

## **Appendix 2. - Tender evaluation – Reason for choosing Libraries Unlimited**

There are many reasons why **Libraries Unlimited** have been chosen as our proposed new Library Service Provider. The following lists some of the key reasons:

### **1. Quality and Operational Competence**

Through Libraries Unlimited extensive experience running Devon's library service, they have tried and tested business continuity processes in place to avoid unplanned closures. They operate an extensive system of relief cover across 50 libraries in Devon and understand how to effectively deploy staff at short notice and, in a planned way, to cover annual leave requirements. They will bolster Torbay's existing relief cover by calling on relief staff from Newton Abbot, Totnes and other nearby libraries.

They have a strong track record of increasing opening hours for no additional cost. Their 2015 Community Pilots programme involved working with 13 communities across Devon to develop new approaches, increasing access to the service through innovative business models and co-production with local communities. These new approaches can be considered for Torbay's Libraries.

### **2. Equality Impact Assessments**

Libraries Unlimited bring significant experience in developing Equality Impact Assessment, Needs Assessment and consultation documents, having undertaken opening hours reviews and large-scale public consultations in Devon in recent years. They were identified as an exemplary service, whilst in Devon County Council, for the thoroughness of their equality impact assessments during the Devon Libraries' public consultation in 2014.

### **3. Back Office Library functions**

There will be opportunities for existing Libraries Unlimited services to add value to the Torbay offer:

#### **Collection HQ**

They will explore the potential of integrating Torbay's libraries into their contract with Collection HQ. This software analyses stock performance data to support effective purchasing, rotation and editing of stock. It provides information on areas that are underused or understocked; produces lists of the most popular authors/titles to support stock promotion; and analyses the data of other CollectionHQ public library customers to identify other popular titles not currently in their own stock.

#### **Inter-library Loans**

They will explore opportunities to merge the Devon and Torbay inter-library loan services. There is the potential to share their UnityUK subscription and DX courier account. Torbay libraries would be able to make direct use of their music and play sets service.

#### **'Choices' Reading Groups Service**

They will explore ways to enable reading groups across Torbay to access their 'Choices' Service which currently serves more than 300 reading groups across Devon. For a modest annual charge, this service gives groups access to almost 600 sets of titles that have been selected for their literary merit or scope to inspire discussion.

#### **4. Digital Offer**

Building on their experiences of opening the first Fab Lab in a UK public Library, Libraries Unlimited would start with a small, accessible offering for young children, using equipment such as Makey Makeys, Tiddly Bots etc., which require little or no training and are ideal for staff, parents/carers and children to learn together. This will help test whether the development of a Fab Lab in Torbay is feasible. If the Council would like to see this concept developed, Libraries Unlimited would seek external funding and explore the potential to align with South Devon College who are making significant investment in their own digital technologies.

#### **5. Outreach to vulnerable and 'hard to reach' families**

Libraries Unlimited have experience of delivering Bookstart programmes to vulnerable families using venues such as Food Banks and women's refuges. Existing contacts with Children's Centres, and the capacity of the Bookstart Coordinator could help identify scope for reaching out to vulnerable families in Torbay. Their 'Books on the Beach' initiative in 2016 saw hundreds of families introduced to library services. This initiative could be delivered in Torbay's seaside locations for very little cost.

Their new 'Unlimited Potential' project (funded by a £245,000 Arts Council grant) is building on this experience by developing creative ways of engaging families least likely to access library services. They will share their best practice with Torbay staff and stakeholders as the project develops over the next 12 months.

#### **6. Information and Learning.**

Libraries Unlimited can offer considerable transferrable experience in developing and delivering information and learning resources and activities as well as their existing offer that can be extended into Torbay.

##### **Information**

As an information provider, they will contribute an extensive range of online resources to complement Torbay's current service offer alongside extensive experience of promoting such resources and supporting staff in increasing take-up.

##### **Activities**

Libraries Unlimited activity programme in Devon has been developed and refined over several years. 'Active Life', 'Active Mind', for instance, has been running since 2012 and in every year, has generated over 150 events focused on Health and Wellbeing across the library network.

The Devon programme of activities for people with additional needs currently includes shared reading groups for people with memory loss and mental health challenges, visually-impaired reading groups and Read Easy sessions, etc.

