



# Evaluation of Leading Modern Public Libraries

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## Contents

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW .....	6
PART A: INTRODUCTION .....	11
1 THE CONTEXT .....	11
2 METHODOLOGY .....	12
2.1 Review of the literature .....	12
2.2 Documentary analysis: LMPL course reader .....	12
2.3 Module observation and follow-up events.....	12
2.4 Mid-programme interviews .....	12
2.5 Critical Incident interviews .....	12
2.6 Pre and post-programme questionnaires.....	13
PART B: DOING THE EVALUATION .....	14
3 MODULE OBSERVATION AND FOLLOW-UP EVENTS .....	14
3.1 Evaluation approaches .....	14
3.2 Observing the groups .....	15
3.3 Observation of Future Leaders Module 2 .....	15
3.4 Observation of Senior Managers module 2 .....	17
3.5 Observation of Heads of Service module 2 .....	19
4 MID-PROGRAMME INTERVIEWS .....	19
5 CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEWS .....	20
6 PRE AND POST-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRES .....	20
6.1 Approach used .....	20
PART C: THEMATIC REVIEW OF FINDINGS .....	22
7 SELECTION AND MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE .....	22
7.1 Selection or nomination .....	22
7.2 Allocation of places and assignment to courses .....	24
7.3 Motivations to participate .....	24
8 PARTICIPANT INTERACTION.....	26
8.1 Participant interaction observation: Future Leaders (cohort A).....	26
8.2 Participant interaction observation: Senior Managers .....	27
8.3 Participant interaction observation: Heads of Service .....	28
9 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF LMPL.....	28
9.1 Overall view .....	28
10 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE FUTURE LEADERS' COURSE.....	29
10.1 Overall strengths of the course .....	29
10.2 Networking and reflection time .....	29
10.3 The materials.....	30
10.4 The course impact .....	30
10.5 Critical comments: programme flow, management, content, facilitation ....	30
10.6 Suggested changes .....	31
11 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SENIOR MANAGERS' COURSE .....	31
11.1 The course as a whole.....	31
11.2 Time to think and plan .....	32
11.3 Personal development and vision.....	32

11.4	Development time.....	33
11.5	Weaknesses of the programme.....	33
11.6	Course tempo and length .....	33
11.7	Over-emphasis on management .....	33
11.8	Other.....	34
12	STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF HEADS OF SERVICE COURSE ..	34
12.1	Overall strengths .....	34
12.2	Benefits of the model.....	35
12.3	Techniques and methods .....	35
12.4	Course materials .....	35
12.5	Creative reflection.....	35
12.6	Weaknesses of the programme.....	36
13	TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (TLQ) .....	36
13.1	Senior Managers' views on TLQ.....	36
13.2	Heads of Services' views on TLQ.....	37
14	APPLYING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT .....	37
14.1	Impact of the programme on participants: cohort C.....	37
14.2	Managing change: cohort C.....	38
14.3	Where the course helped: cohort C .....	38
14.4	Impact of the programme on participants: cohort B .....	39
14.5	Impact of the programme on participants: Future Leaders .....	40
14.6	Impact of the programme on participants: Senior Managers .....	42
14.7	Impact of the programme on participants: Heads of Service .....	44
15	THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE.....	45
15.1	Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Future Leaders .....	46
15.2	Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Senior Managers .....	47
15.3	Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Heads of Service .....	48
16	PARTICIPANTS' LEADERSHIP STYLES .....	48
16.1	Leadership styles: Future Leaders .....	49
16.2	Leadership styles: Senior Managers .....	50
16.3	Leadership styles: Heads of Service .....	51
17	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEFORE AND AFTER THE COURSE	52
17.1	Other professional development: Future Leaders.....	52
17.2	Other professional development: Senior Managers.....	52
17.3	Other professional development: Heads of Service.....	53
18	THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP IN LIBRARIES .....	53
18.1	Leadership development: Future Leaders .....	53
18.2	Leadership development: Senior Managers .....	55
18.3	Leadership development: Heads of Service .....	56
PART D: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....		57
19	CONCLUSIONS .....	57
20	CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COURSE PROVIDERS .....	58

21	FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY AUTHORITIES .....	60
22	FOR LMPL STEERING GROUP .....	61
23	FOR MLA .....	62
APPENDIX A	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	65
APPENDIX B	DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS: LMPL COURSE READER .....	77
APPENDIX C	– SUMMARY OF LMPL ‘STRENGTHS’ AND ‘WEAKNESSES’ ...	80
APPENDIX D:	MODULE OBSERVATION TOOLS AND GUIDELINES.....	83
APPENDIX E	– FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS.....	86
APPENDIX F	- FUTURE LEADERS FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOP AGENDA.....	87
APPENDIX G	– MID-PROGRAMME INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	88
APPENDIX H:	CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	89
APPENDIX I	– PRE-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE.....	90
APPENDIX J	– POST-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE.....	92
APPENDIX K:	KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS BY EVALUATION ACTIVITY ....	94
APPENDIX L:	OBSERVED INTERACTION DURING COURSE ACTIVITIES	100

**Evaluation of Leading Modern Public Libraries**  
**Final report prepared for the Leading Modern Public Libraries Steering Group**  
**by Information Management Associates and the Centre for the Public Library**  
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## **EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW**

This report presents findings of the external evaluation of the **Leading Modern Public Libraries** (LMPL) programme, as undertaken by Information Management Associates (IMA) in partnership with the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS), University of Sheffield, during February 2005 – June 2006. The LMPL programme is a key component of the action plan to implement the DCMS **Framework for the Future** strategy.

### **PART A: INTRODUCTION**

The context for this work, the scope of the LMPL programme, the specific objectives and the intended opportunities for participants are outlined (section 1).

The evaluation methods used are outlined: these include a review of the literature on leadership development, documentary analysis of the LMPL course reader, module observation and follow-up events, mid-programme telephone interviews, Critical Incident telephone interviews, and pre- and post-programme questionnaires. A different cohort of LMPL participants was used as a research sample during each stage of the evaluation, one from each of the three levels of the programme (section 2).

### **PART B: DOING THE EVALUATION**

A detailed description of the main evaluation programme elements and the associated activities is offered, including descriptions of the activities observed.

The programme description covers the module observation objectives and approach, as well as the follow-up events organised by/for each of the three cohorts, as well as the method of assessing aspects of group performance (sections 3.1-3.2). The activities described include the Future Leaders' engagement with their working environment and organisational culture, creative problem solving, change management and leadership and activities in the follow-up event; and involvement by Senior Managers and Heads of Service in involvement in addressing complexity and leadership, creativity and risk and responding to the Transformational Leadership questionnaire, as well as their follow-up events (sections 3.2-3.5). Also covered are the mid-programme interviews aims and activities, the Critical Incident interviews and the pre-and post-programme questionnaire aims, approach and response (section 4-6).

## **PART C: THEMATIC REVIEW OF FINDINGS**

The main findings of the evaluation cover the selection of participants, observed activities, strengths and weaknesses of the programme and its key elements, the impacts of the programme, and issues around leadership in public libraries.

Issues in the **selection of participants** by PLAs are summarised, including: whether they were selected or nominated (and how); the allocation of places and assignment of participants to courses; and people's motivations to participate (section 7). The observed participant interactions at all three levels are then reported (section 8).

Overall, the programme was judged successful but with some reservations about the Future Leaders' programme (sections 9 and 10). Various concerns raised by participants were dealt with as part of a continuous process of feedback, review and actions throughout the delivery of the programme.

The main strengths of the **Future Leaders' course** included the 'common sense of purpose' and (generally) the facilitation. Other strengths included the time provided to network and to reflect away from work; use of the materials by participants since the course; and reports of the positive impact of the course on the Future Leaders (sections 10.2-10.4). Various weaknesses were reported in the detail of the programme: some participants were unhappy about the slow start to the course, what they described as the standard managerial content, and occasional poor facilitation (section 10.5). Some people reported limitations when taking the programme back to the workplace, because they did not feel that they had sufficiently clearly defined targets and structures for their own post-course support (section 10.1). Various suggestions were made about the course content (section 10.6).

The **Senior Managers' course** was judged successful as a whole; particular strengths included the focus on PLs, the collegiality engendered, the facilitation, and the way that the TLQ created self-awareness, as well as the time to reflect and plan, the scope for personal development and impetus to continue this, and the sense of feeling valued through being offered this programme (sections 11.1-11.4). Some negative comments were made about details of structure and presentation, the pace and style of course delivery, the amount of management theory (sections 11.5-11.8)

Similarly the **Heads of Service course** was adjudged a success overall, with special mention of the networking opportunities and chance to learn from each other's experiences, the collegiality fostered and the TLQ, all engendering improved confidence and self-awareness. Other strengths were in helping with staff communication, and the encouragement of a more open participative culture, as well as acquisition of new techniques and methods, the usefulness of course materials, the time for creative reflection and the quality of the facilitators (sections 12.1-12.5). There were minor criticisms of the indexing (!), facilitation and content (section 12.6).

The **Transformational Leadership Questionnaire** was seen as crucial in providing participants with insight into their own leadership performance and potential. Many Future Leaders felt that the absence of the TLQ-focus was a major limitation in their

programme. Most of the Senior Managers and Heads of Service responded very positively to the TLQ, finding it both interesting and revelatory and there is evidence that people are modifying their behaviour in the light of the feedback (section 13).

A major indicator of the programme impact is the extent to which people **applied what they learnt**. The Critical Incident interviews focussed specifically on this and provided ample evidence of use at all three levels. Many of the critical incidents described were addressing well-recognised areas of managing change. Critical Incident respondents also identified where the course had helped them to change (sections 14.1-14.3).

Individual assessments of the **impact of the course on leadership** so far are necessarily tentative (section 14.4), but preliminary assessments of this impact were offered by Future Leaders (focussing on use of materials and ideas), Senior Managers (being encouraged to adopt different perspectives and acknowledge the 'bigger picture') and Heads of Service (cascading ideas within the library service and with more senior colleagues within the wider local authority, as well as identifying specific situations in which to use tools and processes presented on the programme) (sections 14.5-14.7).

Participants were asked about the **organisational climate** and other factors, since these could limit scope for engendering change through this type of programme. A few Future Leaders were at a transitional phase in their work role so that they were unable to apply their knowledge as strategically as they would wish. Most Future Leaders and Senior Managers saw the prevalent leadership style as at odds with the transformational approach and felt that their organisation would benefit from the ideas presented on the course – although several Future Leaders felt that the organisation was not necessarily open to change (sections 15, 15.1 and 15.2). Heads of Service had a similar view of current organisational leadership but were divided on whether their organisation would benefit from a change or redirection in leadership style and approach (section 15.3).

Turning to **participants' own leadership styles**: Future Leaders were unsure about their style and contribution at the outset but most responded positively to the course and proved receptive to the idea of transformational leadership; Senior Managers tended to be non-committal about their own style at the outset, but readily bought into the transformational approach; whilst Heads of Service were decisive when identifying their own leadership style, and its relationship to LMPL, seeing themselves as 'politically aware' and 'empowering'. They were positive about the effects of the course on their leadership (sections 16.1-16.3). Participants' other professional development activities were also reviewed (section 17).

Ideas were gleaned on **future leadership development** for public libraries, from Future Leaders, covering their own development as leaders, support that they would like from professional organisations, as well as the future of public library leadership and comments on the working relationship between the three LMPL participants within their organisation after completing the programme. Senior Managers, also envisage a potential role for regional organisations such as the MLA regionally and SCL and offered various specific suggestions; whilst Heads of Service suggested an alerting service, formal (and informal) accredited learning, and funding for more staff

to attend LMPL or for further LMPL cohort/ network meetings (section 18).

## **PART D: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We concluded that:

- the LMPL programme was clearly a success at the Heads of Service and Senior Managers levels and was a qualified success at the Future Leaders level<sup>i</sup>; anyone who joined the LMPL programme ready to develop their leadership capacity and skills was given ample opportunity (section 19.1).
- almost all respondents were able to work on their skills and capacity to deliver transformational change for their library service; the programme provided opportunities for participants to learn and develop alongside colleagues; participants were enabled to formulate action plans for their self-development as leaders (with reservations): the programme has made a substantial contribution to meeting the aims of the 'Framework for the Future' (section 19.2)
- a significant minority of nominees for the Future Leaders level (made by PL services) were adjudged inappropriate by their peers (or in a few cases, themselves)<sup>ii</sup> and the absence of a strong transformational leadership self-assessment element meant that the Future Leaders course was felt to be too close to 'standard management training' by a minority of participants (section 19.3)
- some participants at all levels made thought-provoking suggestions about supporting their own future development and about extending this type of programme for other library service managers (section 19.4).

Recommendations are offered for future course providers, public library authorities, the LMPL Steering Group and for the MLA.

Considerations and recommendations for future course providers

We identified a number of issues about course content and presentation. One significant area of disagreement between the external evaluation team and FPM is about 360° assessment of Future Leaders. We found it difficult to understand why the **TLQ** was not offered at Future Leader level. Arguably, Future Leaders have more to gain from a diagnostic tool such as the TLQ. The FPM team takes a different view (section 20.1). Some respondents felt that there was an over-emphasis on **management tools and techniques** (section 20.2). It is probably appropriate to consider **enhanced flexibility** in what is offered and how; a more even distribution of activities; an introduction to the course reader contextualising the management content; and more on political leadership and PL leadership in the materials (sections 20.3-20.6).

Recommendations for public library authorities:

- a systematic, uniform participant selection process should be agreed and adhered to by all relevant PLAs<sup>iii</sup> (21.1)

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<sup>i</sup> The overall success of the Future Leaders programme was qualified by a number of weaknesses in programme design and delivery as perceived by participants. Around half of the participants who provided feedback made one or more comments about perceived weaknesses.

<sup>ii</sup> We understand that this issue has been addressed in the new programme.

<sup>iii</sup> We understand that this issue has been addressed in the new programme.

- authorities should adopt a consistent policy to give increased opportunity, motivation and momentum for the participants within each authority to work together, and apply the training at operational, organisational and strategic levels; the development of formal mechanisms and performance measures to prove the impact of the programme at service level; financial support, and ‘time out’ to pursue on-going professional development opportunities (21.2).

#### Recommendations for the LMPL Steering Group:

- various important programme management considerations should be addressed. In particular:
  - attention should be paid to the selection issue already raised<sup>iii</sup>
  - allocation of places should be less rigid than the three places per authority adopted in this programme. Allocation should be flexible enough to reflect local needs and priorities, as well as any short-term shortages of appropriate candidates
  - library authorities should be encouraged to specify their own expected outcomes from the programme so that they can evaluate the programme success locally<sup>iii</sup>
  - individual progress through the programme should be monitored (using a self-appraisal tool linked to programme expected outcomes); and
  - participant need for further support should also be monitored and addressed where required (22.1).
- any further development of the LMPL model should include a clear statement about the perceived role of this type of intervention in relation to succession planning (22.2)
- this programme and any further roll-out should be evaluated on an ongoing longitudinal basis and any such evaluation should include all key stakeholders, including local and national government representatives and decision-makers, in order to establish the political and cultural impact of the programme as a ‘strategic intervention’ (22.3)
- any future LMPL-style development should be supported by a part-time secretariat to provide help after the course in identifying facilitators and venues, advising on funding options, and encouraging participants to undertake further leadership development action (22.4).

#### Recommendations for the MLA:

- the MLA should give careful consideration to commissioning research into the nature of and scope for succession planning, particularly in relation to public libraries and other areas of LIS. Any such research should be conducted over a significant time-frame, to enable some tracking of activity over time. The aim should be to establish what effective and acceptable succession planning might mean in practice (23.1)
- the further leadership development needs of participants in the LMPL programme and the needs of other potential leaders should be addressed by MLA in considering further implementation of Framework for the Future (23.2).

## PART A: INTRODUCTION

### 1 THE CONTEXT

This report presents findings of the external evaluation of the **Leading Modern Public Libraries** (LMPL) programme, as undertaken by Information Management Associates (IMA) in partnership with the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS), University of Sheffield, during February 2005 – June 2006. This consortium was commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to conduct the external evaluation in February 2006. The report supersedes the draft version submitted to the LMPL Steering Group in June.

The LMPL programme is a key component of the action plan to implement the DCMS **Framework for the Future** strategy. The relevant part of the plan aims to build public libraries' capacity to improve through better quality of leadership and workforce skills by means of a nationally co-ordinated leadership development and management skills programme to build this capacity. As such, the programme is of major importance for public libraries, since it directly addresses the perceived weakness in leadership development in the public libraries domain. This weakness was highlighted in 2001, when the Sheffield **Public Library Workforce Study**<sup>iv</sup> drew attention to the lack of leadership in the public library profession and identified the need to develop a new generation of leaders. In particular, this report stressed the need to "address not just leadership at the top of the organization, but leadership 'from the side' and right throughout the organisation." The authors identified succession planning and leadership development as important areas for the profession and advocated the "recruitment, identification and development of high calibre graduates as a crucial investment for the future". More recently, the information services National Training Organisation report **Skills Foresight in the Information Services Sector 2003-2009** (isNTO 2003) confirmed leadership development as a priority development need in all types of libraries.

The response provided through the LMPL programme was proportionate to the issue: this programme provided the largest and most sustained leadership development intervention in public libraries ever attempted in the United Kingdom (offering in the order of 2,800 person days of supported development – or around 24 person-days per authority). Following a successful pilot phase, the programme was rolled out between April 2005 and March 2006 to all 149 public library services in England by FPM, an independent training organisation, which was commissioned to undertake this work by the MLA in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians. The programme offered one place to each authority at each of the three programme levels (Heads of Service, Senior Managers and Future Leaders) for a series of residential workshops backed-up by specially prepared learning materials and anchored (at the Heads of Service and Senior Manager levels) in a 360° appraisal process (TLQ), all focussed on transformational leadership.

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<sup>iv</sup> Usherwood, R.C., Proctor, R. and others (2001) *Recruit, retain, lead: the Public Library Workforce Study* LIC Research Report 106 <http://shef.ac.uk/publications.htm>

The specific objectives of the LMPL programme (set out in the **Framework for the Future** document) were to:

- build librarians' capacity to improve through better quality of leadership and workforce skills
- equip staff with skills to deliver a clear vision for improving services
- provide staff with new business management and marketing skills.

The programme set out to give participants an opportunity to:

- strengthen their skills and capacity to deliver transformational change for their authority and public library services
- learn and develop alongside colleagues from other authorities who share similar levels of responsibility
- formulate action plans for their self-development as leaders.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

A number of research methods were used during the evaluation project, which are briefly described below. Individual approaches to each method, including specific aims and objectives, are described in the next section.

### **2.1 Review of the literature**

A review of the literature was undertaken to provide theoretical context for the programme evaluation, and to consider other approaches to leadership training and development within public services and the library and information sector. Sources consulted include the professional press, relevant electronic databases and organisational information resources. **See appendix A for the results.**

### **2.2 Documentary analysis: LMPL course reader**

To support evaluation of the programme delivery, and participant responses to the programme, the evaluation team have also had access to course materials. A brief analysis of the Senior Managers and Heads of Service course reader is attached as **Appendix B** and should help to contextualise comments made by participants concerning programme content.

### **2.3 Module observation and follow-up events**

The participant observation method was employed in this longitudinal element of the evaluation, beginning with observation of the actual programme at all three levels, followed by an organised event for each of the relevant cohorts, six to nine months after completion of the programme. Both quantitative and qualitative observation tools were used during this phase of the evaluation.

### **2.4 Mid-programme interviews**

Telephone interviews were conducted at the mid-programme stage to collect qualitative data on how participants were responding to the programme as the course progressed.

### **2.5 Critical Incident interviews**

Telephone interviews were also conducted with a critical incident focus after completion of the course, to examine the extent to which the programme was being applied by participants in the workplace.

## 2.6 Pre and post-programme questionnaires

The questionnaire survey method was used to facilitate another longitudinal approach to programme evaluation, collecting both quantitative and qualitative 'before and after' data concerning participants' perceptions of the impact and appropriateness of the programme.

A different cohort of LMPL participants was used as a research sample during each stage of the evaluation, one from each level of the programme (ie. Heads of Service, Senior Managers and Future Leaders). All respondents have been assured complete anonymity by the research team: consequently, individuals and collective relevant cohorts are not named within the evaluation report.

Recurring themes and key findings from each stage of the evaluation are summarised within the report under the following headings:

- **Operational** relating to FPM (ie. in relation to course content, design and delivery).
- **Organisational** relating to Public Library Authorities (ie. in relation to participant selection; application of the programme within authorities).
- **Developmental** relating to LMPL Steering Group (ie. in relation to the on-going strategic development and delivery of the programme).

In conclusion, the previously identified key points are used to inform recommendations made to programme providers FPM, the LMPL Steering Group (LMPLSG) and to Public Library Authorities (PLAs) concerning the effectiveness of the LMPL programme and the future development of public library leadership.

## **PART B: DOING THE EVALUATION**

### **3 MODULE OBSERVATION AND FOLLOW-UP EVENTS**

#### **3.1 Evaluation approaches**

##### **Observation aims and objectives**

In accordance with the original evaluation proposal submitted to MLA, the main aims and objectives of the observational element of the evaluation were to establish to what extent, as a result of completing the programme, participants had developed their:

- Strategic grasp of leadership as a concept.
- Interactive skills within a leadership context.
- Leadership capabilities.

