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**An Evaluation of the  
Quality Leaders Pilot Project:  
A Pilot of Stage 2 of the  
Quality Leaders Project with  
London Borough Of Merton  
And Birmingham City Council**

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## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 We found that the experience of the Quality Leaders who took part in this pilot project was very positive and there was general agreement that they had developed significantly and, most notably, with respect to the levels of confidence exhibited. The range of learning variables that the QLP successfully developed included a number of knowledge, skill-based and attitudinal components and there was clear evidence of successful transfer of this learning to the working practices of the Quality Leaders. The nature, range and transfer of learning which was achieved suggests that the QLP constitutes a highly effective model of 'management development through service development'.

2.2 The success of the QLP in developing the Black library workers who took part in the scheme suggests that it can be recommended in this context. It was also felt that the QLP could be extended to the development of different groups in different areas and the model has already been extended to other groups in one of the pilot authorities.

2.3 There was clear evidence that the QLP has the potential to successfully develop the services offered by the authorities who took part in the pilot, however, as the service development proposals have not yet been formally put to the authorities concerned, no conclusive statement can be made in this respect, which is the subject of the third phase of the QLP. Given the overall success of the second stage, it is recommended that the QLP proceed to stage 3.

2.4 There was evidence that a number of specific concerns around the implementation of the QLP, however these were generally of an operational nature and would be easily rectified by following more closely the specifications of the model set out in this report. The production of a more comprehensive 'QLP training manual' would aid this process and the production of such a manual is strongly recommended.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

#### **3.1 Terms of reference.**

The agreed aim for this pilot phase of the program was to develop and evaluate the Quality Leaders approach. This is to be achieved by providing a full description of the approach adopted in the second stage of the three-stage Quality Leaders Project and an evaluation of how well the second stage of the project has worked in terms of both the management development of the Quality Leaders and the quality of service proposal developed during the development period (ref. minutes of the Advisory Group Meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2001, when they become available).

#### **3.2 The Context of the Quality Leaders Programme.**

3.2.1 Following the publication of the Roach and Morrison (1998) report and the Steven Lawrence report, there has been a growing concern from within the library services of all local authorities around the position of Black library workers and the provision of services to Black communities.

3.2.2 In relation to institutional racism within the library profession, Kahn (2000) has reported out of over 20, 000 personal members of the Library Association, only 1.2% were of African, Caribbean or Asian background, while only 3 individuals earned over £27, 000. This is the case despite the increasing number of Black library workers who are seeking to enhance their prospects through formal training and qualification in professional librarianship and in the context of almost two decades of equal employment opportunities policy within some parts of local government.

3.2.3 The 1998 White Paper, 'Modernising Local Government: In Touch With the People' set out a strategy for the reform and modernisation of local government in England. This local government modernisation agenda was predicated on a perceived need for local authorities to ensure they are in touch with people, to provide high quality services and to give vision and leadership for local communities. Over the last three years, this agenda has generated a series of statutory and non-statutory changes to the local government framework to put in place opportunities and incentives for councils to modernise. Key components of this new framework include Best Value; Community Planning/Community Strategies; new political management structures; and, more recently, local public service agreements, and powers to promote the economic, social and environmental well-beings of communities.

3.2.4 The 1998 White Paper described Best Value as "a duty to deliver services to clear standards - covering both cost and quality - by the most effective, economic and efficient means available". The Local Government Act 1999 described this duty as "making arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which ... functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It included statutory guidance on certain key requirements, including the publication of the results of reviews in annual Best Value Performance Plans.

3.2.5 This legislative framework represents both an obligation and a major opportunity for local authority library services to include measures targeted specifically at the Black communities in their library plans. There remain, however, several key issues in relation to consulting the Black community which need addressing and which include better consultation mechanisms and communication of the results of such consultation, the need to integrate an equality perspective at the policy level and the overcoming of language and other barriers to effective consultation (Ali, 2000).

3.2.6 In the context of the advent of Best Value reviews and performance plans, it is likely that the poor value for the black community offered by public library services will rise in visibility and gain more management attention and commitment. It is therefore important that library services develop ways to respond to this renewed challenge and the Quality Leaders Project represents one such way of developing this capability.

