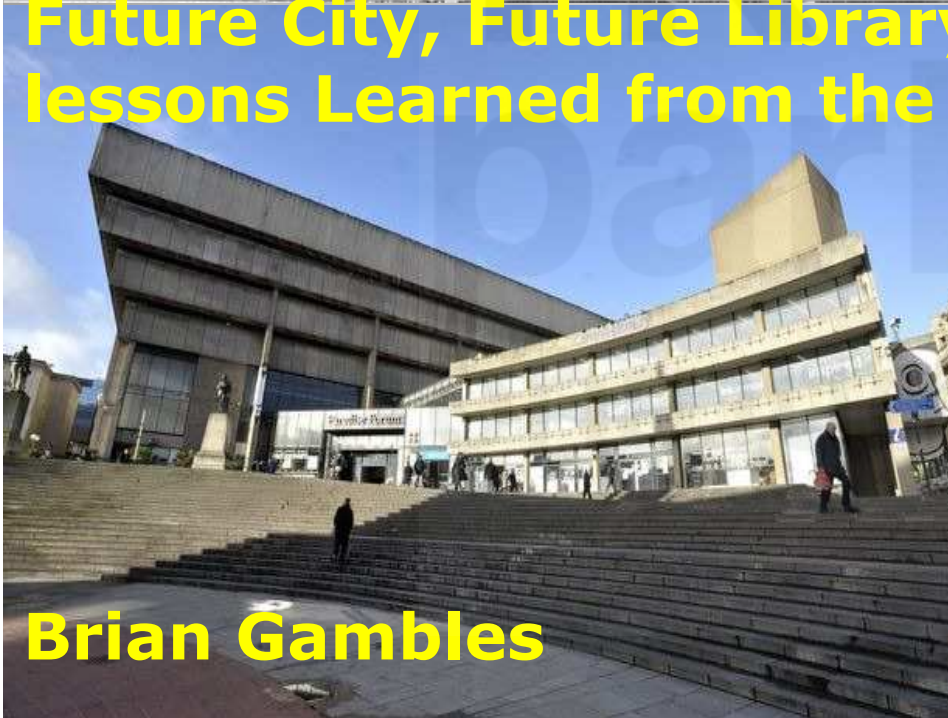


**TK Forum, Bangkok 2016**

**Library Innovation and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Future City, Future Library: Experiences and lessons Learned from the Library of Birmingham**