##### **Observation approach used**

The approach used was largely qualitative in nature, using the principles of participant observation. One cohort was selected from each level of the programme, and following consultation with FPM, a member of the evaluation team attended the second module with each relevant cohort during May-June 2005 in order to observe participant levels of engagement with course content and presentation, leadership training as a process and group behaviour according to observation guidelines. The same cohorts were then involved in various follow-up events.

The evaluation team hosted a meeting of the relevant Future Leaders cohort at the University of Sheffield in February 2006 (**see appendix F for workshop agenda**). The workshop facilitated additional observation of the group and also addressed the specific aims and objectives of:

- Establishing opinions on the main strengths and weaknesses of the LMPL programme.
- Identifying participants' usage of course materials and skills and knowledge gained.
- Obtaining opinions on methods and strategies to support participants' future development as leaders, and how to extend leadership training to others.

A member of the evaluation team was invited to participate in a self-organised meeting of the relevant Senior Managers cohort in January 2006, during which a structured focus group was conducted as part of the programme evaluation (**see appendix E for questions used in the focus group**). The focus group allowed further observation of group activity and engagement, along with the specific aims and objectives of:

- Establishing participants' opinions on the most beneficial aspects of LMPL – successes and positive outcomes.
- Obtaining opinions on the least beneficial aspects of LMPL – suggestions for alternative content.

- Considering how to progress their leadership training and development.

The relevant Heads of Service cohort had also organised their own event, which was attended by a member of the evaluation team in June 2006. The same focus group was conducted with this group to facilitate comparable data collection between the two 'higher level' groups.

Quantitative observation tools were also used during the initial observation of module 2 for all three levels. These were used as a guidance tool for assessing participants' engagement with the course content, and interaction with course facilitators and fellow participants during attendance on the course only. They were not used during the follow up events because of the different nature of the content of the three sessions. Also, the numbers of original course participants attending these events varied, and were significantly lower than the full cohort in each case. **See appendix D for the research tools used during module observation.**

### 3.2 Observing the groups

The observation of all three cohorts is reported briefly under subject headings following the structure and programme of each module observed. Each group was given a quantitative score for the relevant sections of the module using the following individual measures:

- Listening to others.
- Participation by group members.
- Quality of decision making.
- Building and developing upon other people's contributions.
- Sensitivity of group members to the feelings of others.
- Handling and use of conflict.
- Level of creativity.
- Keeping everyone on task.

The following quantitative scale was used to score each group's performance for each category:

LOW 0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    HIGH

### 3.3 Observation of Future Leaders Module 2

The designated Future Leaders cohort had a total of 25 participants (18 female, seven male).

For the purposes of observational data analysis, the structure and content of Future Leaders module 2, **Leading Change**, has been summarised using the following three headings:

- Working environment and organisational culture.
- Creative problem solving.
- Change management and leadership.

### **3.3.1 Working environment and organisational culture**

The module began with a number of exercises designed to enable participants to consider their role as leaders within a specific sector, within an organisation, and as individuals, with a focus on organisational culture and how this can affect each leadership role. Exercises included a consideration of the aspects of organisations that manifest their underlying culture, whereby participants were asked to work in groups and consider their own organisation's 'Heroes' (current or former members of staff that are frequently talked about, remembered fondly, etc), 'Symbols' (such as dress codes, physical layout or features) and 'Rituals' (patterns of behaviour). Another exercise involved a card sort within which groups of participants had to identify and choose the 'top six' cultural characteristics (from 30) needed to deliver a high quality customer service in direct relation to 'Framework for the Future'.

Participants responded positively and actively to the organisational culture exercises, which prompted a lot of anecdotal discussion about the most and least beneficial aspects of their own organisations. The focus was on changing or removing those symbols and aspects that seemingly block progress and vision, and on the need to change the organisational culture that 'we have' into the culture that 'we want' according to 'Framework for the Future'. Participants were responsive to the concept of change management within a leadership context, and of their own individual roles within their organisations.

### **3.3.2 Creative problem solving**

The next session included a number of exercises involving different creative techniques for group problem solving. The intention was to give participants a number of techniques that could be taken back to the workplace and used with individual teams to tackle specific issues. Participants worked in groups and tested the various techniques by applying them to public library issues, which were identified by individual group members, or by the trainer as a problem to be tackled by all groups; for example, participants were asked to consider how to increase public library use by young men (aged 18-25) using the 'Reversal-Dereversal' technique. The technique required participants to consider a problem in reverse by first identifying the barriers to library usage facing the identified demographic group, and then considering how to address these barriers.

Participants' response to and engagement with the different techniques varied quite considerably, depending upon the individual group involved, and the perceived complexity of the technique (a total of five individual techniques were used). The Superheroes exercise, for example, was not applied very well by the particular group being observed. The technique involved identifying a particular issue, and then each group member had to adopt the persona of a particular 'hero' (celebrity, fictitious character, etc) and consider how this character would tackle the problem. After one member had identified an issue of their own, the observed group then spent the allocated time discussing this individual's problems at work, and did not engage with the exercise at all! Although at least one group responded relatively enthusiastically to at least one exercise, on the whole, engagement and levels of creativity were inconsistent.

### **3.3.3 Change management and leadership**

The second day of Future Leaders' module 2 focused on change management and the leadership of change. The session began with a reflective exercise on instances where participants had managed change well and others that were less successful, looking at the processes involved. Groups responded well to the exercise, and generally seemed more responsive to reflective 'real world' exercises such as this. Participants were directed to key texts and further resources relevant to the management of change by the trainer. Exercises such as 'force field analysis' were undertaken, designed to explore forces for and against change within organisations, and methods of reducing resistance. Another exercise considered the individual, team, and organisation's readiness for change: this was noticeably effective in encouraging participants to realise and acknowledge the need to discuss issues surrounding *Framework for the Future* with colleagues in an inclusive and motivating way. Following a session on risk taking, the module ended on a positive note with participants identifying individual action plans (using distributed pro formas) building upon what had been covered by the module.

### **3.3.4 Future Leaders follow-up event**

The follow-up event for the observed Future Leaders cohort involved a half-day workshop which took place at the University of Sheffield in February 2006, and was facilitated and observed by the evaluation team. Eight out of the original 25 cohort members attended the event. It should be noted that several other members expressed an interest in attending, but were unable to due to annual leave, or the inability to take time off on that particular day. The relatively low attendance therefore is not indicative of the group's interest in continuing leadership development as a whole.

During this workshop, participants worked in pairs and identified particular strengths and weaknesses of the LMPL course, as well as any areas that they felt needed further development or inclusion in the programme. They then split into two groups to list and discuss how they have used the course materials and ideas within their authorities. Using the headings 'materials and activities' and 'knowledge, ideas and processes', each group discussed one topic, and then swapped documents to add their examples to the other group's list. Next they worked in pairs to discuss their future needs in developing as leaders, and support that they would like from professional organisations where appropriate. Ideas were then fed back to the group. Finally, the group was asked to spend a few moments reflecting as individuals on the future of public library leadership in relation to specific roles for professional organisations, approaches to be taken, leadership models and a focus for development. Again, their ideas were pooled.

### **3.4 Observation of Senior Managers module 2**

The observed Senior Managers cohort had a total of 20 participants (12 female, eight male). For the purposes of observational data analysis, the structure and content of Senior Managers module 2, *The Creative Leader*, has been summarised using the following three headings:

- Complexity and leadership.
- Creativity and risk.

- Responding to the Transformational Leadership questionnaire (TLQ).<sup>v</sup>

### 3.4.1 Complexity and leadership

The opening session involved a highly focused and structured examination of the role of a leader in a complex organisation, considering the views and impact of multiple stakeholders. Participants, for example, were presented with two generic organisational models which were then applied in a problem solving exercise. The first model, the '7S Framework', included seven essential components for an effective organisation: **Shared Values, Structure, Strategy, Systems, Skills, Staff and Style**. The second model defined an organisation as 'four domains', including **Governors and Managers, Staff and Professions, Service Users and Local Community and Partners**. Participants worked in groups of four, with one member identifying a particular problem using the 7S Framework, and the other three members acting as 'consultants'. The group then had to identify solutions to the problem using the four domains.

### 3.4.2 Creativity and risk

The creativity and risk session included some of the exercises employed on the Future Leaders programme, which were used to encourage a more creative approach to problem solving and service development. Again, participants worked in groups and 'real world' public library scenarios were used as examples when trying out the various techniques. Five techniques were used in total, with some considered to be more effective and useful than others.

### 3.4.3 Responding to the TLQ

Participants had been split into two groups in order to facilitate one-to-one Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) feedback interviews: one group attended the creativity and risk session whilst the other had their feedback sessions. At the end of the module, all participants reconvened to discuss the *group* TLQ results. The session was introduced by showing TLQ results in other sectors (both public and private) to provide a comparison. Participants had rated themselves higher than their Direct Reports on the 'genuine concern' scale and higher than their line managers on the 'empowering' scale. The group also had a relatively low score on the 'inspirational' scale. These three attributes were identified as key transformational leadership skills by the trainer, and participants were advised to 'work on' these areas, and to be aware of the personal benchmarks they were setting themselves with high personal scores.

### 3.4.4 Senior Managers' follow-up event

Rather than organise an additional, perhaps counter-productive, follow-up event, the evaluation team participated in a participant-organised meeting of the previously observed Senior Managers cohort in January 2006, conducting a focus group as part of their event. The focus group was tape recorded and fully transcribed for the

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<sup>v</sup> The TLQ is a 360° appraisal tool completed by participants, their 'peers' and 'direct reports' within their own organisations. Individual measures used within the questionnaire reflected the principles of transformational leadership.

benefit of effective data analysis. Fifteen out of the original 20 cohort members attended the event and participated in the focus group, which covered three themes:

- Most beneficial aspects of LMPL.
- Least beneficial aspects of LMPL.
- Developing Senior Managers as leaders.

The opportunity was taken to observe how the group interacted at this event.

The group spent approximately half an hour discussing the most and then the least beneficial aspects of the programme. They were then asked to discuss their future leadership training and development needs, and the relevant support required from professional organisations.

### **3.5 Observation of Heads of Service module 2**

The observed Heads of Service cohort had a total of 20 participants (13 female, seven male). For the purposes of observational data analysis, the structure and content of Heads of Service module 2, 'The Creative Leader', has been summarised using the same three headings as for the Senior Managers:

- Complexity and leadership.
- Creativity and risk.
- Responding to the TLQ.

The Heads of Service module 2 had exactly the same content and structure as the previously reviewed Senior Managers module.

#### **3.5.1 Heads of Service follow-up event**

A member of the evaluation team attended a participant-organised meeting of the observed Heads of Service cohort in June 2006, in order to conduct the same focus group session described above. Twelve of the original 20 participants attended the meeting. The session lasted approximately 50 minutes and was tape-recorded and fully transcribed. The data were analysed using the same headings.

## **4 MID-PROGRAMME INTERVIEWS**

The main aim of the mid-programme interviews was to monitor the impact as the course progressed in relation to participants':

- Strategic grasp of leadership issues.
- Understanding of their own leadership capabilities.

One cohort from each level of the programme was approached to be interviewed after they had completed the first module. Structured telephone interviews were undertaken with volunteers from each cohort (a total of 30 interviews across the three levels of the programme). Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and were tape recorded and fully transcribed for the benefit of effective data analysis.

**See appendix G for the list of interview questions.**

Nine telephone interviews were completed with members of the targeted Heads of Service cohort and 11 telephone interviews with members of the targeted Senior Managers cohort in October 2005. Ten telephone interviews were completed with members of the targeted Future Leaders cohort in February 2006.

The interview was designed to explore respondents' perceptions from an individual, operational and organisational perspective, including key themes such as their individual need for leadership skills development and training; workplace implementation of skills developed; recognition and perceived value of the transformational model.

## **5 CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEWS**

Critical Incident interviews were conducted with a total of 51 participants drawn from three courses (Heads of Service – 14; Senior Managers – 18; Future Leaders – 19)\* and based on their availability at the time of the interviews. Nobody refused to participate, but two people had since taken up posts outside the sector.

In each case, respondents were asked to select and describe examples of significant activity since the course in which they had applied what they had learnt. They were then asked to say how they had become involved in the programme (except Heads of Service), and to comment on the course programme, content and delivery. The questions were open-ended but, since a number of common themes emerged, some of the replies have been tabulated in Part C of this report. **See appendix H for the critical incident interview schedule.**

## **6 PRE AND POST-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRES**

The main aims and objectives of the pre and post-programme questionnaire phase of the evaluation were to expand on the longitudinal approach used during the observation method, and to track any change and development (since completing the programme) in participants' understanding of:

- Their own leadership style and approach.
- Their organisation's readiness for change and preferred leadership style.
- Interpretation of the transformational model.
- Continuing professional development and engagement within a leadership context.

### **6.1 Approach used**

Once again a new cohort from each level of the programme was selected as the sample for the questionnaire method. A pre-programme questionnaire was designed and circulated electronically to all members of the selected cohorts due to start the programme from November 2005 to February 2006 (**see appendix I for the**

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\* It was noticeable that the proportion of males to females decreased with the level of the course: the ratio of respondent Heads of Service was 6 male to 8 female; for Senior Managers 4:14; and for Future Leaders 2:17.

**questionnaire**). The pre-programme questionnaire was designed specifically to explore participants’:

- Preliminary perceptions of leadership as an individual and as part of an organisation.
- Motivation for attending the course.
- Levels of professional engagement.

Questionnaires were completed anonymously, and contained additional demographic information such as level of course attended, job title and length of time in service. The response rates are shown in Table 1A:

**Table 1A: Response rate: pre-programme questionnaire**

	No. of participants per cohort	No. of returned Questionnaires	Response rate (%)
Future Leaders	26	20	77
Senior Managers	20	15	75
Heads of Service	19	12	63

A post-programme questionnaire was designed and circulated electronically to all pre-programme respondents in April 2006 (**see appendix J**). The post-programme instrument was designed to explore participants’:

- Developed understanding of their individual leadership style and capabilities.
- Understanding of the role of leadership within their organisation and of their own contribution.
- Perceived benefits of attending the programme.
- Attitudes towards continuing professional development within a leadership context.

Post-programme response rates are show in Table 1B:

**Table 1B: Response rate: post-programme questionnaire**

	No. of distributed questionnaires	No. of returned questionnaires	Response rate (%)
Future Leaders	20	15	75
Senior Managers	15	9	60
Heads of Service	12	6	50

Post-programme data have been matched to relevant pre-programme responses reported in Part C below.

## PART C: THEMATIC REVIEW OF FINDINGS

**N.B.** Although there are similarities in response by different cohorts, there were also some differences – for example in the reported success of the Future Leaders programme delivery. Responses from the different cohorts have accordingly been distinguished below. For ease of reference, the various cohorts involved in the evaluation are identified in this part of the report as follows:

**Observation and follow-up events – cohorts A**

**Mid-programme interview respondents – cohorts B**

**Critical incident interview respondents – cohorts C**

**Pre- and post-programme questionnaire respondents – cohorts D**

Predictably, the different methods used to gather data also resulted in some differences in coverage and emphasis (hence our decision to employ a variety of different methods). Summaries of the key conclusions from each phase of the evaluation are shown in Appendix K.

### 7 SELECTION AND MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE

#### 7.1 Selection or nomination

It was noticeable during the **Future Leaders'** (cohort A) observation that some of the participants did not quite 'fit' the expected profile of a Future Leaders group, and this was confirmed by informal conversations with some of them. The average age of participants, for example, was considerably higher than expected (one participant was about to retire!). Another participant said that he had not understood his selection (by his line manager): he was employed as an IT manager, did not supervise a team, did not have any particular understanding or beliefs about the public library service ethos and responsibilities, and expected to leave the service at some point to work in the private sector. This raises issues over the selection process, and the suitability of participants on the Future Leaders programme.

Since a significant element in a leadership development programme is the suitability of the people selected, we asked the cohort C **Senior Managers** and **Future Leaders** how they came to be on the programme. A potential weakness was revealed here, in that only six people (five Future Leaders and one Senior Manager) were involved in a formal selection process. Five of these were asked to make a case for participation on a side of A4; one future leader was subjected to an informal interview. Of the remainder, nine people volunteered, 18 were nominated (but didn't know the selection criteria), two were late substitutes and two were "the only available candidate".

This non-selection process led a Future leader to say:

*"I expected people in their 20s, the majority were my age or older. I'm not really sure where the new leaders are coming from."*

The average length of time in service (with public libraries) for questionnaire respondents from the **Future Leaders** cohort is 18 years, with the shortest length of time in service being 3 years, the longest 33! Although the Steering Group took a deliberate decision to avoid specifically targeting 'young leaders', these service profiles again raise issues over the selection and recruitment of participants for the Future Leaders programme, and the seeming dearth of early-career emerging leaders amongst the participants. They hold a variety of posts which infer some existing level of seniority and responsibility in service management, including **Central Library and Archives Manager, Bibliographical Services Manager, Senior Libraries Manager, Performance Management Officer and Operations Manager.**

Fifteen out of 20 Future Leader respondents described their decision to attend the programme as 'entirely voluntary'. They were all approached by their management team directly, or expressed an interest in response to an e-mail requesting volunteers. The 5 non-volunteers were asked specifically to attend the course by line managers and felt obliged to do so.

All cohort B **Future Leaders** had been approached and asked to attend LMPL by a senior manager or their Head of Service, because they had been considered to be the most appropriate person to attend from within their team/service. Most were happy to attend; one respondent said:

*"I was asked by my line manager to attend as the most appropriate person at my level. I was happy to attend... I've just been promoted so I'm looking to develop my management skills."*

Only one person indicated any sense of being obliged to attend:

*"I was put on the course as the youngest potential manager in my team – the others are a little older. I'm also the only permanent member of staff... so I wouldn't describe my decision to attend as voluntary, no!"*

Cohort B **Senior Managers** found out about the course by reading promotional literature from the MLA, and in one case, following communication from SCL. Most people were obvious candidates within their organisations: two were approached specifically by their Head of Service.

The average length of time in service for **Senior Manager** respondents to the questionnaires was 23 years (lowest 12 years, highest 36). This is not markedly different to the Future Leader respondents. Some Senior Managers however, hold posts which demonstrate strategic responsibility, and therefore a greater degree of seniority than the Future Leader respondents, such as **Development Manager, Assistant Head of Libraries: Operations, Principal Libraries Development Manager, and Service and Business Planning Manager.** Others hold titles similar to Future Leaders such as **Customer Services Manager**, which suggest management responsibilities at operational level only.

Twelve out of 15 Senior Managers described their decision to attend LMPL as 'entirely voluntary', although most were approached by their Head of Service and asked to attend. Two non-volunteers offered the following explanations:

*"My manager nominated me prior to discussion. Decision based on the fact that I tend to deputise for him in his absence. I do not however have any formal recognition for this role although the experience is good."*

*"My Head of Service requested me to attend because I do not have a management qualification and have not attended a great deal of formal management training. It is now a requirement in my authority for senior managers to attend leadership training and this course was preferred because it specifically focuses on public libraries... I have no personal motivation to attend this beyond a sense of loyalty and obligation to my manager."*

The average length of time in service for the **Heads of Service** who answered the questionnaires is 25 years (longest 39, shortest 13); only 2 years longer than that of the Senior Managers cohort (although we draw no particular conclusion from this similarity). All Heads of Service were directly invited to attend by MLA and were accordingly in a position to decide whether to do so.

## **7.2 Allocation of places and assignment to courses**

A Head of Service questioned the arbitrariness of allocation, describing it as "*utterly ludicrous that every library service has the same allocation whether they are very large or very small.*" She also questioned the basis on which people were assigned to courses. She had been unable to establish whether it was intended that they should be allocated to courses near where they worked (to facilitate later networking) or not.

## **7.3 Motivations to participate**

Several cohort B respondents were motivated by interest in their own continuing professional development, sometimes linked to recent changes in post, or a desire for future promotion:

*"A general need to undertake CPD at my level if I'm going to progress... I saw this as a way to self-appraise my management skills, which it certainly has so far."*

*"I've recently started a new job which is much more challenging and I needed a fresh perspective on things."*

Three Future Leaders had been 'just given' the course, and didn't particularly have any personal motivation to attend.

The most frequently mentioned personal motivation for attending the course amongst **Future Leaders** who replied to the prior questionnaire were 'a desire to develop my existing management skills into leadership skills' and 'a desire to boost my confidence in, and awareness of, my own leadership abilities' (each selected by 10 respondents). The main motivation for six people to attend the course was a

‘general enthusiasm for training and continuing professional development’ or to ‘support [my] future career development and promotion opportunities’. This suggests a highly self-motivated group: only 2 respondents reported a prior ‘interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service’, and only 3 expressed ‘a desire and/or a need to lead change in my own organisation’.

Asked about the main benefits of the programme afterwards, respondents most frequently picked an ‘improved confidence in my own leadership abilities’, which when matched to the aspirations in the previous paragraph, can be summarised as a positive outcome for those participants. Twelve out of 15 respondents also selected ‘the opportunity to take time out and consider my personal role within my organisation’ and ‘the opportunity to network and engage with colleagues from other library services’, again underlining the importance of interpersonal benefits of the programme to participants. Seven respondents selected ‘the development of skills and evidence to support my future career development and promotion opportunities’, whilst only 2 selected ‘the incentive to lead change in my own organisation’ and ‘an invigorated interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service’: this upholds the view that the Future Leaders are largely motivated by personal development rather than the challenge of intervening as leaders within their organisation.

