

Bolton Council

Report to: The Children's and Culture Committee

Date: 21 August 2013

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Report No:

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Report Title: **Twelve Month Review of the New Library Network.**

Non Confidential: This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to review the performance of Bolton's Public Library Service over the previous twelve months, April 2012 to March 2013, since the implementation of the recent Library Network Review.

Recommendations:

Decision:

Signed:

Date:

Summary

In November 2011 the Executive Member for Adult and Community Services and the Executive Member for Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity approved a report which proposed a new operating structure for Library and Museum Services. It was agreed that all changes implemented to the public library network would be subject to on-going review at six, twelve and eighteen month intervals.

This report details the performance of the revised network over the first twelve months from April 2012 to March 2013.

Background Documents

Arts Council England report *Envisioning Libraries of the Future* published May 2013.
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/research-library-future-published-today/>

Report to The Executive Cabinet Member – Leader’s Portfolio 17th December 2012 **Six monthly review of the new Library Network.**

Report to the Executive Member Adult Services and Executive Member Human Resources Organisational Development and Diversity 23rd November 2011. **Proposed new operational structure for Library and Museum Services.**

Report to the Executive 12th October 2011. **A new model for Bolton Library Service: consultation results and implementation of a new service model.**

Report to the Executive Member Adult Services and Executive Member Human Resources Organisational Development and Diversity 23 February 2011. **Review of Bolton Library Network.**

Report to the Executive Member Adult Services and Executive Member Human Resources Organisational Development and Diversity 24th November 2010. **New Structure for Library and Museum Services.**

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 In 2011 the Council took the decision to review the public library service in Bolton. Libraries are very valuable community resources and provide an important service for many local people. However, in the context of the Council's own philosophy for delivering savings, especially prioritising services for the most vulnerable children and adults, it is not realistic to completely exempt a 'universal service' from savings. After two rounds of consultation the preferred option adopted included reducing the number of libraries within the borough from 15 to 10, resulting in a saving of £407,000. The Council believes that the reconfigured network resulting from the review gives Bolton a strong, realigned public library service which more than delivers the Council's statutory duty.
- 1.2 In September 2012 the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey MP wrote to the Leader of Bolton Council. The letter indicated that the Secretary of State, under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, was not currently minded to direct a local inquiry into the revision of the public library network in Bolton. The letter did ask for updated information on the new network, particularly relating to the effect of the library closures through the latest performance data. It was agreed that this information would be submitted by the 23rd November 2012.
- 1.3 This information was supplied as a six monthly performance report to the Minister and the same information was submitted to Executive Cabinet Member – Leader's portfolio in December 2012.
- 1.4 The Minister responded to the performance data in a letter to the Leader of the Council on 31st May 2013. The letter stated that the Secretary of State would not be directing a local enquiry into the changes to the public library network in Bolton and that on assessment **'the Council continues to offer a comprehensive and efficient library service'**. The letter is attached to this report at **Appendix A**.
- 1.5 During 2013 there has been two significant national reports published on the development and purpose of public libraries, one from Arts Council England (ACE) and the other from the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)
- 1.6 Following a considerable amount of research, the long-awaited ACE report *Envisioning Libraries of the Future* was published on the 23 May 2013. It is based on research undertaken during the previous year 'to better understand what libraries could and should look like in the future'. The link to the full report and supporting documents is listed under Background Documents.
- 1.7 This report makes a clear and compelling case for public library services. Research findings show that libraries are highly valued by users and non-users alike as 'trusted spaces, open to all, in which people continue to explore and share the joys of reading, information, knowledge and culture'.
- 1.8 Looking at recent innovations and likely trends over the next 10 years, ACE predicts 'the future public library will be both a physical and a virtual place - somewhere people visit, and also somewhere to be part of wherever they are'.
- 1.9 However ACE acknowledge the significant challenges that face public library services which include advancing technology, pressures on public spending, an ageing population, and more citizen involvement in service provision. To meet these challenges, ACE has identified four priorities:
- using libraries as community hubs
 - making the most of digital technology and creative media

- resilience and sustainability
- training to ensure people who work in libraries have the right skills

- 1.10** The second national initiative has been developed by SCL and details four 'Universal Offers'. The offers – Health, Reading, Information, and Digital - are the four service areas which modern users regard as integral to public libraries. The implementation of the Universal Offers is the first integrated national approach to library services, defining what public libraries should provide, and what users should expect. They also identify where libraries can provide real value to local people and where they will be working collectively to deliver impact in difficult times.
- 1.11** For example, by working smarter and collectively, libraries are prioritising some big shared reading programmes like the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge used by at least 60% of local authorities. Supporting the health and well-being agenda 'Books on Prescription,' is a national scheme for England developed by the Reading Agency in partnership with SCL and with the support of partners including Arts Council England and the Department of Health. Under this scheme, GPs and other health professionals will be able to provide prescriptions for patients with mild to moderate mental health conditions for specific CBT and self-help books which will be accessible in all English libraries. It will also, for the first time, offer people mood boosting novels and poetry plus social reading activities like reading groups.
- 1.12** The strategy laid down in the Envisioning report would indicate that Bolton's approach to public library service delivery is moving in the right direction. The service in Bolton is already delivering to the majority of the good practice listed in the Universal Offers and for those areas where this is not the case these elements form part of future delivery plans.
- 1.13** This twelve monthly review of the new library network in Bolton picks up the priorities and next steps from the six monthly report, shown as bullet points at the start of each section, and details the progress made in identified areas of delivery. It also presents the annual performance data.

2. Additional Opening at the Central Library and Museum

- Continue to promote the services available on Sundays and Bank Holidays as part of the Bolton Town Centre offer
 - Repeat visitor survey by March 2013
- 2.1** Prior to April 2012 the Central Library and Museum building was open Mondays to Saturdays, it did not open on Sundays. The Central Library was open a total of 60.5 hours per week and the Museum and Aquarium was open 48 hours per week. From 15 April 2012 the Central Library & Museum building opened to the public on Sundays between 10.00am and 4.00pm, giving the Central Library a total of 65 opening hours per week and the Museum and Aquarium 53.5 hours. The Central Library & Museum building also opened to the public on 5 bank holidays in 2012-13 between 10.00am and 4.00pm.
- 2.2** The table below breaks down the number of visitors who have made use of the facilities on Sundays and Bank Holidays between 15 April and 24 March 2013 (inclusive). The Crescent building was closed on 31 March, which was Easter Sunday.

	Sunday visitor totals	Average Sunday visitor count	Bank Holiday visitor totals	Average bank holiday visitor count
Aquarium	6,061	121	1,390	278
Library	21,021	420	3,199	640
Museum	13,955	279	3,298	660

2.3 More specifically within the Library the total number of loans and the total number of hours the computers were used during these additional opening hours was as follows:

	Sundays	Average Sunday performance	Bank Holidays	Average Bank Holiday performance
Loans	14,069	281	1,458	292
ICT Use (hours)	4,987	100	532	106

2.4 Library and Museum Services continues to promote Sunday and Bank Holiday opening, developing a family plan of activities that combines with Town Centre events. Each Bank Holiday craft activities take place in the afternoon to encourage more visitors. Recent activities have included 'Make a Dinosaur egg' on Easter Monday and African jewellery on the May Bank Holidays. For the August Bank Holiday there will be an extra screening of the Cinema at the Crescent showing Ratatouille to celebrate the Food and Drink Festival. Families can also make a 3D rat and chef's hat.

2.5 In May 2013 visitor surveys were carried out over several Sundays and on the late Spring Bank Holiday (27 May 2013). In the surveys the majority of visitors (85%) had visited the building before, 92% intended to visit the library and 43% intended to use a computer. This broadly reflects the findings of the surveys conducted in April 2012.

2.6 The majority of comments were positive and included the following:

- *It's an ideal time to study and catch up with course work*
- *Fabulous, I work full time and often left only with highly commercial activities on weekends*
- *I think it's great, very practical*
- *Nice to find somewhere open with events*
- *Everyone is off and it is a good chance to visit the Museum as a family*
- *Very useful for people without other computer access*
- *Very handy for working mums with school age children*
- *Bank hols are just the right time for museums and galleries to be open*
- *I have to do my job match so I was pleased it was open today*
- *Brilliant for busy grandmas*
- *Brilliant for studying closer to exams*
- *Good to combine Sunday visit with stroll around the market etc*
- *One of the best things that has been done*
- *Super for a family, thank you*

3. Services to Children and Young People and to Schools

- Develop a joined up offer for families at the Crescent which links library and museum resources through activities and trails including holiday and Super Saturday events.
- Continue to develop and promote the school library and museum offer to create a 'wraparound' experience whereby teachers and pupils can borrow a project loan, participate in a museum workshop, handle objects from a museum loan box and use online resources to enhance their knowledge and enjoyment of different subject areas.

3.1 Activities have been linked to the collections or to exhibitions such as fabric collage sessions relating to the Constance Howarth exhibition on the life and work of a Bolton fashion designer. 12 new family trails have been produced at the Crescent over the last year. At least 600 of the Egyptian trail have been used and over 200 each of the other trails have been taken.

3.2 There has been a targeted events programme to increase engagement with local residents, especially children and young people around the Hall I' th' Wood Estate. This has seen visitor figures attending onsite activities increase from 284 between April 2011- March 12 to 1,177 between April-March 2012-3. This has been helped by the introduction of free all year round opening on Tuesdays and Saturdays in April 2012.

3.3 After consultation with teachers and a review of existing workshops, a new museum education offer was launched in September 2012. This incorporated the principles of inspiring learning and learning outside the classroom. The workshops offered now concentrate on the unique resources of Bolton's collections and Historic Halls such as Egyptology, Local History, Art and Natural History including the Aquarium.

3.4 The education brochure has been revised so it easier to cross reference the Museum workshops with online resources available through the Crescent Activity Bank and book and artefact loan boxes through the Schools' Library Service.

