

10. 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 non-viable 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 criteria 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 stop at Brooklands, at the Styx Boating Reserve.

The impact on the Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board area is the loss of the Hillmorton stop. 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 29. Actual customer numbers for the 20-minute visit are between 1-4 weekly. A customer survey conducted on 1 May 2002 indicated that all customers drove to the stop and all would be able to use an adjacent mobile library stop at Dundee Place or Torrens Road.

An increase in time is proposed for the Torrens Road stop to assist in browsing time for the elderly customers. The only other stop in the Board's area to have a recommended reduction in time is the Hoon Hay stop at Rowley Avenue. This has few actual customers, but school children 'hang out' on the bus during its time there and are getting exposure to the library message and environment. The time reduction is both to enable benchmarks to be achieved and to allow safer driving times between stops.

Recommendation: That the information be received.