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Copenhagen Libraries

# STRATEGY 2014-2019

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# Copenhagen Libraries' Strategy 2014-2019

## Introduction

*The Culture and Leisure Department's offers contribute directly to making Copenhagen an attractive city*

Copenhagen is an attractive city to live in. This is frequently stated in international comparisons, and the ever-increasing number of inhabitants shows that the city is undergoing rapid development. This is manifested, for instance, in the establishment of completely new city districts and an even more international atmosphere. In Copenhagen, the general political ambition is to increase growth in the form of knowledge, innovation and employment in order to retain and strengthen this development. The Culture and Leisure Department's offers contribute directly to making Copenhagen an attractive city to live in, giving each individual Copenhagener the opportunity to contribute to the city's growth.

The libraries' objective, as prescribed by law, is to promote information, education and cultural activity by making books and other materials available. The realisation of the library's objective thus supports the general political visions for Copenhagen directly. However, the libraries cannot achieve this purpose solely by holding on to the traditional library role and tasks. Changes in the library's role are needed, as are new library offers.

*The general political ambitions about more education and increased competences make the libraries indispensable*

The greatest challenge is to realise the public libraries' objective, i.e. to promote information, education and cultural activity in a society that poses growing demands on the individual citizen. The competitive pressure of globalisation and the increased complexity of society mean that the libraries' objective is more relevant than ever.

However, it is no longer sufficient to provide access to a book collection and to lend books. Nor is there any reason to expect that the general profusion of information and commercial media in itself will promote information, education and cultural activity for all citizens.

*Copenhagen Libraries wants to make a greater difference to more Copenhageners*

The starting point for the strategy is a more purposive library service aimed at the Copenhageners. Increased self-service, more digital materials and new forms of digital service will make it possible for the majority of library users to become more self-reliant. This support cost optimisation, facilitates better offers aimed at citizens who are not self-reliant, and makes it possible to provide an proactive library service to citizens who are not currently using the library. This will, to a greater extent, target personal guidance at the citizens who are unable to make use of other offers.

The strategy also prepares the ground for the creation of new and more activities at the libraries by involving citizens in the planning and execution of e.g. events, reading clubs and communication.

Copenhagen Libraries wants to make a greater difference to more Copenhageners. 'Greater difference' implies that the libraries want to do more than just lend books. Citizens should, to an even greater extent, be offered the opportunity to find inspiration, discussion, guidance and informal learning.

The ambition about serving more Copenhageners entails that Copenhagen Libraries will increasingly work systematically and purposefully at getting more Copenhageners to use the library. Here, the digital library and digital service are important tools.

*The library should, to a greater extent, be a place where citizens become smarter together*

The general ambition can only be realised by involving citizens more at the physical library, so that the citizens become smarter together. This can happen, for instance, through study groups, clubs, writers' workshops and events.

This presupposes a changed role for the library's staff, as well as physical settings that support new forms of activities. Access to the library and to the materials also needs to be improved, both in physical and digital form. This can be achieved by expanding opening hours and developing the digital library.

## **Refocusing at Copenhagen Libraries**

Copenhagen Libraries works continually to optimise the library service, and like other institutions in the City of Copenhagen, it is subject to budget cuts. The development of the library service over the coming years is therefore expected to take place within a reduced financial framework. Copenhagen is growing by 1,000 citizens per month, and these citizens are to be serviced by the libraries within the reduced financial framework.

Copenhagen Libraries also wishes to give priority to new areas and work more proactively. This requires the release of resources from the existing library service. The keywords in this effort are digitisation, service reorganisation, and modernisation of the libraries.

### **– Digitisation**

*The most important material in the digital library are the e-books*

A significant action area in the strategy is the development of an actual digital library for the Copenhageners. The action area is introduced below. The most important material in the digital library are the e-books. In terms of refocusing, digitisation of the book collection is therefore a key task. Copenhagen Libraries will work purposefully at making citizens choose the digital version of a book or audiobook whenever this is possible and makes sense.

The digitisation of Copenhagen Libraries' book collection is organised as a multiannual project in collaboration with Denmark's other libraries under the auspices of the public libraries' common e-book service, *the eBookcase*, and The Danes' Digital Library.

