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**LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To update Members on activities within the Libraries and Community Learning Service

**Information and Analysis**

2. The Libraries and Community Learning Service comprises Libraries; Adult and Community Learning; Family Learning; and Work-based Learning. The service sits within Children's Services and reports to the Assistant Director (Partnerships).
3. This report covers activities during the period April 2007 to November 2007 and also looks at proposed activities up to March 2008.
4. The service has recently undergone a major restructure which has enabled a more joined-up approach to the delivery of all parts of the service. This reflects the need for libraries to be more involved in learning and community development, and for teaching staff to be more aware of the contribution of libraries and culture in the achievements of learners. The new structure came into effect on the 1st of September and already significant improvements have been made in the way staff work together to achieve our aims.
5. Since April 2007 we have increased the number of people accessing the service. It is however worth noting that this increase cannot always be reflected in the current performance indicators for libraries as the indicators for engagement are very focussed on the number of books we lend and the number of enquiries staff deal with. These indicators do not reflect the volume of people who access our reading groups, the number of adult education classes we run, our children's activities or the number of people who access information via the internet.
6. We now have 10 reading groups with a new group starting in January. We also have a poetry reading group to which we invite local poets. The reading groups cover all ages and abilities including 2 groups for adults with visual impairments.

Activities for Children (Libraries)

7. We continue to run our very popular Baby Rhyme Time sessions and since March 2007, 91 children and 882 parents/carers have taken part. We run the sessions at both libraries and at Children's Centres. The rhyme times linked to Bookstart held in Children's Centres over the summer attracted 89 children and 80 parents/carers.
8. During the summer holiday Bookstart produced a special certificate for children aged 0-4 designed to coincide with the Big Wild Read. Each participating child had to visit the library 3 times and take out a book at each visit in order to complete the challenge. 129 children started the challenge and 25 completed it with 10 of these attending a special presentation ceremony on National Bookstart day to receive their certificates. In addition

a further 77 children aged 0-4 are engaged in the Bookstart Bookcrawl.

9. Since September we have been involved in the new Booktime project which aims to promote reading in schools by the gifting of a free book pack to every reception-aged child. Of the 27 primary settings contacted, 16 have actively participated in the scheme and 27 Booktime sessions have been held. 715 Booktime packs have been distributed to reception children.
10. We run regular storyclubs, activity clubs, class visits and Storysack events. We host a number of events for young people based on their needs or hobbies as well as homework support. 136 children have taken part in Local Studies events.
11. Learners attending work-based learning are now beginning to use the library and library staff arranged a number of activities to encourage them to use the resources we have to support their learning.
12. The mobile library visits schools and nurseries and we have purchased a good range of stock. Junior issues on the mobile saw an increase of over 120% in the past year.

#### Activities for Adults (Libraries)

13. We run a range of activities and events for adults which are very popular. These include:
  - (a) Murder mystery nights
  - (b) Visiting authors and poets including the Auden Poetry Display
  - (c) Talks and displays including the Tees Cottage Pumping Station talk, the Golden Age of Amateur Football exhibition and film show, the Railway Museum display
  - (d) Creative writing events
  - (e) we have held a number of advice sessions (Marie Curie, energy efficiency etc)
  - (f) 139 people have attended our family history sessions
  - (g) 84 people attended the Patons and Baldwin event; and
  - (h) we are now part of the Books on Prescription service working in partnership with the PCT.

#### Community Events (Libraries)

14. The mobile library took part in the Darlington Carnival. We do a number of fundraising events through the year supporting a wide range of charities. We have launched the Books on Prescription Service. We visit schools to deliver reading sessions.

#### Adult and Community Learning, Family Learning and Work-based Learning

15. We continue to see a growth in the numbers of people accessing our learning services. We have extremely good retention and achievement rates with over 80% of adults achieving rising to 100% on some courses. The results for Work-based learning are above the national average. With support from the Learning and Skills Council, and in particular the efforts of the Darlington team, we have, for the first time, secured FE funding in addition to our adult learning funds. This means that we can now further develop our service by introducing a range of qualifications. Whilst the amount of FE funding is small (£69,505) it is recognition of our success and gives us a base to build from.

### Family Learning

16. The Family Learning team has widened its remit and whilst it still works with primary schools it now works with the Youth Service, health providers, Children's Centres, Youth Offending Team and secondary schools. 324 children and young people and 537 adults have been supported by the team.
17. We also have an LAA project called Family Learning Intensive Support. Funding has enabled us to employ a tutor to work on a 1:1 basis in the home. The tutor receives referrals from health visitors or Children's Centre staff and is working with hard to reach families. The project has worked with 25 families to date with some remarkable results. Learners have progressed to mainstream provision, some have gained OCN qualifications, some have gained basic skills qualifications and all have gained in confidence.

### Work-based Learning

18. Work-based learning delivers vocational training to 70 young people aged 16-19. The areas covered are construction, motor vehicle, business administration and childcare. The childcare element has been delivered by Stockton Riverside College but as from September it is being delivered at the Coleridge Centre. We also deliver an E2E contract which supports disadvantaged young people into training. WBL works closely with employers to ensure that the delivery is of a high quality.

### Adult and Community Learning

19. ACL is now known as Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) and comes under the Government's safeguarded arrangements which means that funding is secured for the next 4 years. Learner numbers have increased significantly over the last 3 years (636 learners in 2004-05 and 1012 learners in 2006-07). In 2006-07, 413 learners came from disadvantaged communities, 9.36% declared a disability and 3.75% came from the BME community.

### English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

20. We have had a number of requests for English language classes, mainly from the Polish community. Our current funding arrangements do not support the delivery of ESOL classes however we are developing partnership working with other providers to ensure that classes can be delivered. We recognise this as an area for development for our service and will be seeking advice from the Learning and Skills Council.

### **Legal Implications**

21. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

22. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the

exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Recommendation**

23. Members are asked to note the content of this report.

**Ruth Bernstein**  
**Head of Libraries & Community Learning Service**

### **Background Papers**

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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