They encourage staff initiative and innovation at a local level. As a result, in addition to their annual scheduled events programme, libraries across Devon deliver regular activities such as shared therapeutic reading groups, talks, mindfulness and craft sessions for all ages. Sharing staff expertise and good practice will allow us to deliver an extensive service offer to Torbay while offering the capability to adapt programmes to local need.

## **FabLab and BIPC**

Evidencing their commitment to sustainable innovation, Libraries Unlimited has specific expertise related to the successful delivery of two Fab Labs (Exeter and Barnstaple) and a Business and IP Centre. Bringing this commitment and culture of innovation to Torbay creates an opportunity to tap into relevant funding sources to extend the Fab Lab activities and outcomes to Torbay.

## **Partnerships**

Libraries Unlimited have several existing partnerships with organisations that work across Devon and Torbay, including the South Devon and Torbay CCG and Active Devon. Their partnership with Active Devon, for instance, includes joint activities during our Active Life, Active Mind month of activities, offering opportunities to work seamlessly in partnership across local authority boundaries on funding bids and public engagement.

## **7. ICT Support**

### **Experience**

Libraries Unlimited ICT team has extensive experience in delivering and supporting library ICT systems. Their Head of ICT & Digital, leads ICT strategy and will lead the transfer of ICT from the Council to Libraries Unlimited. The ICT team includes skills in supporting all library systems from RFID self-service and public access to technical hardware/software support.

Libraries Unlimited have well-established relationships with providers such as Bibliotheca and Axiell (and will share an LMS (Library management System) with Torbay) which they will utilise for the benefit of Torbay libraries.

### **Technical Ability – Supporting the Library Management System:**

Torbay Libraries and Libraries Unlimited use the same Library Management System.

Libraries Unlimited will have already set up SPARK and Arena with their own systems and processes by contract start date. They will use this learning to smoothly integrate Torbay's LMS systems into the Libraries Unlimited back office systems.

They have developed significant knowledge of the system during the LMS implementation project, working closely with Axiell. Torbay and Devon colleagues have worked side-by-side to develop the system with Axiell and have good working relationships.

Torbay's Library systems team will integrate well with Libraries Unlimited systems team and this will be helped by the geographical proximity of the teams. The Torbay team and Libraries Unlimited colleagues will be expected to work alongside each other to share experiences, knowledge and ideas for the development of the system to the benefit of both Torbay and Devon authorities and customers.

By fully integrating the Devon and Torbay library management systems during year 1 of Libraries Unlimited contract to run the council's library service, it would open up access for customers to a much greater quantity and range of stock and the benefits of a single library card.

Efficiency savings can then be made by restructuring and integrating both the bibliographic services and the systems/online services teams.

## **ICT Implementation Plan:**

Libraries Unlimited has been working closely with Devon County Council to smoothly transfer all its library ICT systems and services into their structure. They therefore have highly relevant recent experience to apply and understand many of the dependencies and challenges involved in the process. This will help Libraries Unlimited plan the Torbay Council's implementation in detail, pending further conversations. They believe that it is realistic to plan for a six-month implementation process due to the complexities involved.

## **8. WEB, Comms, Marketing.**

Libraries Unlimited have significant experience in rebranding library services, including Devon Libraries as part of Devon County Council (2008) and new charity Libraries Unlimited (2016).

They follow a communications and marketing strategy to raise awareness of services and have an established social media following.

As Libraries Unlimited, they have built their reputation, online following and stakeholder relationships. They have achieved significant media coverage and grown their social media following and engagement by 50%.

As a charity, they have a free Google AdWords advertising allocation, part of which will be used to promote Torbay Libraries services.

They have experience of developing guidelines, improvement processes and systems. Being engaged in a process of continuous improvement creates opportunities for economies of scale in embedding sophisticated practices in delivery of Torbay Library services.

They are able to extend the range of e-books, e-audiobooks and other e-resources available to customers, thereby broadening the appeal of library services to new audiences, including Zinio, Naxos Music Library, and COBRA.