### **– Service reorganisation**

*Copenhagen Libraries creates a more systematic approach to servicing citizens*

Copenhagen Libraries wants to create a more systematic approach to servicing citizens thereby releasing resources for other initiatives. It is an important objective to release staff from time-consuming individual guidance tasks, freeing them to work with more targeted and proactive efforts.

A project that will span several years is therefore in progress, which includes a service reorganisation in which a number of the library service areas will be changed. This is expected to lead to improved self-service and a more uniform service in some areas. This does not necessarily mean a lower level of service, but it could, for instance, include more digital service and limits on personal service of individual citizens, if a queue is building up.

*The libraries make citizens more self-reliant*

It may also entail more task-specific staffing at the libraries and a more differentiated service during opening hours. Citizens may, for instance, be referred to self-service during peripheral hours with low staffing but have access to special guidance during certain hours. Copenhagen Libraries will work at making citizens self-reliant in selected areas, e.g. through better communication and guidance.

Wherever possible, collective guidance or teaching of groups will supplement or take the pressure off the individual guidance in relation to specific target groups. These could, for instance, be upper secondary school students.

The service reorganisation will include a number of new service offers, among others in the form of more programmed activities and a more proactive and targeted library service. A part of the new expanded service offer will be established through the involvement of citizens, e.g. in club activities and Internet-based forums.

## **– Modernisation of the libraries**

*The physical library is still the core*

The physical library is the core of Copenhagen Libraries, and it is important to retain and develop good physical settings for the library service.

As lending of physical materials becomes less significant, the libraries need to attract citizens to an even higher degree than before through different offers that encourage them to stay longer at the libraries. It will very much be in the physical library and in the encounter between citizens that Copenhagen Libraries will promote information, development and cultural activity. This poses greater demands on the layout and the activities in the physical library.

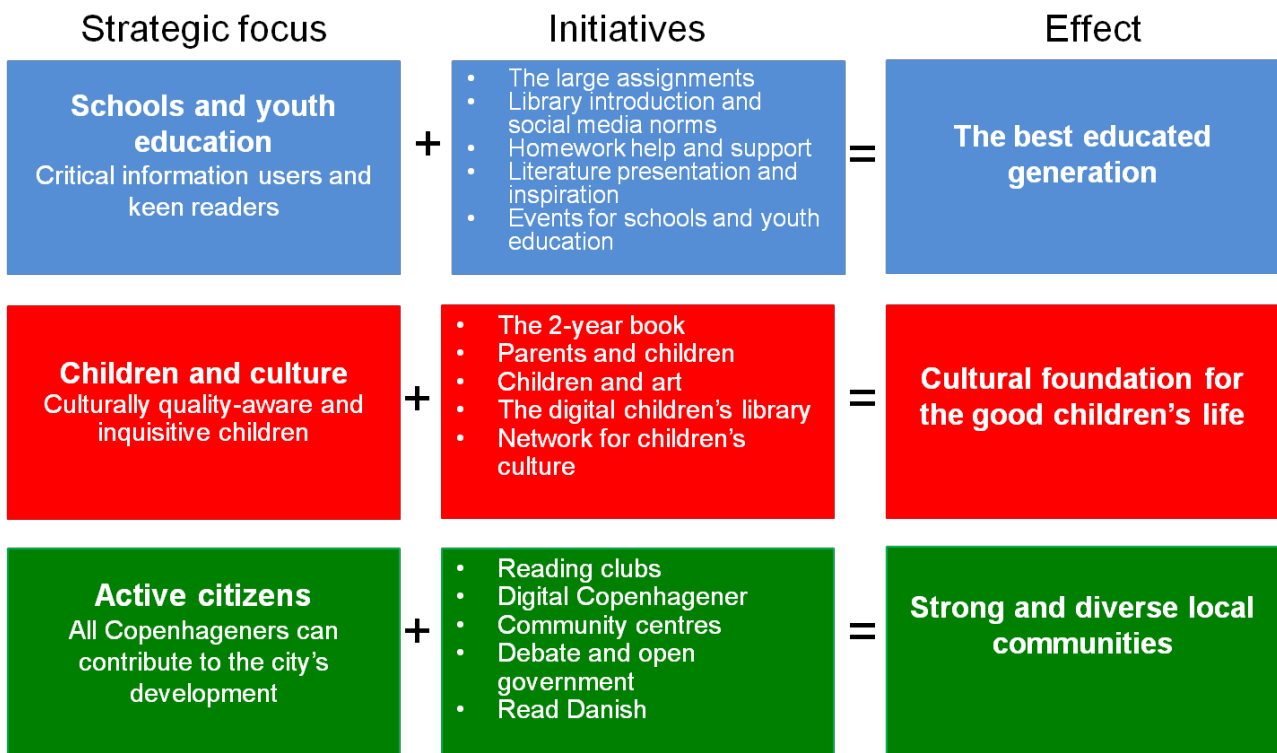
The physical library will continue to be the most important element in the library service, but it is also resource-intensive. Copenhagen wants to have libraries that all citizens will enjoy visiting, and where events, communication and facilitation work as crowd pullers and as a catalyst for information, education and cultural activity. This will require funds for modernisation of a number of libraries.

