

REPORT TO: Employment Learning Skills and Communities
Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 23rd June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport

SUBJECT: Library Service

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an annual report on the Library Service for the period 2013-2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) The report be noted**
- ii) Members comment on the service delivery and future challenges for the service**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Library Service is delivered through 4 static libraries, a satellite facility in Castlefields Community Centre, an outreach service for the housebound and through digital access. Key resources in their communities they provide books, information and technology which promote lifelong learning, digital inclusion and encourages and celebrates reading. They are important community spaces which offer a welcoming neutral environment and host a range of cultural activities, events and opportunities for all sections of the community.

3.2 All libraries provide access to the Internet and quality assured online resources through more than 100 public computers and laptops. All the buildings are Wi-Fi enabled providing flexibility for customers and also offer self service facilities for borrowing and returning materials. 24/7 access to services are available through a virtual library presence offering an enquiry service and the ability to search for, reserve and renew items remotely via the online catalogue

3.3 In 2013-14 a total of 415,406 items were borrowed. Visits have risen this year and reflect the significant proportion of people using libraries for other purposes i.e. to access public computer facilities.

The library service has 70,026 registered members with 16,289 having borrowed items in the last 12 months. This equates to 57.7% of the population who are registered members, 23.7% have actively borrowed in the last 12 months. Against the total population 13.7% of members have borrowed in the last 12 months

	No' of registered members	Active members	Active members as a % of the population	Number of items borrowed	Number of visits to library premises
2012-13	61,147	16,468	13.1%	433,189	620,942
2013-14	70,026	16,289	13.0%	415,406	675,989

- 3.4 The 3 year Library Strategy was endorsed in June last year and defines the priorities of the service to ensure we meet our statutory responsibilities whilst contributing to the corporate and strategic priorities of the borough.
- 3.5 In July 2013 the Library Service moved into Wave 5 of the Efficiency Review Programme. The As Is phase has been completed whilst work continues on the To Be proposals.
- 4.0 The report demonstrates the progress that the Library Service has made in the last 12 months. It is structured to reflect the priorities set out in the Library Strategy and illustrates the impact that the service has had in supporting people to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and participate in the cultural and community life of the borough.
- 4.1 **Priority: Inspiring a community of readers and learners**
In line with the Public Libraries Universal Reading Offer the service has provided a full programme of creative reading promotions and events some of which are set out below:
- 4.1.1 **Bookstart** - the Library Service continues to work with partners to deliver this scheme which offers the gift of free books to all children at two key ages before they start school to inspire a love of reading. Libraries coordinate the delivery of the packs to health visitors, nurseries and early year's settings. The Bookstart Baby packs are given out by health visitors to babies prior to their first birthday whilst the Bookstart Treasure packs are given out to all 3-4 year olds by nurseries and playgroups. Each pack contains books, rhymes and songs as well as an invitation to join the library and participate in their local weekly Rhymetime. National Bookstart Week was celebrated in collaboration with Children's Centres with 95 children participating in traditional tales story sessions
- 4.1.2 Rhymetimes sessions are held in all 4 static libraries and deliver stories, rhymes and activities which support speech and language development in an informal setting. They also provide parents with an opportunity to participate and gain confidence in their own storytelling abilities. During 2013-14 149 Rhymetimes sessions were delivered across libraries with

a total of 3,773 children and parents participating.

- 4.1.3 In collaboration with Children's publisher Ladybird Runcorn Library hosted the Ladybird Roadshow to celebrate and promote the joys of storytelling. 68 children and parents were treated to stories and activities. Ladybird experts were also on-hand to speak to parents who wanted guidance or advice on reading with their children. Feedback from parents was very positive *"plenty of activities and great interactive storytelling"*, *"we gained new skills"*, *"it has reinforced the pleasure in storytelling"*, *"we had a fantastic time and I will interact and make stories more interesting"*
- 4.1.4 **Schools** – Engagement with schools is an important aspect of libraries work to inspire children and young people to enjoy reading and to develop information skills. The library service continues to offer traditional class visits to schools introducing children to the library so they can become proficient in finding information and resources as well as expanding their reading experiences. Over the last year we have worked with 22 schools and have delivered instructional sessions to over 4,000 children and young people. In addition we have provided opportunities for them to meet numerous authors and participate in a range of workshops.
- 4.1.5 **World Book Day** - we supported a themed assembly at Westbank Primary school which was attended by 150 children dressed as their favourite book characters. Author Tim Bowler visited Bankfield School and spent the morning talking to 220 year 8 pupils about his books and then 60 young people were selected to take part in an exclusive writing workshop.
- 4.1.6 **Summer Reading Challenge** - over the summer we encourage children aged four to eleven to take part in the challenge which aims to keep them reading throughout the summer holidays. The theme last year was the "Creepy House" and on entering the challenge children embarked upon an exciting adventure with friendly characters as they explored the three creaking floors of the Creepy House. Participants had to read six books of their choice and after every two books another part of the Creepy House adventure was unlocked and new a hair-raising character revealed. Children could read any books they liked and there were activities to participate in and rewards along the way. 830 children joined the Creepy House Summer Reading Challenge with 40% of those who originally started, finishing the challenge. This is a 29% increase of children taking part in last year's challenge.