They encourage staff to share stories where they have made a difference; e.g. helping people get a job or connecting lonely people. They are becoming increasingly sophisticated in using data and stories to capture social value and impact. As part of their social value research project with the University of Exeter they are establishing ways for staff to develop deeper organisational understanding of social value. They would use their learning to inform additional ways to demonstrate the outcomes that Torbay services deliver.

## **9. Business and Project support**

Libraries Unlimited have an experienced Leadership Team which provides support on a range of projects and programmes. Key staff are PRINCE2 and MSP trained providing rigour to the project management process from the development and formalisation of ideas and first concept stages to delivery and post project completion close down reporting. Their current team has strong experience ranging from establishing the organisation as a separate, stand-alone charity, and managing building projects and refurbishments to winning and delivering external funding projects.

Their Head of Commercial & Innovation has previous experience of developing and delivering town centre regeneration schemes, and a Business Improvement District and is aware of the value this work can bring to the wider economy and the Library Service.

## **10. Fundraising**

Libraries Unlimited staff team have extensive experience of raising funding and managing projects from a wide range of EU, national and local grant awarding bodies – from small to large scale, including the Arts Council and HLF. They will bring this experience to this contract, and will prepare a fundraising strategy, in conjunction with the Council.

As a charity, they can access a wider range of fundraising sources than the Council and can benefit from Gift Aid. They are developing an individual giving scheme and introducing branded donation boxes, which will benefit Torbay.

### **Fundraising for local studies provision**

Libraries Unlimited believe that local studies provision is an area ripe for securing additional funding, through business sponsorship, linkages with tourism or through grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund. They have strong existing skills and a track record in securing external funding in this area that would allow them to deliver considerable added value to Torbay Libraries.

## **11. Room and space hire**

Libraries Unlimited have prioritised generation of income in Devon through room hire as a key source of additional income, resulting in c£300K income in 2016/17. They have modernised and improved the end to end processes, including bookings, promotion and payments, and library managers have income targets for room hire built into appraisals. Libraries Unlimited feel there is scope to generate more income in Torbay using the expertise they have developed.

## **12. Daily collection and delivery of stock**

If necessary, Libraries Unlimited are able to build on their existing contract with Devon Norse as their van/courier delivery service. The contract has recently been reviewed and renewed for a further 3 year period. Norse has extensive experience of providing their delivery service and has operated with a high level of satisfaction.

## **13. Review and improve local studies website**

Over time and in agreement with the Council, Libraries Unlimited will review and improve the local studies website. At this stage, they would consider creating a mini-site to act as a new 'landing stage' for the site. The website would offer an engaging and interactive front-end and link through to the catalogue of resources.

The website would use images, case studies, videos and infographics to give users a better understanding of what is available on the site and how they might use it. The aim would be to create a colourful website that is easy to use for a range of audiences, including children and young people to encourage a younger audience to explore local resources.

## **14. Extend "Adopt A Book" scheme**

Over time and in agreement with the Council, Libraries Unlimited could consider introducing their highly successful Adopt A Book scheme in Torbay. This initiative, developed and

funded as part of the Carnegie Library Lab programme, encourages people to sponsor conservation of some of the most valuable and rare items in the collection. In less than 3 months, more than £3,000 has been generated to conserve a number of items.

## **15. Home Library Service**

Libraries Unlimited have experience of working with a delivery partner (Royal Voluntary Service) to increase the number of clients and volunteers accessing the service. They currently serve nearly 700 people across Devon, with deliveries being made by nearly 250 volunteers based in 42 library locations.

Opportunities for an integrated stock catalogue can provide housebound clients access to the extensive regular print, spoken word, eBook and large print collections currently available in Devon. Given the high cost of spoken word and large print items in particular, this will benefit Torbay customers with access to significantly more stock.

## **16. Residential Homes Service**

Libraries Unlimited transitioned towards a volunteer-led service to clients in residential homes which was carried out in Devon over a period of 18 months which has delivered a personalised service tailored to individual needs; released library stock previously committed to bulk deliveries and enabled savings on the provision of services. This approach could also be implemented in Torbay.

## **17. Transfer of Service - Initial Set up Tasks - Workforce:**

In any transfer of services its vitally important that the transfer is well planned and staff are efficiently integrating into the new Service providers culture.

