

### 13. MOBILE LIBRARIES REVIEW: EVALUATION OF TRIAL PERIOD

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| Corporate Plan Output: 8.2.13 Mobile Libraries  |  |

The purpose of this report is to inform Community Boards of the recommended decisions following evaluation of the trial period for the Mobile Libraries Review. That review originated as one of the Outputs and Standards Projects.

The purpose of the Mobile Review has been to:

- Clarify the role of the Mobiles in the library's business.
- Improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the service.

The review was conducted in two stages. Stage one defined the role of the mobile library service as part of the library's business, established criteria for providing the service, and identified benchmarks for evaluating the use. The Output and Standards Committee adopted this report on 6 September 2000.

Stage Two determined where and how mobile library services would be delivered across Christchurch City. The most significant change to the service resulting from the review was the reduction from two vehicles to one. A schedule of stops was developed and five stops that had become unviable and were clearly not meeting criteria and benchmarks were recommended for disestablishment. Customers at those affected sites were consulted about their mobility and transport, and their ability to use an adjacent service, either another mobile library stop or a fixed-point library. Community Services Committee adopted those recommendations in May 2001, as a trial for a period of up to one year. The new schedule took effect from 30 July 2001.

This final stage of the Mobile Library Review has evaluated the trial period August 2001 to March 2002, measured the statistics from that period against the adopted benchmarks for customers and issues, and noted any customer feedback resulting from the changes made.

Customer feedback on the changes was generally low key, and a mixture of concern and satisfaction. Inevitably some customers were inconvenienced by the change of day or time, and a few elected to use alternate services at a fixed-point library. Others were delighted by the more convenient time for the visit to their locality. There has been no feedback to date from any customers about not being able to access library services due to cuts or changes made to the service.

Following the collation and measurement of available statistics against the benchmarks, some under-performing stops were identified. Those stops were also evaluated for other extenuating circumstances such as distance from an alternate service, or social or economic reasons for continuing the service. When all benchmark measures and other circumstances were included in the evaluation, two stops were identified as being clearly unviable and are being recommended for cuts. They are the stop at Hillmorton, at the corner of Halswell and Hoon Hay Roads, and the Brooklands stop, at the Styx Boating Reserve.

The impact on the Shirley-Papanui Community Board area is the loss of the stop at Styx Boating Reserve, Heyders Road, Brooklands. Council set benchmarks for customers and issues at 14 customers per hour and 50 issues per hour. Currently this stop is achieving hourly converted figures of 7 and 36. Actual customer numbers for the 20-minute visit are between 1-4 weekly. A customer survey conducted on 3 May 2002 indicated that all customers would be able to use an adjacent mobile library stop at Brooklands Hall, 1.5 km distance.

The other underachieving stop in the Board's area is that at Kainga. This stop was initially recommended for cutting during the Stage Two review, but was given a reprieve with a fortnightly service. This may have created some uncertainty amongst residents as to when the bus would be there. The decline in use at this stop has also accelerated over the second half of the review period. Kainga is geographically isolated, with the nearest alternate library service being at Brooklands Hall, 3.5km distance.

With a proposed reduction in time for the low-performing stop at Queenspark School, time is available on Saturday afternoon for a visit to Kainga. As the fortnightly Friday afternoon stop is not attracting sufficient customers it is considered worth trialling a weekly service at a time when potentially more residents would be at home. A customer survey taken on 26 April asking if a Saturday service would be preferred was inconvenient for just one customer, who does also use the Shirley Library on occasions. A 30 minute time slot from 2.55-3.25pm on Saturdays is proposed.

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

**Chairperson's  
Recommendation:** That the officer's recommendation be adopted and that the Libraries Unit consider building a library in Belfast in the future to service the rural communities.