Motivation for cohort B **Senior Managers** to participate was generally a desire to develop personally (again), as well as to help discover ‘what is going on nationally’, illustrating a strategic and political consciousness amongst this higher level. Older respondents suggested that the course was an opportunity to refresh their knowledge and insight. Personal development is linked to career development and promotion opportunities:

*“Fantastic for people who want to grow in this area and have ambitions about leading public libraries... it shows that this is where my future plans lie.”*

*“As one of two deputies I am aiming to be Head of Service, so I am attending primarily to support my career progression.”*

*“I went to library school a long time ago... I saw it as a useful way of updating my skills. I was quite keen to attend the course... I was less keen to go to Swindon but that’s a different issue!”*

Senior Managers who answered the pre-event questionnaires appeared to be motivated to participate in LMPL by more focused aims than the Future Leaders respondents, with 9 respondents selecting the single objectives of ‘a desire to develop my existing management skills into leadership skills’ (3), ‘a desire and/or a need to lead change in my organisation’ (3) and ‘a sense of obligation because of my position in my organisation’ (3). Three respondents expressed a general enthusiasm for training and continuing professional development, while 2 respondents were seeking to improve confidence in and awareness of their leadership abilities.

Post-programme responses received from these Senior Managers again show that the main perceived benefits of the programme are more self-orientated, including an

equal number of selections (seven from nine respondents) for 'the opportunity to take time out and consider my personal role within my organisation', the 'opportunity to network and engage with colleagues from other library services' and 'improved confidence in my own leadership abilities'. This mirrors the picture for the Future Leaders reported above in terms of the perceived benefits of LMPL for personal development and awareness. Four out of nine Senior Managers also selected 'the development of skills and evidence to support my future career development and promotion opportunities', illustrating that this group still has ambition and a desire for career progression despite the relatively high average 'length of time in service'. Only one respondent selected 'an invigorated interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service', which is perhaps surprising for a group with strategic posts within their organisations.

Personal motivating factors amongst cohort B **Heads of Service** include a general commitment to professional development but also a more advanced interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service. Heads of Service also felt a sense of obligation to lead by example, particularly with reference to the other LMPL participants from within their own service, and in relation to their position within the authority. The opportunity to network with other service heads was also attractive:

*"There was an expectation that because there were three levels of the programme, that Heads of Service should lead from the front, and I'm quite happy to do that."*

*"To meet other Heads from elsewhere in the country and to share skills and problems – to learn from one another."*

Reassuringly, most **Heads of Service** who answered the questionnaires were motivated to attend by 'a desire and/or a need to lead change in my organisation' (5) with low numbers of Heads expressing a sense of obligation, and an interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service (2). Three respondents identified a desire to boost confidence in their own leadership abilities, indicating that this is a significant motivating factor at all levels of the programme. Post-programme responses showed that the main benefits for service heads have been very similar to the other levels, in that they are largely personal in nature, including the opportunity to take 'time out', to network with colleagues from other library services, and improve confidence in their own abilities (4 each).

## **8 PARTICIPANT INTERACTION**

Participants (cohorts A) were observed during three elements of the programme, using a checklist, and scores were assigned for each element by the evaluator on a scale from 0 to 7 (**see appendix L** for the results); participants were then informally observed again by the same evaluator during the follow-up event. The results are presented below.

### **8.1 Participant interaction observation: Future Leaders (cohort A)**

Event observation activity

On the whole, the group was very animated and displayed enthusiasm for the programme. Participants responded positively and actively to the organisational culture exercises, which prompted a lot of anecdotal discussion about the most and least beneficial aspects of their own organisations. The focus was on changing elements that appeared to block progress and inhibit vision, and on the need to change the organisational culture that 'we have' into the culture that 'we want' according to 'Framework for the Future'. Participants were responsive to the concept of change management within a leadership context, and of their own individual roles within their organisations.

Participants' response to and engagement with the different creativity techniques however varied quite considerably, depending upon the individual group involved, and the perceived complexity of the technique (a total of five individual techniques was used). The Superheroes exercise, for example, was not applied very well by the particular group being observed. The technique involved identifying an issue, and then each group member was called on to adopt the persona of a particular 'hero' (celebrity, fictional character, etc) and consider how that character would tackle the problem. In this instance, after one member had identified an issue, the observed group then spent the allocated time discussing this individual's problems at work, and did not engage with the exercise at all! Although each group responded relatively enthusiastically to at least one exercise, on the whole, engagement and levels of creativity were inconsistent. (See appendix L table 1 for the activity scores.)

#### Follow-up event summary

Participants engaged positively with the set exercises, and momentum and enthusiasm for discussion was maintained throughout the event. Participants contributed equally when working in pairs, but two or three group members were more vocal when feeding back to the group. This is to be expected for a group this size. All participants conveyed an enthusiasm for building upon the LMPL experience and continuing to develop their leadership training and development. This group did not appear to be generally proactive in taking the lead within their organisations and setting personal, team and organisational targets for performance and outcomes. The several comments made about the lack of support within their service, lack of programme guidance about what to do afterwards and lack of communication locally among the three LMPL participants from each organisation suggest that, despite claims of improved confidence, these Future Leaders need formal mechanisms to help their ongoing support and development.

## **8.2 Participant interaction observation: Senior Managers**

#### Event observation summary

The Senior Managers group were a lively, constructive, proactive and committed group who demonstrated higher levels of creativity and strategic awareness than the Future Leaders cohort. (See appendix L table 2 for the activity scores.)

#### Follow-up event summary

This cohort was a lively and enthusiastic group who are committed to their ongoing leadership development, as individuals, as a group and as teams within their authorities. The group was proactive in organising its own structured event, and concluded the day with setting a date for their next meeting, including suggestions for content, venue and asking/nominating volunteers to coordinate the

arrangements. The group are clearly considering the wider strategic implications of public library leadership following on from the LMPL programme, although this is largely on a theoretical level at this stage. Despite being a much more proactive group than the observed Future Leaders cohort, members have still expressed a need and a preference for formalised structures to support their ongoing development.

### **8.3 Participant interaction observation: Heads of Service**

#### Event observation summary

The observed Heads of Service are a highly confident and motivated group who show a greater concern for the development of *other* leaders within their organisations and the public library service as a whole. They see the programme as a worthwhile platform for meeting this objective. They have taken responsibility for their own individual and collective (as a group) leadership development, with clearly defined objectives and action planning. (See appendix L table 3 for the activity scores.)

#### Follow-up event summary

The group appeared to have higher levels of confidence in their existing leadership skills, which is perhaps to be expected at this level. The group on the whole worked well together, and were proactive in responding to the programme, particularly in identifying areas for personal development, including development of other staff members. Participants at this level were more responsive to elements of the programme that focused on personal development, eg. the TLQ.

## **9 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF LMPL**

### **9.1 Overall view**

Overall, the **Heads of Service and Senior Managers programmes** were judged successful, with only a few individual reservations. Participants were enthusiastic about the programme as a whole, the balance of elements, the structure, pace and content. The **Future Leaders programmes** were reported to be broadly successful, but with some significant reservations, as described more fully below.

Taking cohort C as examples, their positive comments are summarised in table 3.

As can be seen in the table, none of the cohort C Future Leaders characterised the programme as challenging; and only one commented on the links made to public library practice. Four Future Leaders felt that a 360° appraisal would have been useful.

**Table 3: Positive Comments: Critical Incident Interview Respondents**

	Heads of Service n=14	Senior Managers n=18	Future Leaders n=19
Peer contact/networking	12	15	13
Reflection opportunities	12	11	13
Course activities	10	6	10
The facilitators	9	9	7*
360° appraisal	8	8°	-
Structure	6	6	3
Contextualization to public libraries	5	5	1
Written materials	3	5	3
Views/attitudes challenged	3	6	-
The programme as a whole	1	5	3

° Also one negative comment about the appraisal (see below).

\* Three people made negative comments about facilitators.

A more detailed commentary on each of the three programme levels is given below.

## 10 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE FUTURE LEADERS' COURSE

### 10.1 Overall strengths of the course

The observed Future Leaders welcomed and benefited from the 'common sense of purpose' offered by a programme specifically designed for public library staff, and also from the networking opportunities provided by the course. The course was also considered to be well facilitated, although some trainers were perceived to have more public library sector knowledge and better interpersonal skills than others. The main limitations seem to occur when taking the programme back to the workplace, particularly in terms of a lack of defined targets and structures for support. It was felt that inclusion of the TLQ in the Future Leader programme would have gone some way to address this.

(See table 1 in appendix C for the full list of strengths and weaknesses as identified by cohort A Future Leaders.)

### 10.2 Networking and reflection time

'All' cohort B respondents (and almost all from the other cohorts) commented on the benefits offered through networking with colleagues from other services, especially the 'commonality of purpose' shared by participants at the same level within their individual services. The residential element of the programme was proving to be beneficial in providing an informal social setting, and valuable 'time out' from the pressures of the workplace. The majority of interviewees had stayed in touch with fellow participants (on a professional basis), or intended to do so.

### **10.3 The materials**

One cohort C participant reported that *“I have read the materials about three times – trying to get the stuff to stay in my head.”* We are not sure if this was intended as criticism!

### **10.4 The course impact**

The immediate effects reported by cohort C participants included:

*“An insight into how to lead without managing.”*

*“It took me out of my nice little comfortable environment.”*

The following general comments about LMPL as a whole were made by cohort D respondents, illustrating the positive impact of the programme as a catalyst for developing leaders, and the need to maintain momentum:

*“Future Leaders was a very useful and informative programme. It both gave the opportunity to learn and also to recognise the good practice that you were already undertaking.”*

*“The courses seemed to be well received by all I have talked with. Also seem to be a catalyst for change, though the momentum will need to be maintained.”*

*“The course was brilliant in its content and also in its ability to enthuse future leaders. I will certainly put the skills learnt into practice, but felt the enthusiasm created by the course, for myself and my team, was extremely beneficial. I would have liked to take up the opportunity of doing one of the further courses offered, eg. an MA, but the costs involved are currently too high for me.”*

### **10.5 Critical comments: programme flow, management, content, facilitation**

Five cohort C participants in the Future Leaders programme were critical of the course and particularly of the slow start and managerial content:

*“After the first session I felt quite negative (it overlapped with previous management courses), there was no guest speaker, and I didn’t get a lot out of it. It could have been condensed; the first night waste of time. The second session very good – providing the context of Framework for the Future and it made it more relevant to the library environment and local government culture.”*

One participant gave up after the first event, which she described as:

*“Poor, uninspiring, boring, the tutors were poor – I only attended the first session because I found it so poor. Too long discussion groups, rambling; no direction, I’d done it all before.”*

The common denominator here was that all the complainants had previously undertaken management training courses. This was not an inhibitor for the Senior

Managers or Heads of Services, a few of whom were simultaneously undergoing other training, but there appeared to be insufficient distinctive content in the shorter Future Leaders programme to distinguish it from standard management training fare.

This course also attracted some adverse comment from three participants about the 'librarian facilitator', who told too many anecdotes (*"nice but egocentric – with too many battle stories"*).<sup>vi</sup> For one participant:

*"The tutors were OK but on occasion more interested in relating their experiences than relating to ours."*

More seriously, one person felt that, in the session on the values of the public library:

*"The facilitators put down people's ideas, put a damper on the rest of the day."*

### **10.6 Suggested changes**

Other cohort C respondents were more positive about the programme as a whole, but suggested specific changes:

*"Needed more on motivating people."*

*"I had hoped for more mentoring afterwards."*

*"The focus on **becoming** a leader was weak."*

*"A lot was general management stuff applied to libraries but not really library orientated (just examples from libraries)."*

## **11 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SENIOR MANAGERS' COURSE**

### **11.1 The course as a whole**

Cohort B appeared very comfortable with, and not excessively challenged by, the management techniques on offer and most commented that they had experienced or used similar techniques before. All interviewees spoke very positively about the focus on public libraries with a helpful and supportive group of colleagues from similar positions.

Similarly, a cohort D member said:

*"I am extremely pleased that I decided to attend the leadership training course and am benefiting from being part of such an interested, supportive and enthusiastic group led by facilitators who obviously know their stuff and manage to convey ideas with humour and enthusiasm!"*

The TLQ was regularly mentioned in positive terms as creating the self-awareness to provide a basis for leadership development.

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<sup>vi</sup> We understand from FPM that they took immediate action to deal with this problem.

## 11.2 Time to think and plan

Cohort D Senior Managers welcomed the time to consider their own leadership style, and to build confidence in their abilities and focus upon areas for development (“So far it has been useful and provided essential thinking and planning time”). The TLQ has been particularly effective in this area.

A typical comment was:

*“[I] found it useful, mainly because of the space and time for thought and reflection that it gave away from the workplace rather than because of the specific content. I think this will be the main benefit for me”*

A more limited view of the same course was:

*“A range of tools and techniques in a safe environment.”* (Cohort C)

Positive comments were made about:

- **Feeling valued**

Various positive comments were made about feeling valued or about recognition of the significance of the library service through this programme:

*“The longest period I’ve spent thinking and engaging with a peer group since I qualified – invigorating.”* (Cohort C)

- **The impact of the programme**

The programme was clearly having some of the intended effect on participants:

*“A wake up call in career terms.”* (Cohort C)

*“It sunk in that I am leader not bit part player – if staff challenged me I felt like ‘they had found me out’. Now I can respond with ‘this is why – I take on your point’.”* (Cohort C)

*“Clarifying my sense of purpose.”* (Cohort C)

*“I feel the main benefit of the programme for me has been that I now recognise my own abilities in a more realistic way – I have always underestimated myself and the contribution I can make and this has been a huge boost to my confidence and has enabled me to trust my own judgement much more than before.”* (Cohort D)

*“The impact will be long-term rather than short-term or immediate. It was definitely a valuable experience, but the practical results can only be measured, if at all, over time.”* (Cohort D)

## 11.3 Personal development and vision

Cohort A responses indicate a variety of positive outcomes in relation to personal development and growth, advanced management techniques and clearer, well defined vision of strategic development within and across individual authorities.

#### **11.4 Development time**

Most cohort B respondents wanted to maintain contact with the group, and to continue to develop their leadership skills:

*“The only thing I would say is that it has to be ongoing... you do need to have actions in place so that it’s at the forefront of your mind. The group we have is the best platform for doing this, so we need to keep the momentum flowing and meet regularly.”*

#### **11.5 Weaknesses of the programme**

Cohort A respondents acknowledged that perceptions of most and least beneficial aspects of the programme are largely influenced by personal taste and motivation. Their critical comments mostly related to details of the structure and presentation of the three separate modules on the programme, rather than specific content.

(See appendix C, table 2 for the full list of LMPL strengths and weaknesses as identified by senior managers.)

Other critical comments related to:

#### **11.6 Course tempo and length**

Four cohort C Senior Managers were critical about the pace of delivery for parts of their course. One said:

*“For the third session there was only one course leader – the gap was felt (a lot for one person to do); she did her best. In the second part (360°) there was a lot of hanging round – more structure needed there.”*

and another added:

*“A little over-long. The middle section – a lot of hanging around – less thought was apparently given to that time.”*

A few respondents were also critical about:

#### **11.7 Over-emphasis on management**

Some cohort D respondents were critical of the management theory elements because much of this was already familiar to them. They thought it might have been more beneficial at this level to allocate more time to the TLQ, as well as providing more strategic content. Four Senior Managers added that:

*“Some of the course content was more management orientated than leadership... and related to what many of us have already heard or experienced. I am very sceptical about the value of such management theory... I have experience of colleagues returning from training spouting jargon but with no clue about how to actually relate to people and motivate and lead them.”*

*“It hasn’t really taught me anything I didn’t know before in terms of management theory and practice: there was a little too much time spent on tools and processes that are familiar to existing managers. The main benefit for me has been the time to focus on me as a leader and what I need to do to progress – the TLQ was highly beneficial, and I would have welcomed more time on this.”*

### **11.8 Other**

Small reservations were made about the materials provided:

*“The materials are OK, fairly standard management seminar material.”* (Cohort C)

*“Although we were told to read them in advance – I did, but it was not necessary”.* (Cohort C)

*There should have been more emphasis on the literature (clearer guidance would have helped).”* (Cohort C)

Several cohort B respondents mentioned a particular facilitator:

*“There was a problem with one of the trainers in the afternoon session... [who] clearly lacked experience and was not up to the intellectual standard of the group. The quality of this session was poor and it affected enthusiasm within the group. One person has dropped out because of it.”*

*“One of the trainers we haven’t been very impressed with... they were very muddled and it was a wasted afternoon.”*

and a mild criticism was registered by a cohort C participant:

*“One made a lot of references to [further education] (too many); the other was a little anecdotal.”* (Cohort C)

## **12 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF HEADS OF SERVICE COURSE**

### **12.1 Overall strengths**

Most Heads of Service reported the same interpersonal benefits as at other levels, including the networking opportunities; learning from each other’s experiences, having the opportunity to communicate with colleagues who are operating at the same level and, in doing so, obtaining ‘new perspectives on shared objectives’; improved confidence and self-awareness. A particular benefit for cohort A was the way in which networking channels have been maintained in a structured and constructive way since the course, through organised events.

**(See appendix C, table 3 for a full list of most and least beneficial aspects of LMPL as reported by cohort A.)**

*“It worked because the only people in the room were doing roughly similar work.”* (Cohort C)

Again, there were many positive comments about the insights gained from the TLQ

### **12.2 Benefits of the model**

For cohort B, the perceived benefits of the transformational model presented by LMPL were the help with staff communication, and the encouragement of a more open participative culture:

*“A lot more opportunity for the front-line to buy in to the service and have more control over what they do... helping motivation, knowledge of what they’re delivering and why they’re delivering it.”*

### **12.3 Techniques and methods**

Despite their existing knowledge and experience, cohort B participants were positive about the acquisition of new styles and approaches at the mid-programme stage. Specific examples include problem solving techniques and creativity exercises:

*“I’ve learnt a lot of new things... that give a method and a framework for managing situations... some of the problem-solving techniques are very useful.”*

*“I’ve certainly learnt new ways to approach certain situations... I found the content on releasing creativity in your teams very useful.”*

### **12.4 Course materials**

The course reader was judged by various participants as being of very high quality:

*“The reader is worth the course fee alone!”* (Cohort B)

*“The manual was particularly useful both for the course and in the future, it summarised management techniques very concisely and related them to the library world.”* (Cohort D)

### **12.5 Creative reflection**

As well as adopting practical tools, service heads are thinking more about their leadership styles, identity and performance:

*“It’s making me think more about my impact on other people, and how to involve them in decision making as well as delivery.”* (Cohort B)

*“Encouraging me to communicate more, admit own shortcomings.”* (Cohort B)

*“What’s coming out very strongly is how your personality is received by staff and how you affect the culture of the organisation... I think that is the area that has become more important... my visibility within and from the service”* (Cohort B)

Other cohort B comments included positive feedback on the ‘excellent’ venue, and five service Heads were very positive about the programme trainers.

## **12.6 Weaknesses of the programme**

Turning to the **negative comments**, a cohort C respondent described the programme as:

*“A bit of a missed opportunity. Content: nothing very new – reinforcing my instinctive response rather than changing behaviour, although it added to my confidence. It didn’t feel it was rigorous or challenging – I generally get a lot out of courses attended.”*

Specific (and usually minor) criticisms were made by individuals about:

### **The materials**

*“A good pack, but as a librarian - the indexing could have been better.”* (Cohort C)

### **The facilitation**

There were some weaknesses in course facilitation and content. Some of cohort A felt that the facilitative skills of one trainer were insufficient,

*“Trainers very good and stimulating (but a bit too much talking).”* (Cohort C)

*“The only downside – the first session: too much emphasis on tensions between computers in libraries versus books in libraries.”* (Cohort C)

### **The programme content**

A few members of cohort A felt that some of the content was too basic.

*“A bit too much management learning materials.”* (Cohort C)

## **13 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (TLQ)**

Various references have already been made to the TLQ. There was widespread agreement that the work centred on the TLQ was crucial in providing participants with insight into their own leadership performance and potential and hence to the programme as a whole.

Many of the Future Leaders, as well as programme participants at other levels, felt that the absence of the TLQ-focused work was a major limitation in their programme. They felt that this would have transformed what was widely perceived as primarily another management training course into leadership development.

Senior Managers’ and Heads of Service views on the TLQ are considered in more detail below.

### **13.1 Senior Managers’ views on TLQ**

Most of the Senior Managers responded very positively to the TLQ, finding it both interesting and revelatory and there is evidence that people are modifying their behaviour in the light of the feedback. Cohort A participants’ immediate responses to the TLQ results, in relation to the 360° appraisal, were varied – there was some opposition to the scores given by managers, and discussion about the extent of

peers' genuine knowledge of participants' skills and performance. Participants generally accepted the advice to develop certain skills in accordance with transformational attributes.

### **13.2 Heads of Services' views on TLQ**

Similarly to the cohort A Senior Managers, the observed Heads of Service scored themselves higher than their 'direct reports' and peers in the TLQ. Comparative data showed that the Heads of Service had scored higher than other public sector organisations, including local government and the NHS. This prompted a discussion about whether or not there is any real cause for concern over the leadership of public libraries, and whether the LMPL programme was absolutely necessary! The group report had recommended participants to focus upon the particular measures of 'inspirational leadership' and generating a 'learning environment' as areas for development. There appeared to be a general acceptance of the transformational model, and a commitment to acting upon the TLQ results and improving individual performance based on this model.