Libraries Unlimited has a team of experienced senior and operational managers who will create a sound foundation for the transfer and integration of the Council's staff. The team are committed to welcoming and working with staff who transfer, providing support to manage transition effectively.

Libraries Unlimited Chief Executive and Head of Service Delivery will play an integral role in engagement during the transfer process, providing reassurance, a clear direction and vision for the future provision of the service. Highly experienced in change management they will work hard to support and engage staff through a period of significant change.

As a mutual owned by staff and Friends Groups engagement is at the heart of everything they do. They have reviewed their governance arrangements to broaden their scope so transferred staff can join Libraries Unlimited as full members of the organisation and will be able to stand for election as staff trustees, having significant opportunities to help shape the organisation as it grows and develops. Libraries Unlimited will increase the size of their elected Staff Forum to provide a place for an elected Torbay representative.

They have established, with their Workforce, Resources and Remuneration Committee (a sub-committee of their Board), employment terms and conditions for staff that join them post-transfer. These include a defined contribution pension scheme and spot salaries, providing an opportunity to generate savings and a high quality employment offer. Their financial model assumes that staff turnover will average 6% per annum.

Libraries Unlimited are developing an Apprenticeship programme, in response to the Apprenticeship Levy, and recognition of the need to diversify their workforce. They have recruited a Finance Apprentice and plan to recruit an ICT Apprentice. They are participating in the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Trailblazer group developing a national standard for library apprentices. They will extend this programme to Torbay as resources allow.

Libraries Unlimited have a wide range of volunteering opportunities to suit all backgrounds and experience. Role descriptions are available on their website. They regularly look to develop new roles to enhance services and meet individual community needs.

Young people can volunteer to support a variety of activities such as the Summer Reading Challenge, Book Track or craft activities and take part in accredited awards/schemes. Roles vary in time and commitment, offering the chance to gain valuable work experience, develop confidence and skills, and make a positive contribution to communities. All roles can be extended into Torbay libraries.

## **18. Staff Training:**

As part of a bigger library service, Torbay staff will have increased opportunities for training and development.

Libraries Unlimited recognise the role wellbeing plays in enabling staff to perform – staff have access to a free, confidential Employee Assistance Programme and we are developing a Staff Wellbeing Charter to drive further good practice. They annually review employee engagement with a staff survey.

## **19. Libraries Unlimited - Close Proximity to Torbay**

Libraries Unlimited was set up during 2015 and 2016 by the managers and staff who now run the company. With the transfer of Devon's library services in April 2016, They have recent successful experience of managing the transfer of a complex library service out of local authority control and into their organisation. Lessons learned from this experience are reflected in the approach and proposals they have detailed in their bid submission, including their awareness of key challenges they are likely to face.

Libraries Unlimited is based in the Devon County Council area, with strategic bases in Exeter, Cullompton and Newton Abbot. This geographical proximity means that they will be able attend regular meetings with Torbay teams, staff, stakeholders and Client Unit with ease, including at short notice should any issues arise which require it.

## **20. Transfer of Torbay Library Services.**

Libraries Unlimited has significant experience in ensuring a smooth transfer of the Library services from the council. Their appointment as provider of library services by Devon County Council required them to implement a comprehensive, robust transition plan to ensure effective transition and business continuity.

This helped them understand the level of resource, governance, skill and experience required to ensure smooth transfer. It highlighted the need for a partnership approach

between local authority and library service. They have created a robust infrastructure involving systems, processes and business support services that support exit processes. Effective project management arrangements are essential, supported by clear governance structures.

Their recent experiences in delivering the Devon County Council Libraries transfer will assist in delivering a smooth transfer of Torbay Library services also.

## **21. Contract Monitoring:**

Shaped by the origins of Libraries Unlimited as an organisation spinning out from a local authority, quality management tools as customarily used in public libraries form the backbone of their approach.

Libraries Unlimited will monitor and control a series of measures against service delivery outputs and internal organisational standards, including numbers of issues of stock items, visits, member activity, events, outreach, computer and Wi-Fi use, etc. and contribute to the annual CIPFA return. Their sophisticated stock management set-up delivers detailed data on bibliographic services performance.

