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Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting
Subject:	Ready, Set, Read! The 2023 Summer Reading Challenge
Date of meeting:	17 November 2023
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	All

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

2. Purpose

2.1 To report on the Library and Archive Service's promotion, delivery and evaluation of Ready, Set, Read! The Summer Reading Challenge 2023.

3. Information Requested

3.1 The Summer Reading Challenge is an annual initiative for libraries that has been running in its present format for over twenty years. It is offered free of charge to all families in the city and is a key element of the Library and Archive Service's annual programme of activities. The aim of the Challenge is to promote literacy attainment by encouraging primary school-aged children to keep reading during the summer holidays. Children are invited to visit their local library to borrow books and set themselves a reading target. The children pick up incentives along the way and when they reach their target, they are rewarded with a certificate. The Challenge has a different engaging theme each year, this year's was entitled *Ready, Set, Read!* and was linked to sports and games.

3.2 Members of the library outreach team targeted nineteen schools in the city with special assemblies to encourage children to take part in the weeks leading up to the end of the summer term. An additional twelve schools were given digital presentations, prepared by the outreach team, that could be delivered in classrooms by teaching staff. The Challenge was also promoted during a special mass reading of Nick Sharratt's *Shark In The Park* in front of 1000 infant schools from across Portsmouth in Victoria Park on Wednesday 5 July before the actual launch in libraries on Saturday 8 July.

3.3 Ninety disadvantaged pupils were selected by four schools in the north of the city to take part in Summer Reading Challenge Plus. Groups of these pupils from Beacon



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View, Highbury Primary, Portsdown and St. Paul's Primary undertook special visits to local libraries in the summer term to borrow books and complete the Challenge before the summer holidays. This initiative is aimed at addressing the lack of participation by some disadvantaged pupils and their families in the city over the summer holidays.

- 3.4 Older, secondary school-aged children, were recruited to supported library staff in eight branches by volunteering to help listen to children talk about the books they had read during the Challenge. Thirty, out of thirty five Summer Reading Challenge volunteers this year were aged between twelve and twenty four. This volunteering is a great opportunity for young people to develop transferable skills and populate CVs as they progress through school and beyond. Fourteen of the young people were using the hours they volunteered to contribute towards a Duke of Edinburgh's Award. A total of 486 hours were volunteered during the summer holidays.
- 3.5 From the period of 8 July to 16 September, over 36,000 children's books were issued in Portsmouth Libraries. A total of forty-eight activities, the vast majority of these free of charge, were delivered by libraries during the summer holidays and attended by 1500 children and families.
- 3.6 By the end of the summer, 3165 children had signed up to take part and 1508 of them had gone on to successfully complete the Challenge. This completion rate (forty-eight per cent) follows an annual trend but the numbers of children who actually completed the Challenge is up by over eight per cent on last year. School Library Service once again offered book-themed bean bags for school libraries to the top six participating schools (Appendix A).
- 3.7 Children also have the option of completing the Challenge online, where they unlock digital rewards and can download a certificate when they have completed. The number of children taking part online remains relatively small with over ninety per-cent of children and families choosing to take part by visiting public libraries in person.
- 3.8 Once again, the Library and Archive Service partnered with colleagues from the Museum Service and held a 'Winners' Event' at Southsea Castle on Sunday 24 September. Over 3500 children and families attended during the day and children were able to pick up a special medal for completing the Challenge. As well as promoting the Castle to a large number of city families, other activities were available, including a special puppet show performance delivered by the Doyle Detectives, treasure hunts, facepainting, storytelling and a silent disco. In keeping with the

Challenge's sports and games theme, children had the opportunity to take part in some activities promoting health and fitness.



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Signed by
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices: None

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

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Appendix A

Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Participation by school

School	School roll	Registered	Completed	Completion rate
Cumberland Infant School	179	63	37	20.7%
St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School	213	60	41	19.2%
Solent Infant School	267	79	51	19.1%
Bramble Infant School and Nursery	173	70	32	18.5%
Langstone Infant School	250	71	44	17.6%
Moorings Way Infant School	149	37	19	12.8%
Court Lane Infant Academy	342	94	43	12.6%
Wimborne Primary School	559	101	59	10.6%
St Swithun's Catholic Primary School	313	59	30	9.6%
Highbury Primary School	406	65	35	8.6%
Meon Infant School	177	43	15	8.5%
Devonshire Infant School	181	30	14	7.7%
Beacon View Primary Academy	357	53	27	7.6%
Court Lane Junior Academy	479	76	34	7.1%
Langstone Junior Academy	357	73	25	7.0%
Medina Primary School	203	25	14	6.9%
Westover Primary School	220	21	14	6.4%
Solent Junior School	363	57	22	6.1%
St Jude's CofE Primary School	421	87	22	5.2%
Ark Ayrton Primary Academy	418	34	19	4.5%
Meon Junior School	343	35	13	3.8%
Fernhurst Junior School	353	57	13	3.7%
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	303	26	11	3.6%
Portsdown Primary School	380	36	13	3.4%
Penbridge School	628	53	21	3.3%
Copnor Primary School	668	83	22	3.3%
Arundel Court Primary Academy and Nursery	553	27	18	3.3%
Ark Dickens Primary Academy	411	26	13	3.2%
Milton Park Primary School	386	20		3.1%

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			12	
Cottage Grove Primary School	401	27	12	3.0%
Mayfield School	540	49	15	2.8%
Southsea Infant School	181	12	5	2.8%
King's Academy Northern Parade (Infant)	262	29	7	2.7%
Craneswater Junior School	747	52	18	2.4%
St George's Beneficial Church of England	335	14	8	2.4%
Manor Infant and Nursery School	214	15	5	2.3%
King's Academy College Park (Infant)	335	36	6	1.8%
New Horizons Primary School	540	34	8	1.5%
The Flying Bull Academy	416	32	6	1.4%
Gatcombe Park Primary School	209	18	3	1.4%
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	298	47	4	1.3%
King's Academy College Park (Junior)	455	25	6	1.3%
The Victory Primary School	406	7	3	0.7%
King's Academy Northern Parade (Junior)	441	16	3	0.7%
Stamshaw Infant Academy	207	15	0	0.0%
Stamshaw Junior School	240	11	0	0.0%
Mary Rose Academy	182	1	0	0.0%
Cliffdale Primary Academy	183	3	0	0.0%