Although the **360° appraisal** attracted several plaudits, one cohort C participant was less than happy:

*"I didn't find the 360° feedback format and the way it was delivered helpful. It coincided with other things that happened to me [problems with another manager]. I did feel at times not as focused – not getting most value out of the time."*

By chance, another Head of Service had been subjected to 360° appraisal four times in the past year! We asked her to compare this version with the others and she said:

*"There is a clear body of knowledge behind it, it was extremely helpful and the feedback was more intense, personal, helpful."*

The complexity of the issues around self-perception and other people's views involved here can be illustrated by a throwaway remark from a Future Leader:

*"The Head of Service has, if anything, got worse!"*

## **14 APPLYING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT**

To what extent are participants applying what they have learnt on their course – a major indicator of impact?

### **14.1 Impact of the programme on participants: cohort C**

Since members of the cohort involved were all asked to select an event or activity where they had tried to apply what they had learnt on the programme, this offers an opportunity to look at the programme impact in these terms. The critical incidents chosen provide ample evidence that cohort C participants are making use of what they have learnt. A few examples illustrate how elements in the course have changed some people:

*“Risk assessment – I’m now seeing risk as positive and creative rather than managing risk out of situations.” (Head of Service)*

*“Four domains – used in discussion with my line manager. This is a difficult relationship – it offered a focus for really constructive discussion – areas to work on in a different way – we worked out issues. She recognised the source of these areas and can support me; e.g. through practical ways to engage elected members (not automatic as a third tier officer).” (Head of Service)*

- Using various techniques from the course in managing current major structural change (Head of Service) or managing a major development programme (Senior Manager).
- Focusing on interaction with staff through the local authority ‘Back to front’ programme, in which senior managers exchange roles with front-line staff (Heads of Service).
- Fed into Audit Commission service review (Cultural Services) and enhanced this (Senior Manager).

#### **14.2 Managing change: Cohort C**

Many of the critical incidents described were addressing well-recognised areas of ‘managing change’. For example:

- Communicating with staff (especially sharing vision) – four Heads of Service; three Senior Managers; two Future Leaders.
- Proactively managing staff working through significant change (e.g. managing risk differently in order to get people to take responsibility; encouraging/empowering staff to take on responsibility) - three Heads of Service; seven Senior Managers; three Future Leaders
- Seeking clarity and focus (eg. in partner roles) - two Heads of Service; one Senior Manager
- Taking time to think - two Heads of Service; three Future Leaders
- Managing staff decisively - two Heads of Service
- Incorporation/changing what they do in the background - two Heads of Service

#### **14.3 Where the course helped: Cohort C**

An overview of the changes that people described and ‘where the course helped’ is shown in table 4 below:

**Table 4: Changes since the course and where the course helped: Cohort C**

	Heads of service n=14	Senior managers n=18	Future leaders n=19
Strategic focus	13	13	9
Operational focus	-	5	7
Used techniques	11	6	13
<b>Applied ideas on managing change</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Changes in own behaviour</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
Boosted confidence	8	6	8
Materials to hand/used	9	6	11
Affecting planning	1	6	2

**We have categorised participant responses under the headings shown.**

The two key indicators in terms of the overall impact of the programme (highlighted above) are:

- significant changes in aspects of the behaviour of participants after their course through **applying ideas on managing change** (changing what people do is a precursor to more fundamental change).
- **changes in their own behaviour** – how they do the job (as indicating a shift in beliefs and attitudes). Two Senior Managers reported making a conscious effort to act as transformational leaders.

In these terms, it is clear that the programme has already had a significant effect on the majority of cohort C members.

#### **14.4 Impact of the programme on participants: cohort B**

Turning to the other groups, hardly surprisingly, most cohort B (mid-programme) participants were not yet actively **changing the way they practised leadership**:

*“It’s not changing the way I practice leadership, more confirming that what I was already doing was right... so it’s making me more confident in what I do.”*

*“It has encouraged me to think about leadership styles and approaches to try, but only on a theoretical level. Problems arise when dealing with people; it’s all rather dependent upon your team.”*

Only one Future Leader had applied a few of the tools or techniques used during module 1, which had had a positive effect:

*“I recognised parts of myself but have picked up new ideas and feel less ‘stale’. I’ve been in my job for 18 months and the things I had tried hadn’t worked. I have already tried new things and they’re having an impact.”*

Similarly, in terms of the **operational** impact of the programme, the majority of cohort B interviewees had not had the opportunity to apply what they had learnt, citing reasons such as lack of time. When asked about future opportunities, most responses were about using some of the tools or exercises within management teams:

*“Not as yet, but I’m sure I would if I had the time, in the business planning area. It will be a challenge in terms of the senior management team... things need to be done or decided on a 50/50 basis... it’s more 70/30 at the moment and I need to address the balance.”*

*“I don’t think it will impinge on front-line staff, not directly. I see the tools as being more about management team working.”*

Where interviewees did comment on using the programme with front-line staff, the focus was on leading staff through change, and achieving ‘buy in’ from staff:

*“I see lots of opportunities to apply the training at the moment in terms of taking people through change... staff cuts, building renovation... we really have to look at individual role, purpose and motivation, getting staff on board and developing team skills... some of the exercises will be useful.”*

Three cohort B Future Leaders who belonged to small teams or worked independently could not identify any opportunities to apply what they had learnt on an operational level: one respondent in particular felt that the emphasis on leading staff through change was inappropriate for him.

There are some differences in how the three managerial levels are applying what they have learnt, principally influenced by the amount of current organisational change and by the opportunities for relatively junior managers to act in leadership roles:

#### **14.5 Impact of the programme on participants: Future Leaders**

At the post-course event, Cohort A participants split into two groups to list and discuss how they have used the course materials and ideas within their authorities. Using the headings ‘materials and activities’ and ‘knowledge, ideas and processes’, each group discussed one topic, and then swapped documents to add their examples to the other group’s list. The results are shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5: Materials, activities, knowledge, ideas and processes that have been applied at work**

Materials and Activities	Knowledge, Ideas and Processes
Ice-breaker techniques and assigning groups in staff forums (all staff) e.g. rotate tables; stand in alphabetical line then breakaway	Five minutes to reflect now included at the end of team meetings
Promenade exercise (getting out of building/work premises) with specific individuals, making/allowing time out of library to achieve task or think around a subject. Suggested coping mechanism, encourages creativity	Applied process of managing change to specific changes implemented in one particular library
Ran through chevron exercise with area team (5 middle managers working across 12 libraries). Picked specific problem and used tool to analyse blockages and means of progress	Spend time talking issues through with colleagues without guilt
Domain mapping – used individually to inform how approached an aspect of own job: helped get perspective on political domain	Applied knowledge of principles of partnership working to summer activity programme with <i>Sure Start</i> in one particular area
Not specifically used material or activity but certainly feel directly influenced in decision-making and work relationships – altered perspectives, improved skills	Addressed issue of poor performance with member of staff – to deal with long-term methods rather than short-term fixes. Dealing with probationary procedures for both new and experienced staff - indirect/planning
Applied 'push-pull' exercise with a staff team of library managers to tackle a particular issue (i.e. withdrawn stock): enabled team to unpack problem and think of the solution first. Intention to get staff to do this themselves rather than rely upon senior managers to provide solutions	'Values Values Values': questioning own, applying to situation, embedding in recruitment and selection
Used an idea from another participant on the course – sharing good practice	Creativity – taking on board ideas, supporting people to express ideas and put in to action
Fed into recruitment and selection: not specific exercise, more a focus on getting right attitude rather than experience	More assertive – more inclined to stand ground. Making own opinions heard; more confident

The application of knowledge, ideas and processes indicate that these Future Leaders have become more confident and proactive in their emerging role as leaders.

Cohort B Future Leaders (at the mid-programme stage) were imprecise in identifying the organisational strategic benefits of applying what was being learnt on the programme at this stage. Some saw the benefits as largely about tackling individual problems and developing teams. Others took the view that the culture of leadership within their organisation needed to become more inclusive and less 'top-heavy':

*“The organisation as a whole won't necessarily benefit, but it can help the service to overcome obstacles, and better equip me to tackle problems as they arise with my team.”*

*“I would say that my organisation needs the transformational model. They would like to think that they're already doing it, but they're not very empowering – everything is led from the top.”*

Cohort B interviewees were asked about the potential to 'cascade' the programme within their organisation. Responses focused on sharing tools and exercises on a one-to-one basis with managers and team members, rather than on broader aspects of developing leaders within the organisation:

*"I'm exploring the use of some of the exercises with my line manager and have arranged to meet up with a colleague who's attending the Senior Managers level once we've completed the course."*

*"Yes, but I'm not sure how structured it would be. If I had the time I would demonstrate the tools to colleagues as individuals not teams."*

#### **14.6 Impact of the programme on participants: Senior Managers**

Even when feeding back to the group during the course sessions, cohort A participants saw the techniques being useful in encouraging them to adopt different perspectives and acknowledge the 'bigger picture'. In general, participants embraced the general principles of the techniques used, and saw them as applying to strategic public library issues such as organisational restructures.

Cohort A members displayed a readier appreciation of how and why to apply the techniques in the workplace than some of the Future Leaders had done: this could be explained by their position in their organisations, since they may have more opportunity and inclination to use management tools. Some participants observed that one particular exercise would be a valuable tool to use with service users as well as staff ('Morphological Mix'), illustrating the creative potential of this group. Some participants were more confident in using techniques that they had used before, eg. De Bono's 'Thinking Hats'.

Four cohort B respondents commented that some of the techniques have already been used to address **project management** issues with both fellow managers and support staff. The anticipated outcomes were that projects would become more structured and focused – one interviewee felt that the applied tool had ensured that *"all bases are covered"*. The tools are proving to be effective in encouraging staff to communicate and become involved:

*"I've brought some of the techniques back and used them...I haven't learnt anything new in terms of style, but the particular techniques for getting the most out of people, ... getting people to discuss their feelings and get beyond them."*

Other Senior Managers are trying to develop their **working relationships** with staff. One person was trying to:

*"... change the ethos in the library service management style... there's a history of top down management and that's not really the way I work. I want people to take responsibility and ownership of things."*

Another respondent who has recently changed post reported that some of the tools are helping them to start 'afresh' and consider how they are perceived by their new team, which in turn has provided the opportunity to think more strategically:

*“I’m trying to build a new team and help them to think and deliver the service. The course is helping me to write strategies for three new services.”*

As well as developing new teams of staff, a third respondent envisaged that the materials would be useful in encouraging older members of their team:

*“I’m hoping to change the nature of some of the staff’s roles... we have an ageing group of professionals... it’s quite a challenge to keep them on board and appreciate that their roles need to change.”*

Where content has been applied at work, a few cohort B participants anticipated issues of **cynicism from participating staff**. In relation to this issue, three people saw the limited number of LMPL places allocated to individual authorities as a limitation in applying the programme:

*“A challenge will be convincing people of the value of what we’re doing. I know certain people will think ‘Oh, she’s been away on another course then’ and will be sceptical about some of the exercises if/when I try to use them. This could have been avoided by letting more people from individual authorities attend the course... it’s difficult to persuade people of the value of something that they haven’t been involved in.”*

*“The course is very hands on and experimental in terms of trying out new tools and exercises – it’s hard to feed that back to somebody who hasn’t been on the course. We don’t have time to recreate the course... It’s difficult to talk through the benefits of something when they haven’t been through the process.”*

*“Some of the members of my team who share similar goals will welcome the tools... they will find it quite dynamic and interesting. I think I will find it more difficult with people at my immediate level who haven’t been on the course.”*

All interviewed cohort B members thought that their **organisation would benefit** from the approaches presented by LMPL at this stage. Senior Managers who reported a ‘top down’ leadership style within their organisation welcomed the chance to promote a more inclusive approach to leadership. Although nothing had formally been implemented at organisational level, respondents were optimistic about their future contribution to the leadership of their organisation:

*“Previously I was confident in applying my style on behalf of my leader... now I’m becoming more confident in becoming a leader myself, and this is important not just for me but for my organisation as a whole.”*

Two Senior Managers felt that some of the recommendations in the programme are a little unrealistic about the time to undertake them when people are faced with the daily pressures and demands of running a service. Although the existing leadership style of some organisations was relatively reactive and directive, this was considered to be both appropriate and effective under given circumstances.

Senior Managers were generally optimistic about the opportunity to cascade the programme within their organisations:

*“I found the reader really helpful and inspiring... it was actually more helpful than some of the training we received... I intend to pass that on to new staff where appropriate.”*

*“In terms of what we’ve done so far, the idea is that when I’ve used a technique with my managers, when they go back to their staff, they use similar techniques, and it will be filtered down that way.”*

One respondent however was quite sceptical about the value of ‘cascading down’ within the organisation and thought that it would be more beneficial for a greater number of people to actually attend the programme:

*“There is a danger that it just becomes a management technique being cascaded down and subsequently ignored... it becomes much more valuable when you go away to do it with critical friends.”*

(This view is strongly supported in the educational change literature, where the cascade approach to change management is generally seen as discredited.)

#### **14.7 Impact of the programme on participants: Heads of Service**

Members of cohort B intended to cascade the course content both within the library service and with more senior colleagues within the wider local authority. One respondent described a system already in place for developing leaders within the organisation, which will be supported by the LMPL programme. It was noted that cascading and dissemination will only work once the potential results are proven, indicating again that the success of LMPL will be in the long term:

*“We have the people on the other element of the programme and we have a Rising Stars policy to develop succession planning and new leaders...there’s quite a lot in that area already going on here.”*

*“Difference needs to be subtle rather than a declaration of intent... people are much more impressed by results than words.”*

Cohort B Heads of Service had also identified specific situations and circumstances in which to use tools and processes presented on the programme. Situations in which approaches and tools have been adopted include those within a wider, strategic and political context, and those involving service evaluation and development:

*“We’re undergoing a fundamental service review at the moment, content particularly around the spheres of influence is very useful in this situation... we’re dealing with staff, politicians... it will be extremely useful in our modernisation agenda.”*

*“We’ve just undertaken a large consultation exercise with customers and non-customers... identifying focus groups, sending out a questionnaire... we’re in*

*the process of analysing the findings and coming out with a way forward... I'll be using the thinking hat technique within that... it will encourage staff to think in a different way and be more open-minded."*

Obstacles in applying course content, as identified by interviewees, include a natural difficulty in instigating change because of people's reluctance and the difficulties in 'teaching an old dog new tricks', overcoming cynicism, pressure of work and political convention. One Head said that he had been very cynical himself prior to LMPL but is now confident that it can be overcome. It was noted that applying the training will be a lengthy and experimental process, but as ultimately the techniques offer staff the opportunity to be more participative, the results will be positive:

*"It's all trial and error... There was differing success on the course depending on who was leading each exercise... they will need practice but could be very useful and positive."*

*"The biggest obstacle is politics at the moment... you could have a wonderful idea but it may not be politically acceptable."*

*"To a large extent it will be empowering front line staff and giving them a more obvious role in the way forward... I think if it's treated negatively by anybody it will be my immediate management team who will think 'hey ho she's been on a course, here we go again'... the proof of the pudding will be in the eating... if it's used effectively they will want to use it themselves."*

Most Heads of Service broadly agree that the transformational model 'fits' the culture of their organisation, 'up to a point'. One participant described the local authority as an 'amorphous being', constantly subject to change and alternative approaches. Three respondents reported a conscious move within their authorities towards an explicit transformational culture, but most authorities within the sample are led on a reactive basis:

*"A lot has already been done to equip a transformational ethos around the place... so most of the methods will fit... generally it fits quite well with what's happening corporately."*

*"There often isn't time to develop style... you're constantly fire fighting."*

## **15 THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE**

Clearly, one of the key influences on the efficacy of transformational leadership is the leadership and organisational climate in which it is being applied. Moreover, it was clear from the critical incident discussion that the organisational climate and other factors could limit scope for engendering change through this type of programme. A few Future Leaders were at a transitional phase in their work role so that they were unable to apply their knowledge as strategically as they would wish. For example, one respondent felt she now had a strategic focus but was engaged at operational level managing a big implementation programme. She was *"Doing transactional things in transformational way"* but was also looking for career development opportunities. Another respondent *"Sees scope for using what I've*

*learnt because I anticipate major changes at work.*" A third person felt stuck at operational level and was unable to identify changes (but enjoyed the course and found it useful) and a fourth was encouraging change by modelling appropriate behaviour (not in line management role).

One Senior Manager had a similar disruption, reporting:

*"Good intentions but not applied yet (maternity leave, then reverted to previous Deputy role)."*

and another had reduced to a part-time job share, but felt blocked because she had been left with a full-time workload until recently.

Finally, one Senior Manager:

*"Liked the course but I feel powerless in face of major change (too few staff and major restructuring imminent)."*

There are some interesting differences in perceptions at the different managerial levels:

### **15.1 Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Future Leaders**

Cohort D respondents were asked to define the 'current' leadership style of their organisation using the same terms as those used to describe individual styles and approaches, and perceptions of those presented on the course. The most frequent descriptions were 'results driven' (13) and 'politically aware' (ten), followed by 'reactive' and 'directive' (seven each), 'task orientated' (six) and 'decisive' (five). The task orientated and results driven elements are similar to Future Leaders' perceptions of their own leadership style, yet the main assessment of organisational leadership style differs significantly from individual leanings towards empathy, inclusion and consultation, and the creative, empowering and visionary assessment of the model of leadership presented by LMPL. It is also interesting to consider that 10 Future Leaders described the leadership style of their organisation as politically aware, yet only two respondents described their own approach, and that of the LMPL programme, as politically aware.

Ten out of 20 cohort D respondents said that their organisation *traditionally* had an identifiable leadership style. Nine respondents believed that their organisation would benefit from a change or redirection in approach. The post-programme responses indicate that Future Leaders are keen, in theory, to adopt the principles and approaches advocated by LMPL: Thirteen out of 15 believe that their organisation would benefit from the ideas presented on the course in taking the service forward. The realities of putting this in to practice are more undecided, with seven respondents each agreeing and disagreeing that their organisation is 'open to change and development with respect to its future leadership'. Ten out of 15 agree that leadership within their organisation is inconsistent, with different leaders and managers adopting different approaches, and only seven respondents are 'optimistic about the combined contribution that the three participants on the course can make to the future leadership of our organisation'. Future Leaders offered the following supporting statements about leadership within their organisation, illustrating the

complexities which beset public library leadership on a practical basis, and the consequent insecurities about their own role and contribution:

*“It may be the attempt to restructure in such a fluid political climate, but the current leadership strikes me as too passively reactive (and consequently too ‘conservative’ in decision-making) to have a clearly identified style, which in turn makes investment in it by staff vexed, and morale low on most levels as a result.”*

*“There are no rights and no wrongs. I have confidence in the current leaders of my organisation, but things change depending on personnel and circumstance. It’s difficult to know where, when and how to ‘fit in’.”*

*“Recent events have made it clear that a restructuring of the staffing structure of the organisation is imperative if we are to continue to develop both the service and the staff in it... which will impact upon the leaders and the led.”*

*“We are currently undergoing reorganisation. There has been no communication so far about the proposed structure but... it involves placing current senior staff in strategic roles – I have serious doubts about any opportunities for me personally being there as a result – in fact I see my post as being somewhat devalued.”*

## **15.2 Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Senior Managers**

Cohort D Senior Managers described the ‘current’ leadership style of their organisation as markedly different to their own perceived leadership style and to their interpretation of the model presented by LMPL. The most popular definition was ‘politically aware’ (selected by 11 out of 15 respondents), followed by ‘results driven’ (10), ‘empowering’ (seven) and directive (six). Empowering leadership is the common denominator in Senior Managers’ interpretation of their own approach, and that of their organisation and the LMPL programme. Whilst respondents acknowledge the need for a variety of leadership styles and attributes, political awareness should be a vital component of leadership training within public services and local government, a view which is upheld by respondents’ judgement of their own organisations.

Ten out of 15 cohort D pre-course respondents agree that their organisation traditionally has an identifiable leadership style or approach, with only seven believing that it would benefit from a change in leadership direction. 14 out of 15 Senior Managers expressed confidence in their abilities to lead their organisation prior to starting LMPL. Post-programme responses illustrate a greater degree of certainty and confidence in existing leadership approaches within their organisations amongst Senior Managers, with seven out of nine respondents disagreeing that their organisation needs to change its current leadership style and approach; five out of nine are optimistic about the contribution that LMPL participants can make to the future leadership of their service. Some respondents felt that the course was somewhat negatively focused on the need for public libraries to change, and their perceived reluctance to do so:

*“With a new Chief Executive in place, the whole organisation is experiencing a new leadership style resulting in changing emphasis and priorities to which we are responding positively.”*

*“Although some of the course content gave food for thought, I felt that some of the content did make false (negative) assumptions about the current state of leadership and willingness to embrace change in public libraries.”*

*“I’m sure the organisation would be responsive to changes if absolutely necessary, I’m just not sure that they are.”*

One respondent expressed a particular dissatisfaction in a perceived negativity towards the current and future performance of public libraries:

*“I think the course for me was disappointing. I felt that it was not visionary, aspirational and upbeat in its presentation and delivery. This did not in my opinion encourage a positive, ‘can do’ attitude to the future. For current and future leaders I think we need to foster a strong belief in the role that libraries can play to support changes in society and an awareness of the power that our vision, commitment and belief in this has for staff.”*

### **15.3 Perceptions of organisational leadership style: Heads of Service**

The majority of cohort D Service Heads described the current leadership style of their organisation as ‘results driven’ (nine), followed by ‘politically aware’ (seven), ‘consultative’ (six) and ‘directive’ (four). Empowering and results driven are compatible with their assessment of their own leadership style and that of the programme.