Based on their strategic objectives, their annual service plan helps them deliver on their 5-year business plan. They operate a clear planning and reporting framework with quarterly reviews with the Devon commissioning team, agreeing a service plan and proposed fees and charges annually. This process can be adopted in Torbay.

## **22. Additional KPIs and Social Impact**

At Libraries Unlimited, quality is about much more than measuring outputs. They are currently adapting systems and methodologies to the requirements of a public service mutual and social enterprise, including management of outcomes and social impact.

They are investing significantly in a new quality management system to monitor, control and improve delivery of outcomes through library services, including social, health, economy, learning and culture. Arts Council England have awarded them a £200,000 grant to deliver a research project into the measurement of the social value they deliver, in partnership with Exeter University Business School, the Open Data Institute and the Real Ideas Organisation.

## **23. Value for money in stock purchasing**

Through the integration of Devon and Torbay's catalogue and library management systems, customers will have access to a total stock of over 1 million items, creating significant value for money with regard to stock budgets, a significant benefit of Libraries Unlimited being located in close proximity to the Torbay area.

## **24. Collection HQ**

Libraries Unlimited holds a CollectionHQ subscription. They will explore the feasibility of extending the use of this to an analysis of Torbay's stock and loan data. By analysing current stock use, this can further support value for money by suggesting a breakdown of the stock budget by categories of stock and individual libraries. The suggested allocations are then refined to reflect average prices for different categories of stock, and also where they need to invest in stock to generate income, for example purchase of DVDs.



CollectionHQ also has a 'Discovery' module which analyses issue data from their other UK customers to list titles which are proven to issue well. This information can be used to suggest suitable purchases for the purpose of stock revision.

## **25. FM & Asset Management:**

Libraries Unlimited have extensive experience of an in house asset management and FM service when they were part of Devon County Council, where the service was operated by NPS and Devon Norse on behalf of DCC. From this experience they understand the value of clear reporting lines between the Library operator and the FM/asset management team and would be able to establish this relationship from the outset. In particular they understand the need to have a clear point of contact. Libraries Unlimited Head of Commercial & Innovation will therefore act as their main point of contact between the TDA and Libraries Unlimited. Their Head of Commercial & Innovation has experience of working with the TDA on a range of projects in the past, relating to business support.

Libraries Unlimited have extensive experience of identifying and realising utilities savings. In their existing buildings they have implemented a range of energy saving measures including solar PV, energy efficient boilers, automatic lighting in meeting rooms and low flush loos. With the advent of the open water market, they are also exploring with a range of suppliers what savings could be made through switching, and they will also explore this for Torbay's contract.

In their current buildings they have a range of tenants from the public, private and third sectors and they work with a range of them to ensure that their customers can benefit from their service offer. They also ensure that their tenants are aware of what a modern library service can offer them and their client groups.

Libraries Unlimited are continually involved in actively seeking new partnerships and users for their spaces, an approach that they can replicate in Torbay. For example, they are developing innovative arts and cultural partnerships with local and national organisations to use their spaces for live theatre and live casting, and they are also working with organisations to provide business advice and digital skills support – all of which they could replicate in Torbay.

## **26. Equipment Refresh:**

Capital investment in Devon's libraries has been a successful element of service modernisation. Libraries Unlimited have significant experience in working with library designers and furniture contractors and are exploring with the School of Architecture & Design at Plymouth University how they can bring fresh ideas to modern 21<sup>st</sup> century library design.

Libraries Unlimited is a registered charity and can leverage opportunities to access multiple funding streams not necessarily available to Local Authority or private sector providers.

As external funding opportunities allow, Libraries Unlimited will bring their digital making expertise to Torbay, which they believe would draw a new audience into Torbay Libraries. Ultimately and dependent on customer response, Libraries Unlimited could seek external funding to provide a Fab Lab in Paignton Library.

## 27. Health And Safety

Libraries Unlimited has a tried, tested and successful approach to managing health and safety compliance within its 50 buildings, an approach which has been refined over many years, and which is now proposed to be extended to Torbay. HROne are experienced in the provision of health and safety advice to the public sector and to academies and private sector clients.

## 28. New Complimentary Services:

Through Libraries Unlimited existing innovative approach to service provision, they are able to offer the Council the following new and complementary services subject to appropriate resources being available:

- **FabLab:** they believe that the local community could benefit from access to enhanced digital technologies through their existing FabLab offer. Libraries Unlimited will look at ways in which they could extend this offer to Torbay Libraries as resources within the contract allow.
  
