
What Makes a Joint Use Library a Community Library?

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ABSTRACT

Although the majority of joint use libraries in educational establishments provide at least an adequate level of service for their school, college, or university users, the standard of service they provide for members of the public is more questionable in many cases. This article considers the benefits and problems of joint use libraries from the perspective of their public users, providing examples from the UK and elsewhere to demonstrate how these occur in practice. A number of success factors are identified that need to be considered if a joint use library is to be successful as a community library, perhaps the most important of these being the need to involve the local community in the development of the library from its earliest stage. Gaining the support and active involvement of the local community is crucial; only then can the true benefits of joint use libraries, as locations for intergenerational activity and lifelong learning, be realized.

INTRODUCTION

The guiding principle of joint use libraries should be that they provide a better standard of service than would otherwise be possible for all users and potential users; as Bromfield (2001) has put it, the joint use library should be “better than the sum of its parts.” However, although most joint use public-school libraries function at least adequately as school libraries and provide an obviously higher level of service than would otherwise be available for students and teachers, the level of service they provide for local communities has been called into question.

Joint use libraries have been the source of heated disagreements within local communities. The controversy caused by the development of joint use libraries at San Jose in California and Visby in Sweden has been well-documented (see, for example, Kauppila & Russell, 2003; Hansson, 2006), but there have been numerous less documented disputes, played out in the local media and council chambers, resulting from proposals to develop joint use school-public libraries. To give just one example, the planned joint use library at Portree in the Scottish Highlands is currently causing controversy; according to the local newspaper, "The inclusion of community facilities within the school—most notably the Portree public library—has proved an unpopular decision, with several community groups campaigning to retain the library within the centre of the village" (West Highland Free Press, 2004). The local community has expressed concern because the school site is not at the center of the village, where many believe the library should be located, and the local community believes the proposed plan allocates too small an area for an adequate community library. In addition, some concerns have been expressed about the security and safety issues of allowing public access to the school site (West Highland Free Press, 2004).

Nevertheless, it can be argued that one of the main strengths of joint use libraries is their strong community emphasis. For example, they can act as sites for intergenerational activities; actively demonstrate the concept of lifelong learning; and provide information, educational, and cultural opportunities that would not otherwise exist in communities. In the 1960s White (1963) identified the following as some of the benefits of joint use libraries: longer hours of operation, better use of the building, and a closer relationship between parents and librarians. Most of the librarians working in joint use libraries surveyed by Jaffe in the early 1980s noted the special contribution these libraries made to their communities (in Fitzgibbons, 2000). The advantages of joint use libraries identified by Bundy in his survey of the literature include the following:

- Promoting greater community interaction by providing a community focal point
- Promoting greater access to information on community services
- Increasing the community's awareness and understanding of current education practice
- Promoting lifelong learning
- Bringing different community groups together on the governing board
- Providing a social justice outcome for smaller communities that could not support separate services (Bundy, 2002)

Joint use libraries, therefore, have the potential to bring a number of both immediate and longer-term benefits to local communities.

JOINT USE LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC POLICY

The principle of joint use facilities has been advocated over a number of years by policymakers in various countries. As Bundy points out, "The pressure for public schools to demonstrate accountability through community access to underused school facilities has undoubtedly been one reason for proposals for joint-use libraries in several countries" (Bundy, 2002, p. 6). In Australia, Dwyer observed a trend to involve the community in schools in the 1970s; joint use libraries were, therefore, "an educationally fashionable thing to encourage" at this time (Bundy, 1998, p. 6). There has been particular support for joint use facilities in South Australia, where in 1974 a politically mandated decision was made that the only way to bring public library services rapidly to small rural populations was to do so on the back of federally funded school libraries (Bundy, 1998). In the United States, Aaron claimed that renewed interest in joint use libraries in Florida in the 1990s was, in part, a result of the "one-stop school" concept advocated by Governor Lawton Chiles, who supported the centralization of community services on the school site (Aaron & Hannigan, 1980).

