

**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 5 October 2018

**Subject:** Mischief Makers: The Summer Challenge 2018

**Report by:** Director of Culture and City Development

**Wards affected:** ALL

**Key decision:** NO

**Full Council decision:** NO

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the success of the 2018 Summer Reading Challenge, including participation statistics to date and to make recommendations aimed at increasing and widening participation in 2019.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **That in order to increase and widen participation in lunch clubs, play schemes and other activities aimed at children in non-library settings during the summer holidays, the Library and Archive Service will seek engagement with Public Health colleagues, with a view to much more targeted intervention in 2019.**
- 2.2 **That the Library and Archive Service develop a strategy that will address the significant numbers of children who sign up for the Summer Reading Challenge but do not complete it.**
- 2.3 **Factors that have made North End Library the most successful branch in terms of participation will be identified and then replicated throughout the Library and Archive Service in 2019.**

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) is an annual reading scheme coordinated by The Reading Agency. In 2017, it was delivered in ninety-seven per cent of library authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, with over 760,000 children aged four to eleven taking part. Portsmouth Library and Archive Service has been delivering the SRC since its start in 1999. The Challenge is valued by schools for the support it can give to families in helping children with literacy attainment over

the long school summer break. For our libraries, it has a substantial impact on footfall and book issues during the running of the Challenge.

- 3.2 The aim of the SRC is to support literacy and reading for pleasure by incentivising children to read six books during the summer holidays, achieving this with an exciting supporting theme and accompanying materials. The theme this year has been based on *The Beano* comic, which is celebrating its eightieth birthday. Therefore 'Mischief Makers' features familiar artwork and characters, known to a multi-generational audience. Children who may not regularly read *The Beano* are still aware of Dennis and Gnasher through a very successful computer animated re-boot of the original characters that is aired on the CBBC channel.
- 3.3 Mischief Makers, the Summer Reading Challenge 2018, launched in all Portsmouth libraries on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July and finished on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September, the day before the winner's event. This year, 1680 children have completed the Challenge, which is the highest figure by the Library and Archive Service (see Appendix 1 for detailed participation statistics by branch library). The Challenge also makes a considerable impact on library book issues over the summer, with just under 45,000 children's items being borrowed from Portsmouth libraries during the period.
- 3.4 Children who successfully complete the SRC are awarded a certificate and medal. Once again, the Museum and Visitor Service granted the Library and Archive Service access to Southsea Castle for the celebration event which took place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September. This year, over 6000 children and families attended. The mobile library, costumed characters from children's books and a number of additional activities were also provided.
- 3.5 This year, Portsmouth Library and Archive Service received £4000 from Victorious Festival to support the purchase of additional books, promotional materials and incentives, with the aim of increasing participation.
- 3.6 During the summer term, in the run up to the holidays, all schools were provided with posters and written information for parent/carer newsletters, explaining the value of taking part in terms of literacy attainment and promoting the Challenge as a positive, free, activity for families to enjoy during the long summer holiday. Every primary school pupil in the city receives a personal invitation to take part and library staff delivered promotional assemblies in the vast majority of Portsmouth schools. In addition to the certificate and medal, many schools will be offering their own rewards to returning pupils who have complete the Challenge in September. Complete participation statistics across all Portsmouth schools will be provided to Members once they are available.
- 3.7 All libraries provide weekly free activities to keep children engaged with the SRC. A new initiative for this year, a *Mischief Makers Extravaganza*, was piloted on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August at Portsmouth Central Library with the aim of increasing participation levels. Authors and storytellers, science workshops, maker spaces and craft activities were delivered throughout the day. The event will be repeated next year as hundreds of children and families attended.