3.5 Two new online sessions for the Crescent Activity Bank on Ancient Egypt and World War 2 were added in August 2012. These have proved very popular with Ancient Egypt visited 661 times and World War Two pages visited 306 times. As Crescent Activity Bank has been designed to be used in classrooms and community settings, the actual number of people viewing the pages will be much higher via a shared screen.

3.6 A new evaluation form was developed to monitor feedback from the workshops and adjustments were made in the light of comments received.

3.7 In response to growing demand for sessions about local history, Super Learning Weeks have been trialled in 2013. This involved engaging the whole school in learning about their local area, and was piloted on two schools where 375 pupils from two schools visited the museum and explored aspects of the history and natural history of their local area.

3.8 Positive feedback on the various workshops offered included:

- *A brilliant afternoon, brought our subject to life!*
- *Interactive activities, all linked to topic in school, staff very informative and knowledgeable- worked with the children fantastically. Great, booked for the whole school, very helpful staff would highly recommend.*
- *An absolutely fabulous day, children were engaged all day and learned so much.*

- *A fantastic session that was practical and very hands on and was very motivating for the children*
- *The children loved the interaction and the quick pace of activities. Even my reluctant boys were engaged, I will definitely be back next Autumn.*

3.9 In autumn 2013 an online booking service for Museum workshops will be launched making it easier for teachers to browse and book sessions.

3.10 The Museum Service is increasingly working in partnership with local schools and youth organisations in the development of Young Roots projects for Heritage Lottery Funding. The Young Roots programme is for projects that engage young people, aged 11 to 25, with heritage in the UK

3.11 Bookstart is the free gifting of book to babies distributed to health visitors and childcare settings via the public library network. The national funding arrangements for Bookstart changed during 2011/12 as monies for the service were reduced. Previously Bolton Libraries were able to obtain additional Baby and Treasure packs for babies of families who had moved into the area after birth or for children who whilst living outside Bolton attended childcare settings in the borough. In 2012/13 Bolton Libraries were only able to obtain the number of book packs related to the Bolton birth rate for the relevant age groups. This has led to demand for the packs outstripping supply.

Bookstart	2011-12	2012-13
Baby packs	3,640	3,195
Treasure packs	4,462	4,166
New Bookstart Bear Club members	783	666
New Bookstart Bear Club library members	205	352

3.12 Although the number of Bookstart Bear Club members has decreased it is encouraging the number who go on to become library members has increased by 71%. The Club is an ideal way to encourage under-fives to develop reading skills as the more books that a parent and child read together, the more free beautifully illustrated certificates they receive. Bookstart Bear Club members are also encouraged to come along to and participate in Toddler Tales.

3.13 Toddler Tales are regular story and rhyme sessions held in libraries which are free for children and their carers. There was a significant increase in the number of both adults and children attending these sessions during 2012-13 proving how popular they are.

Toddler Tales	2011-12	2012-13
Adults attending the sessions	2,726	3,442
Children participating in the sessions	3,655	4,727
Average number of children per library	243	472

3.14 The Summer Reading Challenge is a national initiative developed between libraries and The Reading Agency to encourage children aged 4-11 year olds to continue reading over the summer holidays. In 2012 the emphasis was on encouraging children to read a minimum of 6 books over this period to complete the challenge. Interest was maintained

by a series of activities across the library network, some of which were developed and delivered by young people volunteering as Summer Reading Challenge Assistants.

- 3.15** In 2012 a trophy was awarded to the primary school with the greater percentage of participants in the Reading Challenge. In 2012, the winner was Blackshaw School and an Alice in Wonderland themed presentation ceremony was held at their local library in Breightmet.

Summer Reading Challenge	2011	2012
Total number of children taking part	1,779	1,379
Average number of children per library	118	138
Children completing 6 books	714	741
Average number of finishers per library	47	74

- 3.16** In 2013-14, as well as being registered as a supporter of Arts Awards, Bolton Library and Museum Service now directly works with young people to achieve their Arts Award. There is the opportunity for young volunteers on the Summer Reading Challenge to achieve their 'Bronze' Arts Award (which is accredited and recognised as equivalent to a Level 1 national qualification).

- 3.17** Class visits to libraries are an introduction for children to their local library and an opportunity to discover the wide range of resources available. These are adapted to the needs of the children – for older children it may be a search and find activity and for younger children it may include telling a story. The Library and Museum service has developed a toolkit for libraries to use, tailored to the needs of classes visiting libraries.

Class Visits	2011-12	2012-13
Number of visits	506	527
Average number of visits per library	33	35
Number of children participating	13,755	14,544
Average number of children per library	1,375	1,454

- 3.18** The Schools' Library Service (SLS) offers a service to primary, special and secondary schools and is integrated with the resources of the Schools' Museum Service. All primary schools in Bolton have access to the Schools' Library and Museum Service (SLMS). SLS also signposts schools to local and national initiatives to promote reading and literacy such as the Summer Reading Challenge and the Try Reading tie in with the Rugby League World championship later in 2013.

- 3.19** SLS offers a range of services to schools including:

Schools Library Service	2011-12	2012-13
Project loans (25 books of themed topics)	3,042	2,624
English Resource Loans (20 copies of the same title enabling classes to read together)	487	584
Additions to stock	4,757	3,696

Enquiries	5,544	6,143
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- 3.20** The number of project loans issued can vary from year to year depending on which financial year Easter falls in. There was investment in increasing the range of English Resource Loans (multiple copies of the same fiction or poetry title) which is reflected in the increase in issues.
- 3.21** All schools had additional children's stock from the closed libraries added to their school libraries during 2012/13. This was in addition to the Wider Reading Loan books that schools already have from the SLS supplementing their school libraries. The stock distributed directly to schools from closed libraries was not included in the additions to stock for the SLS. This stock was well received as the following comments illustrate:
- *The children were so excited to open the boxes of books. They loved what you'd selected for us and I had to ring up and thank you*
 - *This school used the stock to replace titles from their out of date classroom collections. They were really grateful for the stock.*
 - *Fantastic, we've been waiting for these, thank you so much we're going to use them in our library, especially the non-fiction*
- 3.22** In summer 2012 the SLS worked with the University of Bolton and local school librarians to organise a children's book festival which included visits by various children's authors. This was instead of the Bolton Children's Book Award which needed a review of its format after running since 2005. In July 2013 there will be a visit by the children's author Barry Hutchinson to the Central Library to celebrate 75 years of the Central Library in its Le Mans location and local schools will be attending. Bolton School will be sponsoring the new Bolton Children's Fiction Award in 2014, and SLS is working with other school librarians to support and promote this new initiative.
- 3.23** The number of enquiries to the SLS has increased reflecting the help and support that the staff give to schools. This can also result in staff going out to schools to help with the development and promotion of school libraries as an important resource in developing literacy, information skills and a love of reading.
- 3.24** One potential development is looking to utilise the strengths of the combined Library and Museum Service to schools and offering primary school pupils an Arts Award as part of their Service Level Agreement. This would draw on the unique position of having the resources across all fields of visual arts from collections in the Museum and Art Gallery and books in the SLS.

4. Library Link

- Promote with partners such as the NHS, Age UK Bolton and other community organisations the good practice that the Library Link service offers in order to ensure that those in greatest need can access it.
- 4.1** Library Link is the free delivery service to Bolton residents unable to visit libraries and do not have friends or relatives who are able to collect books for them. Customers can borrow standard, large print and talking books which are delivered to their homes by staff and volunteers every two weeks.
- 4.2** There are currently 330 Library Link customers, 42 of whom joined after the new Libraries and Museums operational structure came into effect.

- 4.3** A new engagement process has been established that enables staff to work with partners such as the NHS, Age UK Bolton and other community organisations to disseminate the good practice that the Library Link service offers as well as work in partnership to ensure that those in greatest need can access it. The procedure for volunteer recruitment and induction has been also been streamlined and improved.
- 4.4** Support for the Library Link service is provided by 1.38 FTE Library and Museum Assistants (Grade 3) who co-ordinate delivery to housebound customers on a fortnightly basis. In addition there are 25 active Library Link volunteers who complement the Library and Museum Assistants.

5. Use of technology

- Standardise RFID self-service system across the network by June 2013
- 5.1** During the summer of 2012, Library and Museum Services continued to introduce new RFID (Radio-frequency Identification) technology. This enables customers to issue and renew items themselves. At selected sites, it can also deal with return of stock and payment of fines and fees, independently of staff. At the Central Library, the technology also automates sorting of material and is an integral part of our stock security system.
- 5.2** These facilities have helped to streamline circulation procedures and make more efficient use of resources. They release members of staff from mundane, transactional tasks to provide a more personal, higher value service to our customers. Hopefully, this work is more fulfilling and results in greater job satisfaction. A number of RFID-tagged items can be issued simultaneously and at any orientation, making self-service much easier for customers, increasing throughput and helping to manage queues. In addition, the technology offers customers a greater degree of privacy when borrowing material of a sensitive nature.
- 5.3** As part of an on-going project to improve services and standardise technology across the public library network, three new RFID self-issue kiosks and two new enquiry points were introduced at the Central Library during Summer 2012. This was followed by installation of a self-service return and sortation unit in the Autumn.
- 5.4** In addition to the Central Library, four other branches in the new network (High Street, Blackrod, Bromley Cross and Brightmet) have RFID self-service technology. The remaining libraries at Westhoughton, Horwich, Harwood, Farnworth and Little Lever will be converted to RFID technology during 2013. This work has been planned in line with the Council's drive to automate business transactions, and one off set up costs have been identified previously.
- 5.5** During the 2011/12 financial year, 54.4% of public library issues were self-service transactions (at sites with this facility). In 2012/13, this rose to 65.5%; a 20.4% increase on the previous year.
- 5.6** The five Neighbourhood Book Collections have RFID technology, therefore, all transactions at the Neighbourhood Book Collection locations are done through self-service.
- 5.7** In April 2013, we became a member of an AGMA Consortium for a shared library management system. This joint procurement delivers significant cost savings, enhanced functionality and further opportunities for joint working across the region.
- 5.8** Implementation of Civica's Spydus, the Consortium's chosen system, is now under way and has a provisional "go live" date in October 2013.