In the UK, as early as 1970, local educational authorities were being encouraged to provide facilities within schools and colleges that could be used by the local community. Although joint use libraries were not explicitly advocated at this time, at least attention was drawn to the possibility of combined libraries (Jones, 1977). More than thirty years later, the potential community role of joint public and school libraries was highlighted in a number of UK government policy initiatives. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the number of joint use libraries in the UK appears to have increased significantly over the last five years. They are seen as a politically attractive option in response to current New Labour policy initiatives. For example, in the last few years there has been increased pressure on schools to become more heavily involved with their local communities through the introduction of extended schools,¹ which provide a range of services and activities for the community, such as adult education classes, childcare, and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. At the same time, there has been a tendency to site public libraries with other community services, in particular, through the creation of "one-stop shops" and "library learning centers." In 2000 *Empowering the Learning Community* recommended that public and educational libraries establish cooperative arrangements in order to improve services locally (LIC, 2000). Two years later, the Audit Commission report, *Building Better Library Services*, identified "making better use of joint-use facilities" as an action for councils and library services (Audit Commission, 2002). These developments suggest that the potential role for joint use libraries could be explored further. *Start with the Child* (CILIP, 2002) recently confirmed that joint use libraries are still being established, largely due to emphasis on Best Value² and the need to

provide libraries in a wider range of locations. They are usually established because they are believed to be the most effective form of provision to meet the needs of a locality and serve small communities.

BENEFITS OF JOINT USE LIBRARIES FOR COMMUNITIES

Joint use libraries offer a number of advantages for communities; amongst the most important are the following:

- Improved facilities: better local facilities, or possibly the provision of a library where none would be available otherwise; a new, purpose-built library providing modern facilities and a pleasant environment; and longer hours of operation than other small branch libraries
- Convenience: opportunities to use the library when people are visiting the school for other purposes, for example, to collect children or to attend courses
- Lifelong learning: opportunities for all members of the community to participate in formal and informal learning
- Intergenerational interaction: opportunities for interaction between all sections of the community, in particular between adults and young people

These benefits are described in greater detail below with illustrations demonstrating how they can be transferred to practice.

Improved Facilities

In many cases, having a joint use library means that a library is provided where none would otherwise exist. The only feasible alternative for many communities is a mobile service that visits, perhaps, once a fortnight. Having a joint use library means that a higher proportion of the local population has regular access to a static library service point close to their home. A joint use library offers a better environment, more resources, and longer opening hours than a mobile service.

Joint use libraries are often open for longer hours than other small branch libraries,³ and they encourage greater use of school buildings beyond the school day, something the UK government is keen to promote. In a survey carried out in the UK in 2003, most joint use libraries opened for a time after school to allow use by the public in the early evening, and a number also had a "late night" when they remained open until around 7:30 p.m. They also allowed access during school holidays and, in some cases, on Saturday mornings (McNicol, 2003). The Audit Commission acknowledged that joint use buildings shared with other services were one way in which public libraries could not only increase hours of operation but also raise awareness and promote the library as a focus for community activity (Audit Commission, 2002).

Many joint use libraries are housed in new, purpose-built facilities, well-suited for newer services such as ICT, which libraries now need to offer. New

buildings are needed in many communities. The Audit Commission criticized older libraries for their intimidating atmosphere and layout: “official looking” facades, imposing issue desks, formal layouts, and uncomfortable furniture (Audit Commission, 2002). The *New Library Impact Study* found that partnerships between libraries and other services could “work together to add value and achieve strategic aims for the authorities concerned” (Bryson, Usherwood, & Proctor, 2003, p. 6). Joining with educational establishments can also open up new sources of funding for new builds or refurbishments that would not otherwise be available to public libraries, for example, funding from the UK Department of Education and Skills or private finance initiatives.

Joint use libraries can also make additional facilities available within the community; this can be particularly important in more isolated areas. For example, Callington Library in Cornwall sells stamps, greetings cards, bus passes, books, and plants. These types of value-added services would obviously not be available if the town were only served by a mobile library. Furthermore, school book fairs are open to the public as well as the school, which is important as there is no bookshop in this small rural town. Like many joint use libraries, Callington is involved in local cultural events; the school acts as a venue for book festivals and author visits (Evidence Base, 2004).

