

## Central Library Hub Case Study

The closure of Marland House as part of the Central Enterprise Zone development posed challenges around the delivery of advice and support services that were delivered from offices within the building

Central Library had reduced opening hours to 5 days a week to achieve previous budget savings

Budget reductions across the Department, Directorate and Organisation were adding pressure to further reduce spending, while still achieving the Welsh Public Library Standards

### The planned solution:

It was decided that, in line with the Hub Strategy being implemented by Communities, Housing & Customer Services, the Hub services previously based in Marland House would be moved into the Central Library building, supporting the co-location strategic thinking in Cardiff.

### Concerns:

- Reduction in library space and impact on the library environment
- Upheaval for customers of the Advice Hub
- Interruptions to services during the transition period
- Due to the planned demolition of Marland House, a very short timeframe to deliver the move
- Reduction in space for Hub services, in particular the training rooms



### How it was done:

£150,000 grant funding was secured from Welsh Government to partially fund the library enhancements.

- Due to the need for internal work in Central Library to accommodate the new services moving in, the building closed its doors on 2 occasions ahead of the move, for two weeks at the end of April and three weeks at the end of May.
- Council staff carried out a significant amount of work while the library was still open to customers, in order to reduce the impact to service users as much as possible. Stock reduction had to be carried out in order to free up space to move stock and furniture around. Thanks to hard work from the staff, this was completed by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. During this period of realignment book issues have reduced slightly are expected to return to normal levels.
- The Marland House Advice Hub closed on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of July and reopened as the Central Library Hub on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. The team worked hard to carry out the move over the weekend, so there was no interruption in service from the Advice Hub or partners.



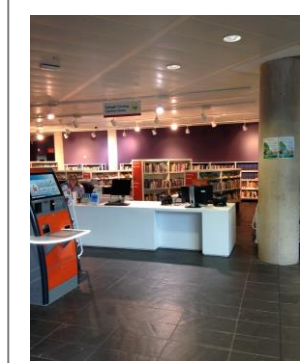
## The new layout:

- The ground floor of the library was redesigned into 3 zones:

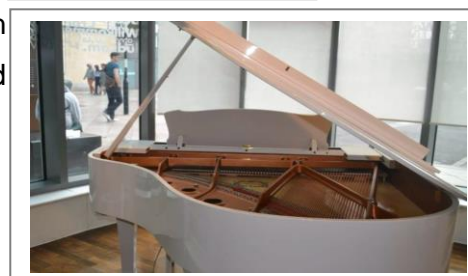
- **Zone 1:** A teenage zone on the right hand side, designed in consultation with The Sprout (News, Events, Services & Activities in Cardiff for Young People) with colourful furniture to appeal to the target group.



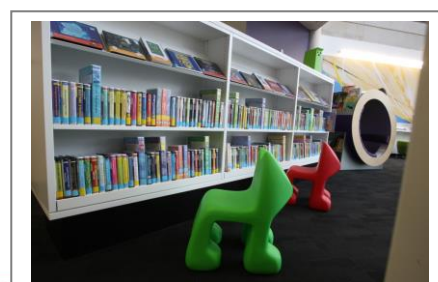
- **Zone 2:** The central section of the floor, which includes the main reception area, Cardiff Bus representation and is designed to maximise library function with redesigned shelving layouts.



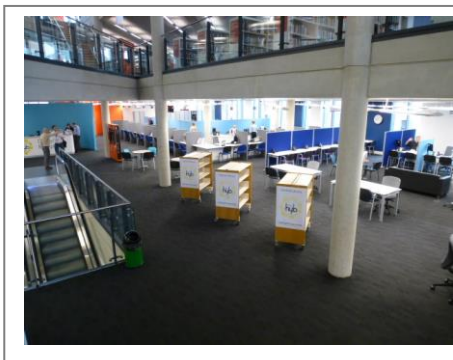
- **Zone 3:** A flexible events and exhibition space, with tailored furniture, this zone also houses the grand piano which will be utilised for out of hours events.