6. Digital Services

- Continue to promote public library role in digital inclusion.
- Develop targeted ICT training and support sessions to reflect the local authority's and the Government's drive to digital channels.

6.1 The mainstay of the Library and Museum Services' public ICT provision is the People's Network PCs. There are currently 186 PCs across our ten library sites and five Neighbourhood Book Collections.

6.2 Between April 2012 and March 2013 computers in Bolton's current library network were used for 141,289 hours which is a rise of 4% on the same period in 2011-12.

6.3 Compared with the same period across 15 libraries in 2011-12, there has been an overall decrease of 6%. However, when the computer use at the Neighbourhood Book Collection sites is combined with the current network's performance the total hours of computer use rises to 156,261, an increase of 4% on usage during 2011-12.

6.4 At the Central Library there has been an increase in the use of computer by 19% helped by Sunday and Bank Holiday opening which was introduced in this period.

6.5 The Library service currently works with two main partners to deliver the digital inclusion offer; Bolton College and Active Ageing (the latter targeting learners who are 50+) and their courses are delivered at the majority of service points. Their provision aims to up skill adults with ICT basics - progression can then be made by the student to more advanced classes if desired. In addition to their standard classes Bolton College also offer more specific subject coverage; recent options have been online family history at Horwich; and Skillbuild (to help job seekers) at Brightmet and launching soon at Farnworth.

6.6 In addition volunteer computer mentors support the digitally disadvantaged in gaining new skills on a one-to-one basis. A total of 931 volunteer computer mentor sessions took place in 2012 – 2013.

6.7 Bolton Library Services took part in the national 'Race on line' initiative coordinated by SCL during 2012 – 2013. Over the four weeks surveyed there were 1,367 instances of staff helping people to "get online". Using this count, SCL estimates a total figure of 17,771 for the year.

6.8 In 2012-13 the library service saw an increase in the use of computers by those applying for online government services and job seeking. Using information provided by Job Centre Plus the Ask Bolton Libraries team has created guidance notes and briefing sessions for staff in areas such as on applying for Jobseekers Allowance Online, using Universal Jobmatch and setting up email accounts.

6.9 Computer use is expected to rise further as the government moves all transactions online by 2015, particularly with the introduction of Universal Credit. The service will continue to work with Job Centre Plus, and other organisations to ensure that staff have the skills to assist customers.

6.10 In preparation for this the SCL in partnership with Arts Council England, is developing a Public Libraries Information Offer to promote the role of public libraries and public library staff and volunteers in helping citizens access and use online information and services.

- 6.11** In January 2013 SCL conducted a skills audit of staff already doing this in public libraries to identify competency and confidence of staff. The survey results were collated and analysed at a national level and a training package is being developed to ensure that staff expertise and support to customers by library staff is uniformly excellent.
- 6.12** SCL is working with partners to publicise the role of libraries in providing online information, as well as to identify what additional technology is required so that customers can easily navigate online resources and to ensure that the quality of information offered in UK public libraries is consistent.
- 6.13** Staff have assisted customers to use digital resources in the following ways:
- Using a hotels booking site
 - Setting up an email account
 - Re-activating a locked email account
 - Using a large format keyboard and magnifying text on screen
 - Use of Google Maps
- 6.14** A customer who had used the PCs at High Street Library to apply for jobs returned to the library to let staff know that she got a job and had had the best summer working with the children. She also said this will positively impact on her future role training as a teaching assistant.

7. Ask Bolton Libraries

- Continue to deliver and promote information and enquiry services across the Library and Museum Services via a range of channels, including social media
 - Standardise the way in which enquiries are handled by all library staff and establish service standards and performance indicators
 - Utilise Lagan, the Council's CRM system, to record enquiries received by Ask Bolton Libraries
 - Establish contacts with council colleagues and external partners to promote the service and seek ways to assist with delivery of information to their service users
 - Participate in the regional shared information services agenda
- 7.1** In April 2013 Ask Bolton Libraries fully adopted Lagan, the Council's CRM system to record and monitor enquiries received by the enquiry service. This will enable staff to gather data and measure performance using data from a single source.
- 7.2** During June 2011 the Information and Enquiry Officers located in an Enquiry Centre away from the library floor and for this reason it is only possible to accurately compare in depth enquiry figures between July 2011 and March of 2012 and July 2012 and March 13.
- 7.3** The number of enquiries received by Ask Bolton Libraries between these two periods was:

Ask Bolton Libraries Enquiries	2011-12	2012-13
July	263	522
August	337	597
September	346	532
October	458	540
November	421	581

Ask Bolton Libraries Enquiries	2011-12	2012-13
December	358	382
January	465	478
February	471	413
March	549	365
	3,668	4,410

7.4 The figures show that enquiries received has grown steadily over the 9 months of the comparison. It is not clear how many customers from the five closed libraries are using Ask Bolton Libraries as their information and enquiry service because this information is not asked of those making enquiries of the service.

7.5 The following is a sample of recent enquiries handled by the Ask Bolton Libraries team:

- *Newspaper articles relating to a death in 1940s*
- *Computer Numerical Control machinery*
- *Contact for complaining about TV licencing staff*
- *Geology clubs for children*
- *Repairers of typewriters*
- *Entitlement to free nursery provision*
- *Do you put butter on a bun?*
- *Entitlement to free NHS dentistry*
- *Businesses in Bolton providing energy saving services*
- *1985 Moscow Olympics*
- *Information on setting up a shoe repair/key cutting business*
- *My exam is in 6 weeks, I need an IELTS tutor*
- *How do I swear an affidavit?*
- *How can I get copies of my GCSE certificates?*
- *What can I do about my noisy neighbours?*
- *Who holds the screening rights to the Spring & Port wine film?*
- *Can I have a list of UK blueberry wholesalers?*
- *What are the Ofgem standard licence conditions?*

7.6 The team sends and receives information via Twitter and in March 2013 Ask Bolton Libraries' Twitter reach included:

Retweets:

Business Bolton (1375)
Crompton Place (793)
Reading Activists (429)
Bolton JCP (1799)

Conversations:

West Yorkshire Archives (2723)
National Trust (141,113)
Katie Fforde (8754)
Kate Long (1799)

New followers:

National Audit Office (11659)
Game Bolton (399)

7.7 The Ask Bolton Libraries team regularly receives feedback from those using the service and a sample of customer comments is below:

- *I really appreciate your time and dedication. Thanks X! Have a nice day.*
- *... thank you so much for your most welcome information. I can't tell who & what I have contacted to try and find out that information. Thank you ever so much.*
- *Thank you for all your hard work, I really appreciate it.*
- Recent Twitter comment from a customer *"Many thanks for this. It sounds and looks just what I'm seeking. You have been a great help." #heretohelp*
- *Thank you for the amount of work you put into answering my "simple" request for information. What a terrific day I have had. The Wanderers winning 4-1, by playing some good football and then the information you have sent me!*
- *Thank you very much for your email and the information which has been found. It was a bit of a long shot, but really appreciate your assistance with the searches.*
- *You are a star! ... Thank you so very, very much for your help - I really do appreciate your time and the research you have done for us.*
- Twitter feedback - *"Thank you very much for your reply & suggestions"*
- *Dear X, thank you very much for your kind response & advices. I will move ahead according to your suggestions.*
- *You're really kind & very efficient for sending me the info I requested in just a couple of days...thank you so very much.*
- Twitter customer said ABL *"...incredibly helpful, it was much appreciated"*
- *You're a life saver, you're so helpful!!!!...Thanks a lot...You're so much better than other librarians.*

8. Neighbourhood Book Collections

- Install exterior and interior signage
- Continue with regular partner review meetings
- Extend library promotional activity with partners in Neighbourhood Book Collections such as 'Six book challenge' and 'Summer Reading Challenge'
- Monitor usage and gather customer feedback

8.1 Review meetings took place with partners during February and March 2013 and the following topics were discussed:

- Statistics for customer activity and stock and computer usage to be updated and forwarded quarterly
- Refresher training to be held for partners' staff on administrative work for the collections so that library staff could be released from this role in order to delivery activities such as story-telling.
- Meetings to be arranged between Neighbourhood Book Collection staff to exchange ideas and good practice.
- The Summer Reading Challenge, the Six Book Challenge and Try Reading and information was subsequently distributed to partners about these initiatives.
- External and internal signage was identified and produced to ensure that the Neighbourhood Book Collections were visible to visitors at partner centres.

8.2 Customer feedback continues to be, in the main, positive about these facilities. Where individual issues have arisen the library staff at 'buddy' libraries are available to help the delivery partner resolve them for the customer.

8.3 Performance data for Neighbourhood Book Collections can be found at **Appendix B**

9. Library Network Services

- Carry out targeted activity and membership drive in identified areas of the borough where take up of services could be increased.
- Develop a plan / programme to review offer to customers with regard to information, advice and support
- Carry out Public Library User Survey (PLUS) by end of March 2013

9.1 During 2012/13 871 adult events with 8413 attendees and 1223 children's events with 26124 attendees were held in libraries across the network. Examples of adult events are Active Ageing card making and arm chair exercises, Knit and Natter, family history workshops, and 'Books and Banter'. Examples of children's events are Toddler tales, craft sessions, summer reading challenge activities and themed story telling.

9.2 During 2012/13 a programme of family activities has been developed at the Crescent as it is a location that is easily accessible by public transport and helps contribute to the economic development of the town centre. The library and museum service is currently developing targeted activities in areas identified as Council priorities e.g. through the Family First initiative

9.3 Co-location of Access Bolton points at Blackrod, Horwich Farnworth and Little Lever are now well established. Opportunities to develop this partnership across the network are being considered.

9.4 The Public Library User Survey (PLUS) took place in March 2013. A total of 3,260 surveys were completed across the ten sites which was a response rate of 81%. Most of the survey questions generated statistical data.