- **Business and Intellectual Property Centre:** The Business and Intellectual Property Centre, based in Exeter Library, can deliver a range of outreach services in the Authority's libraries. Subject to available resources Libraries Unlimited will agree the scope for workshops and events for business start-ups and potential entrepreneurs in the Bay within the resources available.
  
- **Living Knowledge Network:** Exeter Library participates in a new and innovative partnership with the British Library to share content with public libraries. Libraries Unlimited regularly live stream cultural and learning events from BL and find that these screenings attract existing and new audiences. Libraries Unlimited plan to live stream some Living Knowledge Network events in Torquay and Paignton libraries from April 2018.
  
- **Health and wellbeing:** Libraries Unlimited believe libraries have a significant impact on the health and happiness of the people who use them regularly. Their annual Active Life Active Mind programme demonstrates how their existing network of libraries provides opportunities for people to explore and improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing. Libraries Unlimited would like to explore with Torbay's Public Health team and other partners the potential for expanding the Authority's range of services supporting health and wellbeing in line with identified needs in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Other commissioning opportunities with other parts of the Authority and the TDA may present themselves over the lifetime of the contract, including digital inclusion, skills development and lifelong learning.
  
- **Arts and cultural activities:** Libraries have enormous potential as spaces for people to engage with arts and cultural activities. Libraries Unlimited bid to Arts Council England for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status was successful, and will give them the opportunity to develop libraries in their portfolio as spaces for a range of arts and cultural engagement for all existing library users and potential new audiences. Libraries

Unlimited anticipate working with the Torbay Culture Board to identify ways library spaces can develop as effective and dynamic cultural places in line with the aspirations of the Great Places initiative.

## **29. Inspiring Vision and Leadership**

Taking frontline staff through transformation and change needs inspiring and energetic leadership at all levels of the organisation. Libraries Unlimited's experience transforming Devon's library service into one that is recognised nationally as one of the most innovative in the country testifies the importance of a strong vision and ability of senior managers to convey that vision inspiring and motivating frontline staff. Their Chief Executive (Ciara Eastell OBE) is particularly effective at engaging library staff and providing a positive and dynamic vision of the potential for library services to impact positively on people's lives. Ciara is very well networked in the library world with extensive connections regionally, nationally and internationally. Libraries Unlimited anticipate that for many Torbay staff feeling part of an organisation which is taking positive steps to make sure libraries thrive, rather than just survive, will have a motivating effect.

Their experience from a major public consultation in Devon in 2014, along with other stakeholder engagement since, puts them in a strong position to lead this work to transition Torbay Libraries into a new Library service provider.

Their vision as an organisation is to bring ideas, imagination, knowledge and creativity to people's lives and communities, working in partnership with our communities and their stakeholders to deliver social value and impact within our communities.

Libraries Unlimited would bring their ethos, values and vision as an organisation, as well as their detailed knowledge of the ways in which library services can support individuals to live happier, healthier lives to bear in shaping the Library Strategy for Torbay. They also bring extensive experience of national and international best practice and policy within the library sector to bear on the strategy development work.

## **30. Fees and Charges:**

Libraries Unlimited use a sophisticated financial system integration tool, which will enable them to offer a detailed monthly analysis of fees, charges and other income to all libraries and managers.

As a charity, they will use their contacts and experience to fundraise from trusts and foundations to support the development of Torbay's libraries. They will also bring their commercial experience in room hire to increase revenue in Torbay

## **31. Customer Surveys:**

Libraries Unlimited use many ways to gain feedback from customers and communities on the services offered through the library service. They undertake an annual customer survey and are committed to senior managers talking directly to Friends Groups and other user groups to hear directly their feedback on the service provided.

## **32. Business Continuity Planning:**

Libraries Unlimited is already working closely with insurers on Business Continuity Planning for their operations in Devon and they will use this experience to quickly develop and agree a BCP for Torbay. This Plan will use the latest up-to-date guidance and thinking and so will ensure they are in a good position to address any future issues or challenges that may arise in Torbay.