3.2.7 A previous report commissioned by the Library and Heritage Services of the London Borough of Merton and funded by the Libraries Information Commission (MRC, 2000) set out to assess the feasibility and suitability of the Quality Leaders approach and concluded that the Quality Leaders Project is feasible and represents a sound method of better exploiting library resources and tailoring solutions to the present deficiencies in the value of services for Black communities as well as developing Black managers. The QLP consists of three formal stages: 1) a feasibility study, completed and reported in April 2000 (MRC, 2000); 2) a Development Project (the subject of the current report); and, finally, 3) a service implementation stage which will be the subject of a future review and funding applications by the QLP Advisory Group.

### **3.3 Description of the Quality Leaders Approach: Management Development Through Service Development.**

3.3.1 The general approach adopted in the Quality Leaders Project (QLP) is one of "management development through service development". The QLP aims to address both equal employment opportunities within the library service and the problem of value for the Black community and to do so within a Best Value framework. The key proposition of this initiative is that the meeting of unrecognised or under-recognised needs requires new services which, in turn, require the development of new management skills and know-how.

3.3.2 At the heart of the QLP lies the 'development project' and an underlying assumption of the approach is that the development project is critical in developing the new know-how that any new service will require for its design and delivery.

3.3.3. The development project is of 6 months duration and is located within a formal project management framework. The person in charge of managing this project is the Quality Leader, who should be a Black library or information worker with potential for development and who takes on responsibility for seeing the project through to successful conclusion.

3.3.4 The Quality Leader is responsible for establishing, convening and leading a part time project team, the Development Team, who are charged with the development of a new service based upon the results of a consultation process with the Black community. The role of the Development Team is to carry out such activities as may be specified by the Quality Leader in consultation with team members and the Mentor and Sponsor in order to develop an idea for a new service based upon a thorough consultation with the Black community, to plan operational processes, resources and implementation steps and to assist the Quality Leader in developing a formal proposal for the new service.

3.3.5 In order for this process to work in the context of the pressured realities of organisational life and the demands being made upon potential members of the project team, it is essential that each Quality Leader is supported by two key people from within his or her organisation: a Project Sponsor and a Mentor.

3.3.6. The role of the Project Sponsor is to provide a warrant and authorisation for actions that the Quality Leader wishes to take, including the setting up of the Development Team. The Project Sponsor should therefore be someone in a senior position, such as the Head of the Library Services or at least someone at Directorate level, as there will be a need to facilitate working across the Directorate, but also with other Directorates.

3.3.7 The role of the Mentor is to provide day-to-day support, guidance and coaching to the Quality Leader. The Mentor should therefore be someone in a managerial role who is able to provide guidance upon organizational systems and processes, managing people and teams and practical advice in respect of particular aspects of project management. In particular, as a large component of the learning and development of the Quality Leader that takes place in the programme is based upon the technique of Behavioural Role Modelling, the Mentor should be an appropriate and suitable role model for the Quality Leader. Contact with other senior managers during meetings and other activities also provides an opportunity for such modelling to take place and provides a broader understanding of how things are dealt with in the home authority as well as a context for service development.

3.3.8 In order for the Quality Leader to succeed, it is also necessary to provide strong and clear management commitment to the development project. Aside from this commitment being figureheaded by the Project Sponsor, this will entail providing a small budget specifically to cover some of the direct costs of the development project, agreeing and ensuring that the Quality Leader's time is freed up to work on the project and that the Development Team are given suitable direction (from the Project Sponsor where necessary) as to their involvement in the project. This commitment is symbolised by each participating authority signing up to a written set of conditions before embarking on the QLP.

3.3.9 It is important that communication and reporting channels are established at the beginning of the project and it is suggested that the line of communication and reporting in relation to the Development Project runs from Quality Leader, through Mentor to Project Sponsor.

3.3.10 The learning and service development aspects of the QLP are inherently intertwined in the structure of the QLP programme. This structure follows a fixed scheme consisting of six key areas in a specific order: QLP induction, project management, consultation, best value and performance, service design and service implementation planning.

3.3.11 The first component, QLP induction, takes place at the very beginning of the project and introduces and explains the QLP and sets out the expectations which will be made upon the various stakeholders. In particular, the Quality Leaders themselves are introduced to the notion of leading the Project Team and the sorts of negotiation and persuasion skills which are going to be required, as well as sensitising them to the types of skills they should be trying to develop and emphasising the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning and development through activities such as attending the formal learning sessions, reading the provided texts, acquiring and reading supplementary material and maintaining a learning log book.