Convenience

In some instances, adults may be more likely to use a joint use library than they would be if they had to make a separate journey to a public library; they can visit when they are at the school for another purpose, for example, to collect children, use shared leisure facilities, or attend adult education courses. This means that library membership and issues may increase and new users are encouraged. In schools that make greater efforts to engage with the local community, people will have more reason to be visiting the school site for another purpose, thereby providing the library with “passing trade.” In the UK the extended school concept is important in this respect as it means that a number of important community facilities are offered from the school site. At Bishops Park College in Essex, a new school that “epitomises the ‘extended schools’ ethos,” the public library service is relocating its local branch to the new community wing. As well as the library, this will include a cyber café, refreshment facilities, health visitors, social services, a credit union, an early years initiative, a nursery, and an older people’s day center (Baker, 2005).

Lifelong Learning

Observing adults using the library for learning activities can help young people to realize that learning is not something that occurs only in school, but it can take place outside formal education and continue throughout life. Cassell (1985) viewed one of the advantages of a joint use library as the development of a community focal point where adults and children

can learn together. Many joint use libraries have developed strong family learning programs. The same benefit has been argued to be true of joint university-public libraries. Referring to such developments in Sweden, Gomez argued that "In a world characterised by life-long learning the combined library resources should give citizens, students and researchers a high-quality service" (Gomez, Hulthen, & Drehmer, 1998, 22). More specifically, Bundy refers to Senn Breivik's claim that a joint use library can offer opportunities for a whole community approach to information literacy development; such opportunities are likely to be increasingly important as public libraries focus more attention on their information literacy role. As Bundy points out, however, the full potential of this has not yet been investigated (Bundy, 2002). A related benefit of joint use libraries is that they can promote a greater understanding of current educational practice within the community.

Many joint use libraries participate in national lifelong learning initiatives. In the UK, for example, many act as learndirect centers.⁴ This allows access to a range of online courses and support. For isolated communities the library may be the only location where such an opportunity is available. This allows people to study a range of subjects, including languages, ICT, and business and life skills, and gain qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), Institute of Leadership and Management qualifications, and CLAIT. Callington Library in Cornwall works with the University of the First Age⁵ to organize not only school but also community Super Learning Days. Approximately 170 people attended such an event in February 2004, completing activity sheets and entering competitions (Anique Skinner, personal communication, May 12, 2005).

Intergenerational Interaction

As a library that has a significant proportion of younger people as its core users in addition to older, more traditional library users, a joint use library has tremendous potential to encourage interaction and improve relations between different generations. A number of library managers quoted in McNicol (2003) referred to good community interaction, which was frequently evident in a joint use library; it helped to maintain contact between older and younger members of the community. Activities such as Christmas concerts and book festivals brought the school and local community together. The atmosphere the library fostered was described as "buzzing" by one library manager; another referred to the "stimulating learning environment and 'can do' ethos." In one library the employment of relief library assistants drawn from the local community was seen as one way to get local people of all ages more actively involved in the work of the library. The library could also act as "a showcase for the school," encouraging the community to become more involved in, or simply more aware of, various aspects of school life. This might be through displays of pupils'

work or simply by increased contact between pupils and local residents. One library manager pointed out the benefits of the public seeing “children doing something positive and ‘educational.’” Conversely, pupils gained from seeing the library being used well and valued by adults.

Although these examples give a flavor of the types of intergenerational activities that take place in joint use libraries, a more systematic approach is needed to ensure that their potential in this area is fully developed. For example, joint use libraries could offer ideal locations for reminiscence work or for local history projects.

DISADVANTAGES OF JOINT USE LIBRARIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Although joint use libraries have a number of advantages, they also bring their own difficulties. The most common include the following:

- Differences in ethos: joint use libraries can have a tendency to be too school-focused and fail to serve the broader social, cultural, and learning needs of the local community
- Accessibility: transport difficulties and limited opening times can be barriers to library use by the local community
- Reluctance to enter a school: in addition to practical barriers, some members of the local community may be reluctant to enter a school because they have bad memories of their own schooldays or because they are put off by the prospect of sharing the facility with a large number of teenagers
- Location: secondary schools in particular are often not located close to other community facilities
- Size of the building and collection: in many joint use libraries, both the building and collection are too small to adequately serve the needs of all potential users

Each of these issues is described in greater detail below.