Feedback from participants and their parents was very positive *"I joined the reading challenge and read all six books. I really enjoyed it and had fun"*, *"loved reading the books and really enjoyed coming to the library. It's become a regular visit now"*, *"we enjoyed this as it got my son reading a lot more before starting school in September"*, *"we enjoyed the Creepy House reading it inspired us to read throughout the summer"*

- 4.1.7 **Reading Activists** – is a national programme run by The Reading Agency in partnership with libraries which provides opportunities for young people (11–24) to promote reading and writing, shape services, gain work experience and learn new skills.

Reading Activists contributes to the government's *Positive for Youth* agenda and Local Authority outcomes for young people. Halton was one of the 18 authorities funded by the Big Lottery to develop this project which has been running for 3 years. During which time 3,052 young people have taken part in 65 Reading Activist events, 124 young people have volunteered as Reading Activists and have been working towards or have received accreditation.

Over the last 12 months Reading Activists have been involved in planning, organising and promoting events and activities for other young people, choosing stock, writing book reviews, interviewing authors and participating in workshops.

- Students with varying degrees of autism from Riverside College took part in a Stop Motion Animation Workshop. All of the young people agreed that through the workshops they gained skills and strengths in team work, communication, planning and digital skills
- One Direction Events at both Halton Lea and Widnes Libraries were very popular. Young People had the opportunity to meet and work with author Sarah Oliver.
- Green, screen filmmaking workshops provided an opportunity for young people to learn new skills and create short film clips featuring their favourite books for screening which are now available on YouTube.
- Author interview – 7 Reading Activist volunteers interviewed American author Leila Sales via Skype.
- 10 young people volunteered for Takeover day in November at Widnes Library. The young people planned and ran the activities for other young people on the theme of the Hunger Games. 29 young people participated in the event.
- Reading Activists hosted a special “Day of the Daleks”, Dr Who event at Widnes Library which they had designed to help eliminate boredom during half term it was attended by approximately 100 children, young people and parents.

- 4.1.8 **Try Reading Project** – the public library services in the North West and Yorkshire & Humber regions (30 in total) were successful in their joint bid to the Arts Council for “Grants for Arts: Libraries” funding for the creative project “Try Reading”. The project celebrated the Rugby League World Cup 2013 and encouraged people to read more and engage in writing and drama.

- 32 young people took part in a professionally led workshop based on Mick Martin's play “Broken Time” participants used scenes from the play to explore writing about character and how to create tension through the written word.

- 21 children and adults participated in author Tom Palmer's Rugby Reading Game at Widnes Library alongside players from Widnes Vikings
- Young people from Bankfield School worked with poetry and dance artists Risktakers to create a performance to welcome the visiting USA Rugby League team at the Opening Ceremony of the Primary Schools Sports Event at the Stadium. They performed a specially written song and dance for an audience consisting of the USA team, officials, the Mayor and around 700 primary school children.
- American themed rhymetimes with Tom the USA team mascot were held at Halton Lea, Widnes and Ditton Libraries, with the American Rugby Team Ambassadors attending the Halton Lea event. 94 children and parents attended the sessions
- Tim Quinn former Editor of Marvel Comics delivered a cartoon workshop, which included figure drawing, emotions, storytelling in pictures, character and story creation, and comic book history. The event was well attended with excellent feedback from all participants. *"I found this event great – very inspiring especially because I am studying computer game design at college. This will help me in my studies"*

4.2 The Library Service has adopted the Public Library Universal Health and Wellbeing Offer to enhance the health and wellbeing of the local community by promoting and providing access to self-help resources, health information, outreach collections signposting and opportunities for social and recreational reading.