3.3.12 An important assumption of the QLP is that the experience of the Quality Leaders in leading the Development Team will be more effective in developing distinctive and valuable sets of know-how and expertise which are particularly suited to service development and innovation and which are difficult to acquire and successfully transfer through conventional training formats. Other, more general management competencies can, if necessary, be developed through supplementary conventional training in specific competency areas such as managing people, managing budgets and managing information and services.

3.3.13 The first formal learning session closely follows the QLP induction, taking place in the first week of the Development Project and consisting of the key area of project management. In this session the Quality Leaders are introduced to some of the formal approaches to project management.

3.3.14 Each of the formal learning sessions consist of two parts: firstly, a short presentation by the session leader of approximately 15 minutes duration, followed by a discussion which should focus upon the issues that the Quality Leaders wish to pursue and, secondly, a facilitated action learning session.

3.3.15 The first part of the formal learning sessions should focus upon introducing the theme of the session and explaining the importance of the theme to the overall QLP framework, giving information and advice about the specific learning theme addressed in that session and, most importantly, provoking discussion and questions by the Quality Leaders themselves. The discussion should therefore be focussed around the application of ideas from the session to the development project.

3.3.16 The second part of the formal learning sessions consists of a facilitated action learning session wherein participants are encouraged in a group to reflect upon the first session, raise any issues of concern and attempt to devise potential solutions to those concerns. This part of the session is supported by an Action Planning Chart which specifies the concern and the date it was raised, the preferred course of action for dealing with it, the date when the issue was resolved or deprioritised and the outcome (ie what happened to the concern). This Action Planning Chart is used throughout all of

the learning sessions to track the development of both the development projects and of the Quality Leaders learning.

3.3.17 During the facilitated action learning sessions, each Quality Leader is asked to identify their top 6 or so concerns and then rate them in order of importance. The action learning session devotes considerable time to defining and clarifying each of the concerns, engaging other Quality Leaders co-consultants. This involves helping the individual to think through the opportunities for tackling the concern and the resources or strengths that could be used to address the concern, the alternatives for dealing with the concern and an evaluation of these alternatives focussing on suitability, feasibility, acceptability, and timeliness. The Quality Leader is asked to indicate their preference for handling the concern and asked to report back at the next forum any action taken and the consequences of the action. At subsequent action learning sessions, the Quality Leader would be asked if the concern was still their top rated one or whether it was appropriate to turn to another concern and deal with that in a similar way.

3.3.18 Following the first and subsequent learning sessions, the Quality Leader writes up the session in their learning log, identifies what needs to be done to prepare for the next session and who will be enrolled on to the Development Team to carry out specific tasks or provide specialist input or knowledge. The Quality Leader also searches for and consults appropriate reference material, using the two texts supplied at the start of the project as a starting point, but gathering additional material as becomes necessary and relevant and writing up notes from this material in their learning log.

3.3.19 The formal training sessions, consisting of the presentations, discussions and action learning sessions, together with the learning logs, action planning charts and reading material provide the formal components of the QLP learning and development framework. This formal framework is supplemented by on-the-job experience actually during the period of the development project. The approach is therefore one of learning by doing, however this 'secondment' model of development is supplemented by the Behavioural Role Modelling approach which is provided by the Mentor. Such an approach is particularly suited to the development of leadership skills (Barker, 2001) as it provides a framework whereby the phenomenological experience of leadership occurs during the action and prior to the application of existing knowledge gained through conventional approaches to training and development such as that embodied within a managerial competencies framework.

3.3.20 Subsequent learning sessions dealing with consultation, best value performance and service design and implementation planning act as signposts or markers to the participants about the trajectory along which their Development Projects and learning travels, however, both of these take place firmly within the context of the requirements of the project, as determined ultimately by the results of the consultation process. There are, however, certain specifications with respect to each of these components.

3.3.21 In relation to consultation, the Quality Leader must provide satisfactory evidence that a rigorous consultation process has yielded valid results. This will involve providing a well-reasoned and argued rationale as to who was consulted and by what method and should be backed up with the use of appropriate evidence, which should include reference to previous or existing consultations. The results of the

consultation exercise must be clearly presented in the context of current service provision and with due regard to the strategic priorities of the local authority.