Differences in Ethos

Tension is often evident in joint use libraries as they attempt to serve two quite diverse communities of users: the general public as well as pupils and teachers. Trying to meet the needs of all users, and potential users, effectively is one of the main challenges facing staff. The differences in ethos between public and school libraries—one being focused primarily on study and the other having a wider remit and placing greater emphasis on recreational reading and information use—can be difficult to reconcile. One common example is the practice of insisting that students use the library for “study purposes” at least during the school day; while this supports the aims of the school, it can conflict with the public library’s

efforts to encourage reading for pleasure and promote wider cultural and recreational activities.

There is a danger that the joint use library can come to feel like a classroom if there are regular classes using the library. The teaching and learning styles used need to be suited to the library environment. Independent and resource-based learning obviously work well, but “chalk and talk” instruction is less appropriate. A library that feels like a classroom is a far cry from the more welcoming “bookshop feel” that almost all UK public libraries now aim to replicate.

The collections themselves in a joint use library can also be too school-focused and not sufficiently diverse or balanced to meet the needs of the local community. How the stock is arranged can also have an impact. Although in most UK joint use libraries the school and public stock is intershelfed, at Haywood City Learning Centre in Stoke-on-Trent, until recently, the public and school resources were separated. This meant that half of the library, the “school side,” was seen as a “no go area” by members of the public (Janet Thursfield, personal communication, May 4, 2005).

Accessibility

The majority of joint use libraries are attached to, or part of, a school, most often a secondary school. It is generally acknowledged that being attached to a school is beneficial in terms of encouraging pupils to use the library, but it is not so ideal for members of the public. They might experience a number of practical problems, for example, school buses that collect children after school blocking access to the library or parking problems. At Sneyd Community Library in Walsall in the West Midlands, for example, it is not easy for members of the public to access the library as they have to enter through the main school entrance. There is a lack of signage to the library both outside the school and when potential users enter the building. This means that many members of the public think it is a resource for the school alone. The location presents further problems in this respect; there is no regular bus service, so travelling to the library is difficult for users without their own means of transportation (McNicol, 2003). This is a widespread problem as public transport links to schools may be poor except at the beginning and end of the school day.

Limited opening hours can be a further problem. Although overall opening hours of joint use libraries are generally good compared to school libraries or small branches, there may be times when the library is closed to the public to allow classes to use the facilities. In some cases, opening hours are less than those of comparable libraries serving a single user group. For example, Lichfield Library in Staffordshire, which is a joint public, university, and further education library, opens the same hours as other branches in the county but less than would be expected for other university libraries (McNicol, 2004a).

Yet another issue is security. Security in schools has become much tighter over the last decade, and visitors are asked to sign in and display a badge indicating they have a bona fide reason for being at the school. However, if a joint use library is sited in school grounds, or in some cases within the school, this can cause difficulties. Excessively bureaucratic or officious procedures are off-putting for public library users and are likely to deter the very people public libraries are working so hard to attract.

Reluctance to Enter a School

Although the familiar environment of a library on school premises might encourage greater use by pupils, this presents a barrier for some members of the public. A widespread problem is the fact that some members of the public, particularly older users and parents with toddlers, feel intimidated entering a library where there may be large number of teenagers. Breaks and lunchtimes, when pupils use the library without teacher supervision, can be especially off-putting for some public library users. Even getting to the library entrance can be an ordeal if it means passing through large, unsupervised groups of teenagers; many joint use libraries do not have separate entrances. Library staff sometimes have to work hard to maintain good relations between the school and the public library users.

Although joint use libraries have been popular in Norway for a number of years, in 2004 it was clear that, at least in the South Trøndelag area, many joint use libraries (or *kombinasjonsbibliotek*) that had been established in the past were no longer meeting the needs of the local community. The main problem mentioned was the fact that adults, especially older people, did not generally like to visit a school because of unhappy associations with their own schooling or a fear of disruptive students (McNicol, 2004b). The former point is one that has been well-researched in relation to both educational establishments and libraries generally (Hull, 2000), but it perhaps needs to be more explicitly stated that the findings of these studies have particular significance for joint use libraries due to their location and, in some cases, their ethos. The latter points to a lack of understanding between some schools and the communities where they are located. Where there was a greater sense of community within the area, Norwegian joint use libraries seemed to stand a higher chance of success (McNicol, 2004b).