9.5 Libraries had helped 10% of respondents with personal finance or consumer matters, 20% with job seeking, 21% with their retirement.

9.6 Of those who completed the survey 30% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability, 14% were unemployed and 35% retired.

9.7 57% visited to borrow books; 86% of these actually borrowed something.

9.8 36% visited with the intention of using a computer; 92% of these actually used a computer. 84% thought that computer facilities were good or very good.

9.9 34% visited to find some information; 82% of these successfully found what they were looking for. 88% were thought information provision at their library was good or very good.

9.10 Overall, 40% of respondents provided feedback, comments or suggestions. CIPFA's summary of these, across the whole network, reads as follows: "In the main, people were very happy with their library; Bolton libraries were widely regarded as being an essential part of the community. Bolton library staff are to be commended. A significant proportion of comments related to the staff who were seen as welcoming, friendly, efficient and helpful, with nothing being too much trouble."

9.11 The illustration at **Appendix G** provides a visualisation of the satisfaction questions. The scores shown are calculated by adding the result for the top two options, very good and good. The circles are positioned according to this combined result, with the highest scoring factor at 12 o'clock, in this case standard of Customer Care. **Appendix G**

- 9.12 Any suggestions from the survey with regard to service development are being considered and actioned as appropriate with feedback posted at the individual library.

10.12 month performance data - Summary

- 10.1 Annual performance data for visitors, loans, ICT use and Sunday and Bank Holiday use are detailed at **Appendix C – F**.
- 10.2 The previous report produced after 6 months was an assessment of the new library network in order to gauge early performance data for the new network. Six months' worth of data could only provide an indication of 'direction of travel'. This early analysis showed that the new network, in the current financial climate, was providing a sustainable platform to deliver and develop a modern public library service in Bolton.
- 10.3 This 12 month review is a longer term assessment of performance and allows for more robust CIPFA comparisons. It is therefore proposed that the next report be delayed from an 18 month assessment to 2 years in order to better monitor usage trends.
- 10.4 There has been a consolidation of performance at the remaining 10 libraries and this has been acknowledged by the DCMS **"Good quality library services remain available and accessible to the local community, and there is no real doubt that Bolton continues to operate a comprehensive library service, more efficiently provided than before."**
- 10.5 As part of this 12 month assessment the methodology of viability criteria used during the library review was revisited and found to be still appropriate in terms of the decision making process. The Minister acknowledges that **'careful thought has been given to ensure that library services continue to be available to residents on an efficient and accessible basis'**.
- 10.6 Although the performance in the visitor and loans indicators has reduced, 14% and 17% respectively when the new network of 10 libraries is compared to the previous 15, this has not been in proportion to the percentage reduction in opening hours of 26%. This proportion reduction is also significantly less across the new network (namely 3% in visits and 3% in loans) which would indicate that the closed libraries were less used and / or migration of use. The Minister concurs that **'the efficiency improvements were successfully targeted'**.
- 10.7 As part of the review in order to standardise opening hour patterns some libraries saw a reduction in opening hours. This appears to have affected annual performance figures, for example at Harwood Library, as customers adjust to the new opening patterns. In this instance events and promotions are being targeted to the local community. The Library Manager for Harwood has recently used the local Area Forum to update residents about the facilities on offer.
- 10.8 The visitor and loans performance indicators have also been in downward trend over the past years. 2011- 2012 saw a reduction of 9% and 11% respectively.
- 10.9 ICT usage has reduced by 6% when the new network of 10 libraries is compared to the previous 15. However, when the computer use at the Neighbourhood Book Collection sites is included there is an overall increase of 4%. Across the new network of 10 libraries an increase of 4 % has been achieved.
- 10.10 Sunday and Bank Holiday opening at the Central Library and Museum continues to be grow in popularity and is well received by users particularly when supported by a range of family activities.

10.11 The offer to children and young people through SLS and the public libraries remains strong, introducing them to the benefits of reading from an early age and, hopefully, creating users for life.

10.12 The Neighbourhood Book Collections have enabled customers to borrow books and use ICT in areas where libraries have closed. Work to develop the relationship with delivery partners continues. Statistics show that these centres have attracted 426 new library members in 2012 -2013.

11. Financial implications

11.1 The Library and Museum Services were delivered in 2012–2013 within revenue budgets. All budget savings have been made.

12. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

12.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the council must have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Fostering good relation between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

12.2 The 12 month review has been assessed for its equality implication, an EIA is attached at **Appendix H**.

13. Recommendations

13.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is asked to note the national context for the future of public library services through the Arts Council 'Envisioning' report and SCL's universal public library offers as a framework for future delivery and development.

13.2 To agree to the proposal to receive the next monitoring report after 24 months instead of the agreed 18 months, in order to review annual performance data and allow for CIPFA comparators.

Appendix A: Letter from Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Councillor Cliff Morris
Leader of Bolton Council
Care of Members' Secretariat
Town Hall
Bolton
BL1 1RU

Local inquiry into library provision in the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton

On 3 September 2012, the Secretary of State decided that he was not minded to intervene by directing a local inquiry under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 into the changes in the library provision in Bolton.

However, before taking a final decision, the Secretary of State indicated that he wished to receive and consider further representations from library users, Bolton Council and other interested persons. When inviting representations, the Secretary of State indicated that he was particularly interested in receiving information about the effect of the library closures that have occurred to date, including current usage figures, the operation and use of the community collection scheme, as well as on any other relevant matter.

Representations have now been received from Bolton Council, the Bolton & District Civic Trust and the Save Bolton Libraries Campaign. The Secretary of State has now considered the matter in light of the representations received, and has decided not to direct a local inquiry, for the reasons set out below.

Principles

The starting point is the 1964 Act. The Secretary of State has considered the duty of a local authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient service under section 7 of the Act.

What constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service is a question involving a significant element of judgement. Those judgements are, in the first instance, for the local Council to make. It has intimate knowledge of local conditions and needs and has direct democratic accountability to the local population. This is a significant factor.

The Secretary of State's view continues to be that decisions about local issues should be taken by democratically elected local representatives accountable to local voters. A wide range of approaches were open to the Council when deciding how to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The Secretary of State also notes that the local authority is entitled to take account of resources in deciding whether a proposal is efficient.

The Secretary of State's duty is of superintendence. She seeks to promote and secure the proper discharge of the statutory duties on local authorities. She has power to direct a local inquiry. Her approach in deciding whether she is minded to intervene to direct an inquiry is to ask herself whether, having regard to the duties on her and the local Council, there is good reason in all the circumstances for her to exercise her discretion to direct an inquiry.

In taking that decision, the Secretary of State has given consideration to a number of factors. They include:

- Whether there is any serious doubt or uncertainty as to whether the Council is (or may cease to be) complying with its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.
- Whether the Council appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way.
- Whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the Council's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community.
- Whether the Council has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals.
- Whether the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy.
- Whether substantial further investigation is needed. A local inquiry would be more likely to be appropriate in a case where there are substantial uncertainties as to compliance with the statutory duty, little substantive engagement with the local authority and inadequate public consultation and discussion of proposals. The converse is also true.
- The advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives.
- Whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry would be appropriate or inappropriate.

The Secretary of State has also borne in mind that too ready an intervention would risk preventing prompt and efficient reforms of library services. Equally, failing to intervene in an appropriate case would risk the delivery of an efficient and comprehensive service.

Library changes in Bolton

Bolton Council has closed 5 of the 15 libraries in the council area. 10 Council run libraries remain open, spread across the area. There has been a modest increase in the opening hours of the Central Library (from 60 to 65 hours per week), which is by far the most heavily used library. Other libraries have had opening hours maintained or subject to modest reductions.

The effect of the library closures has been mitigated by a number of local neighbourhood 'collection sites' co-located with other community facilities. At these collection sites, a more limited range of books can be borrowed and a full range of library stock can be ordered. There also remains a home library service for the disabled.

Despite requests, no imminently workable community bids were made to run the closed libraries.

Prior to the closures, the Council carried out a consultation process. 3,824 responses were received during the initial consultation period in early 2011, and a second period of consultation, involving random sampling methods aimed at achieving feedback based on a fully representative sample of Bolton residents took place later in 2011. The consultations indicated that there was little local appetite for a volunteer run service, which was also opposed by local union representatives. An equality impact assessment was prepared.

Representations

Three sets of representations were received: from the Council, the Civic Trust and the Save Bolton Libraries Campaign.

The Council's representations raised the following key points, and enclosed a review of the new library arrangements:

- The library closures took place between January and April 2012.
- Library usage figures from April-September 2012 were provided. Those figures provided initial information about the effect of the library closures:
 - Total number of opening hours reduced by 26% overall, across the library network.
 - Total number of items loaned reduced by 19% overall (with a 3% reduction in the remaining 10 libraries).
 - Total number of visitors reduced by 14% overall (with a 1% reduction in the remaining 10 libraries).
- Updated figures for the period April 2012 – March 2013 were also provided by the Council. Those figures indicate that in terms of the 10 Council run libraries:
 - Total number of items loaned reduced by 1.9%
 - Total number of visitors reduced by 0.6%.
- The Central Library was now open on Sundays and most Bank Holidays. This has been a success. 10,045 visitors have attended on Sundays from April – September 2012 (average 402 visitors per Sunday) and there have been 3,199 Bank Holidays visitors over the same period (average 640 per Bank Holiday).
- The Library Link home library service continues to operate, with deliveries every 2 weeks. There has only been a small increase in usage following the library closures.
- The 'collection sites' have each been stocked with 1,000-2,000 books each. Three of the collection sites have been particularly successful with book loans between April – September 2012 ranging from 1,832 (Halliwell) to 5,264 (Heaton). Two of the collection sites have proven less popular.