Seven out of 12 Heads of Service recognise that their organisation has a traditional leadership style, with half of the respondents agreeing and an equal number disagreeing (six each) that their organisation would benefit from a change or redirection in leadership style and approach. Seven agree however that their organisation would be responsive to change, and nine out of 12 were confident in their leadership abilities prior to starting the programme.

## **16 PARTICIPANTS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES**

How do participants’ leadership styles accord with the demands of their organisations and the aspirations of the LMPL programme?

All Cohort B interview respondents were asked to consider their own leadership styles and approaches, and most said that the programme was reassuring them of their own capabilities and helping to boost their confidence.

*“I would say that I am not too prescriptive... inclusive in encouraging others... I’m not afraid of failing. I am learning some new ideas on the course, but really it is confirming what I already knew about myself.”*

A cohort C respondent on the Future Leaders course said that she had recognised herself as an operational manager rather than leader through the course.

Again, there are differences evident at the three managerial levels:

### **16.1 Leadership styles: Future Leaders**

Generally, cohort B interviewees were hesitant or unsure in defining their organisational leadership style or approach, and about their own contribution. Respondents generally agreed that the approach offered by LMPL would 'suit' their organisation, particularly those who were critical of the current style, or those within organisations that are experiencing change:

*"I would describe the existing leadership style of my organisation as not very good... there isn't an awful lot of leadership in fact. The course is very timely for us as an organisation, there are a lot of changes taking place and we need to be more focused about leading the change."*

*"The style differs as the senior management team changes. I suppose on the whole the style is very prescriptive... top down... not very flexible. It would certainly benefit from a new approach but I don't feel that I can input fully. I'm not really taken notice of!"*

Cohort D respondents were asked to select phrases to describe their own individual leadership style or approach. The group was relatively homogenous in its selections, with 'empowering' and 'task-orientated' being the most frequent choices (ten each), followed by 'consultative' (eight). Six respondents described their leadership style as 'empathetic', 'inclusive' and 'results driven', which suggests that leadership is practised on a necessity-based level (prescribed by task and desired result) by the Future Leaders, and that the agreement and co-operation of colleagues and team-members is regarded as important. Two respondents highlighted the difficulty in defining their own leadership style including the need to adopt flexible approaches to address different situations, and the potentially differing opinions of others:

*"For some time now, my style has varied depending on situation, timescale and staff involved."*

*"I found this difficult to answer: I suspect my own view of myself is not how others view me."*

Post-programme data suggest that participants have developed a clearer understanding of their own leadership capabilities. Respondents were asked to select definitions of the leadership style presented on the programme (using the same list of terms) and to describe how this related to their own particular leadership style or approach. Responses indicate that cohort D has developed recognition of the key principles of transformational leadership. 13 out of 15 respondents described the programme as 'creative'. Eleven respondents selected 'empowering', with 'visionary' and 'empathetic' as the next most frequent selections. The interpretation of leadership presented by LMPL has helped Future Leaders to confirm and contextualise their own performance and contribution, suggesting a general acceptance and adoption of the model presented:

*“It confirmed that my own approach and initiative wasn’t misguided (and helps me to identify the more useful examples in my organisation from whom to benefit).”*

*“The course supported my leadership style – collecting all the information, and using flexibility and being empathetic, but it also provided supporting skills relating to creativity and a more dynamic approach.”*

*“It confirmed that much of what I do is fine, and highlighted areas I need to strengthen.”*

*“I was encouraged to find that leadership does not necessarily mean loud and in your face, which I most definitely am not.”*

## **16.2 Leadership styles: Senior Managers**

Most cohort B interviewees were non-committal about their own leadership style and approach at the mid-course stage, but saw LMPL as a means of exploring their style:

*“I’ve never thought about putting a label on it. I quite like to dip in and out of various styles. I like to delegate to my team but make myself approachable enough to step in if needs must.”*

*“I expect that my style will change in time following this contact with other managers at my level. It gave me confidence in using my style and going for it.”*

*“I can’t really answer that... I just do what I do... part of the reason of the course is to help you recognise that, so I look forward to finding out!”*

One Senior Manager was confident in his own style at this stage in the programme:

*“I like to encourage staff to grow where I can see potential... I can see myself in the course materials... I haven’t learnt anything new... I suppose if it ain’t broke don’t fix it.”*

Another cohort B member had been encouraged to change her style by the change management course content, and become more results orientated, rather than empathetic:

*“It has encouraged me to be more dispassionate and think about the service and why we do things, rather than the effect upon people in post. I still consider them, but not as much as I have done.”*

Most respondents agreed that the programme was changing the way they think about leadership, rather than practise leadership, at the mid-programme stage. Four interviewees felt that they had become more focused on their leadership goals; several commented that practical change will be a long-term process.

When defining their own individual leadership style and approach, cohort D Senior Managers were less homogenous in their selections, with each of the 15 descriptors being selected at least twice. The most frequent selections were 'empowering' (nine) and 'consultative' (eight), suggesting quite a democratic approach to leadership amongst the Senior Managers cohort. 'Results driven' and 'decisive' were the next most frequent with five selections each. Three Senior Managers described their leadership approach as 'politically aware'. When interpreting the model of leadership presented by LMPL, the post-programme respondents have shown an awareness of the transformational agenda, and have described the model in the majority as 'creative' (eight), 'empowering' (seven), 'empathetic' and 'visionary' (four each), which is strikingly similar to the definitions selected by the Future Leaders cohort. Only two respondents described the course content as 'politically aware'. Supporting comments indicate that the Senior Managers respect the value of these principles, but also recognise the need to adopt alternative leadership styles to suit their organisation and role:

*"We were encouraged to model our leadership on these lines [by LMPL] but I would also add inclusive, innovative and politically aware to internal expectations."*

*"The ideas presented were much more 'hands on' and softer than the way I would normally do things – it has encouraged me to think about the impact of my actions and behaviour."*

*"I am more decisive, empathetic and collaborative... I think at different times and for various reasons all the models above [terms given to describe leadership style] are valid because they achieve different things in different circumstances. Sometimes leaders have to be reactive, directive and results driven – that's life!"*

### **16.3 Leadership styles: Heads of Service**

The cohort B interviewees were decisive when identifying their own leadership style, and its relationship to the model presented by LMPL. Two interviewees had already undertaken a 360° appraisal similar to the TLQ, so were aware of their own areas to develop, and were looking to the programme to provide opportunities for this. Service Heads also demonstrated an existing knowledge of leadership models and their appropriateness in given situations, and welcomed the opportunity to complement their existing styles with alternative approaches:

*"I tend to be transactional in nature... there is a big push in public services to be more transformational, I think probably that's where my weakness lay... I am hoping that the course will address the balance... hopefully I'm a manager of quite a high standard, I would like to be a leader of equal standard!"*

*"I've been through a 360° appraisal within my Council... I have already identified areas for development... I will be using the course to build upon that."*

*"What we're talking about here is not that one recreates oneself, but perhaps a change in emphases... if those areas are good or pretty decent, what are*

*the less good areas, and those are the ones to focus on and do something about.”*

Asked to select words that described their leadership style, seven out of 12 service Cohort D Heads of Service described their own leadership style as ‘politically aware’; with ‘empowering’ as the next most popular description (six), followed by ‘collaborative’ and ‘proactive’ (five each). Post-programme respondents considered the model presented by LMPL to be mostly ‘empowering’ (six), followed by ‘visionary’, ‘results driven’ and ‘empathetic’ (four each).

## **17 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEFORE AND AFTER THE COURSE**

Another influencing factor for this programme is whether it is a ‘one-off’ or whether the participants are professionally active in their own development. Were most of the course participants already engaged in professional development? We asked about their other professional development activity and, again, the results are shown for the three managerial levels below.

### **17.1 Other professional development: Future Leaders**

Cohort D Future Leaders were asked what activities they had undertaken in the six-month period prior to starting LMPL, and since completing the programme. They already had a healthy and active attitude towards professional development prior to attending the programme: 13 out of 20 Future Leaders had undertaken three or more professional development activities. The most popular activities were ‘reading professional literature’ (16), ‘attending a training event/course’ (13), ‘attending a professional conference’ (ten) ‘reading/contributing to email discussion groups’ (ten) and joining or renewing ‘membership to a professional organisation’ (ten). Eight Future Leaders had facilitated a training event, and one respondent had spoken at a professional conference. Only three Future Leaders had not undertaken any professional development activities in the six-month period preceding the programme. On the other hand, only three respondents stated that the activities they had undertaken related directly to leadership development.

Given this level of activity it is not surprising that the 15 post-programme responses have not revealed much difference in professional development activity amongst the Future Leader respondents since attending LMPL. Nine respondents have completed 3 or more activities since completing the programme; only 1 respondent had not completed any. Reading professional literature was again the most popular (and accessible) activity (12), followed by attending a training event/course (nine). Interestingly four of the 15 respondents had facilitated a training event/course, and two had written a paper for publication. Those respondents undertaking the higher level of professional development activity each had 20+ years experience in the public library sector, which suggests they have the knowledge, seniority and momentum to engage at a more advanced level, perhaps calling into question the appropriateness of their inclusion on the Future Leaders programme.

### **17.2 Other professional development: Senior Managers**

As is perhaps to be expected at this level, Cohort D Senior Managers were actively engaged in professional development prior to starting the course. Fourteen out of 15 Senior Managers had undertaken three or more professional development

activities in the six-month period preceding LMPL. Attending a training event/course and reading professional literature were the most popular activities. Eight Senior Managers had facilitated a training event/course. Post-programme responses do not indicate a discernible increase or decline. No Senior Managers indicated that their development activities had related explicitly to leadership skills development and training. Four out of nine post-programme respondents have met with Future Leader and Heads of Service participants to review the programme internally, although this has largely been done on a casual basis.

### **17.3 Other professional development: Heads of Service**

Once again, respondents from the Heads of Service Cohort D were already active in professional development activities prior to starting the programme. All respondents had undertaken three or more activities in the six-month period, with six Heads of Service speaking/presenting at a professional conference, and eight facilitating a training event or course. The noticeable difference here between the cohorts is that five out of 12 service heads had undertaken additional training relating to leadership skills/theory, indicating a commitment to development in this area. As with the other levels, there is no obvious change in pattern since the course. Three Heads of Service had initiated formal meetings with the relevant Senior Manager and Future Leader from within their organisations, suggesting that the lack of co-operation at other levels stems from a need to be approached by a senior colleague, or a lack of confidence in suggesting a formal working relationship within a leadership context. Cohort D members made various suggestions about ongoing development within a leadership context including a greater focus on developing leaders within the organisation (supporting the request for greater succession planning made by Future Leaders in the follow-up event summary); coaching skills relating to the development of future leaders; and a stronger working relationship with MLA and SCL on developing leadership strategy.

*“There needs to be a greater focus on how to develop leaders within the organisation – I can’t help but feel it is a little too late to be focusing on current Heads of Service!”*

## **18 THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP IN LIBRARIES**

Where should leadership development in public libraries go from here? Predictably, the participants were not short on suggestions. Participants at all three levels were keen to ensure that this programme or something comparable continued into the future:

*“More people should have the opportunity to do it: MLA/DCMS should provide continuous, ongoing support for development as leaders.”* (Head of Service)

Once again, there were differences in emphasis (if not in direction) between the suggestions made at the three managerial levels:

### **18.1 Leadership development: Future Leaders**

Cohort A Future Leaders were asked to consider their own development as leaders, and support that they would like from professional organisations. Their main suggestions were:

- Open forum/discussion board (e.g. on CILIP website).
- E-mail network/discussion list for all LMPL Future Leaders.
- Regional meetings/workshops in association with branches of SCL.
- Regular meetings within and between Future Leader cohorts (cost implications of this were noted: there would need to be some discussion/agreement between participating authorities, and perhaps a sponsoring body such as regional MLA agencies).
- Mentoring within authorities (eg. relevant LMPL Senior Manager to mentor Future Leader, who subsequently becomes mentor to other staff).
- Workshops sponsored and facilitated by regional MLA agencies: cost supported by Public Library Authorities .
- Promote organisational engagement with LMPL materials and outcomes (within individual library services): difficult to get people engaged when they haven't attended the course and don't have first hand knowledge of the materials. Relevant Head of Service, Senior Manager, and Future Leader should work together to cascade and promote the materials and knowledge gained.
- Greater communication and shared commitment between the three levels of the course: (e.g. action planning, in order to deliver tangible LMPL outcomes and impact). This can help to keep momentum and 'sell' benefits to other staff.

The group had a lengthy discussion about recruitment issues, the lack of succession planning, and subsequent difficulties in developing effective leaders in the public library service. It was thought that difficulties lay in finding and nurturing staff who are able to balance and manage corporate pressures whilst maintaining professional values. The group saw a need to capitalise on the leadership training they have received and to be more proactive in resolving their own issues. Project management was put forward as a way to develop other staff. No specific action points identified for the group.

The group then focused on the future of public library leadership:

- It was felt that in order to make the public library service attractive to the most talented and dynamic graduates and applicants, there was a need to focus on positive image building by professional organisations and leaders within the service (one example given was to use successful reader development programmes and initiatives, promoting the cultural value of public library services). The group felt that they and other LMPL cohorts could establish working projects on this theme, in consultation with MLA and other professional bodies.
- There needs to be an increased focus and extended training on change management.
- Targets and benchmarks need to be set to show the impact and value of LMPL (perhaps set by MLA), (eg. a body of evidence containing examples of how the training has worked in practice, positive outcomes, leadership best practice). This will motivate and challenge LMPL participants to continue their

leadership development, and promote the value of leadership training to 'future' Future Leaders.

- A system for succession planning needs to be put in place (under guidance of professional bodies): important to identify, recruit and support leaders as early as possible in their careers.
- Develop the programme regionally in association with regional MLA regional agencies: neighbouring authorities working together, and extending the programme to more public library staff.

Cohort D Future Leaders were asked to consider the types of professional development activities that would be most beneficial to them in their on-going leadership development and training. Responses match those given during the follow-up event above in the desire for a more regional focus, extending the training received on a national basis, and opening up the programme to a greater number of participants. Questionnaire respondents again mentioned a potential role for the regional MLACs, along with regional branches of CILIP and SCL. Their anticipated role is largely facilitative, and providing funding for any relevant events. Respondents would like more networking opportunities, and the chance to shadow leaders in other authorities and learn from best practice.

Cohort D respondents were also asked to comment on the working relationship between the three LMPL participants within their organisation after completing the programme. Responses again echoed statements made by other evaluation participants, in that there is no consistent co-ordination and application of the three levels of training within and across the participating authorities. Respondents stressed that this was largely through a lack of time rather than a reluctance to do so. Where the three participants have met, it has been on a casual basis, with no real strategy implementation. Some respondents did express a future commitment to working together with the relevant Head of Service or Senior Manager:

*“At the moment [we have] just generally discussed what the course included. Plan to work together to cascade some of the elements to other staff.”*

*“My line manager and I are going to undertake a joint project from September based on ideas gained from the course(s).”*

*“We have set a schedule of meetings to discuss our development and the use of course tools as a team.”*

## **18.2 Leadership development: Senior Managers**

As with the Future Leaders group, cohort A Senior Managers envisage a potential role for regional organisations such as the MLA regionally and SCL. Responses included:

- Further structured development of the TLQ assessment, including recognition of targets set and outcomes realised. Potentially managed/supported by MLA.
- Continued and regular meetings with own cohort.
- Regional meetings between all LMPL participants at each level (managed/supported by regional MLA regional agencies).

- Organised pathways within individual PLAs at all three levels of the programme.
- Formalised mentorship schemes.
- Continuing formal training along the lines of LMPL, including the provision of more places to other staff members within individual authorities.
- Networks for disseminating and cascading the training and outcomes (eg. leadership best practice case studies), possibly in the form of a leadership website hosted by MLA, or a CILIP Special Interest Group (SIG).
- Opportunities for existing SIGs to develop and disseminate leadership-related materials and events.
- The group recommended the formation of a committee consisting of MLA, CILIP, SCL representatives to govern and support ongoing activities both on a regional and national level.

Cohort D Senior Managers have similar preferences to Future Leaders about methods to support their future leadership development, particularly in the desire for a regional focus, and continuation of the programme. Other suggestions included annual refresher courses involving the same LMPL cohorts to discuss and review progress amongst participants. In terms of content, some Senior Managers requested a greater focus on ‘higher level’ strategic thinking and the public library’s role in local government, and thought that this was a little rushed within the LMPL programme:

*“... a greater focus on strategic leadership and the bigger picture in terms of regional objectives and how to consolidate the public library’s role and future within the authority. It is a constant battle!”*

*“I felt the most useful parts... i.e. thinking strategically, were too near the end of the programme. I felt things were just getting challenging as the course finished.”*

### **18.3 Leadership development: Heads of Service**

Cohort A Heads of Service are happy to take control of their own ongoing leadership development (as evidenced by the attendance at their follow-up meeting) but highlighted the following potential support structures:

- An alerting service which brings attention to recent publications, courses, events, etc within the leadership discipline.
- More formal accredited learning (perceived as being motivational) e.g. leading to a MBA.
- Funding for more staff to attend LMPL.
- Funding for more meetings of existing cohorts/LMPL networks.
- Methods for accrediting/substantiating ‘informal’ learning into a recognised qualification.

## PART D: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 19 CONCLUSIONS

#### 19.1

Overall, the LMPL programme was clearly a success at the Heads of Service and Senior Managers levels and was a qualified success at the Future Leaders level. Referring back to the specific objectives of the LMPL programme listed in section 1 above, the programme contributed directly to improving the quality of leadership skills of participants and indirectly to enhancing workforce skills; equipped participants with an awareness of how to deliver a clear vision for improving services, and provided participants with some new business management and marketing skills (depending upon what other recent development opportunities they had experienced). On the basis of a wide range of feedback from participants, we conclude that anyone who joined the LMPL programme with a readiness to develop their leadership capacity and skills was given ample opportunity, as well as support in doing so.

#### 19.2

In terms of what the programme set out to give participants (also listed in section 1), almost all respondents were able to work on their skills and capacity to deliver transformational change for their library service, although some Future Leaders had little or no chance to put these lessons into practice. It is too early to judge whether participants have been able to contribute to transformational change for their authority; this will be an interesting focus for any future evaluation of LMPL or any successor programme.

The LMPL programme was outstandingly successful in providing opportunities for participants to learn and develop alongside colleagues from other authorities who share similar levels of responsibility. Opportunities were provided for participants to formulate action plans for their self-development as leaders, but subsequent success in applying these plans was limited by the failure of some trios of participants in particular PLAs to meet together on a regular basis and by patchy organisation of follow-up self-help events by cohorts of participants.

This programme has clearly made a substantial contribution to meeting the aims of the *Framework for the Future* and we are sure that the future impact can be even stronger if our suggestions for addressing specific limitations in the current programme are addressed (see sections 20-23 below).

#### 19.3

Although most participants found it useful, a significant minority of the nominees for the Future Leaders level were seen as inappropriate by their peers (or occasionally themselves) and the absence of a strong transformational leadership self-assessment element (provided at other levels through the TLQ) meant that the Future Leaders course was felt to be too close to 'standard management training' rather than a development experience for some participants. We return to this point below.

## 19.4

Participants at all levels made interesting and thought-provoking suggestions about supporting their own future development and about extending this type of programme for other library service managers. We hope that the points summarised in section 18 above will be taken into account in considering how to develop this important work.

We have identified a series of issues and suggested ways of addressing them in relation to future course providers, public library authorities, the LMPL Steering Group and the MLA below.

## **20 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COURSE PROVIDERS**

It should be noted that during the course of the external evaluation project, many of the issues identified within this report have been raised through *internal* evaluation exercises undertaken by FPM, as part of a continuous process of feedback, review and actions throughout the delivery of the programme. Accordingly, it is likely that some of the issues raised here will already have been addressed. They have still been included in this report out of responsibility towards the participating respondents, who volunteered their time to contribute to the evaluation and share their views, and to facilitate as thorough an evaluation report as possible for the benefit of all key stakeholders. We feel that it is also important to note that although the content and delivery were continuously improved throughout the life of the programme, the experience for any given cohort was 'the real thing' for that group of participants and could not readily be ameliorated for them later.

In making suggestions for strengthening the programme we wish to stress that most participants felt that they gained substantially from the programme in its present form.

We have outlined a number of issues, together with our suggestions for addressing them below:

### **Course content and presentation**

#### 20.1

One significant area of disagreement between the external evaluation team and FPM is about the 360° appraisal of Future Leaders. The FPM view is that "The TLQ is heavily dependent on the ratings from Direct Reports. We assumed (correctly) that many Future Leaders would not have line management responsibilities ... many authority structures separate the operational management of services from the specialist librarian functions so that even someone leading children and young people's services can find that they have no staff directly reporting to them."<sup>vii</sup>

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<sup>vii</sup> FPM usefully added that "Although TLQ is not appropriate for Future Leaders we have responded to their request for some external developmental tool. The new programmes for Future Leaders is using the MBTI for this purpose ..." Continuing what we hope is a constructive disagreement, and accepting that this is beyond the scope of the programme evaluation report, we feel that it may be helpful to add our view that the Myers Briggs Typology Indicator is hardly a substitute for the TLQ since it is entirely self-assessed. MBTI is most valuable when used in support of a continuous group development process, ideally with a licensed facilitator who can help participants identify behaviours associated with different types as they occur in group interactions.