Many joint use library staff in the UK have reported that some members of the public quickly become more comfortable once they become accustomed to the atmosphere. Alternatively, those who prefer a quieter environment adapt their patterns of library use and choose to visit at other times (McNicol, 2003). However, there is a danger that some members of the public can be permanently deterred from using the library if they are wary of teenagers; while some may opt to visit other local branches, for many this is not an option, and they become nonusers of the public library service.

Location

Being located close to community services such as leisure centers, council service points, playgroups, car parks, and shopping areas can be a way to increase use of the public library; people are likely to be in the area for other reasons and might use the library at the same time. As White (1963) found, however, schools are often not located close to other community services. Although primary schools are usually situated close to the center of the communities they serve, this is rarely the case for secondary schools. In addition to the obvious geographical separation of many secondary schools from other community services, in recent years there has been a tendency for more children in the UK to attend secondary schools some distance from their homes. This might be because they live in a rural area, but it might also be due to a wish to attend a school run by a religious denomination or, increasingly, one that offers a specialization such as languages, arts, or technology.⁶ This means that the local population who would be expected to use the joint use public library may not be the same community that is served by the school, and this can create difficulties. Children from other schools may be reluctant to visit the library, and there will be fewer direct links between the school and the immediate local community.

Size of the Building and Collection

Too many joint use libraries are too small to adequately serve both the school and local community. In older libraries, this problem has been exacerbated by the introduction of ICT (Information and Communications Technology), which has demanded more and more space. Space needs may also change as a result of fluctuations in the local population, but lack of space is not just a problem that develops over time. In many instances, difficulties are apparent soon after the library opens. A desire to reduce building costs means that some newer joint use libraries have not been built to accommodate the current needs of the local population and even less consideration has been given to possible future expansion.

The fact that many joint use libraries lack separate areas for diverse, and often conflicting, activities, such as individual studying, reading, and whole class sessions, can prove problematic. Jaffe recommended that a joint use library should provide adequate space and separate areas for the school and public use (Jaffe, 1982, 100). Library staff interviewed by McNicol (2003) felt that, ideally, a joint use library would have a room for class use and a separate computer area, but this is rarely the case in practice.

SUCCESS FACTORS

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account to ensure that a joint use library serves the local community as well as its school users. It is important that these are taken into account when decisions are being made as to the suitability of a proposed joint use library, and they

should continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis. The key factors that need to be considered are

- demographic and geographical factors;
- publicity and marketing strategies;
- public consultation exercises;
- the ethos of the partners involved;
- the location of other community facilities;
- access.

Demographic and Geographical Factors

The nature and composition of the local community helps to explain why a joint use library was established in many areas. In McNicol (2003), several library managers referred to the isolated nature of the community they served, poor transport links, and the fact that the size of the local community was not large enough to justify a branch library. Fitzgibbons (2000) claims that the size of the community is the first consideration when deciding whether a joint use library is a viable option. Woolard (1980) recommended that the optimum environment would be communities with 5,000 or fewer residents, where there are usually not enough library resources and few trained staff. Bundy suggested the lower figure of 3,500 (Bundy, 2002). Woolard (1980) noted that it is also often the case that communication is easier in small communities, and they often have a large, stable percentage of residents involved in community life. In addition, it could be argued that there is less division and wariness between the young and old members of a smaller community because people are more familiar with each other and come into contact on a more regular basis than in a larger community, where it is possible for separate groups to form that have little or no contact with each other.

