

10. CHRISTCHURCH CITY LIBRARIES: SPREYDON AND ST MARTINS CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

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| Corporate Plan Output: 8.2.0 Libraries & Information | |

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an overview of activities at Spreydon Library and St Martins Children's Library in the year ending 30 June 2001.

THE LIBRARIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Both libraries have been involved in a number of activities which have developed and strengthened community relationships. We have continued our focus on children's services, delivering programmes both in the libraries and at 13 local primary and intermediate schools. Regular pre-school music and story programmes at both libraries were well received and occasional guest performances by Tessa Rose or Liz Weir have been enthusiastically received by both parents and children. Programmes have been attended by 4,000 children throughout the year. Competitions and special events during school holidays were well supported. Help with homework research and choosing a "good read" are the principal activities at both libraries between 3.00 and 5.00pm.

Each month Spreydon Library sends bulk loans of large print and talking books to six rest homes in our area and the couriers of twenty five print-disabled customers collect their talking books from the library.

This year Spreydon Library has been actively promoting free tutorials to adults learning to use the computer technology in the library. There are beginner classes in internet use, how to receive and send email, use the online library catalogue and explore selected web sites. Most adults choose to learn these skills on a one-to-one basis.

A focus group meeting was held at Spreydon Library last July to gather community feedback on customer service, the resources offered and strengths and weaknesses of the Library. A common theme from this and other meetings held throughout the library network was that our customers would like to see more stock rotated and this is now happening.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Spreydon Library is open 48 hours a week, Monday to Saturday, and is staffed by 8.01 FTEs. At Spreydon Library 423,500 items were issued during the year, a 1.9% decrease on the previous year, and over 35,000 enquiries answered. An average of 14,000 people visit the library monthly. Spreydon Library continues to have the third highest issue figure of the city's community libraries.

St Martins Children's Library is open 24.25 hours per week and is staffed by 1.05 FTEs. At St Martins 55,700 items were issued and 9,000 enquiries answered in the 2000 – 2001 year.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The cramped working conditions at Spreydon were eased when a Portacom staff room and office was installed next to the library building. It was hoped that this would be only a temporary measure until the library was refurbished but financial constraints have pushed these plans out to at least the 2003/2004 budget year.

Both libraries were delighted when the Beckenham Service Centre site was chosen for the new South Library and Council Services facility. This has overcome both the difficulties of extending Spreydon and finding a site for a new St Martins Library and will further enhance library and information services in our two wards. Many St Martins parents have, however, expressed disappointment that their Children's Library will be moved to the new facility.

Christchurch City Libraries continues to be in the forefront of technological development and over the past year developed a new website which offers the residents of Christchurch an astonishing range of services. Residents can search the catalogue and premium databases, find out about clubs and activities, check the events calendar, delve into local history, read book reviews and readers guides and, by using a pin number, access their own record or place reserves. There is also now the facility to add a small sum of money to membership cards which allows people to use the internet, print, photocopy or pay library charges.

IMPACT OF INTERNET ACCESS ON OUR REFERENCE SERVICE

Much has been written about the perceived threat of the internet to public libraries. Librarians have actually found that the impact has been beneficial rather than detrimental. It has enhanced our reference service by enabling us to provide a depth of information which we may have previously been unable to achieve and we have applied professional expertise to evaluate websites ensuring customers receive credible information. Training our teams to develop searching accuracy and efficiency is of paramount importance. Some time-consuming practices have been superseded by the speed and relevance of the internet and the days of laboriously gathering information in information files have long gone. Instead, we are using this time to help our customers become computer literate and information empowered.

Access to the internet bridges the digital divide by enabling all members of our community, regardless of wealth or status, to become part of the information future.

Recommendation: That the information be received.