The Bolton Civic Trust made the following key points:

- A local inquiry ought to take place, given the scale and nature of the impact of the library closures.
- It was imperative that consideration be given to walking distances when considering the distribution and number of branch libraries.
- The calculation of distances made by Bolton may be incorrect. The differences between straight line distances and distances to be travelled were identified.
- The 'minded-to' decision fails to consider the effect on primary education of the library closures.
- Libraries are important amenities for local communities.

The Save Bolton Libraries Campaign provided a very lengthy submission. The central points made appear to be as follows:

- There is a "resource-based policy of non-intervention".

- The Secretary of State is adopting an incorrect threshold for intervention by directing a local inquiry.
- The right to education under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) ought to be taken into account.
- The powers under section 10 of the 1964 Act are properly to be regarded as duties.
- The promotion of literacy is a significant public policy goal, and the closure of libraries does not assist this objective.
- The availability of IT facilities is a relevant matter under the 1964 Act. Internet access has numerous social benefits and is an integral part of a lawful service under section 7 of the 1964 Act. There has been a drop in IT facilities.
- Libraries are particularly important in deprived areas.
- Libraries ought to work in conjunction with local schools to assist in education, including being co-located where possible.
- There were other library closures in Bolton in 1997. The more recent closures have exacerbated the problems caused by those closures.
- There ought to be more locally located branch libraries.
- The impact of the implementation of the closures has been significant, indeed “dire”. There has also been a reduction in staffing.
- There is anecdotal evidence which requires testing at a local inquiry that claims for an enhanced service at the Central Library are incorrect.
- The mitigation measures taken are minor and insubstantial.
- The collection centres ought not be taken into account when considering whether to direct a local inquiry, but in any event the evidence is mixed and the service is inadequate.
- The consultation and impact assessment carried out by the Council was insufficient and inadequate.
- The Council ought to consider sharing services regionally.
- The Council’s corporate charges as a proportion of the library budget are too high.
- The Council should have considered greater use of volunteers (albeit the Campaign does not support volunteer-run libraries).

Decision

The Secretary of State has now considered the matter in light of the representations received. She has decided not to direct a local inquiry, for the reasons set out below.

The Council continues to offer a comprehensive and efficient library service. There remain a substantial number of council run libraries across the Bolton area. Opening hours have been maintained or improved in many cases, and reductions in other cases have only been modest. Careful thought has been given to ensure that library services continue to be available to residents on an efficient and accessible basis. The changes were made following a public consultation.

There appear to be no breaches of national library policy and no other good reason why an inquiry ought to be commenced.

Not every reduction in library provision will justify a local inquiry. In the present case, the Secretary of State's view is that an inquiry is not appropriate. A local decision was fairly taken following a detailed consultation and impact assessment process. Good quality library services remain available and accessible to the local community, and there is no real doubt that Bolton continues to operate a comprehensive library service, more efficiently provided than before.

Bolton is a metropolitan area, with good public transport. It now has 10 public libraries, including a large central library that is heavily used (now with enhanced opening hours), plus 9 branch libraries. The Council believes that 96% of the local population still live within 2 miles of a library, and that almost the entire borough is within 20 minutes journey to a library, plus walking time to the nearest bus stop. Car ownership is high in Bolton and transport services are provided for the elderly and disabled. There is also a mobile book delivery service for disabled persons who cannot visit fixed libraries. The Secretary of State views this as plainly sufficient to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

The Secretary of State has not taken into account the local collection services that have opened in 5 locations. However, at least 3 of these services are enjoying substantial usage and are proving popular with local residents.

Against this, the Secretary of State has noted that there were significant reductions in library usage figures in the six months following the closures. Some of this change appears to be due to the usage of local collection services instead. There has been a 26% overall drop in opening hours (ignoring collection sites), leading to a 19% drop in issues and 14% drop in visits. The drop in issues and visits has been substantially less than the reduction in opening hours, and markedly less so in the remaining council run libraries (namely a 3% drop in the number of issues and a 1% drop in the number of visits) indicating that the closed libraries were less used and/or migration in usage. This indicates that the efficiency improvements were successfully targeted. The Secretary of State's experience is that such figures tend to improve over time, once residents adjust to library changes. This is borne out by the updated figures for the first 11 months following the closures which indicate that in terms of the 10 council run libraries there was a drop of 1.9% in issues and 0.6% drop in visits compared to the corresponding period for the previous financial year. Accordingly, the Secretary of State does not consider there is any real doubt that Bolton continues to offer a comprehensive library service.

Turning to the main issues raised by the Civic Trust and the Campaign:

- Walking distances are a relevant factor, but do not justify an inquiry. It is not reasonable to expect every person to be within walking distance of a library. Public transport is available to secure access to community facilities. Disabled people who cannot use public transport have access to a delivery service.
- It is not appropriate or necessary to hold an inquiry into the calculation of precise distances to a library. The important issue is whether good quality library facilities remain reasonably accessible to the local population.
- Substantial support has been provided for local schools. All of the primary schools in Bolton are members of the Schools Libraries and Museums Service. The Service provides advice and assistance to schools and provides project loans (collections of 25 different books on themed topics – 3042 loans in 2011/2012), loans of 20 copies of books for classes to read together (487 loans in 2011/2012) and added 4,757 books to its stock in 2011/2012. Further, several of the collection sites are co-located with facilities that are for (or heavily used by) children and young people.

- There is no “resource-based policy of non-intervention”. The Secretary of State’s policy and approach is set out above and is lawful and proper.
- The right to education under the ECHR does not alter the proper approach to whether to order a local inquiry under the 1964 Act. The Convention does not require a specific level of library provision, or alter the approach to be taken under the 1964 Act to the question of whether to order a local inquiry.
- The availability of IT facilities is not a relevant matter under the 1964 Act. However, the Secretary of State agrees that Internet access and IT provision and support has numerous benefits. IT support and usage has remained approximately steady despite the library closures.
- Anecdotal evidence about the Central Library is not a basis on which the Secretary of State thinks it appropriate to order an inquiry. Such substantial evidence as exists tends to indicate that the Central Library is flourishing.
- It is not appropriate to order an inquiry to consider regional sharing of services. It is Bolton’s obligation as library authority under the Act that is under consideration. This is a matter for the Council to pursue with neighbouring local authorities, if it considers it can improve services and efficiency by so doing.
- The Council’s corporate charges are a budget matter for the Council. There is no evidence that they are excessive or are preventing the delivery of a comprehensive library service.

Publication

A copy of this letter will be published on the GOV.UK website.

Ed Vaizey MP
Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries

Appendix B: Neighbourhood Book Collections - Customers 2012-13

CUSTOMERS										
	Halliwell UCAN		Heaton Children's Centre		Oldhams Children's Centre		Orchards Children's Centre		Tonge UCAN	
	Enrolments	Borrowers	Enrolments	Borrowers	Enrolments	Borrowers	Enrolments	Borrowers	Enrolments	Borrowers
April	56	120	4	206	8	51	0	21	25	16
May	26	70	0	172	9	57	0	25	8	20
June	14	61	3	169	5	56	0	16	14	15
July	6	49	7	188	8	60	0	10	5	27
August	23	55	22	184	20	91	0	24	2	23
September	3	43	12	196	7	66	1	14	4	18
October	1	82	6	318	5	93	1	21	5	28
November	1	53	13	219	13	68	0	18	3	15
December	2	39	0	161	0	41	0	10	0	8
January	9	51	4	180	7	53	0	15	3	11
February	5	47	3	187	4	44	0	13	15	13
March	9	44	5	182	10	41	2	41	10	19
TOTAL	155		79		96		2		94	213

Appendix B: Neighbourhood Book Collections Performance 2012-13

STOCK										
	Halliwell UCAN		Heaton Children's Centre		Oldham's Children's Centre		Orchards Children's Centre		Tonge UCAN	
	Loans	Reservations	Loans	Reservations	Loans	Reservations	Loans	Reservations	Loans	Reservations
April	512	93	821	161	186	0	92	22	51	73
May	385	67	735	170	402	0	125	18	101	75
June	267	25	744	105	311	7	61	7	52	3
July	197	51	896	64	363	20	30	2	101	1
August	225	34	1,013	90	579	22	86	8	70	5
September	246	35	1,055	157	348	14	41	2	64	0
October	228	39	1,317	109	359	19	42	4	102	4
November	224	40	1,138	153	343	21	56	6	59	6
December	162	45	825	186	200	16	27	3	21	0
January	180	36	911	214	257	28	41	4	40	4
February	153	44	853	164	170	28	53	10	29	1
March	192	29	964	135	209	17	35	5	72	0
TOTAL	2,971	538	11,272	1,708	3,727	192	689	91	762	172

Appendix B: Neighbourhood Book Collections Performance 2012-13

COMPUTER USE (HOURS)					
	Halliwell UCAN	Heaton Children's Centre	Oldhams Children's Centre	Orchards Children's Centre	Tonge UCAN
	8 PCs	5 PCs	3 PCs	3 PCs	8 PCs
April	510	54	13	17	214
May	600	62	9	14	193
June	619	58	14	26	223
July	819	72	22	41	314
August	996	57	39	145	249
September	827	75	25	77	275
October	1,048	88	115	44	238
November	937	97	81	37	275
December	613	56	47	22	176
January	1,017	102	91	26	272
February	1,001	92	81	24	278
March	1,017	90	80	22	246
TOTAL	10,003	903	618	496	2,954