Publicity

The correct marketing and promotional strategy is essential for a successful joint use library. In some cases, the library is promoted effectively within the school, but less attention is paid to publicity targeted at the local community. In addition to general public library service promotion, joint use publicity needs to make it abundantly clear that the library is not just a resource for the school but is open to, and welcomes, the entire community. This can be a difficult message to put across. Ideally, the library building should be visible from the roadside but, where this is not the case, it needs clear, prominent signage. Staff working in joint use libraries report adopting a plethora of promotional activities including open days, talks, leaflets, newspaper advertisements, attending local carnivals, talking to residents in the community, and addressing residents' group meetings (Evidence Base, 2004). However, as Haywood City Learning Centre in Stoke-on-Trent found (Janet Thursfield, personal communication, May 4, 2005) there is no guar-

antee that even if all these methods are tried the library will be successful in attracting the local community if local people do not feel themselves to have ownership of, and active involvement in, the library. Therefore, it is crucial that the local community is consulted and involved in decisions regarding joint use facilities from the outset.

Public Consultation

In order to involve communities and hopefully gain their support for joint use facilities, a well-thought-out consultation process is needed that demonstrates a genuine respect for the community's views and concerns. This can help to prevent or overcome the types of problems described in the introduction to this article. Aaron and Hannigan (1980) developed a model for helping local communities make decisions about the appropriateness of a joint use library. As Bauer (1995) points out, community fit is important, and all communities are not suitable candidates for a joint use library. The local community needs to be involved in a feasibility study. A joint use library is being planned in Upper Riccarton in Christchurch, New Zealand. Before the decision was taken to proceed with a joint facility, a detailed study of demographic information, transport patterns, and educational institutions and other facilities was carried out. There have also been a number of consultation exercises, culminating in the establishment of an "Ideas Bank" where teachers, students, and the local community can share ideas about what they would like to see in the new library (Christchurch City Libraries, 2005).

In Derby in the East Midlands, a planned joint use library serving the public and workers at a healthy living center has made significant efforts to involve the local community from the earliest stages. Although this joint use library did not involve an educational establishment, the same principles apply. A library panel has been set up that it is hoped will become a permanent body with its own constitution; a youth forum has been involved in selecting stock; a survey has been sent to all local residents and schools; and a member of the library staff works with residents' groups to ensure their views are taken into consideration (Roberts, 2005).

The approach taken in Essex, where a new joint use library has recently opened at Bishop's Park College, was to ask customers of the existing branch, which was to be closed, what could be done to enable them to make use of the new facility. Objections were anticipated, but once the decision to go ahead with a joint use library was taken, demonstrating that the council would do whatever it could to help the community to adjust became a priority (Baker, 2005). Although this is quite rare, occasionally the impetus for a new joint use library has actually been led by the local community. At Winnersh in Wokingham, the idea for a community library was suggested at a village focus group; there was demand from the local community and the idea was championed by a local councillor (McNicol, 2003).

Sometimes school pupils and the local community have been actively involved in the design of the library. At Ardnamurchan in the Scottish Highlands, for example, the community was involved in an art project to create a stained glass installation and projection in the library (McNicol, 2003). The library at The Campus at Weston-super-Mare has ceiling prints designed by pupils at the school (Kelly, 2005).

Some joint use libraries have used innovative forms of public consultation. For example, in Bolton arts-based consultation materials are being developed to engage members of the local ethnic minority community, as this group is often excluded by traditional consultation methods (Keane, 2005).

The Ethos of the Partners

A joint library needs to match the general ethos of both partners. Joint school-public facilities obviously work best in schools that see involvement with the local community as an essential aspect of their mission. In these schools, links are built up through other activities such as shared sports and ICT facilities and the involvement of students in community projects. In a school where fewer efforts are made to engage with the local community, it can be more difficult for a joint use library to establish its position in the community. It is important that the school recognizes that the library is not a classroom but has a wide-ranging social and cultural role.

As Bundy (2002) has suggested, it may be that joint public and community college libraries work better because of the maturity of the students, the design of the building, and the utility of the collection to the general public. In Norway joint use libraries appear to work slightly better in high schools, for sixteen to nineteen year olds, than in primary schools, which might place more restrictions on adult access to the school grounds. However, primary schools may have more potential as sites for joint use libraries than has yet been realized. Despite more security issues, they have a number of advantages over secondary schools, namely, no large groups of teenagers to deter more apprehensive library users; better links with the local community and local families; a more suitable location in the heart of residential areas; and less of a focus on examinations and traditional styles of studying.

