

Title of meeting: Culture Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Subject: Library Learning Offers

Date of meeting: 7 October 2016

Report by: Director of Culture and City Development

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by

Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the wide range of informal learning opportunities currently coordinated by the Library and Archive Service's Access and Learning Librarian.

3. Information Requested

- 3.1 The Society of Chief Librarians, The Arts Council and The Reading Agency have developed a number of Universal Offers, covering five key areas which their customers and stakeholders see as essential to a twenty-first century library service. These are Reading, Digital, Information, Health and Learning Offers.
- 3.2 The Learning Offer in public libraries has been developed so that children, young people and families will be able to build their confidence and skill with their creativity, coding and digital skills. Often the learning outcomes overlap with other Universal Offers.
- 3.3 During 2015/16, more than 1000 people have benefitted from over 7000 hours of tuition or support. The overwhelming majority of this is provided free of charge to residents.
- 3.4 Portsmouth Libraries have had a long term partnership with Highbury College, who provide tutors to deliver a wide variety of creative craft courses. The College views this outreach and informal learning provision as highly important in promoting their activities to the widest possible audience across the city (Case Study 1). Courses are provided free of charge and have covered such subjects as vintage crafts;

making fabric flowers; smocking; decoupage; origami and decorating cupcakes (Case Study 2). In the period April 2015 to March 2016, fifty-six residents have taken part. In addition to these craft activities, a number of more informal regular groups meet in our libraries, including a crochet group at Paulsgrove and knitting groups in Beddow and Central Libraries.

- 3.5 Highbury College also provide a regular programme of activities that help bridge the digital divide by promoting and supporting the use of ICT. Courses provided include basic and intermediate sessions in computing. Courses in digital photography have also been popular with library users. In 2015/16, 219 learners have benefitted from this tuition (Case Study 3).
- 3.6 In addition to courses run by Highbury College tutors, there are a number of library volunteers who support our digital inclusion agendas. Often, these volunteers are retired tutors or ICT professionals, keen to pass on their skills and enthusiasm to those people new to computing. The volunteers supplement the Highbury courses by providing basic and intermediate training to residents and also one-to-one sessions, for example with people who have recently purchased tablets or other hand-held devices. 173 people took up volunteer-led ICT training in 2015/16. Library staff and volunteers have also provided occasional training to help customers use our online library services such as eBooks, eAudio and Freegal.
- 3.7 Portsmouth Libraries received £5000 from the Tinder Foundation's "Libraries Digital Inclusion Fund" in September 2015. By the end of March 2016, 147 adults with disabilities were introduced to some basic ICT modules provided on the "Learn My Way" online platform, including "Staying healthy with NHS Choices" and "GP services online". This learning complemented our well-established work with vision impaired residents. This external funding will be used to purchase some accessible ICT equipment so libraries can better support adults with disabilities.
- 3.8 Code Clubs were introduced at Southsea Library in September 2015 and are led by one of our long-serving ICT volunteer tutors. These are part of a nationwide network of free computer coding clubs for children aged nine-eleven. The volunteers teach children how to program by showing them how to make computer games, animations and websites. Coding was introduced to the national curriculum in September 2014 and libraries are well placed to support those children who do not have access to computers at home. Teaching programming skills to children is seen as a long-term solution to the skills gap between the number of technology jobs and the people qualified to fill them. To date three Code Club courses have been delivered from Southsea Library: an initial run of twelve weeks for beginners attended by ten children, followed by two sixteen-week week courses for more intermediate learners that were attended by fourteen children.
- 3.9 Portsmouth Libraries also provide valuable support to job seekers. Professionals from the National Careers Service (NCS) have offered weekly drop-in sessions at Central; North End, Southsea and Beddow libraries where members of the public can receive free impartial advice on any aspect of career choice, change and job

search. They can help people match skills and ideas to a career or help with practical tools such as CVs, application forms and interview skills. North End library also hosts a weekly job club on Tuesday afternoons, which is supported by volunteers who help customers search for jobs online and help with CV writing. Well over 400 people have attended the job club sessions during 2015/16.

- 3.10 The Festival of Learning, previously known as Adult Learners' Week, is an expanded national celebration of lifelong learning, with learning events taking place during May and June each year. This year, Southsea Library hosted a number of events, including a chocolate-making workshop; healthy lifestyle sessions and holiday Spanish and German language sessions. Central Library also ran a smoking cessation group and there were stress awareness workshops at Cosham and Paulsgrove libraries.
- 3.11 In addition to free courses, Southsea Library offers regular paid-for Ukulele tuition and Central Library offers regular programmes of Yoga instruction. Over 160 people have taken part in these sessions in the past year.