Appendix C: Visitors to Libraries - 2012-13

Library Network Prior to April 2012												
Location	2011-12					2012-13					Difference	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Number	%
AB	5,671	6,282	5,155	4,836	21,944							
BL	6,913	8,450	7,134	7,275	29,772	7,617	8,114	7,031	5,450	28,212	-1,560	-5%
BR	12,470	13,064	11,412	12,655	49,601	12,832	13,816	13,596	13,085	53,329	3,728	8%
BX	9,620	9,571	9,107	9,041	37,339	7,145	8,629	8,204	8,200	32,178	-5,161	-14%
CH	11,751	11,464	11,479	8,408	43,102							
CL	115,146	121,651	114,845	123,867	475,509	126,963	123,867	123,641	111,319	485,790	10,281	2%
FW	17,457	19,340	15,530	18,615	70,942	20,373	23,007	19,978	19,856	83,214	12,272	17%
HW	24,063	27,887	24,671	24,361	100,982	21,605	23,673	22,130	20,868	88,276	-12,706	-13%
HE	10,031	8,037	7,631	4,213	29,912							
HS	19,894	21,201	20,117	18,870	80,082	17,690	20,059	16,891	14,643	69,283	-10,799	-13%
HO	29,346	33,283	27,950	28,443	119,022	27,363	27,955	26,918	25,002	107,238	-11,784	-10%
ML	8,906	7,679	6,219	0	22,804							
OG	7,143	8,218	7,334	1,867	24,562							
LL	16,574	17,219	16,260	16,120	66,173	14,498	15,280	15,671	15,035	60,484	-5,689	-9%
WH	22,383	25,134	22,997	24,862	95,376	22,086	24,222	21,365	19,535	87,208	-8,168	-9%
TOTAL	317,368	338,480	307,841	303,433	1,267,122	278,172	288,622	275,425	252,993	1,095,212	-171,910	-14%

Appendix C: Visitors to Libraries - 2012-13

Library Network Post-April 2012												
Location	2011-12					2012-13					Difference	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Number	%
BL	6,913	8,450	7,134	7,275	29,772	7,617	8,114	7,031	5,450	28,212	-1,560	-5%
BR	12,470	13,064	11,412	12,655	49,601	12,832	13,816	13,596	13,085	53,329	3,728	8%
BX	9,620	9,571	9,107	9,041	37,339	7,145	8,629	8,204	8,200	32,178	-5,161	-14%
CL	115,146	121,651	114,845	123,867	475,509	126,963	123,867	123,641	111,319	485,790	10,281	2%
FW	17,457	19,340	15,530	18,615	70,942	20,373	23,007	19,978	19,856	83,214	12,272	17%
HW	24,063	27,887	24,671	24,361	100,982	21,605	23,673	22,130	20,868	88,276	-12,706	-13%
HS	19,894	21,201	20,117	18,870	80,082	17,690	20,059	16,891	14,643	69,283	-10,799	-13%
HO	29,346	33,283	27,950	28,443	119,022	27,363	27,955	26,918	25,002	107,238	-11,784	-10%
LL	16,574	17,219	16,260	16,120	66,173	14,498	15,280	15,671	15,035	60,484	-5,689	-9%
WH	22,383	25,134	22,997	24,862	95,376	22,086	24,222	21,365	19,535	87,208	-8,168	-9%
TOTAL	273,866	296,800	270,023	284,109	1,124,798	278,172	288,622	275,425	252,993	1,095,212	-29,586	-3%

In 11 - 12 a difference of -9% was recorded for visitors to Libraries.

Appendix D: Loans – Library Network Prior to April 2012

Library Network Prior to April 2012												
Location	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	2011-12 Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	2012-13 Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Difference Loans	%
AB	9,498	9,991	7,187	6,770	33,446							
BL	5,883	6,210	5,582	5,583	23,258	5,308	5,192	4,841	4,468	19,809	-3,449	-15%
BR	12,255	12,346	10,883	11,072	46,556	12,343	12,347	11,557	10,759	47,006	450	1%
BX	9,879	10,701	9,714	9,696	39,990	10,202	9,601	9,258	8,616	37,677	-2,313	-6%
CH	6,563	6,652	5,109	2,957	21,281							
CL	72,734	76,133	69,343	70,478	288,688	76,626	74,210	70,694	67,674	289,204	516	0%
FW	17,146	16,519	13,814	14,571	62,050	15,288	15,004	14,210	13,680	58,182	-3,868	-6%
HW	23,950	25,827	23,004	22,771	95,552	24,198	23,605	22,238	20,935	90,976	-4,576	-5%
HE	13,504	14,460	11,125	7,849	46,938							
HS	11,392	12,226	11,100	11,835	46,553	11,466	11,058	10,084	9,870	42,478	-4,075	-9%
HO	23,420	23,401	21,276	20,729	88,826	23,468	22,422	21,452	20,393	87,735	-1,091	-1%
LL	14,320	13,614	12,252	11,765	51,951	12,405	11,983	11,349	10,790	46,527	-5,424	-10%
ML	5,281	5,558	3,892	843	15,574							
OG	7,500	7,384	4,765	3,356	23,005							
WH	21,175	23,950	16,775	19,884	81,784	21,159	20,760	19,762	18,692	80,373	-1,411	-2%
TOTAL	254,500	264,972	225,821	220,159	965,452	212,463	206,182	195,445	185,877	799,967	-165,485	-17%

Appendix D: Loans – Library Network Post April 2012

Library Network Post-April 2012												
Location	2011-12					2012-13					Difference	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Loans	%
BL	5,883	6,210	5,582	5,583	23,258	5,308	5,192	4,841	4,468	19,809	-3,449	-15%
BR	12,255	12,346	10,883	11,072	46,556	12,343	12,347	11,557	10,759	47,006	450	1%
BX	9,879	10,701	9,714	9,696	39,990	10,202	9,601	9,258	8,616	37,677	-2,313	-6%
CL	72,734	76,133	69,343	70,478	288,688	76,626	74,210	70,694	67,674	289,204	516	0%
FW	17,146	16,519	13,814	14,571	62,050	15,288	15,004	14,210	13,680	58,182	-3,868	-6%
HW	23,950	25,827	23,004	22,771	95,552	24,198	23,605	22,238	20,935	90,976	-4,576	-5%
HS	11,392	12,226	11,100	11,835	46,553	11,466	11,058	10,084	9,870	42,478	-4,075	-9%
HO	23,420	23,401	21,276	20,729	88,826	23,468	22,422	21,452	20,393	87,735	-1,091	-1%
LL	14,320	13,614	12,252	11,765	51,951	12,405	11,983	11,349	10,790	46,527	-5,424	-10%
WH	21,175	23,950	16,775	19,884	81,784	21,159	20,760	19,762	18,692	80,373	-1,411	-2%
TOTAL	212,154	220,927	193,743	198,384	825,208	212,463	206,182	195,445	185,877	799,967	-25,241	-3%

Appendix D: Loans – Neighbourhood Book Collections 2012 - 13

Neighbourhood Book Collections					
Location	2012-13				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Halliwell	1,164	668	614	525	2,971
Heaton	2,300	2,964	3,280	2,728	11,272
Oldhams	899	1,290	902	636	3,727
Orchards	278	157	125	129	689
Tonge	204	235	182	141	762
TOTAL	4,845	5,314	5,103	4,159	19,421

When the data for the library network and the Neighbourhood Book Collections is combined the total loans for 2012-13 are 819,388. This is a difference of -15% on the figure for 2011-12. In 11 - 12 a difference of -11% was recorded for loans.

Appendix E: ICT Use – Library Network Prior to April 2012

Library Network Prior to April 2012												
Location	2011-12					2012-13					Difference Hours	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Number	%
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours		
AB	430	497	456	406	1,788							
BL	411	408	413	424	1,656	341	440	334	375	1,490	-166	-10%
BR	2,518	3,202	2,070	2,662	10,452	2,450	2,308	2,452	2,068	9,278	-1,174	-11%
BX	625	628	723	898	2,874	487	551	570	523	2,131	-743	-26%
CH	1,345	1,505	1,510	882	5,242							
CL	15,001	15,814	17,914	19,727	68,457	18,638	20,600	20,515	21,587	81,340	12,884	19%
FW	2,698	2,956	3,210	3,276	12,140	2,765	3,038	2,925	3,023	11,751	-389	-3%
HW	1,922	1,792	1,641	1,920	7,275	1,751	1,805	1,405	1,427	6,388	-887	-12%
HE	478	434	459	393	1,764							
HS	2,642	2,709	2,787	2,884	11,023	2,648	2,976	2,764	2,293	10,681	-342	-3%
HO	2,487	2,811	2,517	2,872	10,687	2,149	2,056	2,098	1,977	8,280	-2,407	-23%
LL	613	744	683	799	2,839	642	770	708	693	2,813	-26	-1%
ML	496	513	342	43	1,394							
OG	1,345	1,068	1,071	607	4,092							
WH	1,971	2,135	2,235	2,213	8,553	1,949	1,680	1,770	1,737	7,136	-1,418	-17%
TOTAL	34,981	37,216	38,031	40,007	150,236	33,820	36,224	35,541	35,704	141,289	-8,947	-6%

Appendix E: ICT Use – Library Network Post-April 2012

Library Network Post-April 2012												
Location	2011-12					2012-13					Difference Hours	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Number	%
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours		
BL	411	408	413	424	1,656	341	440	334	375	1,490	-166	-10%
BR	2,518	3,202	2,070	2,662	10,452	2,450	2,308	2,452	2,068	9,278	-1,174	-11%
BX	625	628	723	898	2,874	487	551	570	523	2,131	-743	-26%
CL	15,001	15,814	17,914	19,727	68,457	18,638	20,600	20,515	21,587	81,340	12,884	19%
FW	2,698	2,956	3,210	3,276	12,140	2,765	3,038	2,925	3,023	11,751	-389	-3%
HW	1,922	1,792	1,641	1,920	7,275	1,751	1,805	1,405	1,427	6,388	-887	-12%
HS	2,642	2,709	2,787	2,884	11,023	2,648	2,976	2,764	2,293	10,681	-342	-3%
HO	2,487	2,811	2,517	2,872	10,687	2,149	2,056	2,098	1,977	8,280	-2,407	-23%
LL	613	744	683	799	2,839	642	770	708	693	2,813	-26	-1%
WH	1,971	2,135	2,235	2,213	8,553	1,949	1,680	1,770	1,737	7,136	-1,418	-17%
TOTAL	30,888	33,199	34,193	37,676	135,956	33,820	36,224	35,541	35,704	141,289	5,333	4%

Appendix E: ICT Use – Library Network Post-April 2012

Neighbourhood Book Collections					
Location	2012-13				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
HALLIWELL	1,729	2,642	2,598	3,035	10,004
HEATON	174	204	241	284	903
OLDHAMS	36	86	243	252	617
ORCHARDS	57	263	103	72	495
TONGE	630	838	689	796	2,953
TOTAL	2,626	4,033	3,874	4,439	14,972

When the data for the library network and the Neighbourhood Book Collections is combined the total number of computer use hours for 2012-13 is 156,261. This is an increase of 4% on usage during 2011-12. In 11 - 12 a difference of -4% was recorded for ICT use.