4.2.1 **Books on prescription** - self-help books based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy principles. Health professionals can prescribe these to patients with mild to moderate mental health problems. The list of books and CD's cover key problem areas and the patient can take the prescription to the library and obtain a copy of the book or CD which they can be borrow for up to 8 weeks. All the titles are also available in the libraries for anyone to borrow. The number of prescriptions has fallen over the last 12 months but the titles within the collection continue to be well used.

4.2.2 **Reading Well Mood-boosting Books** - is a national promotion of uplifting titles, including novels, poetry and non-fiction. These books are recommended by readers and reading groups around the country and are available to borrow from any library.

4.2.3 **Pictures to Share** - a collection of books designed to stimulate memories among older people. Whether problems are caused by Alzheimer's Disease, stroke, Parkinson's Disease, brain injury or any other condition, these books can be enjoyed by anyone affected, as well as by their carers. These books can be borrowed by individuals or by care homes.

4.2.4 **Memory Boxes** - in response to the growing need for help for people with dementia and their carers, the service created a collection of themed memory boxes. The collection aims to stimulate the memories of those suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia and these are now being widely used for reminiscence therapy. Each box contains local photographs and books, a book from the Pictures to Share series, replicas of posters, labels and pictures, smell bottles, a music CD and objects of the time, such as toys and household implements. The collection is available for individuals or organisations to borrow and has proved so popular that a further 20 memory boxes have now been developed.

4.2.5 **Centenary of the outbreak of World War 1** - Halton Libraries working in partnership with Cheshire Museums and Cheshire Archives held a series of events to commemorate the First World War. The Great War Touchscreen Kiosk was displayed at Halton Lea and Widnes Libraries and contained collections of images from across historic Cheshire. The photographs showed different aspects of the Great War, the men who went away to fight and never returned, the people left behind and the war memorials. Special information panels about local Victoria Cross war heroes Thomas Alfred 'Todger' Jones and Thomas Mottershead were also displayed and two Community Collection Roadshows were staged to gather and record local people's Great War photographs, documents, objects and oral history.

5.0 **Priority: Employment, enterprise and developing online skills**

In line with the Public Libraries Universal Digital Offer the service is committed to helping Halton residents become ICT literate through a programme of support and targeted activities and providing access to computer facilities across all libraries.

5.1 Computer use continues to grow and shows a 9% increase in the last 12 months. Wi-Fi is available in all libraries and use has grown by 41% which reflects the nature of people accessing services online through mobile devices.

	Number of computer sessions	Number of hours of computer use	Number of Wi-Fi sessions	Number of hours of Wi-Fi use
2012-13	147,071	94,649	5,991	5,164
2013-14	161,855	100,357	10,273	8,521

5.2 The Library Service has provided support to help people to get online through regular IT Clinics and one to one support as well as specific events including sessions during UK Online Week and the Spring Online promotion.

5.3 In conjunction with communications company TalkTalk we also delivered a Connecting the Community IT event at Halton Lea Library and a National Older Peoples Day IT event at Widnes Library. Talk Talk experts were on hand in the workshops and personalised one to one

sessions to help people with email, social networking, accessing multimedia, Word/Excel, understanding the internet, online shopping, PC basics and safety on the internet. The events were very popular with lots of positive feedback. 60 people attended the workshops and one to one sessions

- 5.4 Digital IT Clinics have been delivered at Halton Lea and Widnes Libraries over the last 12 months with 77 sessions having taken place with 475 attendees.
- 5.5 25 Work club sessions supported by both GMB and library staff have been delivered this year with 287 attendances.
- 5.6 A total of 261 one to one support sessions have been delivered by library staff. 63 were job related and 194 involved older people seeking support in getting online, setting up e-mail accounts and finding out more about social networking and safe internet use. These sessions are very popular and have had a positive impact on the lives of those individuals attending as reflected in some of the feedback received:

"I'm going on holiday for the next 3 weeks, but just wanted to say how much I have enjoyed coming to these lessons, it came about at a perfect time, as my husband recently died I really felt like I would be stuck struggling along on the computer at home, as he used to do all the important things on there, but now obviously I need to know, and I do feel like slowly it is starting to sink in! I'm also so glad I have something to take my mind of it and let me concentrate on something else. Thank you"

"I have tried so many different things and taken books out from the library to try and help me but I just can't seem to get my head around it. What you have actually shown me has really helped and I am going to make sure I spend at least half an hour tonight practising while it is still in my head."

"I really want to learn to use the computers so I can take my driving theory test online. As my instructor has said that I am ready but I really don't know how to use a computer so if I can do that, it will be great."

