. (45 minutes)
- We felt it important that customers had an input, as the public-facing catalogue is a major part of the LMS.
- The decision to choose Innovative Interfaces was based 50/50 on quality and cost.
- Their product did everything that was required in an uncomplicated way; the company had a clear development route and was embracing new technologies such as mobile devices.

Procurement - What have we learned?

- It took a LOT longer than expected.
- Time constraints caused by the imminent end of existing LMS contracts
- In hindsight we would agree our specification BEFORE involving other services, who have their own agendas and ideas of what is important
- Devote more time to supplier presentations and the opportunity to ask questions of each supplier
- Conduct visits to locations where systems are in use.

Migration

- Dudley and Wolverhampton will move to the new system at the same time, in Quarter 4 2015/16. Walsall will follow in Quarter 2 2016/17 and Sandwell to move no later than 2017/18.



- The initial moves will see each authority retain autonomy, whilst moving to greater shared services over time.

Implications for the harmonisation of policy, fees and charges

The most important part in simplifying the shared service agenda is to unify existing policies from all four authorities. BCLIP partners worked together to agree harmonisation recommendations which will be adopted as each moves to the new system.

We will harmonise:

- library membership – single card
- borrower categories
- fees and charges
- stock categories, including classification
- joint catalogue
- stock reservation
- return of items to any library

Challenges

- **Staff training** – difficult to assemble staff in a single location to undertake training via group sessions. Therefore, it is critical that staff have time to read through briefings and can practice on the new system in their own library using test data.
- **Tight deadline** – to effect real savings for this project and avoid paying for the LMS system twice, authorities need to migrate to the new supplier before having to renew existing LMS contracts.
- **Logistics** – Cannot know how much stock will be in transit from one authority to another until the system is a fully-shared. There will undoubtedly be an increase in van deliveries. There is a clear customer benefit to this, but an increased cost to library service delivery.

What next?

Potential future shared back office functions:

- Joint stock purchase
- Joint stock management policy
- Joint notifications
- Single automated renewals number
- Single automated online renewals link
- Joint postcode data files
- Joint distribution/van delivery system

Other challenges/opportunities:

- E book/audio/films apps
- Open+
- West Midland Combined Authority
- Community involvement



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Any questions?