Appendix F: Crescent Activity Sundays and Bank Holidays 2012-13

	Visits - Sundays					Visits - Bank Holidays*					2012-13 Total Sunday and Bank Holiday Visits
Location	2012-13					2012-13					
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	
Aquarium	1,016	1,393	1,667	1,985	6,061	1,069	321	0	0	1,390	7,451
Library	4,558	5,487	5,448	5,528	21,021	2,654	545	0	0	3,199	24,220
Museum	2,485	2,833	3,691	4,947	13,955	2,592	706	0	0	3,298	17,253
TOTAL	8,059	9,712	10,806	12,460	41,037	6,315	1,572	0	0	7,887	48,923

	Loans				
Location	2012-13				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Sundays	2,573	3,887	3,702	3,907	14,069
Bank holidays*	1,118	340	0	0	1,458
TOTAL	3,691	4,227	3,702	3,907	15,527

Appendix F: Crescent Activity Sundays and Bank Holidays 2012-13 (Continued)

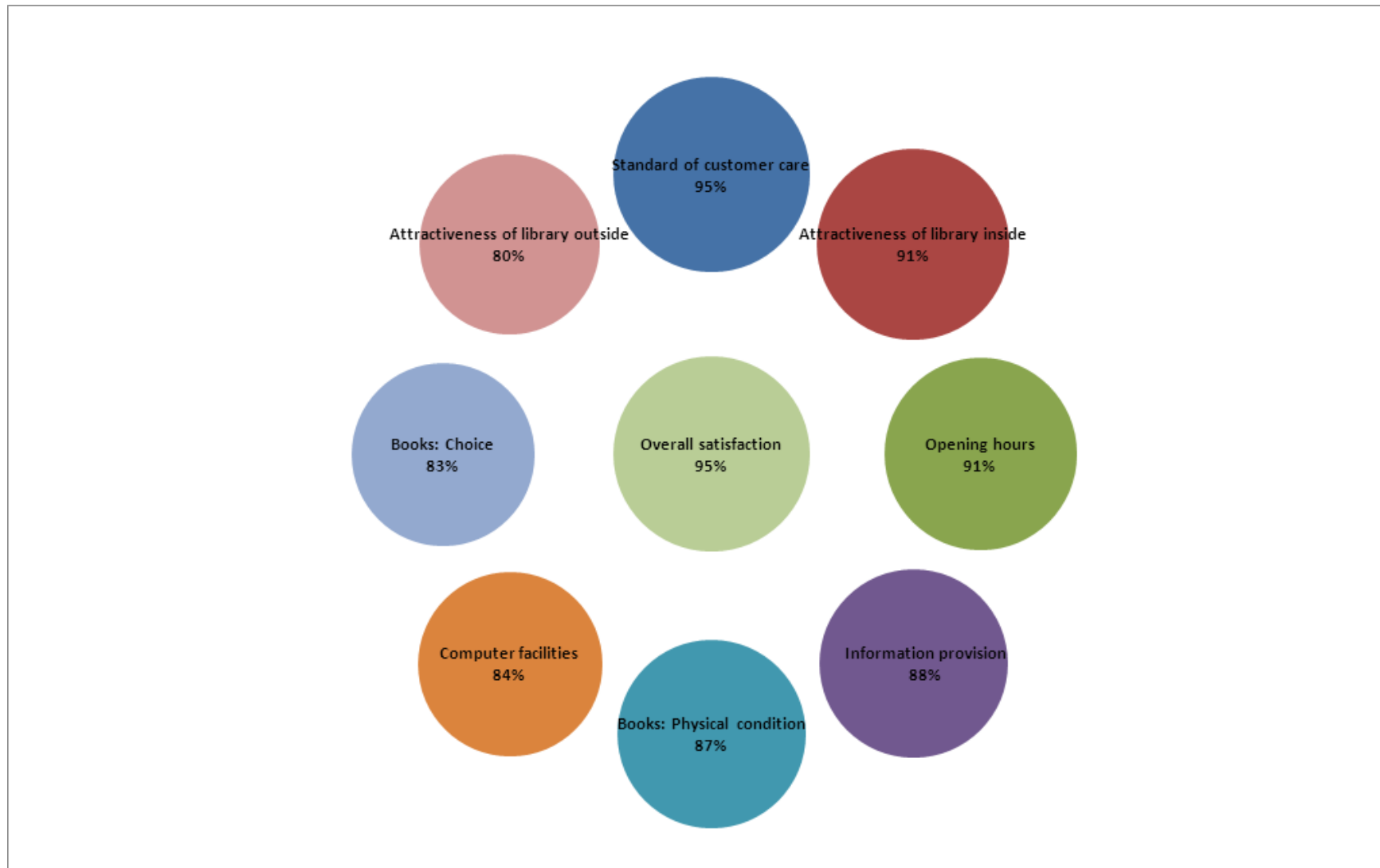
	ICT Use				
Location	2012-13				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Sundays	807	1,387	1,350	1,443	4,987
Bank holidays*	416	116	0	0	532
TOTAL	1,222	1,504	1,350	1,443	5,519

*The Central Library & Museum was open from 10.00am to 4.00pm on the following **bank holidays** in 2012-13

- Monday 9 April
- Monday 7 May
- Monday 4 June
- Tuesday 5 June
- Monday 27 August

Appendix G: Public Library User Satisfaction

The following illustration provides a visualisation of the satisfaction questions. The scores shown are calculated by adding the result for the top two options, very good and good. The circles are positioned according to this combined result, with the highest scoring factor at 12 o'clock, in this case Standard of customer care



Appendix H
Equality Impact Assessment
Part 1: Screening Form

Bolton Council

Title of report or proposal:
12 month review of the new library network

Department:	Chief Executive's Department
Section/SIAP unit:	Library, Museum and Archive Service
Date:	July, 2013

This report is for decision and is therefore subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The following questions have been completed to ensure that this proposal, procedure or working practice does not discriminate against any particular social group. Details of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment have also been included in the main body of the report.

Equality Impact Assessment Questions

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes:

In 2011, as a result of the need for significant budget savings, the council agreed to review Bolton's library network. This decision was taken in the context of the council's philosophy towards the savings, in particular the need to protect the most vulnerable children and adults. As such, savings were to be sought from universal services, including the library network.

In October 2011, following two rounds of public consultation, the Council's Executive approved a new model for Bolton Library Service. This reduced the number of libraries within the borough from 15 to 10, to deliver a saving of £407,000 from a combination of staffing and building costs. The reconfigured service has Central Library as the hub of the network, with three tiers of community libraries.

In November 2011, a new operating structure for the Library and Museum Service was approved. It was agreed that the changes implemented to the Public Library Network would be reviewed at 6, 12 and 18 month intervals. This report of 16th July to the Executive Cabinet Member – Leader's Portfolio sets out the findings of the 12 month review (April 2012 to March, 2013) and provides a further update to the six month review which went to Cabinet Member on 13

December 2012.

On 31st May, The Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries wrote to the Leader of the Council. The letter stated that the Secretary of State would not be directing a local enquiry into the changes to the public library network in Bolton and that on assessment 'the Council continues to offer a comprehensive and efficient library service' The letter is attached to this report at **Appendix A**.

It should be stressed that detailed EIAs have previously been completed on the new service model, which were published alongside the reports of 12 October and 23 November 2011, referenced above. This EIA now looks at the equality impact following 12 months of implementation. This twelve monthly review and EIA of the new library network in Bolton picks up the priorities and next steps from the six monthly report, shown as bullet points at the start of each section, and details the progress made in identified areas of delivery. It also presents the annual performance data. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months in order to better monitor long term usage trends.

2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

The main stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the new library network are:

- The public – particularly those in the 5 areas where a library branch closed under the review
- Staff
- Partners – in particular, those who are involved in running Neighbourhood Book Collections

3. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The report provides a review of performance of the library network twelve months after implementation of the new service (April, 2012 to March 2013). This tests the impact of the new service; the effect of the mitigating steps which were taken as a result of the review and picks up the priorities and next steps sited in the six monthly report. Performance will continue to be kept under review.