"My husband has been ill for quite a while, and at first I thought it wouldn't matter that I couldn't use the internet, but more and more people keep saying to me, it will be handy to buy things or order things online as he can't drive me about me anymore, so thank you for your patience"

- 6.0 **Priority: Extending access through innovation and new technology**
Technological change is happening at a tremendous pace and the library service has tried to grasp the opportunities available to us within the current resources.

- 6.1 The efficiency review impacts on this priority but we have been able to make progress in the following areas:
- Backroom procedures have been streamlined to improve efficiency through electronic invoicing and ordering.
 - The virtual library has been improved and the library catalogue enhanced with more interactive and personalised features including book reviews and ratings.
 - Social media is used to communicate with customers about events and service developments.
 - Material brought to the World War 1 roadshows has been catalogued and the information will be digitised and made available through the website

7.0 **Priority: Providing a relevant and responsive library service**

7.1 Over the last 12 months the Library service has continued to provide opportunities for young volunteers to engage and shape the service through the Reading Activists programme. Although the Big Lottery Funding for this programme has now ended the Reading Agency has received a gift from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which has identified £700K to develop a Reading Challenge for 13 to 24 year olds. This sustainability funding is to support young people's activities as a continuation of the hubs developed through the Big Lottery funding.

7.2 Halton is one of only 15 authorities nationally whose young people will work with the Reading Agency to develop and test the Challenge over the next 10 months. The Challenge aims to increase young people's reading enjoyment, skills, confidence and employability through reading and volunteering opportunities.

7.3 In addition to the funding for the development of the Reading Activists Challenge, libraries have also been offered grants from the Cabinet Office's Social Action Fund to build on the work of young volunteers supporting the Summer Reading Challenge. Halton's allocation of £900 will be used to attract and train new volunteers

7.4 Libraries continue to offer community spaces providing opportunities for people to meet and participate in the social, educational and cultural life of the community. A range of activities takes place across the libraries including Reading Groups, Knit and Natter sessions, Film making, Self Help Services, Weight Management, various internal and external partners also use the facilities for meetings and to deliver training courses.

7.5 **CIPFA Children and Young People's Survey** – this was conducted in February 2014 this was last completed three years ago. The new survey introduced last year covers three age ranges, Preschool and KS1 (0-7 years), KS2 (7-11 years), KS3 and KS4 (11-16 years). In total 788 children and their parents/carers responded during the two week survey, of these 56% were girls and 44% were boys.

7.5.1 Overall 54% of respondents gave their library a 10/10 satisfaction score, 24% gave 9/10, 15% gave 8/10, 5% gave 7/10 and 1% gave 6/10. Other key findings are:

7.5.2 **KS1 (0-7 years completed by parent or adult)**

52% rated their library 10/10 in the satisfaction question
100% believe their library helps their child with learning to read
97% believed that libraries prepared their children for school
98% believe their library helps their child socialise with other children
99% believe the library helps with speaking and listening

7.5.3 **KS2**

63% of children rated the library 10/10
99% thought the library was a safe place
97% thought the library had the books they need
98% thought the library held the information they needed
77% of children had borrowed a book during term to read for pleasure
96% think the library has helped them get better at reading
96% think the library has helped with their enjoyment of reading
77% think the library has helped them with using computers

7.5.4 **KS3 and KS4**

43% of gave their library a 10/10 rating, 31% gave a 9/10 rating and 12% a 8/10 rating
51% had borrowed a book during the term to read for pleasure
83% had asked library staff for help with their schoolwork this term
37% had used a library book this term to help with their school work
49% had used a library computer to help with schoolwork this term

7.5.5 Further detailed analysis of the CIPFA Children's results will be undertaken to get a better understanding of how children and young people use the library and to inform improvements in our provision.

8.0 **Priority: Workforce development**

The majority of outcomes under this priority are directly linked to the efficiency review although some social media training has been undertaken and nationally we are involved in the development of the Public Library Universal Information Offer learner network which is developing training modules for library staff which will be rolled out this autumn.

9 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Outcomes used to measure the achievements against the Library Strategy and statutory responsibilities

10.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None at this time

11.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

11.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Community activity and events, Bookstart, Rhymetimes, work with schools and other partners, Reading Activists volunteer programme, engagement with a wide section of the community

11.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Provision of public access computer facilities, support for people getting online, job seekers, employment and training opportunities and those learning new skills

11.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Provision of venues from which to deliver health and wellbeing events, Books on Prescription, Mood boosting collection and Memory Boxes.

11.4 **A Safer Halton**

N/A

11.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

N/A

12.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

12.1 None at this time

12.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

13.1 The service is open and accessible to all Halton residents

14.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.