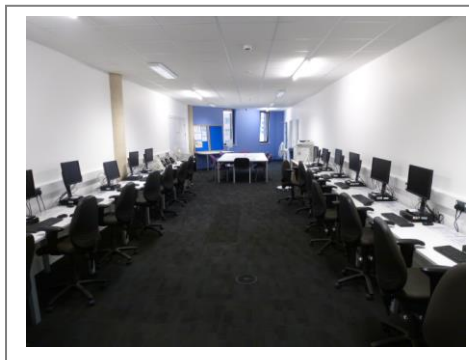
- The first floor mezzanine level is home to the children's library story telling area, children's computers and a range of children's books. The area hosts the Storytelling and Rhymetime sessions as well as Welsh story time: Amser Stori.



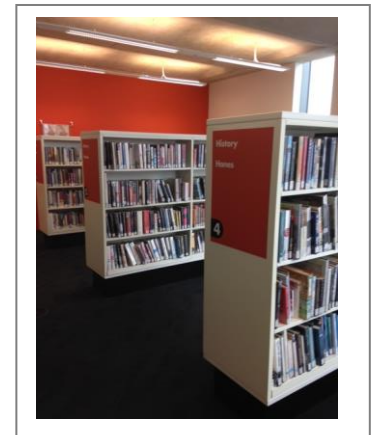
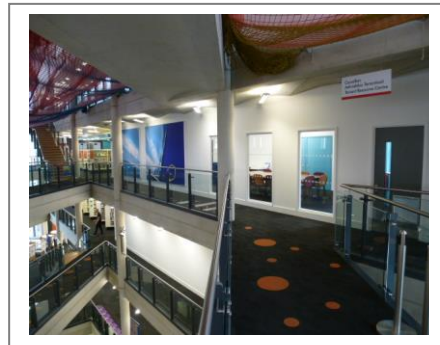
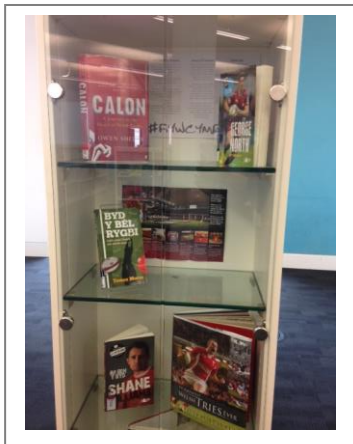
- The second floor of the library houses a number of library collections including Languages, Biographies, Law, Music DVDs and Parenting. This floor was redesigned as a hub space to house the City Centre Advice Team, including Housing Advice, Council Enquiries and Money Advice, as well as multiagency services; Citizens Advice Service, Diverse Cymru, SpeakEasy, Credit Union, NEST, Shelter, Age Connects and Blavo & Co Solicitors. The Hub space includes private interview rooms, accessible phone lines and public PCs and the waiting area features a children's reading space with book shelving.



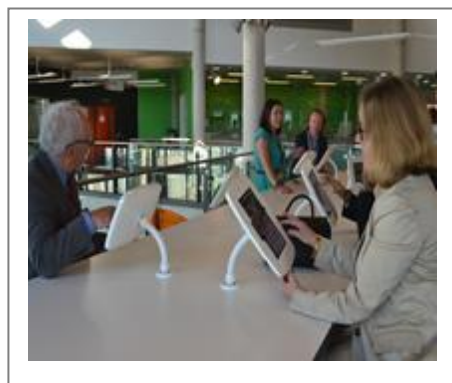
- The third floor of the library houses the extensive Fiction collection as well as the Large Print and Talking Books, Community Languages and Music CDs, Scores and Tutors. The floor also includes an ICT suite which supports the delivery of Job clubs as well as a flexible events space to support the many functions of the new hub.



- The fourth floor of the library houses the European Direct Information Centre as well as a large selection of book collections, including Education, History, Travel Guides, Religion & Philosophy and Arts & Media. The shelving was redesigned so the floor could also accommodate an ICT suite that supports the delivery of Job clubs as well as the Tenants Resource Centre.



