

## 15. MOBILE LIBRARIES REVIEW: STAGE TWO

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Corporate Plan Output: Mobile Libraries 8.2.13	

The purpose of this report is to inform Community Boards of the recommended decisions of Stage Two of the Mobile Libraries Review that originated as one of the Outputs and Standards Projects.

The purpose of the review has been to:

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

The review has been 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 such a service, and identified benchmarks to evaluate the service. The Output and Standards Committee adopted this report on 6 September 2000.

The objectives of Stage Two of the review are to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Mobile Library service by:

- Using the criteria and benchmarks established in Stage One to determine the viability of existing stops.
- Identifying areas in Christchurch where it would be desirable to provide mobile library service, and measuring these against the established criteria.
- Determining the most effective and cost efficient way to deliver service.

Over recent years there has been a gradual but accelerating decline in business on the mobiles culminating in a 17.5% decrease in 1999/2000. This has resulted in a consequential increase in operational costs and cost per transaction in comparison with other community libraries. This decline in use has come about by a combination of factors including the changes and rebuilding of new libraries with the 'wow' factor, redevelopment of large suburban malls changing people's travelling and shopping patterns, and the customer expectation of computer access at libraries.

Efficiencies and cost effectiveness can be improved by either increasing the amount of business or by maintaining the same amount of business and reducing the costs of achieving it. Previous efforts to increase business through advertising and letter box drops have not produced a corresponding increase in issues so we need to look at efficiency gains and reduction in the cost per transaction figure by reducing the cost of actually delivering the service.

During the review possible stops were identified and compared to the current mobile stops to achieve a close match between possible and actual stops. Factors such as demographics, focal community points and access to transport were considered. Existing mobile library stops were evaluated against the agreed guidelines and criteria, particularly customers per hour and issues per hour, plus their proximity to another library. Six stops clearly failed to meet the criteria, and these are being recommended for cutting. They are: Queenspark - Travis Road; Mairehau - Clearbrook Street; Belfast - School, Kainga; Dallington - Gloucester Street; and Bromley - Keighleys Road/School.

It became apparent that to achieve any significant efficiencies and savings the service would need to be reduced to one bus. In other words, by trying to maintain the current level of business that the mobile service provides but reduce the costs of doing that business by cutting operational costs, namely staffing and vehicle costs.

The review team's recommendation to Council is to provide mobile library service from one bus on one late night and all day Saturday, to all the stops that currently meet or are expected (with reduced stopping time) to meet the criteria and benchmarks, and that this be trialled for a period of up to one year. Service hours will be reduced from 44 hours currently provided by the two mobile library buses, to 32 hours to be provided from one vehicle. Savings to Council would be approximately \$76,000.

The impact on the Burwood/Pegasus Board area is the loss of the Travis Road stop outside the QEII shops. This stop does not meet the benchmarks set for customers and issues per hour of service. Use has declined further in the past six months. Customer survey forms completed in our recent survey indicated that all of those customers also used New Brighton Library.

### **Chairperson's**

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