

# **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**17 SEPTEMBER 2009**

## **SUNDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

### **REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

#### **1.0 WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE COMMITTEE?**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a review of key achievements and performance for 2008/09 and highlight priorities for 2009/10 for the Library Service.

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. Sunderland Public Libraries serve the residential population of 280,300 through a network of 20 community libraries, 2 mobile libraries, a mobile ICT Learning / Customer Service Centre Vehicle (Libraries Information Access Zone), a Local Studies Centre and a Books on Wheels service. It also serves Sunderland Schools (via the Schools Libraries Service) and Sunderland Royal Hospital via a Hospital Service.
- 2.2. In 2008/09 the service received over 1.5 million visitors, issued 1.2 million items, delivered over 18,000 learning hours and answered over 154,000 enquiries. Further Sunderland Public Libraries - Fact and Figures for 2008/09 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. Libraries deliver and support key outcomes for local communities and individuals with all service planning aligned to match Sunderland Partnership and City Aims.

#### **3.0 VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1. The vision for Libraries is to .....  
**enjoy, explore and discover**
- 3.2. In order to ensure the continuous development and improvement of all service areas and to ensure communication across the service, nine key service groups meet regularly to plan, deliver and evaluate. The groups cover the following areas: Access and Inclusion, Digital Citizenship, Books and Reading, Services to Young People, Health and Well Being, Learning Development, Communication and Staff Development, Performance Improvement and Library Marketing.
- 3.3. The key objectives and action plans for the service are developed by these groups thus ensuring the involvement and participation of a wide range of staff from all areas of the service.

#### **4.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2008/09**

- 4.1. During 2008/09 Sunderland Public Libraries delivered a full programme of activities and events in support of the city's strategic priorities. Examples of these include:-

## **4.2. Prosperous City**

- A new Customer Service Centre and Library opened at Ryhope in May 2008 providing access to a wider range of city council and library services. The service immediately proved popular with over 195 new members joining in the first month. Issues and PC usage also increased and regular councillor ward surgeries and learning courses have brought new customers to the centre.
- In October 2008 Hendon Library celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, signalling the start of a year long celebration of the city's three Carnegie Libraries. The celebration was opened by the then Deputy Mayor, Councillor Dennis Richardson and included a photographic display of the Hendon area over the past 100 years, an Edwardian sweet shop and visits by pupils in costume from Valley Road School.
- The National Year of Reading ran throughout 2008. Aimed to encourage reading both for pleasure and as a means of improving learning and achievement a busy programme included author visits, poetry workshops, traditional tales, Sunderland's first Reading Festival and the establishment of two new reading groups at the Blue Bell Pub, Fulwell and at Starbucks in the City Centre. There are now 13 adult and 7 children's reading groups in Sunderland hosted or supported by libraries.

## **4.3. Healthy City**

- In 2008 1,300 children took part in the national summer reading challenge 'Team Read' across all libraries. In partnership with the Sunderland Empire 'Sportacus', star of CBBC's 'Lazy Town' challenged young readers to get active and compete against him on the library Wii console.
- Ten families from Easington Lane, Ryhope, Southwick and the City Centre took part in the Premier League Reading Stars project, which uses footballers as positive role models to get children hooked on reading. 40 children and their parents had the opportunity to meet with Sunderland goalkeeper Craig Gordon, the SAFC reading champion and children's author Tom Palmer.
- Houghton Library Visually Impaired Person's Reading Group celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of its oldest member. Brenda Thompson who has been a member of the group which meets regularly to discuss audio books said *'I have been coming to the reading club for years and I really love it - everyone is so kind and friendly and the library staff really look after us'*.

## **4.4. Safe City**

- The family and children's activities at the 2008 International Friendship Festival included for the first time a poetry and storytelling Tipi. Many families took refuge in the warmth and dryness of the Tipi and were entertained by performance poet Craig Bradley and local storyteller Tony Wilson. In total over 300 visitors to the festival took part in poetry and storytelling activities over the two days.

- In 2008 115 clients were supported with Information, Advice and Guidance by trained library advisors. Guidance included course availability and progression, developing CV's, completing job applications and interview skills. To meet increasing demand further staff were trained to NVQ level 3 in Advice and Guidance extending services to further libraries and increasing staff skills.

