

# Setting up a Public Service Mutual in real life

Benefits, challenges and critical success  
factors the Nottinghamshire experience



**Inspire**  
Culture | Learning | Libraries

Peter Gaw – CEO Inspire – Culture, Learning and Libraries

Masterclass -12 December 2017 – Beeston Library

# Nottinghamshire Libraries

- 60 Libraries / 3 mobiles
- Whatton Prison Library
- 200 fte staff
- £20M capital investment in buildings and ICT
- 55% revenue reductions since 2009/10 – no closure commitment
- 2010 – A Strategy for Nottinghamshire Libraries – includes consideration of alternative operating model

## Inspire – Culture Learning and Libraries

- 8 non public Library buildings
- Adult Learning, Archives, Arts, Education Library Services, Music Services  
Records Management, Study Programmes, Youth Arts.
- 190 fte staff
- £720 K learning investment programme



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

A Strategy for Nottinghamshire's Libraries



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**Benefits** – know why YOU are doing it

### Our Leadership Statement

We are committed to sustaining the value and impact of the services we provide for Nottinghamshire people and working in a new organisation in new ways to fulfil our vision.



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# Answer key question – what is in it for .. ?

- Politicians
- Senior Officers – The LA CEO
- Staff
- Customers
- Communities
- You and your team



It may be .....

- Financial – initial and longer term
- Emotional – ‘softer’ consideration for some staff and customers
- Organisational – what will you gain / lose
- Change in governance
  - - more/less scrutiny – performance monitoring
  - - greater and better strategic input ?
  - - advocacy , skills, connections
- New relationships beyond the LA
  - Partners / funders / staff / HE / FE / social enterprises / other PSMs



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**Challenges** (not simple choice of legal form)

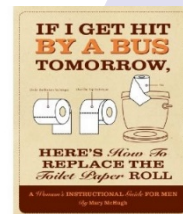
**Leadership, capacity ,  
resilience, good  
management and tenacity**

‘The transition from LA to a PSM was the hardest thing I have ever had to do my working life. Building new libraries, making 60% savings and even managing Archivists pale in the wake of achieving a successful mutual... but it was worth it’



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# Lessons

- Where we went right
- Where we should have taken a different route
- Where we failed



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# Where we went right - Critical Success Factors -

- Staff buy in ( and understanding ) from start
- Political support and consensus
- Strategic framework – Notts Lib Strategy – Council Redefining Strategy
- Political cycle – we went live 13 months before election
- Council corporate centre and leadership
- Stakeholder engagement plan
- Kept the leadership within the service / department
- Commitment to smooth transition
- Take advice – get support – be resilient – no heroic leadership



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# Where we should have taken a different route

- Trade Unions – should have started earlier
- Corporate leadership buy-in not cascaded to those it may impact
- Financial advice – external non LA essential
- Earlier separation from ‘day job’ – capacity and negotiating
- Greater corporate project management support and buy-in
- Portfolio - Understand better the implications of non LGPS TUPE
- Property, Pensions and Contract Management
- Establish a shadow board much earlier

## Where we failed

- Negotiate the best deal with Council – certainty on price
- A good deal in relation to disaggregation of central costs and services
- Complete property arrangements before go live
- Establish financial capacity and system before going live
- Data – Transfer of shared files and applications – service and corporate
- Fully understand potential VAT liabilities
- Transition of payroll – multiple employments and emergency tax
- Capacity of people to be in a room and not be there – car leasing !



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# Portfolio Tests

- What are the synergies for management, back office and delivery ?
- Is there a common purpose / ethos (or could there be) ?
- How have they been managed ( by who ) ?
- Is there funding / income ?
- What liabilities are there ? Eg staff
- What is the political view / support ?
- Does it reduce or enhance the potential of success ?
- Don't assume anything !

We are 52% libraries  
Selection of the rest  
-historical service groupings –  
-Archives / Adult Learning  
-Other services looking for a home  
- cultural synergies



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## 20 months on

- What is the new normal ?
- We are a start up - but with baggage
- We need to grow distributed leadership and organic growth and change
- More confident – (perception or reality) we are no longer seen as LA
- Exercise new freedoms, take calculated risks
- Finance and compliance is everyone's business
- New Leadership – Governance – New Ways / Old Ways
- Prepare to change and develop – competencies – skills – roles
- Funding – success and near misses
- Auditors
- Forward Plan 2020 – priorities and challenges





STAFF and COMMUNITY  
ENTHUSIASM, COMMITMENT  
AND COLLABORATION

GROWTH &  
DEVELOPMENT

THE PLAN  
COVERS OUR

2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>  
YEAR

so we are a  
NEW AND  
DEVELOPING  
ORGANISATION

we are a charitable mutual

therefore staff &  
INSPIRE members  
(43,000+) elect  
people onto the  
board and 'own'  
the society

True to adding  
value to CULTURE,  
EDUCATION, LIFE,  
PROSPERITY in  
~NOTTINGHAMSHIRE~  
including  
HERITAGE

**L**earning streams  
through all activities/  
outcomes—  
WE HAVE BOTH A FORMAL  
LEARNING SERVICE WITH FUNDING  
for 16-19 year olds (to prevent NEET)  
and an informal adult education  
programme

BUT NEARLY  
EVERYTHING ELSE  
WE DO HAS a  
learning  
outcome

'NEW'  
VIBRANT,  
INNOVATIVE  
CREATIVE  
ORGANISATION

INSPIRE

ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE

FORWARD PLAN 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
of FUNDERS  
especially  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL,  
plus ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND and  
EDUCATION AND  
SKILLS FUNDING  
AGENCY

WE WANT TO  
BE A GOOD  
PARTNER  
and TO BE A  
COMMISSIONER'S  
PROVIDER of  
CHOICE

FINANCIAL  
STABILITY,  
GROWTH  
& Efficiency

the INSPIRE OFFER  
the BACKBONE  
ACCESSIBLE LOCALLY

LIBRARIES  
at the heart of  
the COMMUNITY &

VALUE  
for  
MONEY  
WE SPEND  
PUBLIC MONEY

WE HAVE  
STRONG  
VALUES

including being  
FRIENDLY &  
PROFESSIONAL

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customer  
FOCUSSED

We are an  
ARTS  
COUNCIL  
ENGLAND  
National  
Portfolio  
Organisation



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