A modernisation can also include co-location, so that the local public library also serves as e.g. a school library or community centre. Co-location with school libraries also supports the strategic prioritisation of children as a special target group.

## Special action areas

In the strategy, three specific and four general action areas have been selected. This reflects the fact that over the next five years, Copenhagen Libraries wishes to give particular priority to actions within these areas.

*The strategy has three special action areas:  
Schools and youth education, Children and culture, and Active citizens*



### – Schools and youth education

Copenhagen Libraries has defined this as an action area directed at institutions. The purpose is to contribute to pupils becoming critical information users and keen readers through collaboration with selected schools and upper secondary schools in Copenhagen.

*Collaboration between primary and lower secondary schools and libraries can take its starting point in literature information, media literacy and digital education*

Actions aimed at primary and lower secondary schools (the Danish *folkeskole*) take their starting point in existing collaboration and in the intentions of the recent *folkeskole* reform. The libraries' particular focus is to promote leisure reading with an emphasis on literature promotion, but it can also include subjects such as media literacy and digital education.

In relation to upper secondary education, the action consists especially in contributing to raising students' information literacy, in accordance with the intentions of the upper secondary school

reform, among other things. Copenhagen Libraries will evaluate the effort in various ways, for instance by measuring the amount of time the involved students spend on leisure reading.

The initiative will, as far as possible, be developed and implemented in collaboration with primary / lower secondary school libraries and upper secondary school libraries. It can also be linked to the development of the digital library and digitisation of materials for specific years or assignment series.

## **– Children and culture**

*Children are keen library users and bring along adults*

Library service for children is one of the areas where the libraries have historically organised efforts to suit the target group. Children's librarians make a great effort, and the most recent cultural habit survey showed that children are very keen users of the libraries. Accompanying children is also one of the most significant reasons for adults to visit libraries.

The initiative is organised according to the needs of the target group. It has been chosen because Copenhagen Libraries wishes to retain a special library approach to promotion of culture aimed at children that allows room for play and for the encounter with many different cultural expressions on the children's terms. The effort aimed at children can be seen as a part of the City's general efforts to attract and retain families with children in Copenhagen.

## **– Active citizens**

The third special action area is a new perspective on library service with the objective of involving citizens under the heading of active citizens.