3.3.22 In relation to Best Value and performance targets, the Quality Leader must demonstrate that they have incorporated the main components of Best Value into their ideas for service development and, in particular, need to show that they have provided a balanced judgement which is relevant to users. Thus performance indicators need to be developed in relation to the potential new service which are easy to understand, easy to collect and are both challenging and realistic. They must also show consideration for concerns of cost, efficiency, quality and access.

3.3.23 In relation to the design of a new service, the results of the consultation exercise must be fed into existing and developing ideas about how to meet the newly identified need from within a Best Value framework. This will involve evaluating alternative ideas for service provision through such activities as benchmarking performance and cost parameters and considering the feasibility, timeliness and acceptability to stakeholders and considering different modes of delivery such as procurement and partnership working and engaging in cost-benefit analyses. Service development ideas would thereby have undergone a process by which the "4 or 5 C's" of Best Value (Consult, Challenge, Compare, Compete [and Collaborate]) have been incorporated into the process of service design.

3.3.24 In relation to service implementation planning, the Quality Leader must develop a formal proposal which is suitable for submission to the Cabinet or Committee for consideration and authorisation and which contains detailed implementation plans including budgets and specifications of operational processes and procedures and should identify alignment with council policies, strategic goals and priorities. It should also include a detailed description of the service, a rationale in terms of the needs of the community and an estimate of the numbers of public likely to use or benefit from the new service.

3.3.25 The end of the six-month development period is marked by a formal 'End of Development Project Event' wherein each Quality Leader makes a presentation of their service proposal to an audience consisting of the Advisory Group and the Heads of Library Service of the participating local authorities. Each presentation is evaluated according to the overall quality of the proposal, the likelihood of implementation and the Best Value performance target and feedback is provided to the Quality Leader and their Head of Library service.

## **4. EVALUATION FINDINGS.**

### **4.1 Evaluation Method.**

4.1.1 The evaluation approach adopted for this phase of the project was a formative, utilization-focussed evaluation (Patton, 1998) with a specific concern with responsiveness (Legge, 1984). It covered only those stakeholders most closely involved in the Development Project and the main aim of the evaluation was to provide an overall assessment of the management development that had occurred for each of the Quality Leaders and the quality of the service proposal developed during the development period. This was achieved by gathering feedback from the Quality Leaders, and other stakeholders involved in the project including Sponsors, Mentors and members of the Advisory Group, as well as by the use of a performance metric in the form of a Behaviourally-Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) which was administered at the end of the project and an identification of the lessons learnt during the pilot in terms of the current operational strengths and also potential areas of weakness of the programme.

## **4.2 What was Learnt.**

4.2.1 Both Quality Leaders reported that they had developed significantly over the course of the Development Project and this was supported by comments from each of the Mentors in both cases. Thus, the overall evaluation from the main stakeholders in the project was positive and one of the most notable ways in which this manifested itself was in the confidence of the Quality Leaders, which was reported to have increased by all stakeholders who expressed a judgement.

4.2.2 The Quality leaders were asked to identify what they considered to be the most beneficial aspects of the programme and they reported that being taken away from existing responsibilities was an important component as it allowed them to devote time to the learning and the completely new tasks they were being asked to perform and manage during the Development Project.

4.2.3 Meeting a range of other people that the Quality Leaders would not otherwise come into contact with was also identified as a particularly valuable element of the programme and the Behavioural Role Modelling (BRM) elements built into the design of the programme were clearly experienced by the Quality Leaders who reported that they had learnt a range of things from these models including ways of behaving such as how to sell ideas and how to present ideas to others, but also factual information and knowledge such as information about what other local authorities are doing and about the processes and procedures within their own authority.

4.2.4 With respect to the gathering of information about what other local authorities were doing, it was reported that this knowledge was transferred to the practical Development Projects during benchmarking activities and this provided clear evidence of the transfer of learning from the learning situation to the practical work situation. Participants reported that they had actually applied knowledge, skills and attitudes developed throughout the course and relating to each of the learning sessions in their Development Projects, so it would appear that the QLP is particularly efficacious with respect to the difficult problem of transfer of learning encountered in more conventional training and development approaches.