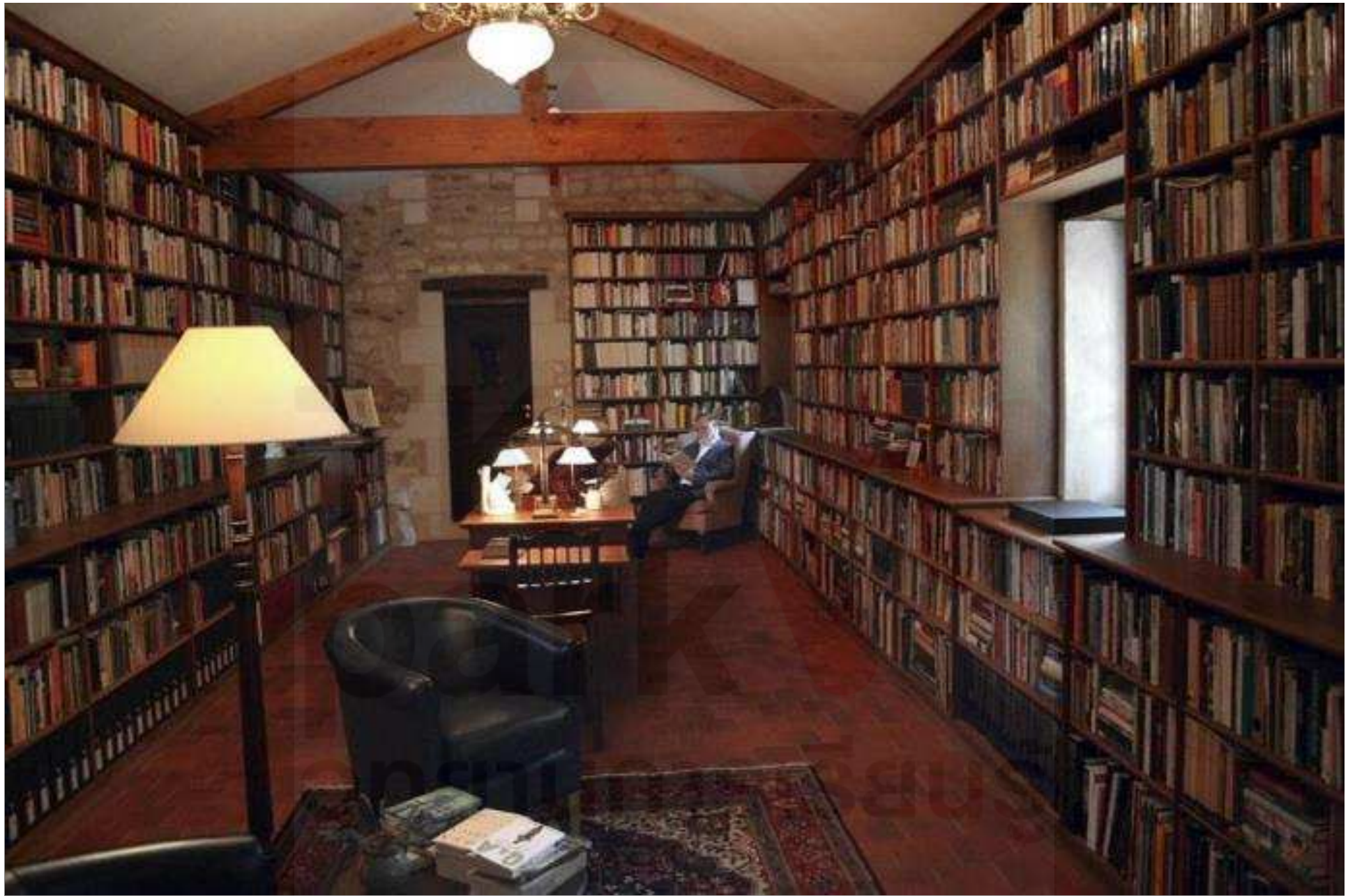
**Brian Gambles**



# Libraries as Agents of Transformation



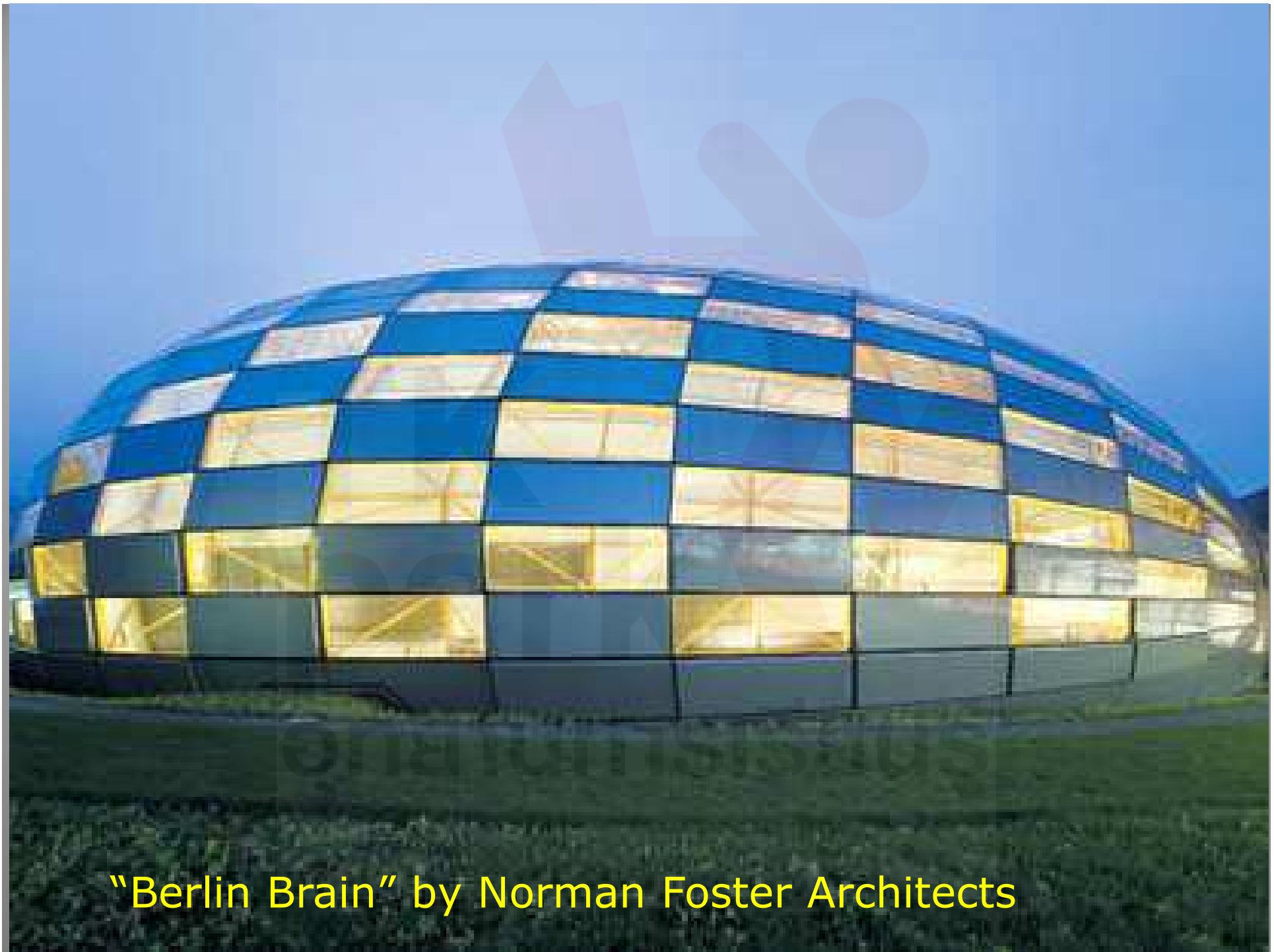
**Future City, Future Library**



Alberto Manguel – The Library at Night



La Biblioteca del Bosque – Miguel Angel Blanco



"Berlin Brain" by Norman Foster Architects

# Birmingham: The City and its people

- Location, Resources and Creativity
- Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution
- The 'city of a thousand trades'



View of Birmingham from the River  
Engraving by J. G. & Co. 1850



**Birmingham: second city, many identities, a young city**

# So, a major city has challenges

- Above average unemployment (young people, long term, concentrated)
- Skills and qualifications deficit
- High levels of functional illiteracy
- Poor health outcomes
- Poor graduate retention
- Challenging image domestically