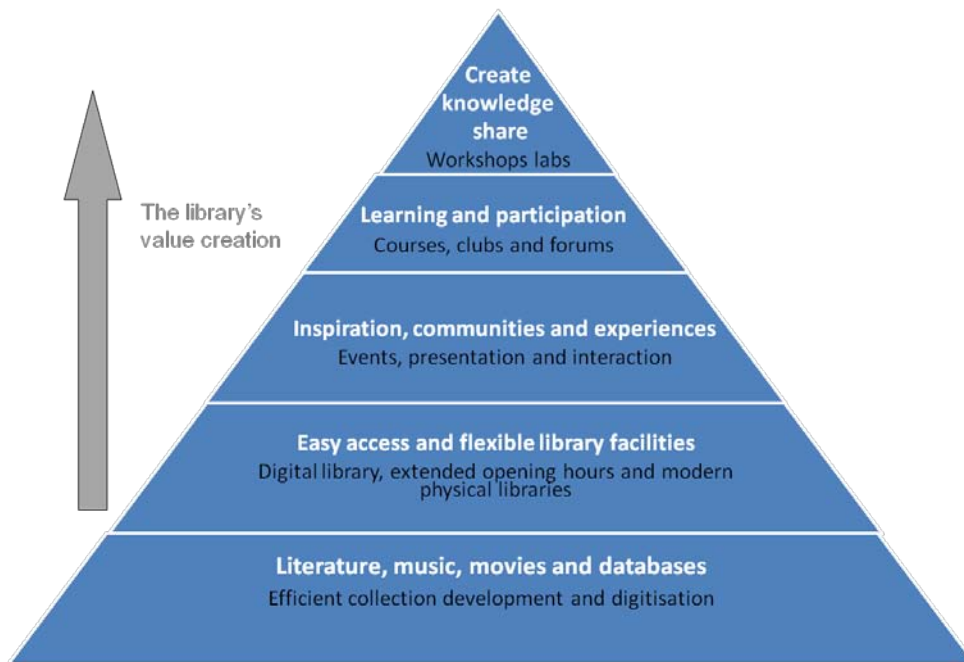
*The citizen is the main player in his/her own information project, but the library provides the settings*

All citizens should have competences and possibilities for creating new knowledge as well as a varied and critical approach to media and culture. In this context, citizens are not only users, but also to a greater extent contributors and creators. Copenhagen Libraries is to contribute to citizens gaining an active role in relation to media, debate and culture.

The figure below illustrates the libraries' value creation. The collection is the foundation for the activities. The citizen's access to the collection is the basis for the library's communication and events. This forms the basis for the involvement of citizens in courses and clubs, or for citizens' own contributions, e.g. in writers' workshops.

The library's offers are based on the library collection, and the library particularly creates value for citizens by providing easy access to the materials. The collection and the access today constitute the foundation of the library's offers. In the figure, this is illustrated through the extent of the two lower elements.

Figure 4: Value creation at the library



The materials will gradually become digital, and citizens' access to them will become easier. The library's unique contribution will be, to a greater extent, to create activities based on literature, music and film. In a digital media image, the library's special offers to citizens are in the upper part of the pyramid.

A good book is thus very valuable to the individual citizen. However, it is also valuable to discuss a good book with others who have also read it. By creating the settings for discussion, the library can add a value that the book does not have in itself, and which the citizen will not get from a bookshop.

*Joint efforts by Copenhagen Libraries and Copenhagen Citizen Service can be expanded further after the establishment of the new administration*