- 3.8 As participation continues to increase year on year, the support for library staff provided by young volunteers aged 12-24 years is invaluable. This is the ninth year we have engaged volunteer support from this age group and full statistics on the number of hours volunteered will be provided to Members when they are available.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 The Library and Archive Service recognises that children and families engage with a variety of activities over the summer holidays, run by different agencies and delivered in many settings. As participants of these activities may not be regular users of public libraries there is potential to increase engagement with the Summer Reading Challenge. For this reason we have offered The Somerstown Hub as an additional venue for participation in the SRC for four years. This year library outreach staff engaged with PCC colleagues providing lunch clubs in Somerstown and Buckland to promote participation. Despite this, the numbers engaging are still comparatively small and so we propose to work with Public Health colleagues in the spring of 2019, undertaking much more targeted activity.
- 4.2 There has been a fifty-five per cent completion rate this year. Typically, fifty per cent of children who sign up go on to successfully complete the Challenge by reading six books. Whilst this figure does reflect national trends, events such as the Mischief Makers Extravaganza may have contributed to the increase this year. The Library and Archive Service will continue to explore ways we can increase the completion rate, working with schools, in particular, to achieve this.
- 4.3 North End Library was by far the most successful branch in terms of participation, with eighty per cent more children completing the Challenge there than Cosham Library, which was the next most successful. The Library and Archive Service will engage with local parents, schools and North End Library staff to identify exactly what factors have contributed to this level of engagement. Outcomes will inform a revised staff training programme in advance of next year's Summer Reading Challenge.

#### **5. Equality impact assessment**

- 5.1 A preliminary EIA has been completed (see Appendix 2). As the recommendations are aimed at making the Summer Reading Challenge more inclusive for children and families in the city, they should not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

#### **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

## **7. Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 The costs associated with the summer reading challenge have been met from the Library Service budget. Additional financial support of £4,000 was received from the operators of the Victorious Festival.
- 7.2 Volunteer input has been invaluable and has contributed to the success of this years SRC

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Signed by:

**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture and City Development**

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Summer Reading Challenge 2019: Participation by branch library.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

## **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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
NA	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**

**Appendix 1: Summer Reading Challenge 2019: Participation by branch library.  
(Completers in brackets).**

Library	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Alderman Lacey	74	167	255 (1)	270 (5)	276 (18)	261 (36)	290 (66)	296 (128)	296 (138)	296 (140)
Beddow	78	216 (2)	328 (12)	390 (20)	410 (32)	420 (51)	420 (122)	420 (186)	420 (224)	420 (232)
Carnegie	27	52	102	115 (8)	127 (16)	126 (28)	128 (48)	130 (70)	130 (80)	130 (80)
Central	31	125	185 (3)	205 (4)	224 (17)	242 (29)	250 (63)	250 (96)	250 (103)	250 (103)
Cosham	35	185 (5)	326 (14)	365 (27)	384 (54)	412 (96)	433 (172)	428 (240)	439 (267)	439 (272)
North End	177 (7)	451 (10)	635 (28)	699 (69)	735 (125)	760 (191)	774 (299)	774 (443)	774 (484)	794 (502)
Paulsgrove	25	83 (2)	99 (1)	115 (4)	120 (10)	122 (18)	128 (40)	128 (42)	128 (46)	128 (48)
Portsea	2	4	10	12 (1)	14 (5)	15 (5)	15 (7)	15 (10)	15 (10)	15 (10)
Southsea	171 (3)	334 (11)	451 (25)	498 (50)	527 (80)	543 (106)	549 (154)	549 (231)	549 (257)	549 (276)
Mobile	2	10	15	16	16	16	17	17	19 (5)	19 (5)
Somerstown Hub									17 (13)	17 (13)
<b>Total</b>	<b>622 (10)</b>	<b>1627 (30)</b>	<b>2406 (84)</b>	<b>2,688 (188)</b>	<b>2,833 (357)</b>	<b>2913 (560)</b>	<b>3004 (988)</b>	<b>3,007 (1,446)</b>	<b>3,037 (1,627)</b>	<b>3,057 (1,681)</b>