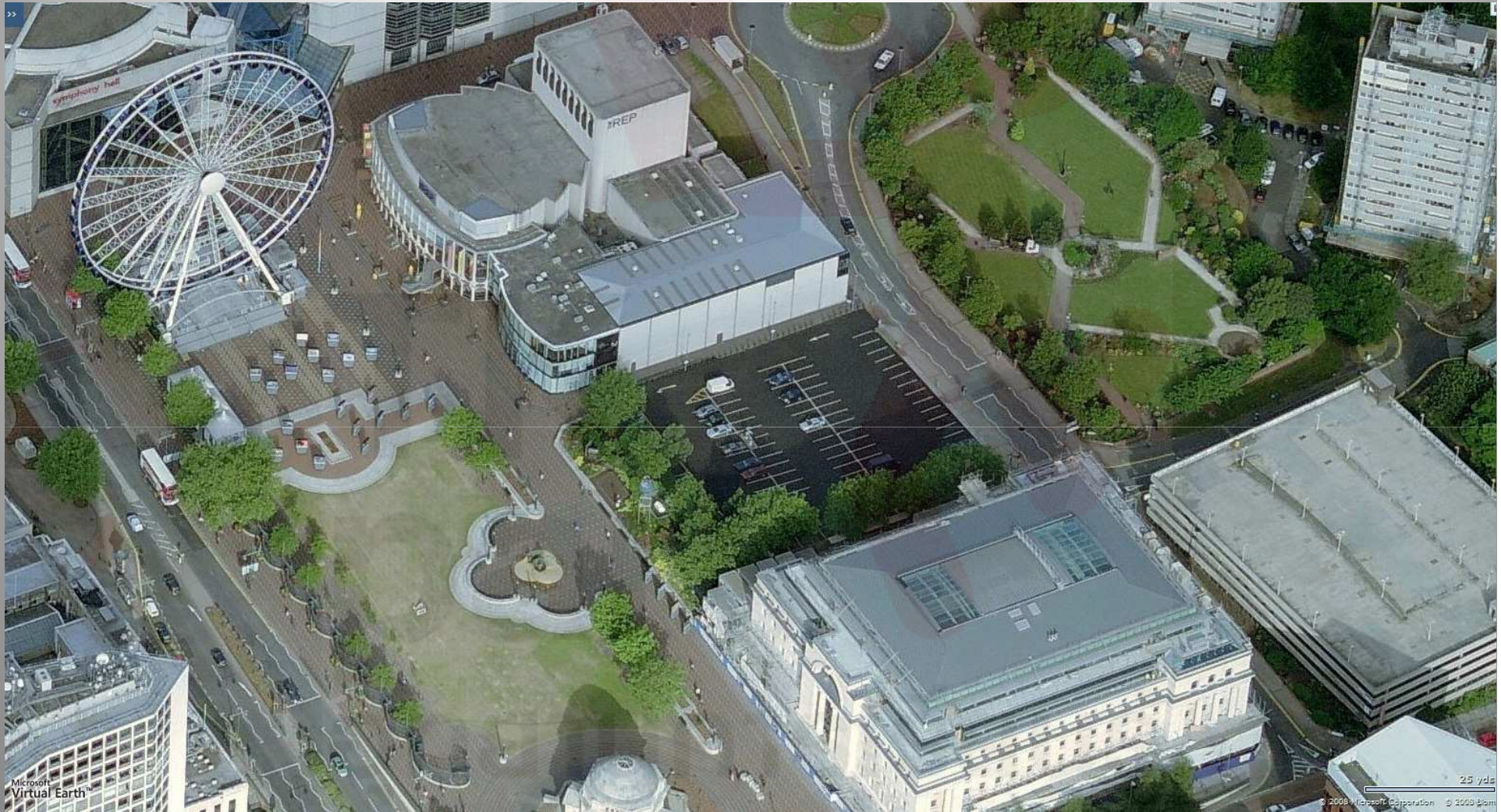


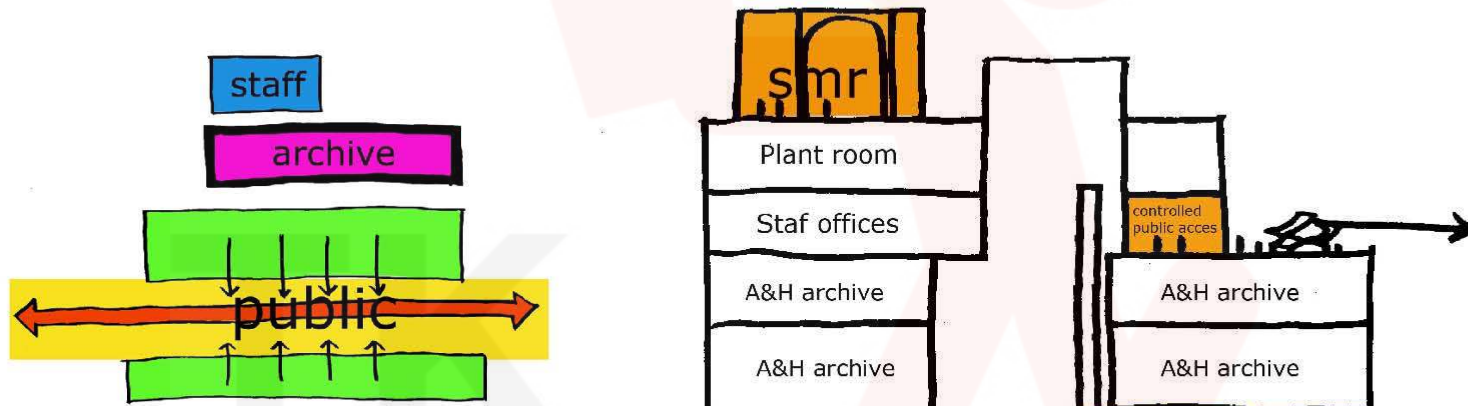


# Which a library can satisfy...

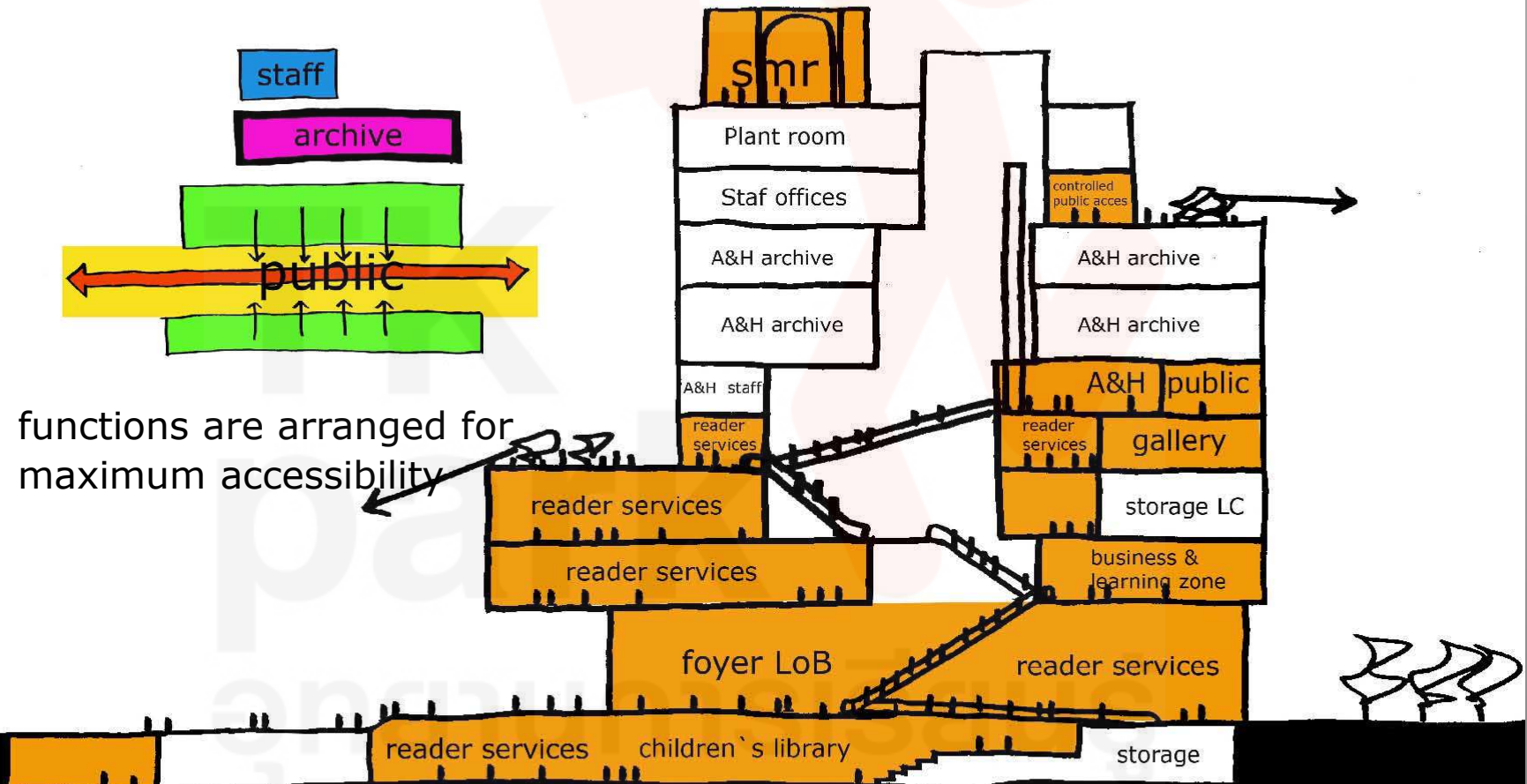
- Social capital and community engagement
- Social, economic and health outcomes
- Creativity, innovation and inspiration
- Grounded in
  - Partnership working
  - A clear strategy for digital
  - A more business-like approach
  - A transformed service offer
  - Relationship management