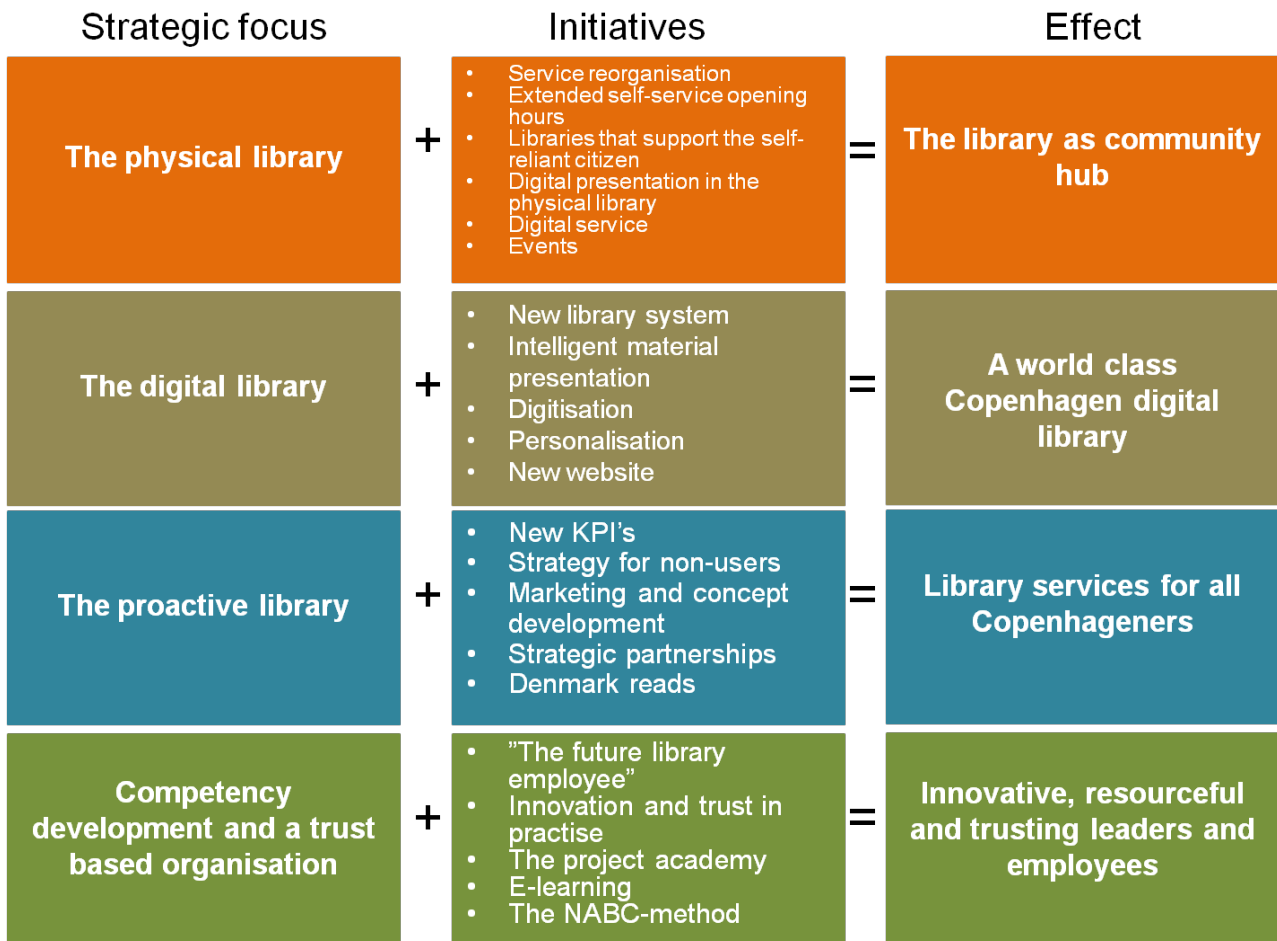
It is an important part of the effort to promote learning initiatives within reading and digital literacy in collaboration with Copenhagen Citizen Service. The administration's merger with Citizen Service also makes it possible to extend digital library service and the link between library and Citizen Service to more areas of the city.

Increasing the number of activities to which citizens contribute actively is an important objective for the action area. It will also be important for Copenhagen Libraries to focus on target groups who have special needs for the libraries' learning offers, and to monitor their use by means of new key figures.

## General action areas

*The physical, digital and proactive library are general action areas*

In parallel to the special action areas, Copenhagen Libraries will work with four general initiatives that include greater parts of the library's work.



### – The physical library

The physical libraries are the core of the library offer in Copenhagen. Over the coming years, the challenge will be to complete a reorganisation of the library service in the physical space, so that the current high level of visitors and customer satisfaction are preserved or even improved, while at the same time, resources are released for new activities. The library space must be adapted to the libraries' changed role.

*Tomorrow's physical library requires flexible and intelligent spaces*

The space must be used to promote information, education and cultural activity, and the library's staff must contribute to creating the settings and facilitating the activities. Entirely unstaffed libraries are therefore not a suitable solution, but it is essential to work towards a further extension of the self-service opening hours to increase access to the collection.

The library space should also be preserved as an informal meeting place and as a backdrop for contemplation where you can be alone in the company of others.