Nevertheless, we find it difficult to understand why the **TLQ** was not offered at Future Leader level. Arguably, Future Leaders have more to gain from a diagnostic tool such as the TLQ, especially in relation to 360° appraisal, because it is difficult to envisage how to develop as a leader if you only have a limited view of your current leadership performance and capacity. Without this self-assessment focus on leadership, some participants felt that the course offered to Future Leaders was insufficiently different from a 'standard' management course. It is also arguable that Future Leaders are the most important strand of the programme and should accordingly have **more** time devoted to them, rather than less. Any major transformation of public library leadership in future will be heavily dependent upon these cadres – they **are** the future of public libraries.

A modified TLQ or other 360-degree tool **could** usefully have been employed to collect data on Future Leaders' behaviour as perceived by peers, their line managers and other people with whom they interacted in the workplace (eg library assistants, library users) irrespective of whether they had formal management/supervisor roles.

## 20.2

Some respondents felt that there was an over-emphasis on **management tools and techniques**. This is a difficult issue to address, because not all respondents shared this view. However, we suggest that some assessment should be made at the recruitment and place-allocation stage about the prior training experiences and knowledge, learning styles, and individual aims and objectives of potential programme participants. This is not to suggest that staff who have already undertaken considerable management training should be excluded from the programme, but that some assessment of their desire and need for 'further' professional development should be made. (It may also be that other forms of professional development would be more appropriate for some programme applicants.)

## 20.3

Now that this programme has provided substantial experience of running a leadership development programme for the public libraries domain, it is probably appropriate to consider **enhanced flexibility** in what is offered and how. We suggest that course leaders/facilitators should outline planned activities to each cohort in situ (taking account of pre-course information collected from participants) and be prepared to modify these activities by, for example, offering alternative exercises from their repertoire at participants' request. In practice, this is unlikely to lead to major programme change, but people like to feel there is some scope for negotiation and this would be consistent with encouraging participants to take responsibility and be active players/partners in facilitating their own development.

## 20.4

In relation to the existing **core programme**, we suggest that an attempt be made to ensure a more even distribution of intensive exercises, discussion, facilitator instruction and 'time out'.

## 20.5

We suggest that the introduction to **the course reader** should explain that management tools and techniques are covered because the boundaries between 'leadership' and 'management' are blurred/overlapping, previous experience and knowledge of programme participants are varied and a holistic approach is desirable.

## 20.6

Although most participants liked the generic management tools and particularly the course reader, we suggest that the coverage of **political leadership and leadership of public services** should be strengthened to complement the coverage during the course sessions. This will ensure that if there are problems in programme delivery or if a participant misses a session there is sufficient back-up in this important area.

## 21 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY AUTHORITIES

### 21.1

It is important for any leadership development programme that **appropriate participants** are recruited. Evaluation respondents reported relatively ad hoc arrangements for selecting Senior Manager and especially Future Leader participants and there is evidence that this resulted in some inappropriate participation in the Future Leaders course. Given that evidence from elsewhere suggests that future leaders are often identifiable when still at school<sup>viii</sup> it is a matter of concern that many of the Future Leaders on the programme already had substantial management experience and that 'stars of the future' were not always apparent. It was evident that some library services found it difficult to locate or select an appropriate Future Leader and that, generally speaking, there was no great competition to be involved. This suggests that some library services are not working systematically to bring on potential future leaders or that this issue is not being given adequate attention during the staff recruitment process. In terms of the LMPL Programme, the inability of some library authorities to field appropriate Future Leaders led to some inefficient use of public funds.

For any future leadership development programme of this kind, there should be a systematic, uniform selection process put in place, following designated criteria agreed by the trainers and the steering group, which should be adhered to by all participating PLAs.<sup>ix</sup>

### 21.2

Many evaluation respondents have expressed a desire for more **formal support mechanisms** within their own authorities in relation to help in their leadership training and development. Some authorities have responded positively to this, but a consistent policy should be put in place. Particular areas for support include the increased opportunity, motivation and momentum for the participants within each authority to work together, and apply the training at operational, organisational and

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<sup>viii</sup> See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4144391.stm#>

<sup>ix</sup> We understand from FPM that these issues have been addressed in the new programme.

strategic levels; the development of formal mechanisms and performance measures to prove the impact of the programme at service level; financial support, and ‘time out’ to pursue on-going professional development opportunities.

## **22 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LMPL STEERING GROUP**

We are aware that the LMPL Steering Group has received feedback from other quarters and has already addressed some of the issues referred to below. Again, we feel a responsibility to raise these issues and make suggestions in order to provide a full and rounded external evaluation.

### **22.1**

While fully recognising the ‘large scale pilot’ nature of the work to date, there are important programme management considerations to be addressed in rolling out any future leadership development programme based on the LMPL model. In particular:

- attention should be paid to the selection issue already raised.<sup>ix</sup>
- although it is important to engage all public library services, allocation of places should be less rigid than the three places per authority adopted for this programme. Allocations should be flexible enough to reflect local needs and priorities, as well as any short-term shortages of appropriate candidates. If the ‘quota system’ is continued in future, we suggest that ‘spare places’ (where an authority has difficulty identifying suitable candidates) should be offered to other PLAs where demand exceeds supply. Authorities that do not take up all the allotted places in one year should be encouraged to do so later when their staffing situation changes.
- library authorities should be encouraged to specify their own expected outcomes from the programme so that they can evaluate the programme success locally.<sup>ix</sup>
- participant need for further support should also be monitored and addressed where required.

We also feel strongly that individual progress through the programme should be monitored (using a self-appraisal tool linked to programme expected outcomes). This process of developing self-awareness by carrying out self-appraisal is fundamental to leadership/management development. A reflective learning log would be an ideal tool for this purpose, coupled with before-and-after self-assessments, which do not need to be highly-structured competence-based instruments. The emphasis here should not be on ‘accurate assessments’, but on developing the habit of reflection as an aid to personal development.

### **22.2**

Succession planning is clearly a long-standing major problem in the public library field, and one which is not an easily resolved, probably because there is no common understanding of what it means in practice. Although most people would probably support ongoing leadership development opportunities, there are concerns about connotations of fast-tracking, high fliers and elite cadres being incompatible with equal opportunities. We have made a recommendation about succession planning to the MLA below; we also recommend that any further development of the LMPL

model should include a clear statement about the perceived role of this type of intervention in relation to this issue.

### 22.3

The timescale for this external evaluation was necessarily limited and roughly co-terminus with the programme. Since many participants saw the programme as a 'starting point' for their leadership training and development, it is important to evaluate this programme and any further roll-out on an ongoing longitudinal basis. Selected participants from each level of the programme should be monitored over an extensive (five to ten year) period. The true impact of the programme, on individual, operational, strategic and sector-wide levels can only be established on a long-term basis. It is recommended that any such evaluation should include all key stakeholders, including local and national government representatives and decision-makers, in order to establish the political and cultural impact of the programme as a 'strategic intervention'.

### 22.4

The LMPL programme included an implicit expectation that participants would organise their own follow-up activity. This is a worthy aspiration, indicating that participants are taking responsibility for their own continued development as leaders. However, in practice the various cadres have had variable success in taking up this challenge. Where people volunteered to organise follow-up events, further action depended upon individual energy or the other pressures on them when they returned to work, as well as variable levels of local support (some future leaders, in particular, found it hard to get to follow-up events). Although the self-help principle is sound, we recommend that any future LMPL-style development should be supported by a part-time secretariat to provide help in identifying facilitators and venues, advising on funding options, and encouraging action.

## 23 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MLA

### 23.1

The LMPL programme has made a substantial contribution to meeting 'Framework for the Future' aspirations about public library leadership. However, we consider that any further development of this important work should be explicitly linked to objectives for succession planning. We have already asserted that succession planning is clearly a big issue in the public library field; this is equally true across the LIS sector more generally (especially in academic libraries), as well as for archives and museums services. We recommend that the MLA should give careful consideration to commissioning research into the nature of and scope for succession planning, particularly in relation to public libraries and other areas of LIS (since the relevance of sub-domain boundaries has not yet been effectively explored). Any such research should be conducted over a significant (three to five year) time-frame, to enable some tracking of activity over time. The aim should be to establish what effective and acceptable succession planning might mean in practice.

### 23.2

There is still work to be done in fully implementing the 'Framework for the Future' in relation to public library leadership. To cite the educational change management guru Mike Fullan, "*Change is a process not an event.*" Many of the participants in

LMPL so far would welcome further support in developing their leadership capacities (see section 18) and there are substantial numbers of other potential leaders (especially in the larger authorities) who would benefit for an LMPL-style programme. We very much hope that the needs of both these groups will be addressed by MLA in considering further implementation of 'Framework for the Future'.

## **Appendices**

- A Review of the literature**
- B Documentary analysis: LMPL Course Reader**
- C Summary of programme strengths and weaknesses**
- D Module observation tools and guidelines**
- E Focus Group questions (follow-up event)**
- F Future Leaders Workshop agenda (follow-up event)**
- G Mid-programme interview questions**
- H Critical Incident interview schedule**
- I Pre-programme questionnaire**
- J Post-programme questionnaire**
- K Key evaluation findings by evaluation activity**
- L Observed interaction during course activities**

## **APPENDIX A      REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **1      LEADERSHIP AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

It is important to consider the role and development of leadership within and across the public sector as a whole in order to provide a theoretical context for the evaluation of the 'Framework for the Future' public library leadership development programme. By considering different approaches to leadership development and training within different public sector services and organisations, an assessment and evaluation of 'key criteria' for public sector leadership can be made. This can then be compared to previous and existing library leadership development initiatives and criteria, and subsequently inform and guide the evaluation of the leadership development programme under investigation.

### **2      CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP**

Horton (2003) describes a 'metamorphosis' within the management of public organisations during the latter stages of the twentieth century, involving a transformation from established bureaucratic systems of public administration to market-oriented, consumer-led and results-driven systems of public management. Borins (2002) states that the conventional wisdom of public sector leadership has been questioned by the need to 'drive down costs', reduce debt burdens, and the need to innovate to apply new opportunities such as advanced information technology. New paradigms of public sector management have been influenced by intensified systems of financial accountability and cost-effectiveness; increased privatisation and sub-contracting of services (resulting in competitive markets); a greater emphasis on quality and service user needs and satisfaction (Horton, 2003).

When studying new public management (NPM) in Switzerland, Emery and Giauque (2003) discovered some contradiction between NPM in theory and practice. The aims and objectives of NPM emulate the 'metamorphosis' in public sector management described above, including greater organisational autonomy, flexibility, responsiveness to public needs, increased efficiency and effectiveness. Pors and Johannsen (2003) define NPM as an attempt to change a bureaucratic and hierarchically organised public sector, whilst strengthening the visibility between production, economy and reporting, and emphasising competition by means of outsourcing, privatisation and decentralisation. Emery and Giauque (2003) explain that such adoption of private sector management practices in terms of management by measurement and performance indicators can in practice have a perverse effect upon the quality of services and the priority given to multiple activities. Employees reported increased and unproductive workloads and rising stress levels. The authors conclude that the focus on the 'logic of economics' is in conflict with 'the traditions and culture of public service', and that the importing of private business practices in to the public sector should not go 'unchallenged'.

Williams (2003) discusses the rise in public accountability, which has occurred in response to high levels of public expenditure, and an increased 'managerialism' of the public sector. As public services are subject to greater scrutiny and accountability, a greater emphasis has been placed on auditing, monitoring and

evaluation of public services, which also has an effect on the necessary skills base of public sector managers and leaders.

In a study of sectoral management cultures, Cullen (2004) observes that a number of internal, external and environmental demands, including accountability to a diverse range of stakeholders, have an impact upon the relationship between 'leadership, culture type, organisational climate and effectiveness' within the public sector. Cullen's study includes an analysis of job advertisements from multiple sectors for a variety of senior management positions. It is observed that public sector advertisements emphasise skills including relationship building and the 'ability to manage change'. The key and most noticeable difference between private and public sector advertisements is the perceived emotional element to public sector recruitment, including requests for passion and for 'personal commitment' to the relevant area of work; public sector management posts sought a greater level of 'understanding of the environment in which their organisation operated' and higher levels of emotional involvement in the relevant fields.

Maddock (2005) notes the failings of public sector leadership in politically sensitive areas such as social regeneration and community building. Maddock observes that transformational leadership, and the requisite political acumen, innovation and emotional skills, is more suitable for such policy objectives than established forms of transactional, operations management, value-based public sector leadership. Maddock concludes that the public sector realm now concerns a 'reconnection between social, business and public domains', and requires leadership based on the ability to acknowledge political realities, orchestrate change, and communicate with staff and communities. In a study of perceptions of transformational leadership, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2005) found that political sensitivity to the agenda of a diverse range of external and internal stakeholders is of considerable importance in the British public sector, encouraged by a government drive towards increased inter-agency and cross-sectoral working.

The 'NHS Leadership Qualities Framework' (NHS Leadership Centre, 2002) defines a formalised process for leadership development throughout the NHS based on 'personal qualities', 'setting direction' and 'delivering the service'. The framework defines a necessary balance between acute political acumen, social responsiveness and organisational accountability:

"Outstanding leaders set a vision for the future, drawing on their understanding of the organisation(s) in which they work, and their political awareness of the health and social care context. This, combined with action-orientation and intellectual flexibility, allow them to move between big picture vision and local operational detail." (NHS Leadership Centre, 2002, pp. 3)

### **3 LEADERSHIP OR MANAGEMENT: A PROFESSIONAL DICHOTOMY?**

The literature reveals a number of different definitions and attitudes towards the practices of leadership and/or management in the public sector. Management is perceived as being the practice of dealing with rules, constructs and guidelines: leadership with vision, action and direction (Tyree and Hansen, 2001). Mason and Wetherbee (2004) observe that management is about *what* things get done,

leadership is about *how* things get done; management involves accomplishing tasks, leadership involves influencing and guiding a course of action. Corral (2002) believes that the comparison and subsequent distinction between the two cultures of management and leadership is 'rather narrowly' enforced within the professional literature, and prefers to acknowledge the corresponding attributes of the two processes:

“Management and leadership are not mutually exclusive: they can and should be overlapping and management does not work well in today’s volatile and unpredictable environment without leadership to accompany it. The key point is that we need competence in both areas at all levels of our organisations, irrespective of the titles of people’s jobs and their positions in a hierarchy and we must develop capacity accordingly.” (Corral, 2002)

For the benefit of this study, observations made concerning the *management* of public services, which are believed by the researcher to have an explicit or implicit relationship to the *leadership* of relevant public services, have been included in the discussion.

### **3.1 Public sector leadership and human resource management (HRM)**

Changes in the philosophical management of public services have placed a greater emphasis on change management and the key role of staff at all levels in facilitating and supporting change and development. Horton (2003) describes a subsequent move away from hierarchical command structures to more decentralised, team-based organisations with devolved authority and responsibility. Such changes are based on principles of human resource management (HRM) whereby an increased emphasis is placed on the role of employees in achieving maximum productivity. The NHS Leadership Qualities Framework (NHS Leadership Centre, 2002) clearly defines the qualities of empowering others, collaborative working and 'leading change through people'.

In a discussion of the relationship between innovation and leadership in the public sector, Borins (2002) states that the more decentralised, fluid and responsive contemporary public services create informal or alternative leadership structures: for example, front line or middle management initiators of innovative products or projects are likely to take leading roles in the advocacy and piloting of such initiatives. A key element of public sector leadership, as such, is the ability and capacity to identify and recognise innovation and leadership skills amongst employees; to illustrate this Borins (2002) quotes William Bratton, the former New York City Chief of Police:

*“Every organisation has a core group of people with original ideas and untapped talents. Some are in leadership positions, and some are not. A successful leader reaches deeply in to the organization to find these people... To propel a large organisation forward, the leader has to enlist literally hundreds of co-leaders at every level.”*

Such inclusive approaches to leadership help to counteract traditional 'heroic' notions of leadership and the subsequent individual association with success or failure. Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2005) discuss the damage inflicted by

'narcissistic, self-serving leaders' using examples of recent corporate corruption cases including Enron. Leadership it is argued, along with learning from experience, is distributed throughout an organisation and does not reside with one individual. Subsequently a greater emphasis is being placed on leadership ethics, authenticity, morality and transparency.

#### **4 PUBLIC LIBRARY LEADERSHIP**

"Future public libraries are simply the libraries of today prepared to face the realities of tomorrow through the integration of services, use of technology, and the right leadership." (Kent, 2002, pp. 54)

##### **4.1 Challenges to public library leadership**

Future recruitment, and the subsequent development of effective leaders, is becoming a major concern for the profession of librarianship. Statistical workforce studies in the United States indicate that of an approximate total of 136,000 librarians employed in US academic, public, school and special libraries, some 83,866 of those employees will have reached the age of 65 by 2010, with more than 50% of current library directors retiring between 2002 and 2010 (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004).

Similarly in the UK, concern has also been expressed about the lack of leaders, both actual and potential, in the public library profession and in other sectors of librarianship, including a shortage of candidates for director-level posts in higher education information services and relevant gaps in key generic skills (Corrall, 2002). Problems associated with the perceived leadership crisis include lack of staff time and resources, levels of pay and status, work-related pressure and stress and fragmented career paths.

Usherwood et al (2001) identified a lack of leadership in the public library sector, and perhaps more notably, no (existing) identifiable way in which a new generation of public library leaders might be fostered. Of the sample studied, issues surrounding succession planning and career leadership development were considered to be important themes for the profession, yet 'relatively few' authorities had begun to address such matters in practice. The report makes the following leadership-related recommendations: appropriate professional representative bodies should investigate the provision of leadership development programmes; that a national system of traineeships is established in order to recruit the best graduates to the public library service; and that individual authorities retain a training position or post to be filled annually.

Tyree (2001) describes a contemporary 'critically turbulent atmosphere' for public library administrators based on financial stringency, unbridled technological advances, increased user expectations and 'political doublespeak'. It is argued that the mission of the public library service can only be accomplished under circumstances where accountability and responsibility can be balanced with creativity and innovation. Hansen (2001) cites negotiation as an essential skill in a time of scarce resources along with constant service evaluation and monitoring.

Kent (2002) recognises the need for public libraries to 'realign their position in the information marketplace' in response to the cultural impact of technological development and the internet. For this purpose, public library leaders must be in a position of 'respect and credibility', and seen and valued as equals to other political, cultural and educational leaders in their respective communities and authorities. The contemporary public library leader must incorporate an ability and willingness to 'sell' the public service whilst maintaining credibility as a 'non-politicised individual in a politicised environment', balancing commercial expertise, political acumen and a service to the 'public good'.

In an extensive longitudinal study of public library leadership and management in Denmark and the UK, Pors and Johannsen (2003) observe that library directors are increasingly oriented towards elements of both new public management (NPM) and value-based management, based on two underlying emergent principles of 'ethics' and 'legitimacy'. Value-based management is described as similar to NPM with features including internal processes along with image building, branding and the creation of a corporate identity and reputation, along with political legitimacy. The research has also shown that library directors perceive 'softer' leadership values such as attitudes, dialogue, motivation and inspiration as increasingly important, illustrating the multiplicity of leadership attributes. Further to participating in a three-year state-funded leadership training course, the Danish sample of public library managers were notably more confident in relation to management issues, and showed a greater knowledge of management tools and higher levels of professionalism (Pors, 2005), illustrating the potential effectiveness of formalised leadership training programmes.

In an extensive systematic review of the literature concerning leadership development undertaken on behalf of the NHS Leadership Centre, Hartley and Hinksman (2003) summarise a number of approaches to leadership development including 360 feedback; mentoring; coaching; networking; action learning; job challenge; secondment; succession planning; formal programmes; fast track cohorts; organisation development; partnership working. A typology of leadership development is included in the study, based on prescribed, collective, emergent and individual approaches to leadership development (Rogers et al, quoted in Hartley and Hinksman, 2003, pp. 34).

Corrall (2002) recognises an 'emerging consensus' concerning a combined theoretical and experiential learning approach to leadership development within librarianship, along with a requirement for cultural change amongst all existing management structures, whereby service heads and line managers alike must 'lead by example' and encourage and motivate career development amongst all staff. Such an approach requires consistent performance appraisal, monitoring and feedback. This echoes observations made concerning general public sector leadership within more decentralised, fluid, innovative and ultimately 'inclusive' organisations.

#### **4.2 Approaches to library leadership**

A working paper produced by the University of Maryland University Libraries (Baughman et al, 2004) discusses leadership training and development within the context of a team-based learning organisation approach. The framework used

emphasises the role and contribution of all staff in improving organisational performance. Objectives include the fostering of shared decision-making and accountability, and the development of shared leadership by strengthening the leadership skills of all library staff. Methods involved include a series of leadership training workshops and activities following an identified list of core competencies for leaders. Individual learning plans are then designed using a self-assessment of leadership styles and personal values, incorporating core competencies. Development activities include 'Leadership Skill Building Modules' which include both value-based and NPM inspired skills and attributes, such as **basics of measurement and evaluation; decision-making and consensus building; mentoring others; planning, setting priorities and effective time management.**

The University of Maryland approach seeks to create a 'transformational leadership' where leaders employ a committing style, which engages other people to help shape the course of change. Core leadership competences identified by the approach include a list of 21 key skills related to supervision; development of employees; planning and organizing; motivation; mentoring; leading; resolving conflict; evaluation; delegation; judgement; commitment; teamwork; flexibility; initiative; communication; organisation; accountability (Baughman et al, 2004).