functions are arranged for maximum accessibility

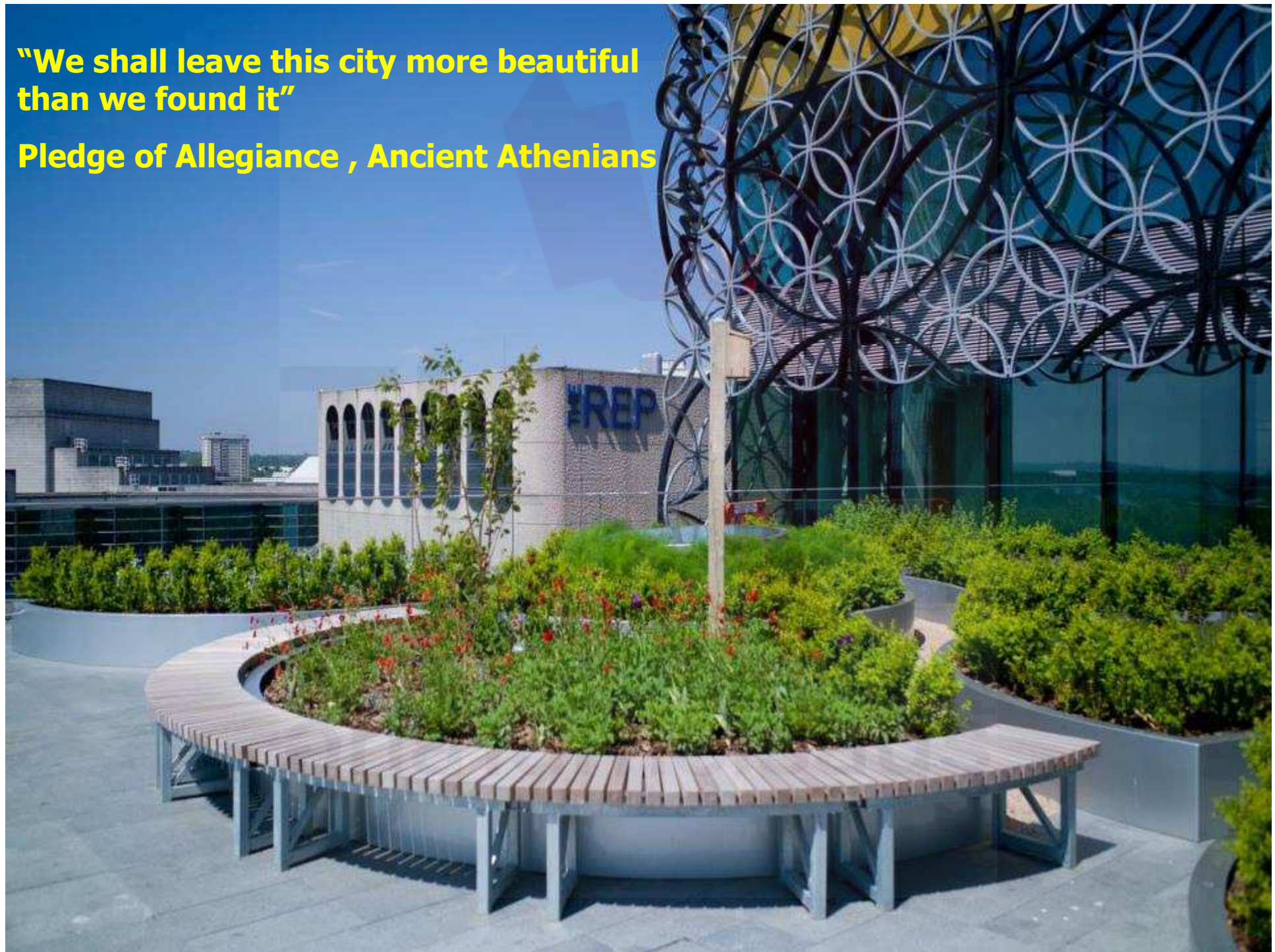




**"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do."**

**“We shall leave this city more beautiful  
than we found it”**

**Pledge of Allegiance , Ancient Athenians**





**The Public Library is public realm**

**Cafe**

**Wi-fi**

**Retail**

**Gardens**

**Foyer**

**Theatre**

**Meeting Rooms**

# Image, Identity and Confidence



A compelling image, a landmark for the city – a new **Brand**

A part of the mix of attractions

Contribution to civic pride and identity

A city that values culture – a reason to live here – **Big City Culture**

# What is a library in the 21st century?

A knowledge hub...a social learning hub...a cultural exchange...an empowerment centre

A new partnership with business, colleges, universities, voluntary sector, creative industries, cultural and arts organisations, writers, performers, schools, the community...

Connecting people to people, people to ideas, ideas to ideas...co-producing services and events...a community space

Library, Archive, Visitor attraction, Event space, corporate venue, social meeting space, business meeting space...