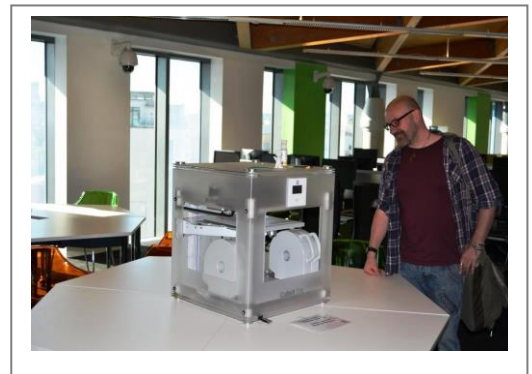
- The fifth floor of the library is a digital floor, including a digital lounge, a creative suite and a children's digital viewing area. This area also boasts a digital wall and 3D printer.



## Technology:

The digital floor has benefited from the technology utilised by Digital Cardiff and the Super Connected Cities Project, which has enabled the creation of the Digital floor including:

- **Video wall in the digital lounge area** – a 9 screen video wall with associated presentation software has been installed on the 5th floor, displaying rolling presentations that are updated on a regular basis. Recent presentations include the City of Cardiff Council Priorities.
- **Video Conferencing Unit** – A purpose built video conferencing unit has been incorporated into the design of the Creative Suite on the fifth floor, to include industry standard facilities in a central location. Since installation this software has already been the inspiration and host for two events for international communication and co-operation. Firstly for Digital Europe day, and secondly for a micro funding event where a Californian company will be delivering a talk and Question & Answer session to small and start-up businesses.
- **3D Printer** – A 3D printer has been brought to the Central Library hub, thanks to Digital Cardiff, as a good working example of the possibilities of contemporary technologies, and a demonstration piece for both customer and businesses of the possibilities of the 3D printer. We are currently focused on the development of the printer as a display piece whilst investigating the feasibility of any commercial potential alongside interested parties.



- **Code Club** – The Code Club itself is not a piece of equipment, however the location and ‘home’ of the Code Club, following the move to the Central Library Hub, has increased the visibility and accessibility of the club, which has since seen an increase in its attendance. The below photograph was taken at the launch National Coding Week, which took place at the Central Library Hub and was hosted by Cardiff Libraries and WEA Cymru and was launched by Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates AM. The below picture shows (L-R) Ken Skates AM, Councillor Peter Bradbury and Mark Isherwood, Chief Executive of WEA Cymru.



With the aims of the refurbished Central Library Hub clearly defined in terms of co-location, space rationalisation and associated savings, and with the Welsh Public Library Standards clearly defined in terms of performance indicators, purchased technologies for the refurbishment needed to be considered not just for their immediate function, but also for their ongoing flexibility, and possible contributions to income generation.

- **Tablet bar** - The reduced space on offer throughout the re-designed building for desktop PCs, combined with the increasing use of mobile devices to access online resources meant that a public use tablet bar was the perfect solution to several issues. Designed to keep the desktop machines freed up for the more involved tasks, the tablet bar is a 'quick win' access point for Hub customers to get online. It has also enabled us to investigate the introduction of training and educational sessions based around similar equipment, with an expansion of the currently offered Minecraft sessions which educate parents to share and be able to support their children as they use these as a tool for learning, as well as adult learning options for tablet use, targeting older persons.

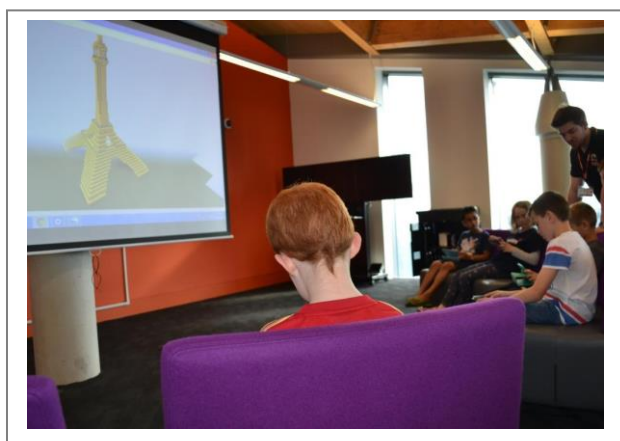


- **Renewed public PCs** – The 5th floor was chosen as the 'Digital Floor' in the design of the Central Library Hub, and the number of public PCs within the available space was maximised. The opportunity was also taken to ensure that the PCs going into this space were as up-to-date as possible, to best serve customers needs and ensure the maximum lifespan of the PCs installed.

