

## 6. OVERVIEW OF THE CANTERBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY NETWORK

RR 10243

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board about the extent and nature of the City's Library Services and to provide a context for the separate reports on Spreydon and St Martin Libraries. Bringing the report to the Board provides an opportunity for you to meet key staff working in libraries in your Board area.

Canterbury Public Library is the network of libraries funded by the Christchurch City Council. Services are delivered from the Central Library, 11 Community Libraries, a Children's Library and two mobile libraries with outreach and housebound services being located at Smith Street. Also at Smith Street is the Bindery. Library management and support services are housed in the top floor of the Central Library.

The network is the second largest in New Zealand, after Auckland City, when measured by population served and by business volume. Over 5 million items are issued each year, with this year's growth currently running at 7% on the previous year. In addition to circulating over 16 items per head of population annually, the network answers approximately 800,000 questions, ranging from the quick reference to in-depth enquiries requiring database searching and specialist skills and knowledge of the staff.

Over a million visitors enter the doors of the Central Library each year. This library currently does about a third of the circulation business. Whilst we do not have door counts for all our community libraries, it is reasonable to assume that another one and a half to two million visits are made to community libraries each year as well. This is the equivalent of 8-10 visits per annum per head of population.

Around 70% of the population are currently registered with the library and the patron database is purged annually. Anyone who has not used his or her card in the preceding two years and who has no outstanding transactions is purged in order to keep the membership statistics up to date and valid.

The business unit that manages the Canterbury Public Library is known as the Libraries and Information Unit. This Unit reports to the Community Services Committee on matters of policy and budget. However, where there are matters relating to specific community libraries, which might be of interest to Community Boards, the Unit is now seeking the views of the Board so that these may be taken into account in any decision making.

For organisational purposes, the Community Library network is split into three areas with four libraries in each area. Each area covers two Community Board areas as follows:

North East Area: Hagley/Ferrymead Board – Sumner and **Linwood** Libraries  
Burwood/Pegasus Board - New Brighton and Shirley  
Libraries

North West Area: Fendalton/Waimairi Board – Fendalton and Bishopdale  
Libraries  
Shirley/Papanui Board – **Papanui** and Redwood Libraries

South Area: Spreydon/Heathcote Board – **Spreydon** and St Martin  
Children’s Libraries  
Riccarton/Wigram Board – Halswell and Hornby Libraries

The Area Librarian is also a Community Librarian at one of the libraries in the area, indicated by the bold type above. Community Librarians are accountable for the day to day management and service delivery from their library. The libraries vary in size, both in terms of circulation but also in staff numbers. The smallest library is Sumner, the largest (by circulation volume) is currently Shirley Library (since reopening following the fire).

Each community library provides a comprehensive range of services and activities to their communities. A customer has access to the total range of lending stock from any library in the network including the mobile libraries. Public Internet terminals (PITs) are in all static libraries. These provide access to all New Zealand Internet sites, a wide range of international sites and electronic resources such as encyclopedias etc. Access to Ebsco host, a database of periodical abstracts and full text articles is about to become available at all Community Libraries.

Programmes for children and school classes are a large part of a Community Library’s services. The focus differs from library to library depending on the number and range of schools in the area, and is also influenced by the population mix in the area. The larger community libraries have activities rooms which can be used for a wide range of activities and programmes.

In 1997 Council adopted the document *Library Alive in the Community* which outlined the strategic directions for the library for the next ten years. Whilst the library will continue to play a role in providing creative leisure (reading, listening and viewing for pleasure), the greatest growth area for libraries is in linking people with the information they need and enhancing the electronic access to this information. World wide web, electronic resources, specialist databases and the technology needed to enable this access is part of our present and the growing edge of our future. Literacy, both functional and informational; the library as discovery place for our culture and heritage; the library as community place are all part of our future.

Libraries are a key facility in the community providing a friendly, accessible, learning environment. The Council’s commitment to both the services and the facilities is evidenced through its programme of refurbishment and new buildings. Currently New Brighton and Fendalton libraries are in progress, Spreydon Library is in the planning stage and three further libraries are projected to be built: St Martins, Parklands and Upper Riccarton/Avonhead. Unfortunately it is proposed to extend the time frame for these developments in the draft budget currently out for public consultation.

It was 50 years last October that the then Christchurch City Council assumed financial and management responsibility for Canterbury Public Library. In that time the network has grown from one circulating and reference library on the corner of Cambridge Tce and Hereford Street to the thriving network we have today.

Circulation figures for both Community and Voluntary Libraries are attached.

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