Transaction



Transformation

Delivery



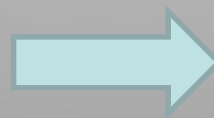
Engagement

Information

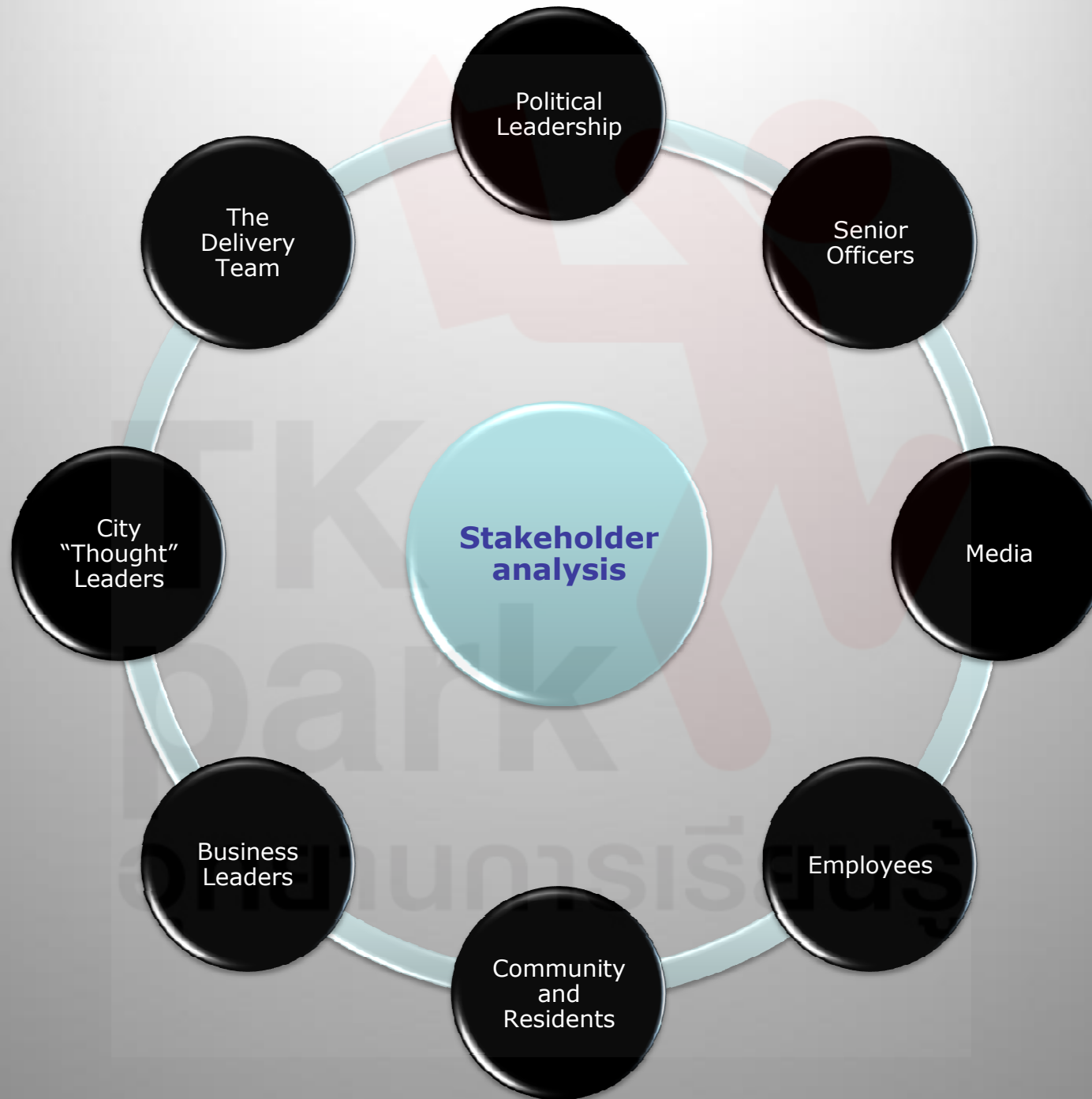


Learning

Resource  
Recovery



Resource  
Discovery



# Concept design phase

- Raise awareness of the new library
- Engage the public in the development of the design of the interior spaces
- Engage the public in thinking about how they might use the new library, to inform the redesign of services
- Ensure the evolving building and services design was in tune with what is important to customers/ potential customers.



# Key messaging topics

- Finance
- Transport
- Green credentials
- Accessibility
- Facilities
- Quiet/noisy separation
- Benefits





**Library Community Ambassadors**

# Engaging through Construction: Economy

- 308 long term unemployed back into permanent employment
- 83 apprenticeships
- 30 homeless work placements delivered
- 19 homeless and ex-offenders into permanent employment

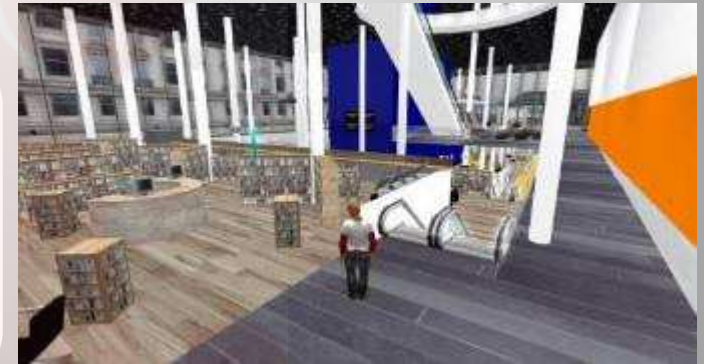




# Engaging through technology



Virtual Library in  
Second Life



Games:  
Foto Fortunes  
People's Archive  
Information  
Overlord



Apps:  
Dozens and Trails







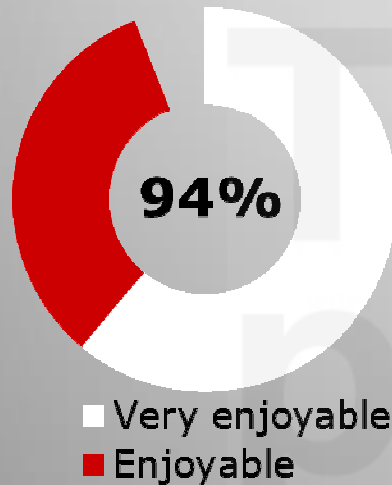
"I think when I look back at the @LibraryofBham opening, the thing I'll remember is how happy everyone seems today"



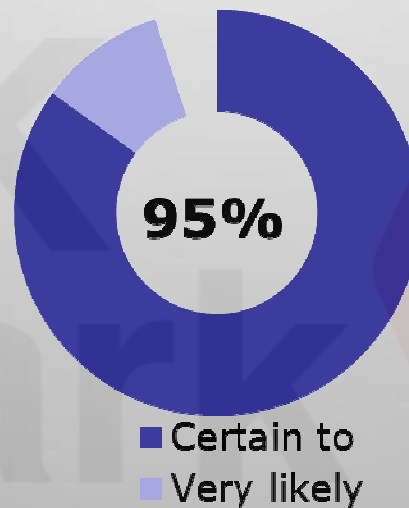
# Success?

- **2.4m visitors (Top Ten UK Destination)**
- Over **90%** of visitors rate each aspect of Library as good or excellent