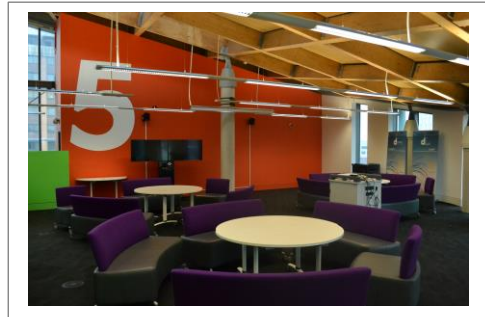




- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)** – The Super Connected Cities project aimed to get free access public Wi-Fi into as many public buildings across Cardiff as possible. This included the Central Library Hub. To support this aim, and to again increase the availability of online access to the public, spaces were allocated to BYOD usage. This consisted of the strategic placement of furniture (both purchased and re-purposed) around an increased number of power points, and in some cases, power sources integrated into the furniture. Anyone with their own device can access the free Wi-Fi and also keep their device charged, further increasing digital accessibility for customers of the Central Library Hub. A longer-term plan is to support BYOD printing, which would enable and empower many people who may only have access to online facilities via a mobile device.
- **Creative Suite** – The Creative Suite aims to maximise the community support and commercialisation agendas of public buildings within as flexible an area as possible. This has been achieved by a combination of appropriate furniture and technology purchases, with a clear idea of function, a flexible approach to form and a variety of options considered vital. The configuration of the equipment and furniture should allow as wide a range of purposes to be met as possible, with customers looking for a space for a meeting, presentation or other event feeling inspired rather than restricted by the space.



- **Modular seating and furniture** – A set of Modular auditorium style seating allows for a talk/seminar arrangement, or for a café style workshop setting, and foldaway circular tables can be incorporated as workspaces, dependent on purpose. So far the area has been host to events as diverse as Eyes Wide Open (microfunding event based around applicants presenting to an audience of potential backers), Code Club (supervised coding sessions for children to learn computer coding and programming), a Digital Hack day for Code Week Europe, as well as computer gaming and poetry events.



- **Projector and screen** – The purchased projector has compatibilities with as wide a range of operating systems and input types as possible. It is Wi-Fi enabled, accepts the majority of audio and visual inputs, and has a high resolution to be fit for purpose for screening movies. The screen is a pull down design, allowing it to be accessed quickly and easily without occupying space when not in use.
- **Audio** – 2 powered speakers have been placed (by an experienced audio visual professional) in the best position to maximise the stereo concentration within the creative suite and minimise spill into the adjacent areas. As powered speakers, they have the amplification inside, reducing the number of cables required and possible number of points of failure. They are compatible with any standard audio output, both from devices brought in and the projector mentioned above.



- **Wi-Fi** – The use of BYOD within the Central Library Hub as a whole could have resulted in issues with availability when the Creative suite was being used for any data heavy purposes, in the Code Club causing a surge in demand when running. The solution was to give the Creative suite its own assigned bandwidth with a specific, password protected SSID. This increases commercial viability with a guaranteed level of Wi-Fi service available in the area
- **Staff Tablets** – The rationalisation of space within the redesign of the Central Library Hub necessitated a reduction in the number of static workplaces available to staff. With a number of their regular tasks requiring access to the Library Management System (LMS), work was done alongside the LMS provider to implement a solution of mobile access to the system known as Mobile Circ. Using a tablet in conjunction with a Bluetooth connected handheld barcode scanner, staff are able to carry out all day-to-day tasks, allowing the remaining desk spaces to be available for more complex tasks. The concept has also been expanded from the initial idea to enable Neighbourhood Development Librarians, and soon the Mobile Library to have on-the-go staff-level access to the LMS.



- **Fourth Floor Meeting room** – To maximise the options of this space available to both internal and external users, the existing projector, screen, and plasma screen arrangement was replaced with a single Touchscreen Smart TV. As with the thinking behind the projector in the creative suite, this has been installed with wall plugs for as wide a range of audio visual inputs as is feasible, allowing for the widest range of visitors to be able to Plug and Play their presentation. It even has capacity for compatible files to be presented direct from memory stick as the screen has its own in-built software and is Wi-Fi enabled. This room also had longstanding issues with Wi-Fi access so a specific access point has been fitted to rectify this situation. Here, the multi-functional needs of a more formal meeting space have been achieved through the considered purchase of one piece of technology.