4.2.5 One key development area which was identified was learning how to 'sell yourself'. This constitutes an example of the 'identity approach' to training and development which has been researched and developed at the University's Management Research Centre and shows that the training spanned individual efficacy, BRM and identity development pathways which should suggest that this multimodal approach is likely to be more efficacious in both skill and attitude development than traditional knowledge-based training courses.

4.2.6 One of the 'negative' learning outcomes which was identified during the evaluation and which had not been foreseen was a negative attitude change with respect to the degree of criticism of the 'home' local authority within which the Quality Leader works. This was expressed in terms of the increased vision that had been gained through access and exposure to the management systems, structures and processes that operate in the authority and an appreciation of the problems with these.

4.2.7 An important aspect of the 'development through innovation' model which has had a demonstrable effect relates to the mechanisms that exist for the promotion of BME library workers. One of the participants reported that they had applied for a more senior position and overcome the first hurdle of getting to the interview stage, which was attributed directly to participation in the QLP. Thus, as a result of the QLP, one of the barriers traditionally faced by BME staff had been overcome, in the eyes of this participant. This is a particularly important success measure given the context in which the QLP is being piloted, as outlined in section 3.2 above.

4.2.8 The Quality Leaders reported that they had developed a wide array of knowledge, skills and attitudes as a result of participation in the scheme, but those specifically mentioned included time management, the development of a strategic mindset, a greater understanding of policy developments such as Best Value, a better knowledge of ICT, presentation and negotiation skills, acquiring and using information, commitment, motivation, willingness to take on responsibility and general social skills involved in talking with such a wide range of people ranging from senior managers to socially excluded potential library users.

4.2.9 In relation to the suggested structure of the programme in terms of the learning themes addressed in each of the Learning Sessions, it was felt that all of the themes were useful, but some were more informative than others. This was primarily due to the participant already possessing the knowledge covered in the session to which this comment referred. This fact does, to some extent, validate the QLP approach since it implies that the participant already possessed the appropriate knowledge in relation to this particular theme, but had not been given the opportunity to apply it, suggesting that there was some other reason that the organization was not benefitting from this person's already existent expertise. In this case, the QLP ensured that the participant was given the opportunity to use pre-existent skills which were being under-utilised and, conversely, that the organization was given the opportunity to benefit from them.

4.2.10 Quality Leaders and Mentors were also asked to complete a Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) in order to assess the managerial competencies of the participants post-scheme. The particular scale used was selected due to its focus upon project leadership with a concern for performance as this was felt to be most relevant as

an outcome measure in relation to competencies developed through the QLP. As is usual in respect of both upward and downward appraisals, respondents rated themselves higher than their mentors, but the degree of difference was relatively small (averaging approximately minus 20%) and the ratings generally indicated fairly high levels of this particular set of management competencies. A pre-post scheme comparison could not be made as the scales were not administered pre-scheme, however, as they are behaviourally anchored they do constitute a valid outcome measure in an absolute sense.

### **4.3 Scheme Design and Operational Difficulties and Successes.**

4.3.1 On the whole, participants felt that the overall design of the scheme was very good, covering relevant issues in a compelling and motivating way.

4.3.2 It was felt that the scheme was suitable for extension to a wider cross-section of people, and in one of the local authorities, it had been used in relation to other groups involved in different development activities.

4.3.3 Concern was expressed over the recruitment and selection process with respect both to Quality Leaders and the recruitment of authorities onto the scheme. This concern was expressed in a number of ways, one of which consisted of the pressures and demands being placed upon the Quality Leaders. The participants were being asked to achieve a great deal, including managing a rigorous consultation exercise, managing their own learning, managing the Development Team, designing a service and its implementation and winning over people and changing attitudes within their local authorities and in the community. The two participants in this pilot study handled these pressures well, but concerns were raised about the possibility that other potential participants on future QLP schemes may not be able to deal with the responsibility and pressure so well. This consideration needs to be taken into account at the recruitment stage, as does the suitability and calibre of the candidates in relation to what they are being asked to achieve during the scheme. With respect to the number of authorities who took part in the scheme, it was felt that co-learning during the learning sessions could have been enhanced with a larger number of Quality Leaders.

4.3.4 Concern was also expressed around a number of issues related to time, ranging from the length of the project itself, where it was felt that six months was too short a time period to achieve high quality outcomes, to the amount of time devoted to the Development Projects by the Quality Leaders, which ranged from full time to two days per week.