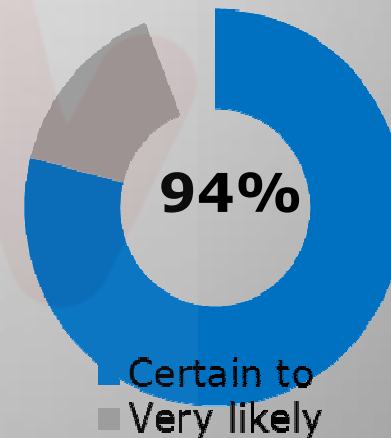
Overall rating



Revisit



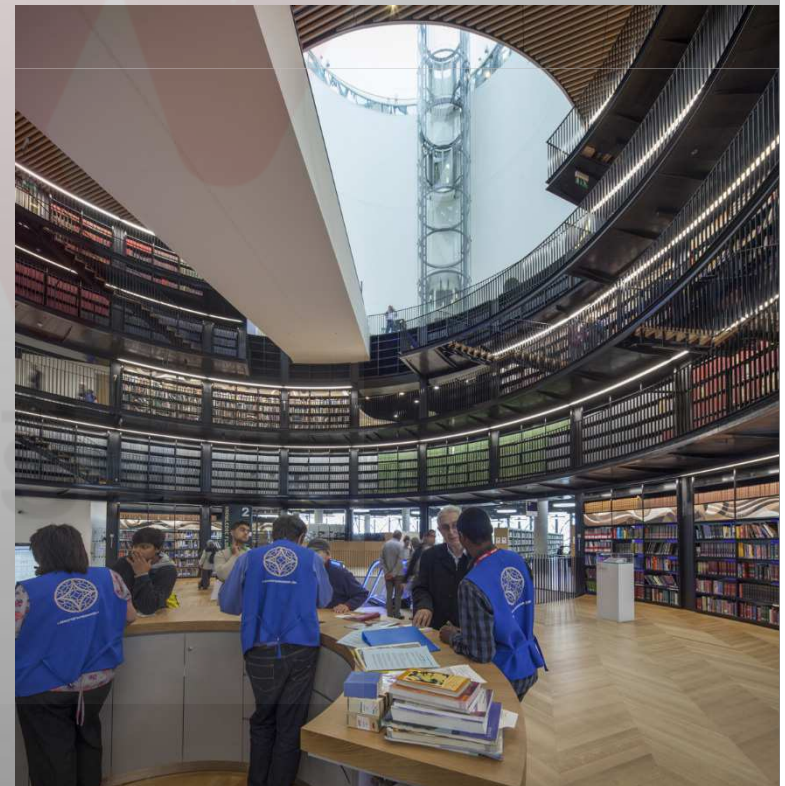
Advocacy



- Customer Survey validating vision for the library
- Multiple award winning
- Popular ownership – pride in their library

- A facilitator of people-centred knowledge exchange networks
- A knowledge host
- An enabler of connection and collaboration for communities of interest
- An interventionist
- A deliverer of results and outcomes
- A coach
- A facilitator of learning
- An encourager and motivator
- A creative reading enthusiast
- A creator of content
- A specialist

## Staff Roles



# Original reason(s) for Visiting the Library

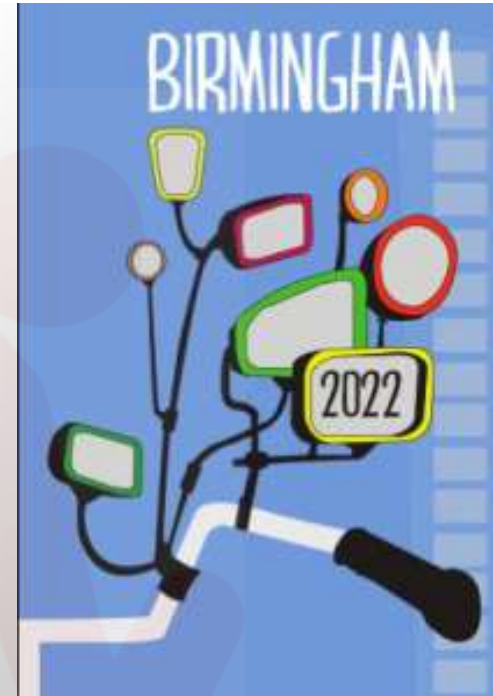
		# annual visits
To study	23%	615,586
Explore/ visit/ enjoy the building	22%	521,420
Use computers, go online, access WiFi	18%	478,295
Borrow books, films, music, other items	15%	370,614
No reason - just passing, spontaneous visit	12%	260,532
Use reference materials on premises	11%	297,523
Learning and job search help	3%	80,116
Archive and heritage research	3%	75,492
A place to meet (friends, family, business)	2%	50,328
Attend event, lecture, performance, workshop	2%	38,858
Use the Café	1%	25,164
Access business services	1%	25,164
See an exhibition	1%	25,164
Attend private event or function	1%	25,164
For my children to use the Library	1%	15,542
Use Library shop	0.1%	2,898
Other	1%	32,011

30%  
tourism

88% single reason

- **Event rich**
- **Co-production environment**
- **Experiential learning**





- Partnership
- Co-production
- Control
- Appetite for risk
- Programme Diversity
- Audience Development



## What happens in the Library?

- What the Library does
- What the Library does with others
- What the Library allows others to do
- What others just do





## The ambience of the Library

- Spaces
- Rules
- Culture
- Staff
- Whose Library is it?
- What risks are you prepared to take?



# Risky business?



**Leaps & Bounds**  
**Who am I?**  
**Express yourself**

Have you got something to say about what it means to be a citizen in this country?  
Do you want to be heard?

We are looking for young people aged 16-19 to join an experimental arts programme, working with artists to explore the question and give voice, through art, to what you have to say - about you, your community and what matters to you.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND  
RSA  
KINGSTON CITY UNIVERSITY  
M





Our programming recognises the wide variety of talent that exists in the city and has provided performance opportunities for many people who would never have expected to perform in public. At a recent music event staged by people with learning disabilities the organiser said: "it cannot be understated how important a job you do in ensuring that people with Learning Disabilities have equal opportunities within the library to showcase their talents."

**REWRITING THE BOOK THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM**



**"Very proud of  
our new  
library in  
Birmingham"**



# Expect the Unexpected

- Singles Night, graduation and weddings
- Santa's grotto
- Burns Night Whisky and Poetry evening
- Salsa and Zumba sessions.
- Our first musical, 3 Summers



HOTBED PRODUCTIONS in association with LIBRARY of BIRMINGHAM  
presents

## 3 SUMMERS

A Groovy New Musical by Euan Rose set in the psychedelic 60's

Studio Theatre  
The Library of Birmingham

June 17th - 21st  
matinee Thursday & Saturday



Tickets £15 (Matinees £10)  
Group discounts for parties of 10 or more  
Available from The BOX (situated in the library's foyer)  
The BOX: 0121 245 4455  
[www.birmingham-box.co.uk](http://www.birmingham-box.co.uk)

hotbed

REWRITING THE BOOK  
THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM

# Events Programming

- Learning about the building
- Process – embedding learning; building in consistency and continuity; ensuring successful delivery
- Overview - events, exhibitions, tours, engagement, community libraries – learning from mistakes, building on success
- Delivery partners – positioning LoB as a key cultural partner
- Audiences – using audience intelligence to ensure we have the right offer for Birmingham
- Sustainability – social benefit and income benefit – getting the balance right



# Exhibitions



- Popular and high standard of curation
- Indoor and out, long and short-term, physical and digital
- Delivered through partnerships, BCU producing the audio content for voices of War; the BBC, Red Cross and the RSA delivering fully formed and resourced spotlight exhibitions to individual photographers delivering small scale digital exhibitions on the Highlight screen.