Location of Other Community Facilities

Another factor that can improve links between the joint use library and the local community is siting the library in a complex with other community facilities such as leisure facilities, arts venues, or shops. A number of schools with joint use libraries are now offering other community facilities. One example is Ardnamurchan school and cultural center in the Scottish Highlands, which was described as “a nucleus for the whole community” when it was opened in 2003 (Scottish Executive, 2003). The library is part of the Sunart Centre (or Arainn Shuaineirt). Facilities offered include an outdoor games area; a games hall for badminton, basketball, football,

and tennis; a fitness suite equipped with rowing, running, and exercise machines, weights, and multigym equipment; an arts venue for concerts, theatre productions, exhibitions, and films; and an adult learning center from which Lochaber College offers a range of courses, including video conferencing facilities. The idea of a community library fits well with the overall ethos of the school, which is intended as a building for the whole community (McNicol, 2003). On a larger scale, The Campus in Weston-super-Mare in Somerset includes meeting rooms, a learning center, a police post, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and a cafeteria (Kelly, 2005).

Access

Separate entrances to a joint use library mean that members of the public no longer need to compete with groups of teenagers just to get into the library. As well as addressing the school's concerns regarding security, different entrances for students and community users can help to overcome reluctance to enter the library. Transport links are another key factor in the success of a joint use library and need to be considered as part of an initial feasibility study. Separate parking facilities are also important.

CONCLUSIONS

It is surprising, perhaps, that despite the emphasis on joined-up⁷ working and greater community cohesion to be found in many UK government initiatives, joint use libraries are rarely given serious consideration by policymakers, as has been the case in other areas of the world, such as South Australia. McNicol (2003) found that, providing people are flexible and prepared to compromise, joint use libraries can work extremely well and have the potential to be an integral part of the local community. In many areas, they enable a better standard of library service to be provided than would have been possible otherwise.

Beyond the strictly practical advantages, joint use libraries offer greater opportunities than are often realized for intergenerational activities and lifelong learning and information skills provision. Amey (quoted in Fitzgibbons, 2000) has stated: "Some of the most vibrant, most community-orientated, most enthusiastically supported libraries that I have encountered have been school-housed public libraries." This type of positive endorsement is often overlooked as more attention is paid to the well-documented practical difficulties such as space, access, and location. These are, of course, all issues that need to be seriously considered before a decision to build a new joint use library is taken. Beyond such practical concerns, however, it is essential that the local community is consulted at the initial planning stage. One of the success factors identified by Fitzgibbons was "a community vision and attitude of commitment to shared services." She argues that "The total community needs to be involved in making the decision, carefully weighing the pros and cons, and determining a joint vision of library needs that

can be met through shared services” (Fitzgibbons, 2000). If there is strong resistance within the local community to the idea of a joint use library, its chances of success are severely limited. The importance of gaining public support and community involvement cannot be overestimated. Where joint use libraries benefit from strong local support—for example, Ardnamurchan in the Scottish Highlands—they stand a good chance of working, but where there is limited support or local opposition—for example, Haywood Library in Stoke-on-Trent—it can be a demoralizing experience for staff struggling to make a joint use library work under these circumstances. If a joint use library is to truly be a community library, the voice of the local community needs to be heeded.

NOTES

1. An extended school is one that provides a range of activities and services, often beyond the school day, to meet the needs of pupils, their families, and the wider community. Examples of extended services include ICT facilities, adult education, study support, and community sports programs (Teachernet, 2005).
2. Best Value Performance Indicators are measures of performance set by the departments in central government (see <http://www.bvpi.gov.uk>).
3. For example, Callington joint use library in Cornwall is open until 7:00 p.m. on two evenings each week, whereas the library in the county town of Truro closes at 6:00 p.m. each day.
4. See <http://www.learnirect.co.uk>.
5. See <http://www.aoy.org.uk>.
6. See http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/what_are/?version=1.
7. For an explanation on joined-up government, see <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/moderngov/help/faqs.htm> and National Audit Office (1999).

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