4.3.5 Difficulties were encountered by the Quality Leaders when they attempted to engage members of the Development Team. These difficulties were not successfully overcome in some cases. Some of the difficulties revolved around the nature of the project and a feeling that it was socially exclusive as it was aimed at only one particular community. On the whole, the operation of the Development Team was not a success and the Quality Leaders themselves ended up doing most of the work involved in the Development Projects, rather than managing the team doing this work. While this was not the original design of the project, it was felt that getting involved in actually carrying out the various tasks themselves was also a valuable learning experience.

4.3.6 The Quality Leaders voiced negative opinions about the lack of certainty of outcomes following the six month Development Project and, in particular, that there was no guarantee that the project would be implemented, or that there would be any lasting change in the organization or indeed that they would see any advancement in their careers. The fact that the none of these outcomes could be guaranteed was raised by the Quality Leaders could suggest that they had put overly high expectations on the QLP programme. This would suggest that the expectations of participants in the programme need to be more closely managed and the scheme should not be 'over sold' to potential participants at selection or induction and that attention should be devoted to developing a comprehensive 'exit strategy' for the Quality Leaders. Further concerns were raised about the potential negative effects should the service proposals not go ahead. These concerns were primarily about the credibility of the Quality Leaders within their organizations and the credibility of the organization within the community, suggesting that the expectations of others in the organization and the community also need to be managed.

4.3.7 The induction for the pilot schemes took place rather informally and extended into the first learning session. Participants reported that they found the prospect of starting the scheme very daunting and this would suggest that a more structured and better induction is needed. Other stakeholders, such as the Mentors and Sponsors would also have benefited from a more thorough induction as they reported not always being sure exactly what they should be doing and there were several examples of confusion or lack of clarity about a number of basic elements of the scheme such as precisely who the Mentor and Sponsor were.

4.3.8 The Action Planning tool that was used in the second part of the learning sessions was not always rigorously maintained throughout the project and this was felt to have had a negative impact. This was related to a general concern around communications and reporting both in terms of managing the QLP itself, and within the Development Projects within each of the authorities. It was suggested that a more active role in managing the QLP and communications could be taken by an independent body, such as the Management Research Centre.

#### **4.4 The Service Development Proposals.**

4.4.1 Service proposals were prepared by each of the Quality Leaders, which is an important output criterion which both authorities have achieved, however, it was felt that the proposals would need further work before they would be suitable for submission to the council.

4.4.2 With respect to each of the ideas for service development, it was felt that these were developed in a rather too internally-focussed way and then later 'checked out' with the community, rather than stemming directly from consultation about what the community wanted. The QLP approach outlined in the previous section suggests that consultation occurs *before* the development of ideas for a new service and results from the outcome of those consultations, rather than the outcome of consultations merely providing supportive evidence for a previously developed idea. The reasons for this are not clear, however this issue would need to be addressed by incorporating a much

greater emphasis upon the necessity to be more outward-looking in developing service proposals. An example of the inward-looking focus is the staff development programme suggested in one of the proposals and to what extent this would offer a new or enhanced service to the Black community.

4.4.3 There was evidence in the proposals of considering different options, conducting an options appraisal and incorporating elements of Best Value, however, neither of the proposals seemed to follow the precise model of service development to that which was alluded to in the original design. This model was, however, not fully specified in the original design; indeed one of the outcomes of the original pilot which was initially discussed was the development of a proforma for a service development proposal, however this was subsequently dropped from this pilot phase due to budgetary restrictions. This constitutes something which could be incorporated into any future development of the QLP.

4.4.4. Concerning the quality of evidence presented in the service proposal reports relating to the results of the consultation process, there was some divergence between the two reports, with one of the reports providing perhaps a little too much information while the other provided not quite enough detail. Overall, though, both reports were of an acceptable standard with respect to the quality of evidence, argumentation and implementation issues, albeit that they each had strengths and corresponding weaknesses in different areas in relation to the specifications set out in paragraphs 3.3.21 to 3.3.24 above. The extent to which these reports could, therefore, be developed into more fully formed service proposals relates to points raised in the previous paragraph and is therefore something which will require further emphasis and development in subsequent modifications to the QLP.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS.**

5.1 It would appear from the preceding section that the learning experienced by the Quality Leaders spanned the continuum of knowledge (eg Best Value), skills (eg leadership) and attitudes (eg confidence) and the project can therefore be judged to have been a success with respect to these three traditional measures of training efficacy.