# Community Ownership

- The Café has become the focus for various groups to meet and work
  - Birmingham Embroiderers' Guild
  - Knit and Natter
  - Poets' Place.





# Festival Destination

- Birmingham Jazz Festival
- Shout Festival
- Birmingham Literature Festival
- BBC Archers Character Invasion
- Fun Palace Weekend
- Frontiers Festival
- Music for Youth



# Community heritage



- Innovative working with multiple partners to connect archival resources to community identity
- Events, workshops, presentations, training, research
- Oral History Training
- Community Archives Skills and Training
- Outreach and Community Engagement Support
- Ongoing Heritage and Project Delivery and Management Advice
- Educational and Learning workshops and programmes



The Library of Birmingham is offering the chance for volunteers to help tend the beds on its elevated outdoor garden terraces, growing plants, including fruit, herbs and vegetables. This is the perfect opportunity for someone who is interested in gardening, but has nowhere to grow, and for someone keen to volunteer in their local community. The Library of Birmingham will sponsor volunteers to receive training through the University of Birmingham's Urban Veg scheme, based at Winterbourne House and Garden, so volunteers will have the chance to learn new skills as well as meeting new friends and enjoying the Library's stunning new spaces.

# Case Study: Business and Learning

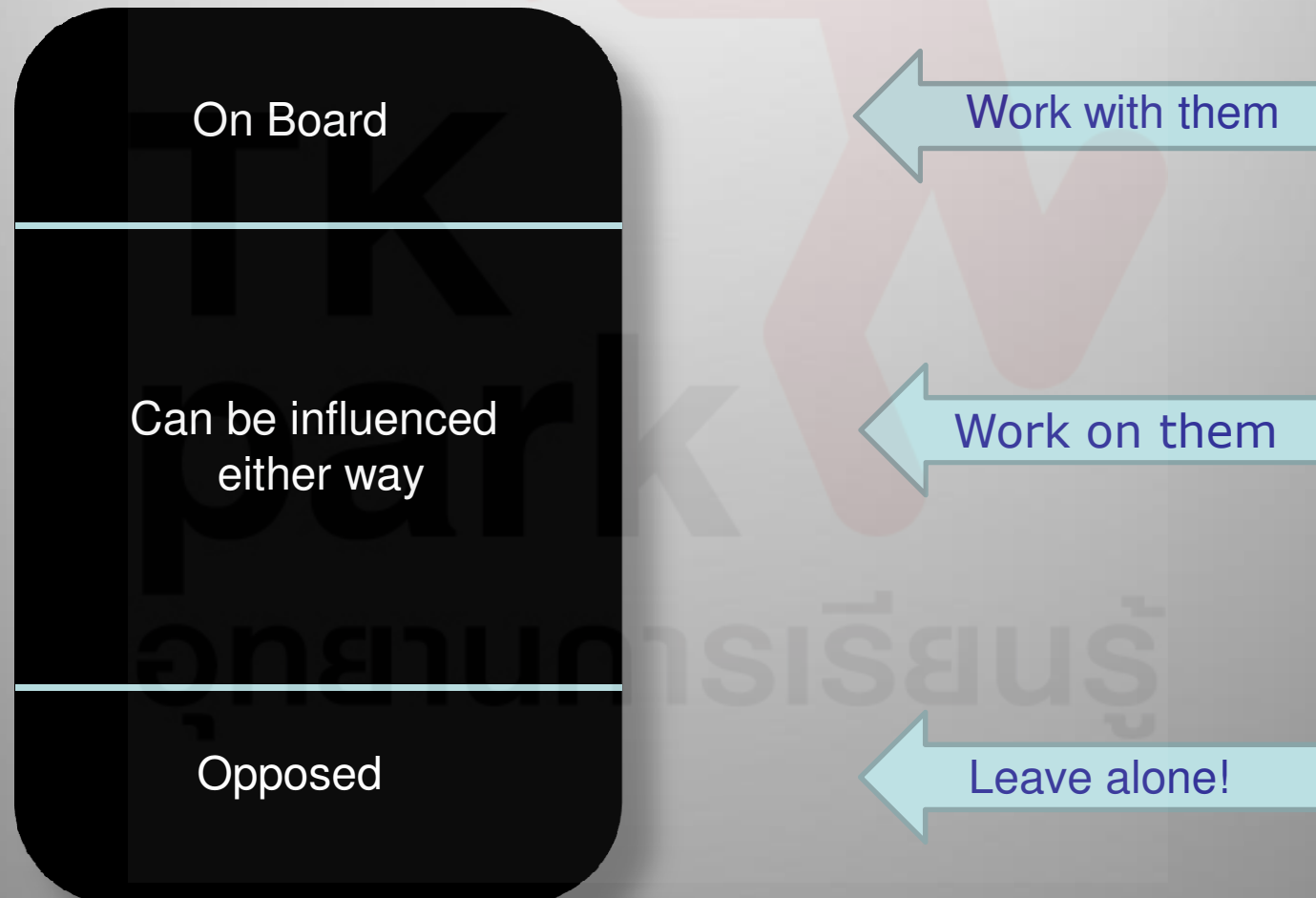
**From Business Information  
to social outcomes**

- **Entrepreneurship**
  - Skills development
  - Business support
  - Growth
- **Work Readiness**
  - Work related life skills
- **Employability**
  - Basic skills
  - Ability to secure a job



# Is change for everyone?

The 20:60:20 Rule











## REWRITING THE BOOK THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM



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