In a study investigating the role, capacity and recognition of emotional intelligence amongst existing public library leaders, Roberts (2002) observes that emotional intelligence competencies are recognised as essential for excellent public library leadership. Relationship management is the most highly valued competency, illustrating the growing propensity for interpersonal skills and human resource management in public service leadership. Related competencies including political acumen, organisational awareness, vision, empathy and adaptability are also cited as increasingly important. The author concludes by recommending that generic approaches to leadership training and development within librarianship, involving a single theoretical model or approach, should be avoided in favour of

*"learning opportunities that will promote the development of emotional intelligence competencies alongside technical skills and abilities."*  
(Roberts, 2002, pp. 108).

Mason and Wetherbee (2004) undertook an analysis of current library leadership training programmes in the US. Training development programmes can be grouped into four specific 'types': skill-building programmes; intensive feedback programmes; conceptual approaches; personal growth approaches. Despite a proliferation of leadership training programmes and subsequent discussion in the US literature, Mason and Wetherbee report a distinct lack of rigorous evaluation research on such programmes, with no published value and impact studies concerning library leadership development; as such it is difficult to establish the effectiveness of leadership training.

This echoes a lack of rigorous evaluation research concerning leadership training within the public sector as a whole: audit and evaluation tools generally consist of immediate reactionary feedback methods, which are largely treated as internal documents by training providers, and which fail to establish causal relationships between training methods and workplace actions and behaviours (Williams, 2003).

Personal evaluation and self-assessment for course participants however seems to be a popular element of library leadership training, including 'leadership autobiographies' and 'personal action agendas' (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004).

Alongside specific training programmes, incidental work-based learning plays a key role in the development of leadership skills, including work-based assignments and projects, adversity in the workplace and personal peers and contacts (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004). An investigation into academic library leadership, 'Hybrid Information Management: Skills for Senior staff' (HIMSS) recommended formal training programmes, including fast-tracked links between education and practice, but also emphasised 'on the job' leadership development via mentoring schemes, project work and succession planning (Corrall, 2002). Stand-alone formal training programmes are likely to be most effective when supplemented by suitable learning opportunities within employing organisations.

The literature has not revealed a set of core, definitive leadership competencies, experiences or aptitudes for librarianship, or for leadership of public library services. This can be explained in part by the diverse nature of the profession as a whole, with a number of sectors incorporating a wide range of services, and staff working at different stages of their career with a wide variety of training needs. This could also subsequently explain the emphasis upon personalised approaches to training within library leadership programmes, work based learning and the fact that programmes within the sector seem to be developed by the profession for the profession (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004).

## 5 LEADERSHIP MODELS

Previous research however into the role of personality traits and leadership development suggests that successful leaders have certain personal qualities, skills and characteristics (Kouzes and Posner, quoted in Mason and Wetherbee, 2004). Personal traits encourage advanced leadership skill development, consistent leadership behaviour, and ultimately, leadership credibility. Personal leadership development can be illustrated as follows:



**Diagram 1**

Research based on the theoretical nature of leadership within given contexts has encouraged a generic theorising of leadership behaviours and attributes, or *models* of leadership. Theories of leadership have been broadly described as trait-based; behavioural; contingency-based; transformational (Corrall, 2002). What follows is a discussion of some of the more prevalent models of leadership within the professional literature:

### **5.1 Situational or ‘contingency’ leadership**

Situational leadership occurs when different leadership styles are adopted depending upon a particular situation. The model was developed by Blanchard and Hersey (Blanchard et al, 2004) and is discussed widely in the popular management press. Leadership style is characterised according to the amount of direction and support given by a leader to followers within a given situation based on ‘supportive’ and ‘directive’ behaviours (directing, coaching, supporting and delegating). Leadership styles are dependent upon the ‘development level’ of those being led, of which there are also four stages; the chosen leadership style will directly correspond to the development level of the follower(s) (Chimaera Consulting, 1999). Leadership as such is not only concerned with the individual characteristics of the leader, but with the complex interaction between the leader, the followers, the situation, or the historical moment in which they are operating (Maurik, 2001).

The process of using certain leadership behaviours in different situations is described by Mason and Wetherbee (2004) as the ‘contingency’ view of leadership; circumstances affecting leadership behaviours include group atmosphere, task structure and the leader’s positional power. Critics of the situational model assert that the relevant balance of concern for task and production with concern for people is now inappropriate when dealing with ‘the realities of constant change’ (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005).

### **5.2 Transactional leadership**

Transactional leaders choose to motivate followers by inspiring a vision of what is to be accomplished, in an approach that is task oriented, and facilitated by the ability to obtain results, solve problems, plan and organise (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004). In a more systematic approach to leadership, the transactional model is perceived as having three dimensions: ‘management-by-exception passive’; ‘management-by-exception active’; ‘contingent reward’ (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005). Such definitions suggest a reactive needs-based approach to leadership. Maurik (2001) observes that many approaches to leadership have a transactional quality, in ultimately representing a transaction between leader and follower, but that essentially transactional cultures are hierarchical and characterized by high levels of command and control.

### **5.3 Organisational leadership**

The organisational approach has been championed by private sector consultancies (Teal, 2003) as a holistic alternative to training programmes targeted towards the development of the individual leader. The organisational model is associated with collective team leadership and linked to innovation and ideas within an organisational context, perceiving leadership itself as a component in the organisational system. By treating leadership in this manner, rather than as a process of individual training and development, it is argued that greater acknowledgement can be made of the social context within which an organisation operates, and of the organisational objectives within that society. Designed to help develop a ‘robust leadership strategy’, the approach incorporates the following key themes: responses to external environment; mapping of the organisational context; identification of appropriate leadership culture; attaining leadership competence; managing leadership throughout the organisation.

#### **5.4 Emotional Intelligence leadership model**

Dulewicz and Higgs (2005) discuss the growing significance of emotional intelligence when considering the future study of leadership, particularly with reference to the relationship between leadership and organisational behaviour. Emotional and social relations of new paradigms of leadership include self-awareness; emotional resilience; intuitiveness and interpersonal sensitivity. Emotional maturity is also cited as a key competency within the trait theory debate, and is considered to be a key attribute of effective individual leadership (Maurik, 2001).

Goleman (2003) asserts that a leader's success depends not on what they do but how they do it, which in turn depends on their ability to inspire and drive emotions. Goleman defines emotional intelligence leadership competencies as *Self-awareness* (including emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence); *Self-management* (self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, optimism); *Social awareness* (empathy, organisational awareness, service); and *Relationship management* (inspiration, influence, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration).

#### **5.5 Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership involves a more empathic, empirical approach, as leaders engage 'not only the heads but also the hearts of others' (Mason and Wetherbee, 2004) in seeking to establish and support organisational *change* and development. The transformational model is similar in approach to the organisational theory, but places a greater emotional emphasis on the individual to inspire organisational leadership. The transformational leader is an effective agent of change, who thinks beyond the conventional bounds of the immediate situation and identifies opportunities for growth and increased effectiveness (Maurik, 2001). Transformational leadership seeks to motivate others by appealing to higher ideals and moral values, with the relevant leaders being expected to create a sense of trust, incorporating long-term vision, empowerment and coaching. James MacGregor Burns (quoted in Baughman et al, 2004) describes transformational leadership as such:

*“Transformational leadership occurs, when in their interactions, people ‘raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused... But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both.”*

Dulewicz and Higgs (2005) describe the transformational model as the 'dominant approach to studying leadership'. New research conducted by key proponents and analysts of the transformational model (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005) reports a new paradigm in transformational leadership which challenges 'heroic' approaches to leadership and focuses on the development of the individual within an organisational context. Using a UK sample of NHS managers at all levels, the most important aspect of transformational leadership was revealed to be 'valuing others' (genuine concern for others' well-being and development). Integrity was also

regarded as an important contextual leadership variable in accordance with the public sector service ethic.

## 6 SUMMARY

Based on a review of the literature and observations made, it is possible to briefly summarise theoretical models of leadership, their key characteristics and the perceived desired criteria for public library leadership (please see table 1). However, the lack of a definitive list of key library leadership competencies and skills, due to the increasingly diverse and multi-faceted nature of the profession, its relevant services and personnel should be noted: it may not be appropriate to apply a single theoretical model or clearly defined set of guiding principles to library leadership training programmes and initiatives. The role of personalised development plans which recognise organisational characteristics and service objectives are of equal (if not greater) importance:

*“As usual the answers are not clear cut: people can examine, learn and practise ‘leadership behaviours’, but they must also have the will to lead and a need to achieve; practical skills can be taught, but personal qualities are hard to develop from scratch. Cross-sectoral perspectives add value, but programmes need to be culturally sensitive and incorporate context-specific elements.”* (Corrall, 2002)

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## APPENDIX B DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS: LMPL COURSE READER

### 1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation team were given access to learning materials provided on the programme, in order to undertake documentary analysis in terms of content, quality and usefulness, and form an assessment of how specific learning materials support the delivery of the programme and the ongoing development of participants.

### 2 ANALYSIS OF LMPL COURSE READER

'Leading Modern Public Libraries', the course reader for Heads of Service and Senior Managers provides accessible coverage of a range of management and leadership topics. It aims to provide 'essential background reading for participants on the ... programme', and is divided into 12 sections. These include outline discussions of topics such as: the external environment, strategic thinking, organisational culture, performance measurement, change, and creativity, innovation and risk. In so doing it summarises a variety of models and approaches to leadership, but claims not to 'advocate a particular approach'. The actual taught sessions however conform to given theories and ideologies espoused by the transformational leadership model, with a strong emphasis on change management, and the use of the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire implies a directive use of this specific model to guide and inform participants' ongoing development as leaders.

The reader as such, it can be assumed, is designed to provide a framework for exploring wider leadership theories and, via a series of 'reflection' questions, it encourages participants to use the literature when considering their own experience of the issues covered. Participants are asked, 'to pause and reflect on how what you have read relates to your own context'.

In terms of content, the reader contains little that would be new to a student who had recently completed a management module on a postgraduate library / information studies programme. There are all the expected references to Handy, Kanter, Mintzberg and the other gurus to be found on management reading lists in different university departments. Despite the claim that it is designed

*"to provide a framework for exploring the leadership of public services in general and public libraries in particular"*

(our emphasis), there is an almost complete absence of any material specifically concerned with the leadership or management of libraries per se. In many ways, the text reads like enhanced lecture notes for a general university level course on management and leadership, although there are occasional references to 'Framework for the Future' to provide the public library link.

The lack of specific library related texts is surprising given the stated aims of the reader and the amount of interest and professional literature on the subject in recent times. In 2000 it was described as *the* pervasive topic at the Public Library Authorities Conference and there have been a large number of initiatives in this country and overseas which might have been included and discussed. Examples of such material include the Christchurch City Libraries' Leadership Development Programme, which won a Human Resources Institute of New Zealand award for innovation, an extensive

US literature following Sheldon's (1991) 'Leaders in libraries', not to mention a substantial number of UK papers and projects such as the Black Leaders initiative and the Clore Leadership Programme. Likewise, the discussion of quality assurance and management makes no reference to the vast amount of library related research projects in the area.

In practical terms there are some other important omissions. Despite quoting the Local Government Management Board research which cited the importance of winning the confidence of elected members the reader contains very little on political leadership. How for example has the move to Cabinet local government impacted on the librarian / politician relationship? In addition, there is little or no mention of succession planning. It could be argued that this was outside the scope of the programme but American research (Schall, 1997) has shown that the reason succession planning is not taken seriously in the public sector is because of:

*“current leaders reluctance to take up the task’ and an ‘assumption that succession issues are beyond the scope of the leader’s work.”*

Although course participants are encouraged to develop their own ideas there are few references to sources critical of the received managerial or professional orthodoxies. The MLA vision for libraries is taken as a given as is the introduction of the new managerialism to public service. There is no room in the course reader for critical voices such as Christopher Pollitt (1993), who argues that imposing such a

*“generic and neo-Taylorian model of management...seems to have been either an act of culpable ignorance on the part of those concerned or an exercise in (possible unwitting) ideological imperialism.”*

This is perhaps just the kind of idea that leaders should be able and willing to discuss.

Overall the reader directs course participants to a worthy and solid set of items. However, despite one non-cited reference to Alan Bleasdale, the range of material covered is somewhat limited, particularly in terms of a resource tailored to providers of a specific service within a professional sector.

Evaluation fieldwork illustrates however that respondents *have* recognised and appreciated a discernible focus on the leadership of public libraries within the actual delivery of the programme. This has mostly been generated by:

- The public library expertise of one of the course facilitators.
- The shared knowledge and experience of participants ie. there is an obvious focus in that all participants were public library staff operating at the same level within each group.
- References to 'Framework for the Future' within course presentation
- The use of public library issues and scenarios when undertaking exercises

Responses to the relatively high levels of generic management theory, both within the course reader and delivery, have received different reactions from participants, largely based on their own existing knowledge, and levels of previous training in this area. Similarly, there are mixed reviews concerning the extent of 'political' content: some

participants at the two higher levels have recommended a greater focus on this area (as will be reported in other sections of the evaluation).

*“It is recommended therefore that course designers try to replicate the public library relevance presented within the actual programme delivery in their supporting texts and resources (some useful suggestions in terms of further reading are given above). There needs to be some tailoring in terms of the balance of generic management theory content, and the raising of political issues and awareness which are essential to the leadership of public services. “*

## APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF LMPL ‘STRENGTHS’ AND ‘WEAKNESSES’

The following tables include summaries taken from the ‘observation and follow-up event’ phase of the evaluation.

**Table 1: Future Leaders summary**

<b>LMPL strengths</b>
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
Time out from working environment and relevant pressures to concentrate and reflect i.e. in the form of a residential programme
Confidence boosting: participants reassured by colleagues and benefited from time and opportunity to evaluate own performance
Empathy sharing amongst participants: realising all in ‘same boat’, experiencing similar challenges
Opportunity to reflect on own performance and self-appraise has encouraged a greater confidence in and aptitude for developing staff, e.g. renewed initiative in terms of staff appraisal, improved mentoring skills, existing management skills reinvigorated by new ideas/techniques
Course well facilitated: trainers good at bringing group together, by being friendly and ensuring that everyone’s opinion was of equal value. Made participants feel comfortable. Had knowledge of public library sector so able to offer meaningful advice and insight
Excellent venues and facilities, which were used effectively by trainers e.g. promenading activity
Range of practical advice received, both in terms of tools/techniques and strategies demonstrated by trainers, and also advice received from fellow participants
Offered a refreshing focus on participants’ own beliefs and ideas
Encouraged participants to develop a ‘critical eye’, and evaluate own/staff/authority performance
Course was challenging, and took participants out of ‘comfort zone’ e.g. domain mapping and chevron activities forced group to consider ‘bigger picture’
<b>Developmental (LMPLSG)</b>
Encouraged and motivated to undertake further development
Common sense of purpose: a course designed specifically for public library staff is particularly beneficial. It has offered a sense of uniformity within and across all PLAs in terms of approaches/tools used
Networking opportunities: group still in touch by e-mail
<b>LMPL weaknesses</b>
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
Absence of TLQ in FL programme disappointing: not understood by FL participants (and their SM/HOS colleagues). Lots of similarities between programme at 3 levels, but ended with TLQ
Trainer(s) quite condescending at times
Imbalance of knowledge of public library sector amongst/within FPM team/trainers: affected content validity
Programme could be quite demanding and labour-intensive at times: although generally felt that this was handled well by facilitators/trainers
Too much emphasis on participants’ ‘real world’ problems when undertaking exercises: running out of examples to use at the end, which affected concentration, quality and value of exercise. Would have preferred less exercises and opportunity to do TLQ instead
<b>Organisational (PLAs)</b>
Proving to be hard to put theory in to practice, when back in the real world demands of running a service. Lack of defined action plan for taking the training forward perceived as a problem: needs formalised development between participants from 3 levels of the course within each PLA. Some participants asked to write a report on the training for their authority, but not sure if/how these have been used
Lack of pre-course information from PLAs/recruitment issues: some attended out of obligation, no real consideration as to participant suitability, or structured application procedures for other potential FLs
Limited post-course support and interest from some PLAs: lack of continuity between participants at 3 levels across and within authorities. Inconsistency in course progression
General lack of synergy between 3 levels: lack of on-going communication and support
Lack of knowledge within authorities about the programme, and who attended course and why.

General apathy towards principles of leadership development: programme should have been opportunity to rectify this

**Table 2: Senior Managers summary**

LMPL strengths
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
Time to reflect, away from the workplace and meet other colleagues in similar situations with same issues to deal with
Networking
Reversal, de-reversal technique/exercise: forced to look at problems from different perspectives
Timing of modules was effective: gave time to reflect and re-energise between each one
Fact that course was residential a huge benefit: gave participants informal time together in pleasant surroundings
Modules were well facilitated and structured. Trainers knowledgeable, professional and above all approachable
Course reader a valuable resource: much more than a textbook, a toolkit that can be used again and again. Has already been referred back to by group members
TLQ assessment valuable in self-discovery and external validation, providing a realisation of leadership abilities and additional tools for development. Has been acted upon by group members
<b>Organisational (PLAs)</b>
LMPL has provided a basis for setting national leadership benchmarks, and a consensus on strategic standards with reference to <i>Framework for the Future</i>
Some of the exercises have been used in staff meetings (chevron, defining public library service/'morphological mix')
<b>Developmental (LMPLSG)</b>
Fact that on same programme as Head of Service, fostering a two-way communication between senior colleagues when preparing an action plan.
Similarly the three levels of the programme were seen as beneficial in encouraging a shared experience across authorities
The focus on public libraries: reinforced a shared experience between participants
Ongoing communication and support within the cohort: e-mail lists
LMPL weaknesses
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
Some tools/exercises seen as less useful by some people e.g. 'thinking hats'
Some group members felt that the allocation of 'personal time' when waiting for TLQ interview was wasted, and needed more structure: others welcomed the opportunity to read, etc. This was dependent upon timing of interview
The content distribution between days and modules was perceived as a little uneven, e.g. first day always very intensive, and then second day had lots of free time for TLQ
Two group members did not benefit from their TLQ interview due to personnel involved ("learnt more about trainer than myself"). Both agreed that the report was helpful, but quality of the one-to-one session had been poor
Group felt that modules 2 and 3 were too intensive, structured and prescribed, and had suffered due to a change in trainers/course facilitators. The style of presentation changed and momentum was lost
<b>Developmental (LMPLSG)</b>
Lack of ongoing assessment in terms of TLQ: needs more official and structured continuity to achieve 'buy in' from authorities
Some respondents who are also responsible for archive and museum services would have liked some generic content on leadership in cultural services (e.g. Clore)

**Table 3: Heads of Service summary**

LMPL strengths
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
The management tools presented on the programme which have been applied in the workplace,

offering different approaches and motivating staff
Messages communicated on the programme including the need to prioritise and make the time to consider and improve own performance
Excellent trainers: focused and knowledgeable
Facilities: offered the 'right environment to learn'
<b>Organisational (PLAs)</b>
Respondents reported a clearer 'sense of vision' within their authorities
Participants have gained a clearer sense of purpose in their leadership of the organisation, and how their colleagues perceive them (related to TLQ)
Heads of Service have also noticed improved confidence levels and increased proactive behaviour amongst relevant Senior Managers and Future Leaders (in some cases)
<b>Developmental (LMPLSG)</b>
Respondents saw the networks provided by the programme as a 'problem-solving resource' which should be opened up to others
Heads of Service valued the national element of the programme e.g. gained 'different perspectives from London authorities'
Heads of Service in general showed a greater appreciation of the programme as a 'strategic intervention' in relation to the setting of national standards. Believe that the programme should be continued on a national basis
It was suggested that positive TLQ data could be used to promote the programme, and as evidence for on-going national training and development
<b>LMPL weaknesses</b>
<b>Operational (FPM)</b>
Concerns over intellectual level of the programme content i.e. not pitched at right level in some cases for Heads of Service group
Exercises considered to be less useful by some people, although participants acknowledge that this is dependent upon individual learning styles
Inconsistencies in trainer's knowledge and facilitative style: affected motivation amongst some participants
Some respondents did not benefit from their one-to-one TLQ interview: felt that they 'hadn't learnt anything new'
TLQ exercise as a whole not particularly valuable to two participants who had previously undertaken similar exercises – felt that the process was too long and overly objective
<b>Organisational (PLAs)</b>
Some Heads of Service felt that the programme has not been taken 'seriously enough' by PLAs, in both pre-programme and post-programme phases
The poor allocation of Future Leader places, and the subsequent profile of Future Leader cohorts, has affected the impact and satisfaction levels amongst some Future Leaders from other authorities. Heads of Service have found it difficult to motivate their relevant Future Leader as a result, where applicable
Some Heads of Service feel that PLAs have failed to respond to the programme in terms of participants' on-going development, action planning and performance evaluation
<b>Developmental (LMPLSG)</b>

## APPENDIX D: MODULE OBSERVATION TOOLS AND GUIDELINES

### OBSERVATION OF GROUP BEHAVIOUR

#### Some elements in effective leadership behaviour

1 Listening to others										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
2 Participation by group members										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
3 Quality of decision making										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
4 Building and developing on other peoples contributions										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
5 Sensitivity of group members to the feelings of others										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
6 Handling and use of conflict (if any arises)										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
7 Level of creativity										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	
8 Keeping everyone on task										
LOW	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HIGH	

### OBSERVING GROUPS AT WORK

(Taken from Pfeiffer and Jones, 1972, Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators)

A group operates at two levels:

1. There is WHAT the group is doing (i.e. the group 'task')
2. There is HOW the group is working (i.e. the group 'process')

Therefore, at the end of any piece of group work there is an opportunity for members to focus on:

- What can we learn from the content of the session?
- What can we learn from the way we worked together?