#### **4.5. Learning City**

- Adult and Family Learning courses developed following consultation have flourished in 2008/09. During the year almost 1,000 adults have taken part in a learning course hosted by the library service. Courses have included basic IT, family and local history, English for speakers of other languages and forensics.
- Boys into Books (5 – 11 years) - In 2008/09 Sunderland Public Libraries took part in a government scheme to promote reading for pleasure to boys in primary school. As part of the scheme schools and libraries received special collections of books and were enthralled by visits from top children's authors. Highlights included author John Dougherty who visited Year 5 and Year 6 at St Paul's in Ryhope whilst teenage author Philip Caveney spoke to over 100 Year 7's and 8's at Southmoor Secondary School.
- Their Past Your Future - During 2008 a partnership project funded by the Big Lottery Fund through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council was developed with Infinite Arts. The project was designed to bring the local aspects of World War 2 to school children. Using the resources held by the Local Studies Centre and the expertise of the partners a learning pack was created through a series of interactive intergenerational workshops. To make the collection of images more accessible they were placed upon Flickr, a popular images sharing site.
- Funding awards were gained from UKOnline to support the delivery of the UKOnline User Journey to digitally and socially excluded learners in the city. The projects on the Libraries Information Access Zone and at Houghton Library exceeded their targets and the additional resources purchased continue to support ICT based learning activities.

#### **4.6. Attractive and Inclusive City**

- Sunderland City Library and Arts Centre was chosen by the Society of Chief Librarians North East to host two regional conference days in June 2008. A total of 300 library staff from across the twelve regional authorities attended the conference which explored and discussed the principles of Embervision, a programme designed to ensure the delivery of consistent quality customer services. Regional targets were set and standards agreed. The training has since been cascaded to over 95% of library staff and the agreed standards applied in all service points.
- Heritage Open Days 2008 took place in September, within Sunderland there were over 9,000 visits to participating properties and events. These included a photographic and mining artefacts display at Washington Millennium Centre Library and class visits to 4 libraries where young people took part in learning sessions with local historian and folk singer Keith Gregson.

## **5.0 LIBRARY PERFORMANCE 2008/09**

- 5.1. With the replacement of the Public Library Service Standards in 2008/2009 by the Library Benchmark (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) Sunderland continues to use national tools to benchmark services and ensure optimum service evaluation and delivery.
- 5.2. Appendix 2 shows comparative outturns for 2007/08 and 2008/09.
- 5.3. Whilst some indicators including enquiries, total bookstock and total acquisitions show an improvement in performance in 2008/09, several others including visitors and issues show a decline. However performance returns have been affected by the closures and temporary relocations of Washington Town Centre Library and Silksworth Library for redevelopment during 2008/09. Whilst some regular borrowers have transferred to alternative locations including Washington Green, Washington Millennium, Doxford Park and Ryhope libraries these closures can be proven to have impacted upon a number of performance outturns. With these temporary arrangements coming to an end in May and June 2009 Washington and Silksworth outturns have already shown improvement with increases in issues and visitors.

## **6.0 PRIORITIES FOR 2009/10**

- 6.1. All service planning objectives and actions are mapped to the strategic aims of the Sunderland Partnership, Sunderland City Council Corporate Improvement Objectives and the new Performance Frameworks for Local Authorities.
- 6.2. The library service strategic objectives for 2009 - 2011 are:-
  - 6.2.1. To ensure accessible library services which meet the needs of all citizens via advice, development and promotion and to encourage cultural participation by all individuals, especially those from under represented groups.
  - 6.2.2. To utilise new and existing technologies to enhance and develop current and future library services through the effective use of ICT.
  - 6.2.3. To open up reader choices, increase participation and enjoyment in reading and offer opportunities for people to share their reading experiences.
  - 6.2.4. To develop library services for children and young people that are welcoming and responsive, and provide a programme of reader development activity that is relevant, interactive and participatory.
  - 6.2.5. To develop and promote access to health information and resources in order to support healthy lifestyle choices.
  - 6.2.6. To develop a learning offer which gives all citizens equality of access to informal and formal learning opportunities within libraries, which offers routes to progression and links to the broader programme of activities citywide.
  - 6.2.7. To work continuously to develop local heritage provision and networks throughout the city.