5.2 There was also strong evidence of transfer between the learning that was occurring and the work setting of the Quality Leaders, again indicating that the QLP has been successful in this alternative measure of the success of training outcome, although this is of course to be expected given the design of the scheme and the focus upon the Development Project as an integral part of the learning process.

5.3 There was evidence that the co-learning which occurred in this pilot fell somewhat short of that which was expected and this was attributed primarily to the low numbers of authorities recruited on to the pilot. This had implications for the quality of co-learning that could be developed in the action learning sessions, which in turn impacted upon the added value of the model over and above that which could have been provided through a more traditional training programme in conjunction with a secondment.

5.4 In relation to this added value dimension, the key areas which were identified correspond to the specific and unique elements of the QLP approach which were inherently built in to the design of the scheme. Three key areas were identified:

- the nature of the on-the-job learning (ie a focus upon the development of a new service, rather than simply some sort of placement within an existing service),
- the quality of learning transfer that occurred (due, presumably, to the transfer vehicle provided by the structured format of the learning sessions and the action planning tool that was adopted)
- the range of learning variables that were covered (spanning the entire range of skills, knowledge and attitudinal variables and the considerable number of specific development areas within each of these components).

5.5 While there were a number of concerns raised with respect to the implementation of the QLP, these were generally of an operational nature and would be easily rectified by following more closely the specifications set out in section 3.3, above. In this regard, it was suggested that the production of a QLP manual would aid this process and the production of such a manual is strongly recommended.

5.6 There was clear evidence that the QLP was effective in developing the Black library workers who took part in the scheme. The QLP can therefore be recommended as an effective way of developing Black library workers, however it was also strongly felt that the QLP could be extended to the development of different groups in different areas and a piloting of the extension of the QLP in this way would be encouraged.

5.7 There was clear evidence that the QLP has the potential to develop the services offered by the authorities who took part in the pilot, however, as the service development proposals have not yet been formally put to the authorities concerned, no clear assertion can be made in this respect, which is the subject of the third phase of the QLP. Given the success of the second stage, it is recommended that the QLP proceed on to the third stage.

## **6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE QUALITY LEADERS PROJECT.**

6.1 This section of the report emphasises some key points which were drawn together about future developments of the QLP.

6.2 There is a need for a strong central co-ordinating body or person. This can be a nominated person from a participating authority who would be seconded for the project or through an external recruitment. One of the tasks of this post would be to set up a strong communications network.

6.3 The Quality Leaders would benefit from more exposure to new ideas, experiments, experiences, readings from the academic and political world - outside the authorities, as well as from outside Library and Information Service. The co-ordinator post described above can ensure that this happens.

6.4 One idea for enhancing the scheme would be to set up regular seminars with invited guests from government, local and academic world. These could also use films, arts and drama to expand horizons and a 'recommended reading list' could be maintained which could expand upon the provided texts to include articles, films etc for all-round development.

6.5 Since the Project is a "Black" project, there is a need for a module/component on combating racism, taking on board ideas, experiences, history, resistance etc of racism and to provide a supportive structure and network in combating racism and connect with Black organisations, e.g. Diversity Council, Social Exclusion Action Planning Network.

6.6 It was felt that the project could benefit from more of a "community outlook" element in the programme and could also encapsulate greater and more formal community involvement in the Project work.

6.7 The issue of some sort of formal accreditation had been discussed at various stages throughout the project and it is possible that it may be able to incorporate connections with the Library Association Chartership programme, NVQs and a Professional Development Programme. QLP 'graduates' could thereby earn formally recognised credits for entering these and other programmes.

6.8 It was felt that there is a continuing need for a strong and consistent presence of Management Research Centre (MRC) in all aspects of the project, especially in maintaining constant contact with QLs, sponsors, etc.

6.9 In order to aid the development of robust performance measures for Quality Leader performance, it was felt that a six month evaluation of performance and progress would be beneficial and could be built upon to provide a regular and formal response and feedback from sponsors, Quality Leaders and other stakeholders (e.g. the local community, Advisory Group).

6.10 The role of Advisory Group as an on-going support could also be strengthened.

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