In the early stages of developing awareness, the following basic process questions can be considered with the group:

- Did everybody participate in the groups activities?
- Did members listen to each other?
- Were there examples of members supporting and helping each other?
- What can group members be pleased about in the way they worked together?
- If they were to repeat the session, is there anything they could change to improve how they work together?

As groups become more aware and sophisticated they can look at how they operate in more depth. They are likely to want to observe:

1. Participation
2. Influence
3. Individual styles
4. Decision-making
5. The work and the people

### 1. Participation

What are the signs that people are involved/not involved/excluded?

Who participates most/least?

Does participation vary?

Are any members silent? How does the group deal with this?

Who talks to whom? Do members 'pair up' or is interaction distributed?

How much do individual members:

- Give information to the group?
- Ask questions?
- Respond to what other members say?
- Agree with the comments of others?
- Disagree with others?
- Criticise others?
- Invite others to speak?
- Interrupt others who are speaking?

### 2. Influence

Which members seem to influence the group most? Whose ideas or behaviour seem to be most important to others? Who is listened to most? Whose suggestions are followed?

Does the group have an appointed leader? Is that leadership accepted or resisted? Are there other leaders in the group? How do they display leadership? Who accepts their leadership? Does leadership change as the group works? Is there rivalry for the leadership? How does the group react to this?

Does the group appear resistant to, or unaware of, any particular member's or subgroup's ideas and contributions?

### 3. Individual styles

Does anyone attempt to impose ideas on the group or push others to support his/her views or decisions?

Does anyone attempt to block the ideas of others? How is this done?

Who co-operates with others or tries to get members to work together?

Does anyone seem to look for ways to differ from the rest of the group or to seek conflict?

Does anyone avoid conflict or any signs of disagreement: smoothing over problems or changing the subject when difficulties occur?

Does anyone seem uninvolved or ready to agree with anybody without seeming to have strong views of his/her own? Does anybody wait to be asked before offering comments?

Does anyone seem particularly helpful in solving problems that arise, in considering the views of others, or in helping the group to work together?

### 4. Decision-making

Does the group make any decisions? If so, what about?

How does the group make decisions?

By majority decision?

By a minority over-ruling others?

By working for unanimous agreement?

In other ways?

Does decision-making, if it happens, divide the group? Do some seem to 'win' and others 'lose'? How do the 'winners' treat the 'losers' and vice versa?

Does the group seem united at the end of its work?

### 5. The work and the people

Did the group accomplish its task? If not, why not?

Did the group stick at its task or was it side-tracked from time to time?

If the group did achieve its task, who and what helped it to do this?

Did the group have an agreed procedure, or did members make suggestions about how to work as they went along?

Did anyone keep a check on progress by summarising from time to time, indicating what has been dealt with and what remained to be done?

How aware of each other were group members as they worked together? Did they use each others names or refer to each other? What were the signs, if any, that they were listening to each other? Did members support, encourage or praise each other? Did members criticise each others ideas or ignore them? Was any member personally abused or put down? If so, what were the effects of this behaviour?

Was there any behaviour that drew group members closer together as a group or that seemed to divide them?

## **APPENDIX E – FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

### **Senior Managers and Heads of Service follow-up events**

Focus group duration: approximately 45 minutes

#### **Most beneficial aspects of LMPL: successes and positive outcomes**

What in your opinion have been the most beneficial elements of the LMPL programme? Why?

Have these elements been successfully transferred to, or implemented in, your workplace? How? (examples of)

Why do you think these elements are particularly suitable for, or applicable to, the leadership of public libraries?

#### **Least beneficial aspects of LMPL: suggestions for alternative content**

What in your opinion were the least beneficial aspects of the LMPL programme? Why?

Are there any specific content, or any particular leadership training needs and objectives, which you consider to be missing from the existing LMPL programme?

Were there any elements of the course that you found particularly inappropriate, irrelevant or unsuitable for the leadership of public libraries?

#### **Progressing your leadership training and development**

Have you identified particular areas for further development? How identified? How will these be developed?

Is there/should there be a role for MLA and other professional organisations in continuing your leadership training and development? What type of role should they play?

In your opinion, does the transformational model, as presented in the LMPL programme, provide a viable and appropriate basis for the future leadership of public libraries?

## APPENDIX F - FUTURE LEADERS FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOP AGENDA

### Leading Modern Public Libraries External Evaluation Event University of Sheffield February 27<sup>th</sup> 2006

#### Objectives for Evaluators

##### To:

- Gather views from participants on the main strengths and weaknesses of the LMPL Course.
- Find out what sorts of use has been made of what was learnt on the course and of the materials provided.
- Obtain participants' advice on the most appropriate future help support for them as leaders and for their peers and colleagues who have not had the benefit of LMPL development.
- To observe group activity to further inform the evaluation of the programme as a whole (**not** the individual contribution or performance of participants).

#### Objectives for Participants

##### To:

- Provide feedback on the three objectives above.
- Get together again with the people who were on your course.
- Other? (To be explored on the day).

#### PROGRAMME

13.00 Introduction to the event

Review of objectives for the day (groups and plenary)

Strengths and weaknesses of the programme (pairs and plenary)

What you have used and how (Round Robin groups)

14.30 Break

14.45 Moving forward:      future support for participants (pairs and plenary)  
   future support for Library Managers as leaders  
   (presentation and plenary)

16.00 To be decided

16.30 Close

## **APPENDIX G – MID-PROGRAMME INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Individual perspective**

How were you selected/recruited to attend the course?

What was your personal motivation for attending the course?

How would you describe your own leadership 'style' or approach?

Do/did you recognise your own approach in the course content, or have you learnt new styles which you would like to adopt?

Why do you think such approaches are appropriate/will be effective?

How confident are you in your own ability to apply these approaches in your workplace?

### **Operational perspective**

Have you identified opportunities to apply the course content/leadership approaches within your workplace in terms of the day-to-day running of the service?

What will be the anticipated outcomes if these approaches are applied?

Do you foresee any challenges/obstacles? How will these be overcome?

Do you think such approaches will be welcomed by colleagues, particularly front-line staff?

### **Organisational perspective**

Do you think the approaches outlined in the course 'fit' your organisational culture?

What is the existing leadership 'style', if any, within your organisation? How is this different to the model presented within the course, if at all?

Will your organisation benefit from the model presented on LMPL? How?

Do you see an opportunity to 'cascade' this model and the training you are receiving within the organisation? Would you advocate this approach to colleagues? How?

Is the course changing the way you practice leadership?

### **Any other comments?**

## **APPENDIX H: CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1 [Except Heads of Service] How did you get to participate in the course?

Prompts: Selected? Volunteered?

2 You were asked to identify an instance where you have used your leadership skills since the course in which you have drawn on what you learnt on the course. Can you think of an example please? Please tell me about it.

Prompts: *Which leadership skills? What results?*

3 Have you used any of the materials, techniques or ideas in other ways since the course?

4 What did you think of the course?

Prompts: Strengths? Weaknesses?

Thank you

## APPENDIX I – PRE-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

### Part 1 – Attending the course

Which course are you attending?	Future Leaders	Senior Managers	Heads of Service
---------------------------------	----------------	-----------------	------------------

What is your current job title?	
How long have you worked in the public library service?	Years

<b>How were you selected/recruited to attend the course? Please provide as much information as possible:</b>			
<b>Was your decision to attend entirely voluntary?</b>			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
			No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>What was your personal motivation for attending the course? Please tick the most appropriate box:</b>			
A general enthusiasm for training and continuing professional development			<input type="checkbox"/>
A desire to develop my existing management skills in to leadership skills			<input type="checkbox"/>
To support my future career development and promotion opportunities			<input type="checkbox"/>
A desire and/or a need to lead change in my own organisation			<input type="checkbox"/>
A sense of obligation because of my position in my organisation			<input type="checkbox"/>
An interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service			<input type="checkbox"/>
A desire to boost my confidence in, and awareness of, my own leadership abilities			<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe below)			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Further comments:</b>			

<b>Which of the following phrases best describe your own individual leadership style or approach? Please select a maximum of 4 phrases by ticking the appropriate boxes:</b>			
Decisive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Politically aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reactive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empowering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Task-orientated	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Proactive	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Empathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Results driven	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Visionary	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Further comments:</b>			

### Part 2: Leadership in your organisation

Please consider the following questions in relation to your organisation (that being your public library service or local authority for those in senior management positions) and tick the appropriate box:	Yes	No	Undecided
Traditionally, does your organisation have an identifiable leadership style or approach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would your organisation benefit from a change or redirection in leadership style and approach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would your organisation be open and responsive to such changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you confident in your own abilities to contribute to the leadership of your organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Further comments:**

**Which of the following phrases best describe the CURRENT leadership style or approach within your organisation? Please select a maximum of 4 phrases by ticking the appropriate boxes:**

Decisive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proactive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Politically aware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reactive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Results driven	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empowering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Task-orientated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visionary	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Further comments:**

### Part 3: Professional activities and engagement

**Which of the following professional activities have you undertaken in the past 6 months? Please tick the appropriate boxes:**

Attending a professional conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking/presenting at a professional conference	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending a training event/course	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitating a training event/course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading professional literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing a paper for publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading/contributing to e-mail discussion group(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subscribing to a publication/e-mail alerting service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joined/renewed membership to a professional organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Did any of these activities relate to the development/study of leadership skills/theory?**

Yes

No

**Further comments:**

**Are there any other comments you would like to make about your decision to attend the leadership training course, your expectations of the training and anticipated outcomes?**

**MANY THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION**

## APPENDIX J – POST-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

### Part 1: Your individual assessment of the course

Which course did you attend?	Future Leaders	Senior Managers	Heads of Service
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What, for you personally, have been the main benefits of attending the course? Please select a maximum of 4 from the following responses:	
The opportunity to develop my existing management skills in to leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to take 'time out' and consider my personal role within my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
The identification and personal recognition of specific skills that I need to develop to become a successful leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
The development of skills and evidence to support my future career development and promotion opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
The incentive to lead change in my own organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
An invigorated interest in the concept of leadership and its place in the public library service	<input type="checkbox"/>
The acquisition of new knowledge and tools to apply in my own workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to network and engage with colleagues from other library services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved confidence in my own leadership abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Further comments:</b>	

Which of the following phrases, in your opinion, best describe the model of leadership presented on the course? Please select a maximum of 4 phrases by ticking the appropriate boxes:			
Decisive	Consultative	Proactive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative	Politically aware	Empathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reactive	Collaborative	Inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directive	Innovative	Results driven	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empowering	Task-orientated	Visionary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please briefly describe in the space below how the model of leadership presented on the course relates to your own personal leadership style and approach:			

### Part 2: Linking the training to your organisation

Please consider the following questions in relation to your organisation (that being your public library service or local authority for those in senior management positions) and tick the appropriate box:	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
I recognised the existing leadership style of my organisation within the model of leadership presented on the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership within my organisation is relatively inconsistent: different leaders and managers adopt different approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am optimistic about the combined contribution that the three participants on the course can make to the future leadership of our organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The model of leadership presented on the course is entirely different to the existing leadership culture within my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that my organisation needs to change its current leadership style and approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation would benefit from the ideas presented on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

the course with respect to taking the service forward			
The model of leadership presented on the course does not suit my organisation and its current needs			
My organisation is open to change and development with respect to its future leadership			
<b>Further comments:</b>			

### Part 3: Your continuing leadership development

Which of the following professional activities have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake, since completing the course? Please tick the appropriate boxes:			
Attending a professional conference		Speaking/presenting at a professional conference	
Attending a training event/course		Facilitating a training event/course	
Reading professional literature		Writing a paper for publication	
Reading/contributing to e-mail discussion group(s)		Subscribing to a publication/e-mail alerting service	
Joined/renewed membership to a professional organisation		Other (please specify below)	

When considering your on-going leadership training and development needs, what type of activity would be most beneficial to you? Please describe a maximum of 3 below, including the support needed, particularly by external organisations such as MLA or CILIP where appropriate:
1.
2.
3.

Have you consulted with the other <i>Leading Modern Public Libraries</i> participants from your library service since completing the course? If 'yes', please describe the nature of your consultation, including relevant outcomes, below:

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the <i>Leading Modern Public Libraries</i> programme, and your future leadership development and training needs?

**MANY THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION**

## APPENDIX K: KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS BY EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The different evaluation methods were chosen to concentrate on particular aspects of the overall picture, as shown in the summaries of key evidence below. However, a very consistent overall picture emerged across the evaluation as a whole. Accordingly, a thematic review is presented as part C of this report.

### 1 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on a review of the literature and observations made, it is possible to briefly summarise theoretical models of leadership, their key characteristics and the perceived desired criteria for public library leadership (please see table 2 on next page). However, the lack of a definitive list of key library leadership competencies and skills, due to the increasingly diverse and multi-faceted nature of the profession, its relevant services and personnel should be noted. It may not be appropriate to apply a single theoretical model or clearly defined set of guiding principles to library leadership training programmes and initiatives. The role of personalised development plans which recognise organisational characteristics and service objectives are of equal (if not greater) importance:

*“As usual the answers are not clear cut: people can examine, learn and practise ‘leadership behaviours’, but they must also have the will to lead and a need to achieve; practical skills can be taught, but personal qualities are hard to develop from scratch. Cross-sectoral perspectives add value, but programmes need to be culturally sensitive and incorporate context-specific elements.” (Corrall, 2002)*

### 2 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS: LMPL COURSE READER

The evaluation team were given access to learning materials provided on the programme, in order to undertake documentary analysis in terms of content, quality and usefulness, and form an assessment of how specific learning materials support the delivery of the programme and the ongoing development of participants.

Our review of these materials (**see appendix B**) concluded that, overall, the reader directs course participants to a worthy and solid set of items. However, the range of material covered is somewhat limited, particularly for a resource tailored to providers of a specific service within a professional sector. As will be seen below, the programme as delivered bridged this gap, leaving problems only for the participants who missed segments of the programme or when people looked at the materials later.

Accordingly, we recommend that course designers try to reflect the ‘public library relevance’ articulated within the programme delivery in their supporting texts and resources (some useful suggestions about further reading are given in appendix B). There needs to be some adjustment in the balance of generic management theory content, and more emphasis on political issues and awareness which are essential to the leadership of public services.

**Table 1: Leadership models**

<b>LEADERSHIP MODEL</b>	<b>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>DESIRED PUBLIC LIBRARY LEADERSHIP (PLL) CRITERIA</b>
<b>Situational</b>	Leadership action responsive to given situation Action either supportive or directive according to development needs of followers Leadership affected by group atmosphere, task structure and positional power Balanced between task/production/concern for people	Public library leadership needs reactionary skills to accommodate given social/political situations Decision making Time management
<b>Transactional</b>	Task-orientated Results-driven Organisation and planning Problem solving Hierarchical	Respect and credibility Decision making Problem solving
<b>Organisational</b>	Holistic Collective Innovative Organisation-driven Social awareness Responsive to external environment	Acknowledgement of organisational culture and objectives Political/social awareness Creativity and Innovation Collaboration Succession planning

<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-awareness</li> <li>Interpersonal skills</li> <li>Resilience</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Intuitiveness</li> <li>Social awareness</li> <li>Relationship building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher levels of emotional involvement and commitment required within public sector services</li> <li>Emotional maturity and interpersonal sensitivity</li> <li>Interpersonal and communication skills</li> <li>Social sensitivity and awareness</li> <li>Teamwork and collaboration</li> <li>Negotiation</li> </ul>
<b>Transformational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change facilitation</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Inspirational</li> <li>Motivating</li> <li>Moral values</li> <li>Visionary</li> <li>Trustworthy</li> <li>Mentoring</li> <li>Empowering</li> <li>Integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political acumen</li> <li>Creativity and innovation</li> <li>Change orchestration and management</li> <li>Motivation</li> <li>Accountability</li> <li>Mentoring and staff development</li> <li>Advocate of 'public good'</li> </ul>

### **3 KEY FINDINGS FROM EVALUATION FIELDWORK**

#### **3.1 Key findings in common**

A number of key findings were identified across the observation and follow-up events, mid-programme interviews, critical incident interviews and the pre- and post-programme questionnaires. Key findings echoing across all these strands of work are:

Main points:

- The various Future Leader, Senior Manager and Heads of Service cohorts all responded positively to the LMPL programme, with reported strengths outnumbering weaknesses in all cases.
- All groups have benefited significantly at a personal level through improved confidence and raised awareness of their own leadership capabilities, styles and potential.
- Groups have applied techniques used and learnt on the programme within their own workplace at some level, notably for project management and in communicating with and including staff more effectively (see also comment at 9.4 below).

Operational points:

- The networking opportunities have been appreciated by participants at all levels in these cohorts, particularly through shared public library-related experiences amongst participants.

#### **3.2 Observation of modules and follow-up events**

Other key findings from this phase of the evaluation are:

Main points:

- Senior Managers indicated that they are developing their awareness of the strategic role of leadership within public libraries.

Operational points:

- All three groups reported inconsistencies in the programme content and in the performance of programme facilitators.
- Future Leaders feel that they would have benefited from undertaking the TLQ exercise.
- Some techniques, particularly the creativity/management tools, are more effective than others, depending on personal taste. Perhaps these sessions could be tailored in the future to accommodate this. Future Leaders would have preferred the TLQ instead of some of the exercises.

Organisational points:

- The selection of some participants on the Future Leaders programme was inappropriate.

Developmental points:

- Future Leaders in this cohort were less proactive in acting as leaders within their own authorities, and suggested that they need formal mechanisms and targets for developing their leadership skills and building upon the LMPL programme.
- Groups have expressed an interest in continuing their leadership development at a regional and national level.
- Groups have also defined potential roles for professional organisations such as MLA (nationally and regionally), CILIP and SCL in supporting their leadership development. They offered ideas for MLA to consider when deciding how to develop the LMPL programme and build upon the largely positive reaction it has received from participants so far.
- Groups agree that there is a need to extend the programme to other public library employees, and disseminate and publicise outcomes of LMPL in terms of leadership best practice.

### **3.3 Mid-Programme interviews**

Additional key findings are:

Main points:

- There is evidence amongst the Heads of Service group of positive strategic impact, particularly in developing leaders within the organisation.

Operational points:

- Some problems arose because of changes in programme facilitators and the comparatively poor performance of one particular trainer.
- The course reader received positive feedback, was being widely used at the mid-programme stage, and was considered to be a valuable tool for ongoing development.

Developmental points:

- All respondents stressed the need for a long-term consideration of programme impact and ongoing programme evaluation.

### **3.4 Critical incident interviews**

Further points include:

Operational points:

- Critical Incident respondents also reported inconsistencies in course content, intensity and facilitator performance.
- Some respondents were critical of the high management theory content, which was over-familiar to those participants who had already undertaken management training.

Organisational points:

- Issues were again raised about the selection of Future Leader participants as well as about allocation of three places per library authority. Positive leadership programme outcomes clearly depend on choosing people with leadership potential to attend.
- Respondents reported some change in their attitudes, and are applying what they have learnt in the workplace at strategic or operational levels, depending upon local circumstances. Factors such as organisational restructures and under-staffing are affecting participants' ability to facilitate change.

### **3.5 Pre- and Post-Programme questionnaires**

Further points are:

Operational points:

- Again, some respondents expressed reservations about the high management theory content in the programme, and have suggested that some of the tools used are inappropriate for the more senior levels.
- They welcomed the opportunity to take reflective time away from the workplace.

Organisational points:

- There was again adverse comment about selection of LMPL participants, especially the high average length of time in service of Future Leaders.

Developmental points:

- Respondents at all levels see a need for flexible approaches to leadership and gave varied assessments about their own style compared to that of their organisation and of the LMPL programme.
- The reported failure by some authorities to co-ordinate the development activities of their three programme participants is perhaps a cause for concern, and supports the need for formalised structures requested by some participants.
- Questionnaire respondents envisage a continued need for MLA to support their leadership development, particularly on a regional basis, with other potential partners including regional branches of CILIP and SCL.

## APPENDIX L: OBSERVED INTERACTION DURING COURSE ACTIVITIES

**Table 1: Future Leaders Group evaluation scores**

	Working environment and organisational culture	Creative problem solving	Change management and leadership
Listening to others	6	5	5
Participation by group members	6	3	6
Quality of decision making	5	4	6
Building and developing upon other peoples contributions	4	3	5
Sensitivity of group members to the feelings of others	5	5	5
Handling and use of conflict	N/A	2	N/A
Level of creativity	5	3	5
Keeping everyone on task	5	2	5

**Table 2: Senior Managers Group evaluation scores**

	Working environment and organisational culture	Creative problem solving	Change management and leadership
Listening to others	6	5	4
Participation by group members	6	6	6
Quality of decision making	6	5	4
Building and developing upon other peoples contributions	6	6	5
Sensitivity of group members to the feelings of others	5	6	5
Handling and use of conflict	N/A	N/A	N/A
Level of creativity	6	6	4
Keeping everyone on task	6	5	4

**Table 3: Heads of Service Group evaluation scores**

	Working environment and organisational culture	Creative problem solving	Change management and leadership
Listening to others	6	5	5
Participation by group members	5	2	5
Quality of decision making	4	2	4
Building and developing upon other peoples contributions	5	3	5
Sensitivity of group members to the feelings of others	5	4	5
Handling and use of conflict	N/A	3	N/A
Level of creativity	4	2	5
Keeping everyone on task	4	2	5

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