Overall, the combination of existing, acquired and purchased technology has been co-ordinated in such a way as to optimise flexibility and functionality across all aspects of the technological offer.

### **The Central Library Hub Services:**

- Library Services
- Extensive IT and self service facilities including upgraded Wi-Fi and enhanced digital services
- Housing Advice, Benefit Advice and Advice about council services such as waste management and street lighting.
- Services from partner agencies e.g. Tenants Advice, Citizens Advice Bureau and Credit Union
- Enhanced training facilities delivering a full range of learning opportunities
- Into Work Services providing CV support and job clubs
- Targeted space for use by Adult Community Learning to deliver formal learning outcomes to the Citizens of Cardiff
- Communities First support



Increases in library footfall – both August & September have seen more than **10,000** extra visitors each month when compared to the previous year.

Customers using online facilities also benefitted, with an increase from **5** public pcs within the advice hub to **8** on the second floor of the Library building. The move has also increased the usage of the online facilities available within the Hub section, with an increase from just over **600** users in the month before the move, to over **1000** users in the month after the move. The improved digital offering also includes the use of digital volunteers to support customers in the job club and on the digital floor, providing more one-to-one support.

**Priority 1:**  
Better education  
and skills for all

Since moving to the Central Library Hub the Code Club has held **7** sessions with 91 members attending

A number of children's events have taken place since the formation of the Central Library Hub including Digital Day and EU Code Week

In March, before the changes began in Central Library, **577** new members joined the library. Following the completion of all the changes **935** new members joined in September, a **38%** increase.



Public phones for Hub users to access other government services, such as the Job Centre or the Department of Work and Pensions, were increased from **3** to **8** as part of the move. This service has seen significant increase in use as a result, in August 2015 over **10,000** users attended, compared to a high of **1638** users prior to the move to the Central library building.

The average wait has decreased from **31** minutes in the month before the move, to only **14** minutes in September, despite footfall increasing by **200** people between June and August.

**Priority 2:**  
Supporting  
Vulnerable  
People

Light, fresh new building creates a more positive, pleasant environment to deal with advice hub queries and hub officers have reported that this can make difficult conversations smoother and easier to manage.

The total amount saved has increased from **£17,000** in September 2014, to **£25,000** in September 2015.

Weekly benefit gained has increased from **£484,196** in September 2014, to **£938,411** in September 2015.



Of the volunteers participating in the volunteering project at the Hub, **50%** of those who left in September left to return to work

Despite a reduction in training room availability, Into Work Services have maintained above target achievements since the opening of the Central Library hub, with **215** people assisted into employment so far this financial year.

**Priority 3:**  
Creating more  
jobs and better-  
paid jobs

The number of people who have attended accredited Into Work training sessions has already exceeded target for the year at **803**.

Over **20,000** people have received Into Work Advice so far this year.



The Co-location of services achieved a **£350k** budget saving from accommodation costs.

The inclusion of a digital floor, which includes a tablet bar, computers, computer games for public use as well as a 3D printer.

An average of **526** people per day are logging on to the Wi-Fi with their own devices at Central Library Hub, these figures have continued to increase since the opening of the Hub

**Priority 4:**  
Working together  
to transform  
services

The successful co-location of over **12** services including council, partner agencies, private sector organisations, providing multiple services from one central location.

The Central Library Hub was open to the public and providing services from the **20<sup>th</sup> of July 2015**. The official launch was held on the **30<sup>th</sup> of July 2015**, which included the launch of the digital floor and the following week continued the celebrations with a range of events for all ages.





## Positive feedback:

The local press shared the council's enthusiasm for the Central Library Hub:



## Quotes from Happy customers:

"I love the new building; the children's reading materials in the hub area are great to keep my little ones occupied while I am speaking to the hub officers."

"Good timely service and solved query efficiently"

"Great team here always polite and friendly"

"The advisor Sophie was polite, patient, understanding to my situation and dealt with the matter effectively, excellent service"