*The digital transition must be followed up by initiatives and offers in the physical space*

As these transactions are replaced by digital materials, the usage pattern will change, as citizens no longer need to visit the library. If the physical library is to make a difference in the lives of citizens in the long term, there must be other reasons for citizens to visit the library than borrowing and returning books. Copenhagen Libraries will use the events work, the digital library, the proactive library services and initiatives aimed at children as means of getting citizens to visit the physical library.

The objective for the action area is to uphold the level of user satisfaction and the visitor numbers while at the same time, the library service is gradually reorganised, releasing resources for proactive efforts and new activities in the library space. The development will require new key performance indicators as a supplement to lending and visitor numbers in order to monitor the effort.

**– The digital library**

The purpose of the digital library is first of all to give citizens easier and better access to both physical and digital materials. In addition, the digital library can take the pressure off some transactions at the physical library by offering digital service and digital materials. Digitisation of the book collection is therefore a key effort.

This should be accompanied by a channel strategy that promotes the objective about Copenhageners choosing digital materials over physical, whenever this is possible.

*The digital library becomes a central platform for dissemination and a showcase for the physical library*

The digital library will be a central platform for dissemination and a showcase for the physical library and the activities that take place there. The digital library will also contribute to communication at the physical libraries during the self-service opening hours, just as it will offer special guidance as already known from *Biblioteksvagten* (online reference service). Digital offers can reach some of the target groups who do not currently use the libraries frequently. Here, social media and partnerships with other digital services are obvious options.

This will happen in collaboration with other municipalities in Denmark within the framework of The Danes' Digital Library. The systems development and digitisation of the materials will take place in collaboration with the other municipalities. In connection with the development, Copenhagen Libraries will prepare a short digital strategy in 2014.

The objective for the action area is a substantial increase in the digital use of Copenhagen Libraries. Concrete objectives for a channel strategy and the substitution of physical materials will also be developed.

**– The proactive library**

A systematic focus on citizens implies a fundamental shift for Copenhagen Libraries, which has traditionally delivered excellent library offers by focusing on the library and on the collection in particular. This has therefore been selected as an independent action area.

*The proactive library will be based on statistical measurements of the library's degree of coverage*

This is first and foremost an analytical and systematic approach to library service for the Copenhageners. It is necessary in order to be able to compete for the users' attention and to ensure that Copenhagen Libraries provides service for all citizens, and not only for the most resourceful citizens.

Data from the action area can contribute to creating better cohesion between digital and physical service. If Copenhagen Libraries knows which books people borrow during the self-service opening hours, an effort can be made to digitise these and thus give citizens even better access to the material.

## – Competence development and an organisation based on trust

The strategy implies changes among the library's managers and staff. The Culture and Leisure Department works with trust as a foundational value, both in the relation between management and staff, and in the administration's interaction with citizens. The action area therefore includes both competence development activities and a continued development of an organisation based on trust with an ever-closer interaction with citizens.

Under the heading “The future library employee”, a modular qualifying training course for all staff will be established in collaboration with selected educational institutions. In relation to the organisation, work is focused on creating a better framework for innovation and for developing trust in both internal and external relations. On the management side, change management will be given particular emphasis.

## Summary

The library strategy is to be coordinated with other initiatives, primarily the administration's merger with Citizen Service. In addition, interaction with *folkeskolen* and the possibilities of collaborating with youth and adult education are to be clarified before these activities are given concrete form. Copenhagen Libraries is an integrated part of the cultural and leisure offer and the Citizen Service in the individual city district, and the prioritisation of the efforts in the individual districts will therefore vary and be adapted to district plans. This applies in particular to the physical library.

The strategy covers five years in order to set out a direction and a framework for the gradual change that Copenhagen Libraries will undergo in step with media development, changed user habits and increased digitisation.

## General objects for the library strategy:

- Longer opening hours and better accessibility
- More activities at the libraries (reading clubs, study circles, courses and events) with greater citizen involvement
- Modernised libraries and attractive physical library spaces
- Library service of more Copenhageners and offers targeted at selected educational institutions
- A fully developed digital library with more e-books, audiobooks, journals, databases
- Better digital service and communication