- 6.2.8. To work continuously to improve communications for citizens and staff - in order to increase participation, to develop and promote library services and to support staff development.
- 6.2.9. To increase awareness and membership of the diverse library offer, through effective and consistent marketing.
- 6.2.10. To monitor the performance of the library service in relation to the corporate priorities and libraries performance framework, to assist in setting targets, interpreting data and developing new ideas.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1. Sunderland Public Libraries are committed to delivering a first class service to the citizens of Sunderland. Service planning and developments are subject to regular reviews and evaluation.
- 7.2. In 2009/10 a full service review is to be considered, examining service delivery in relation to opening hours, library programme and staffing requirements. Any review will ensure full consultation with members, library users and citizens.
- 7.3. A Reading Strategy is currently being developed by the Library Service. Working in partnership with a consultant who has undertaken consultation and research, the strategy is due to be completed in autumn 2009. The aim of the strategy is to put reading at the heart of communities in the city, to promote an inclusive service and to develop and embed partnerships taking forward the vision of Sunderland as a Reading City building on the achievements of the National Year of Reading.
- 7.4. The service is to continue with an ongoing marketing campaign to promote the service to both existing and new users. To date this has included a Bag for Life campaign, promotional materials on buses and increased marketing in non-traditional library venues, including shopping centres, parks and at events and festivals.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1. Members are requested to note the above for information and comment as appropriate.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 - Sunderland Public Libraries - Facts and Figures 2008/2009  
Appendix 2 - Library Performance Framework

## APPENDIX 1 - SUNDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES - FACTS AND FIGURES 2008/2009

	2007/08	2008/09
Number of static service points	20	20
Number of Mobile Libraries	2 + 1 Mobile ICT vehicle	2 + 1 Mobile ICT vehicle
Number of Visitors	1,606,621	1,538,537 *
Number of enquiries	150,566	154,489
Total Stock	463,431 (@ 31.3.08)	466,956 (@ 31.3.09)
Number of Items Issued	1,307,712	1,269,810 *
Number of new items added to stock	66,359	66,685
Number of Active Borrowers	49,339 (@ 31.3.08)	48,858 (@ 31.3.09) *
Number of new members	14,234	13,951 *
Number of Requests Taken	33,843	42,695
Number of ICT hours accessed	151,384	169,460.5
Number of Learning Sessions attendee hours	22,955	18,166 *
<b>User Satisfaction with the service</b>		
% of library users aged 16 or over who view their library service as very good/good	93%	93%
% of library users aged under 16 who view their library service as good	86%	86%
% of library users aged 16 or over who rate staff helpfulness as very good or good	97%	97%

% of library users aged under 16 who view the library as a friendly place	98%	98%
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**\* Performance figures impacted by temporary relocations at Washington and Silksworth.**

## APPENDIX 2 - LIBRARY PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Indicator Definition	07/08 Final Outturn	08/09 Final Outturn	Comments
Total who have used a public library at least once in the last 12 months (NI 9)	N/A	41.1	New national performance indicator for 08/09
Number of physical visits per 1,000 population	5,726	5,489	Below 07/08 but impacted by temporary relocations at Washington and Silksworth
Total number of requests	33,843	42,695	
Number of electronic, telephone or mail enquiries	45,669	49,628	
Total number of enquiries	150,566	154,489	
Number of Book Issues	1,250,188	1,220,319	Below 07/08 but impacted by temporary relocations at Washington and Silksworth
Number of AV Issues	57,524	49,491	Below 07/08 but impacted by temporary relocations at Washington and Silksworth / also current trends and market conditions re CD's / downloads
Number of Active borrowers per 1,000 population	176	174	Below 07/08 but impacted by temporary relocations at Washington and Silksworth
No of 4-11 year old girls who are library members as a percentage of the 4-11 year old girl residents	N/A	66%	New library benchmark indicator for 08/09
No of 4-11 year old boys who are library members as a percentage of the 4-11 year old boy residents	N/A	58%	New library benchmark indicator for 08/09
Total book stock per 1,000 population	1,579	1,595	



Total AV stock per 1,000 population	72	71	Reduction in AV stock reflecting current trends and market conditions re CD supply / downloads
Total Acquisitions	236	238	
Total book acquisitions per 1,000 population	220.6	228	
Total AV acquisitions per 1,000 population	15.8	10	Reduction in AV acquisitions reflecting current trends and market conditions re CD supply / downloads
% take up of available ICT time in libraries	34%	35%	