

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Subject: The Portsmouth Mobile Library

Date of meeting: 12 December 2014

Report by: Head of City Development and Cultural Services

Wards affected: ALL

1. Requested by: The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport

2. Purpose

2.1 To update the Cabinet Member on performance and progress made by the Portsmouth Mobile Library after the first two months of operation.

3. Background

3.1 The mobile library officially launched on Monday 1 September 2014, having made a preview appearance during the Southsea Show at the beginning of August. This service has replaced the Mobile Library in Drayton, Farlington and Anchorage Park which was provided under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Hampshire County Council (HCC) Library Service and ceased deliveries at the end of August 2014.

3.2 The new service increases the frequency of visits to these locations, with stops weekly at Anchorage Park (formerly fortnightly under the HCC SLA) and twice-weekly stops at Drayton (formerly once a week).

3.3 Library services are now available within a 20 minute walk to all Portsmouth residents. The mobile library, in addition to the nine static libraries, supports city-wide agendas regarding literacy and learning, improves access to PCC services and also helps with green agendas.

3.4 The vehicle has been manufactured and fitted out within budget. It has books for all ages and interests and a public access computer. The vehicle's bright and modern design and attractive book stock has met with a great deal of positivity from the public.

£100,000 of capital funding was allocated in the 2014/15 budget, to meet the requirement by Full Council to deliver a Portsmouth Mobile Library service to support areas in the city less well served by static libraries.

- 3.5** The new vehicle makes additional stops in Paulsgrove, London Road and Copnor Road and operates from Monday to Friday. The current timetable is included in Appendix 1. It is proposed that deliveries will be made to residential homes on Tuesday mornings from January 2015.
- 3.6** The experience of Southsea Library shows that locations close to where residents gather and shop are popular. To this end, three supermarket sites in the north of the city have been included in the timetable. Store managers at Tesco North Harbour, Sainsbury's in Farlington and Morrison's in Anchorage Park, have all been very cooperative and have facilitated highly visible parking locations for the vehicle.
- 4. Impact in the first two months**
- 4.1** From Monday 1 September to Friday 28 November, a total of 1743 people have visited the mobile library (1030 adults and 713 children). Excluding renewals, 2021 items have been issued from the vehicle, 34 reservations for stock held in the static libraries have been taken and 81 new members have joined the library service. Taking two of our smaller branch libraries as a comparison, during the same period, Portsea Library issued 1273 items, took 38 reservations and joined 41 new members. Paulsgrove Library issued 2878 items, took 124 reservations and joined 58 new members.
- 4.2** In addition to the standard weekly locations, the vehicle also attended the Summer Reading Challenge winners' event at Southsea Castle on Saturday 20 September and Spinnaker Tower during the October half term. The Library Service has recruited volunteers to support the driver/assistants and the public at different locations. There are four volunteers each engaged three hours a week who typically assist by meeting and greeting customers.
- 4.3 ICT provision on the mobile library**
- 4.4** As colleagues in Information Services continue to explore a permanent mobile internet solution, they have loaned a trial mi-fi unit - a wireless router that acts as a mobile internet hotspot - allowing up to ten devices to connect.
- 4.5** A network point is to be installed in the loading bay at the Central Library, enabling staff to connect the vehicle to update the self-service kiosk.
- 5. Review of current timetable**
- 5.1** The three areas in the north of the city that were served previously by the Hampshire Mobile Library Service are also seeing more borrowers now, which may in part be due to improving the location of the vehicle. After two months of operation, the Tuesday afternoon stop at Eastney is proving the most popular stop in terms of visitors, followed by the Wednesday afternoon stop at Mayfield Road/Copnor Road.

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- 5.2** The Library and Archive Service are seeking to engage with other Council departments that may wish to hire the vehicle during weekends to promote their services. Additionally, there is scope to promote and support other cultural service offers in the north of city locations.

- 5.3** It is proposed that performance at the locations and resident feedback is monitored for six months before any decisions are made regarding adjustments to the current timetable.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of City Development and Cultural Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1: The Portsmouth Library Mobile Timetable

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The Portsmouth Library Mobile Timetable

Day	AM	PM
Monday	Drayton Lane/Havant Road 9.00 - 13.00	Ludlow Road Paulsgrove 13.00 - 17.00
Tuesday	Homes/Admin	Eastney Fort Cumberland Road 13.00 - 17.00
Wednesday	London Road (opp. Amberley Road) 9.00 - 13.00	Mayfield Road/Copnor Road 13.00 - 17.00
Thursday	Farlington, Sainsbury's Car Park 9.00 - 13.00	Anchorage Park, Morrison's Car Park 13.00 - 17.00
Friday	North Harbour, Tesco's Car Park 9.00 - 13.00	Drayton Lane/Havant Road 13.00 - 17.00
Weekend	Events/Bookings	Events/Bookings

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location