.....
Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Case Studies

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

Library Learning Offers

Appendix 1 - Case Studies

Case Studies 1

Claire Attika (Company Secretary Foundation Learning, Highbury College) said, 'Highbury have a successful working partnership with Portsmouth Libraries which has gone from strength to strength over the last 3 years. The communication between the Access and Learning Librarian, formally the Digital Inclusion Librarian and Highbury has been second to none, which has ensured classes have been well advertised and filled with people wanting to learn more. We offer various beginners and intermediate programmes to people who may not feel comfortable/able to be in a college environment and prefer the relaxed surroundings of the libraries. We started with basic IT and camera courses and these have been hugely popular with the people of Portsmouth; this has led to us developing further, next level programmes, all of which are delivered with fun and enjoyment being high on the list! Great feedback has been received, mainly about the tutors and the locations we deliver at and we strongly believe that the programmes being delivered within the libraries help to enhance the lives of the Portsmouth residents.'

Julia Smee, a tutor at Highbury College said, 'what I love about teaching in the library is the lovely cross-section of students. Some have lots of experience and some have none, which is a constant challenge to me. At the end of each course I love to see the vast variety of work the students have produced from the same class, and just how happy they are to have achieved so much.'

Case Study 2

Patricia, an attendee at a craft course said, 'I have attended Arts & Craft courses at several libraries with Julia (Highbury College Tutor) and have always enjoyed and learned different techniques in a very happy environment where I have been inspired and encouraged. I have enjoyed a variety of craft projects; decoupage, patchwork, painting on terracotta pots, weaving with ribbons to make a cushion cover etc. Julia is always full of ideas and very patient when teaching different skills and techniques. Having retired due to ill health, I needed something to stop me falling into a "trough of despair". This has been fabulous and I can't imagine what I would have been like without them.'

Case Studies 3

Liliya has attended a number of ICT courses: 'I have completed Water Photography and it was absolutely amazing, I have learnt so much about my camera and every setting, and I am continuing with the Flash Photography, Intermediate Photography and Get-Off Auto Photography courses as I enjoyed it so much. I am also doing the Microsoft Office course because I have a basic knowledge of the software, but have never done Excel but have learnt so much more, it has helped me develop my knowledge and can enhance my future. I am now taking the craft courses (crazy patchwork) and am very excited about it; I have improved my vocabulary as English isn't my first language and learnt new crafts also, even though I'm a dressmaker by trade, libraries are definitely helping and expanding my



knowledge, socialising and meeting new friends, learning from others, and all of the tutors are amazing, all free of charge too....absolutely brilliant....Thank you!

Brenda attended a complete beginners 10 week course and a 7 week follow up course at Southsea Library and the Microsoft Office course at Central Library with Highbury College 'I have a laptop at home but couldn't really use it, but after attending Claire's course at the library I have put emails into folders, I can look up any information needed and can even find out what hotels are like when going on holiday, I can find anything out now so I am really grateful to Claire and the library service and would love to progress even more so I am now doing the continuation of the Microsoft Office course.'

Christine has attended many library courses over the last year, including Microsoft Office, Photography, Photoshop and craft courses. She said, 'as a child a visit to the library with my Dad was a weekly event. It was all about books and being quiet. Now a library for me it is still books but now so much more. Since moving to Portsmouth 2 years ago, I have done several courses in several libraries, photography, IT courses, crafts...I love it! New to the area it has expanded my friendship circle and introduced me to more skills. It has been wonderful to have this facility on my doorstep and it has helped to keep me sane when I was new to the area and knew no-one.'

David attended a 'complete beginners' ten week ICT course and a seven week follow up course at Southsea Library. He said, 'before I started the computer course all I knew was to switch it on! Through attending Claire's course in the library, I now know how to email, do internet searching; now I can keep in touch with family and friends regularly. I can look up anything I want to know on Google and this has made a big difference to my life and opened up a whole new world. Claire's extremely patient and knowledgeable and has a great method of teaching with a sense of humour. I have thoroughly enjoyed everything I have learned by attending the courses.'

Angela, who also attended these courses said, 'the only thing I knew was how to switch on the computer. The courses have opened up a whole new world to me and I can now keep in touch with all of my family and friends using Facebook and even email. Only Claire (the tutor) has enough patience to teach me and I am so grateful to her and the library. Libraries have so much to offer.'

Polly has completed two ICT courses and has just signed up for the advanced Microsoft office course for a further six weeks. She said, 'I knew how to send and receive emails, but I didn't really know anything else. Now I can sort my emails into folders, attach pictures to emails, I can use Facebook to see how my grandchildren and great grandchildren are getting on in New Zealand and keep in touch, which I found extremely difficult before. I can now see pictures of them and keep up to date with what they are doing, which is wonderful as I really miss them. I can find out any information I need to know or am interested in, I look on Amazon and Google. I have found the course very interesting and Claire has been amazing and very patient. I have been through a very difficult time recently and attending Claire's course has helped me immensely. Claire is on our wavelength, taking things slowly, no one else has been able to teach me.'