The council's duties under national legislation underpinned the development of the new model of library service. This focused in particular on the duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act; and the 2010 Equality Act, which requires the council to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups of people
- Foster good relations between different groups of people

In October 2011, following extensive public consultation, the council's preferred option was approved. This involved moving from 15 to 10 library branches, with the closure of five libraries – at Astley Bridge, Castle Hill, Heaton, Highfield and Oxford Grove. The following key concerns were raised during consultation:

- Concerns about the 'community impact' of the loss of library buildings
- Detriment of distance travelled for some people if a library is closed
- Concerns about the impact on education and learning, especially for children
- The needs of elderly and disabled people, who might find the extra distance or cost problematic

The following mitigating steps were identified following the public consultation, and have subsequently been implemented or further developed:

- Introduction of extra opening hours, namely at the Central Library and Museum building
- Development and continuation of specific service initiatives to children and young people
- Promotion of Library Link (at home service)
- Providing better access to specialist services at Central Library
- Free requests for stock holdings in Bolton with delivery to nearest library or Neighbourhood Book Collection
- Increased use of technology and digital services
- Establishment of Neighbourhood Book Collections (NBC) in the proximity of a closed library with partners already operating in those communities

In light of data and feedback collected 6 months after implementation, a series of next steps were identified. This 12 month report sets out a detailed analysis of performance against each of these aspects of the service and addresses the next steps for each of these areas identified in the six monthly report. In headline terms, between April, 2012 and March, 2013 (when comparing the new network of 10 libraries with the previous network of 15 libraries):

- Visitors decreased by 14%, when compared to the previous network of 15.
- Loans decreased by 17% when compared to the previous network of 15. It should be stressed that loans have been in decline nationally and locally for some years
- Although the performance in the visitor and loans indicators has reduced, this has not been in proportion to the percentage reduction in opening hours of 26%. This proportion reduction is significantly less in the new network which indicates that the closed libraries were less used and/or migration of use. The Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries agrees that the 'efficiency improvements were successfully targeted'.
- Computer usage has decreased by 6%, when compared to the same period last year. However, when the neighbourhood book collections are taken into account, overall usage has increased by 4%

In terms of the implementation and next steps from the six monthly report (next steps are bulleted and italicised at the start of each section):

Additional opening at Central Library and Museum

- *Repeat visitor survey by March 2013*
- *Continue to promote the services available on Sundays/Bank holidays as part of the Town Centre Offer*

Opening hours at Central Library, as the hub of the network, have been extended to include Sundays and bank holidays. The opening hours of the Museum and Aquarium have also been extended to include Sundays and bank holidays

In 2013 visitor surveys were carried out. In both surveys the majority of visitors had visited the building before. Over the last twelve months, there have been 41,037 Sunday visitors to the three facilities; and 7,887 bank holiday visitors. Feedback from visitor surveys has been broadly positive – for example, because it opens up family facilities for more time, provides more time for revision in the library, and links well to town centre shopping and events.

The Service continues to promote Sunday and bank holiday opening and has developed a family plan of activities that combines with Town Centre events.

It is recognised that not all customers will find it suitable to use the service on a Sunday/Bank

Holiday, and some members of the public have expressed their concern about the impact which the changes may have on those for whom these are days of religious observance. It should be stressed that the services remain open at other times of the week, for those who do not wish to use them on Sundays and bank holidays

Staffing has been arranged using staff who are contracted to – and also those staff who volunteered to - work weekends and bank holidays, to mitigate the impact on staff

Services to schools, children and young people

- *Develop a joined up offer for families at the Crescent which links library and museum resources through activities and trails including holiday and Super Saturday events.*
- *Continue to develop and promote the school library and museum offer to create a 'wraparound' experience whereby teachers and pupils can borrow a project loan, participate in a museum workshop, handle objects from a museum loan box and use online resources to enhance their knowledge and enjoyment of different subject areas.*

Over the last twelve months, activities have been clearly linked to collections or to exhibitions and 12 new family trails have been produced at the Crescent over the last year.

Targeted events to increase engagement of local residents especially children and young people around the Hall I'th Wood estate have been introduced seeing an increase in visitors to the site.

A new museum education offer was introduced in September, 2012 after consultation with teachers. This incorporates the principles of inspiring learning and learning outside the classroom.

Education and learning opportunities for children and young people continue to be a priority, and events, activities and initiatives for children and young people continue to be run across the network, including at the NBC locations. Positive feedback has been received regarding the Museum workshops and as a result of stock given to schools from the closed libraries.

Further information on these areas is set out in the body of the report

Library Link

- *Promote with partners such as the NHS, Age UK Bolton and other community organisations the good practice that the Library Link service offers in order to ensure that those in greatest need can access it*

Library Link is an important part of the mitigation for people who may be unable to get to their nearest library as a result of the changes to the network, since it provides a fortnightly home delivery service for those who are unable to get to a library branch and do not have friends or relatives who can collect books for them

An increase in take up of this service was expected following the implementation of the new service. Over the last twelve months, forty-two new customers have joined the service following the changes (a significant increase from the review at six month) from a total of 330 customers.

A new engagement process has been established which enables staff to work with partners such as the NHS, Age UK to disseminate information about the Library Service ensuring that those in greatest need can access the service. Staffing support for this service remains in place.

Requests, technology and digital services

- *Standardise RFID self-service system across the network by June 2013*
- *Continue to promote public library role in digital inclusion.*
- *Develop targeted ICT training and support sessions to reflect the local authority's and the Government's drive to digital channels.*
- *Continue to deliver and promote information and enquiry services across the Library and Museum Services via a range of channels, including social media*
- *Standardise the way in which enquiries are handled by all library staff and establish service standards and performance indicators*
- *Utilise Lagan, the Council's CRM system, to record enquiries received by Ask Bolton Libraries*
- *Establish contacts with council colleagues and external partners to promote the service and seek ways to assist with delivery of information to their service users*
- *Participate in the regional shared information services agenda*

People can continue to request items at service points across the network, including at NBCs. Requests for locally held items continue to be free, and there continues to be a small administration charge for items borrowed through the inter-library lending scheme

Self-service issue technology is in place at the Central Library and four other branches as well as at each of the NBCs. During the 11/12 financial year, 54.4% of library issues were self service transactions. In 2012, this rose to 65.5%- a 20.4% increase on the previous year.

In April 2013, the Service became a member of an AGMA consortium for a shared library management system. This joint procurement will deliver cost savings and improve functionality.

An extensive digital offer continues to be in place, and can be accessed across the network. Between April 2012 and March, 2013 there was a 4% rise in computer usage compared to the same period last year.

In 2012-13 the library service saw an increase in the use of computers by those applying for online government services and job seeking. Using information provided by Job Centre Plus the Ask Bolton Libraries team has created guidance notes and briefing sessions for staff in areas such as on applying for Jobseekers Allowance Online, using Universal Jobmatch, setting up email accounts. The service is continuing to work with Job Centre Plus and other organisations to ensure that staff have the skills to assist customers.

SCL is working with partners to publicise the role of libraries in providing online information, as well as to identify what additional technology is required so that customers can easily navigate online resources and to ensure that the quality of information offered in UK public libraries is consistent.

In April 2013 Ask Bolton Libraries fully adopted Lagan, the Council's CRM system to record and monitor enquiries received by the enquiry service. This will enable staff to gather data and measure performance using data from a single source. The Team also sends and receives information via Twitter.

Enquiries received has grown steadily. It is not clear how many customers from the five closed libraries are using Ask Bolton Libraries, as their information and enquiry service because this information is not asked of those making enquiries of the service.

Neighbourhood Book Collections (NBCs)

- *Install exterior and interior signage*
- *Continue with regular partner review meetings*
- *Extend library promotional activity with partners in Neighbourhood Book Collections such as 'Six book challenge' and 'Summer Reading Challenge'*
- *Monitor usage and gather customer feedback*

The NBCs were established as important mitigation for the five areas whose library branches closed as a result of the review. While not replacement libraries, people can borrow and request items, make enquiries, and use ICT at NBCs

This is likely to be particularly useful for people who may be unable or unwilling to travel long distances to access the services, for example because they have limited mobility as a result of ill health, disability or older age; because they have young children; because they do not have access to a car or the cost of public transport is prohibitive; or because they are a young person

NBCs have been established in community buildings in each of the five areas where library buildings closed – Halliwell and Tonge UCANs, and Orchards, Oldhams and Heaton Children's Centres. The building which previously housed Heaton library has been retained for community use, to respond to concerns about a lack of community facilities in Heaton

Resources have been put in place to ensure that the NBCs are appropriately stocked (based on the needs/interests of each area), and staffed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs are open for more hours each week than the previous library facility in each affected area. A range of activities and events have been developed at the NBC venues, often using the book collections to support this e.g. story time sessions, healthy living sessions

Customer feedback continues to be positive, for example reflecting the convenience of the NBCs, and expressing that the service on offer was better than anticipated.

Library Network Services

- *Carry out targeted activity and membership drive in identified areas of the borough where take up of services could be increased.*
- *Develop a plan / programme to review offer to customers with regard to information, advice and support*
- *Carry out Public Library User Survey (PLUS) by end of March 2013*

A number of adult, children and family events and activities have taken place in libraries across the network and a programme of family activities has been developed at the Crescent.

Co-location of Access Bolton points at Blackrod, Horwich Farnworth and Little Lever are now well established. Opportunities to develop this partnership across the network are being considered.

A survey in March 2013 completed across the ten sites showed that Libraries had helped 10% of respondents with personal finance or consumer matters, 20% with job seeking. Of those who completed the survey 30% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability, 14% were unemployed and 35% retired.

Overall, 40% of respondents provided feedback, comments or suggestions. CIPFA's summary of these, across the whole network, reads as follows: "In the main, people were very happy with their library; Bolton libraries were widely regarded as being an essential part of the community. Bolton library staff are to be commended. A significant proportion of comments related to the staff who were seen as welcoming, friendly, efficient and helpful, with nothing being too much

trouble.”

The data and feedback to date suggests that the infrastructure of the new service has been well developed and set up, and that this has been a time of adjustment for the service and its users. Continuing to promote and increase take up of services across the network, including the NBCs, and Library Link for those who are eligible, will remain a priority over the coming year.

4. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

	Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so what?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified adverse impact
Race	The library network continues to provide books in alternative languages.	Should customers be unable to access stock in alternative languages, then there could be an adverse impact. However, these items continue to be available through the service.	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – including the provision of stock in alternative languages - and the council's statutory requirements.	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is both comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. Customers can continue to access alternative language stock at service points across the network. No particular issues in relation to stock in alternative languages have been identified over the last twelve months.</p> <p>It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months</p>
Religion	The extended (Sunday and Bank Holiday) opening hours at Central Library, Museum and Aquarium have been put in place to enhance access to the hub of the network. However, some members of the public have expressed dissatisfaction with	It is recognised that the Sunday opening of Central Library may not be considered suitable for people for whom Sunday is a day of religious observance.	The extended opening hours have been put in place to increase the accessibility of the service for customers from across Bolton's communities. This may have particular benefits for those whose working arrangements mean that they are unable to use the service during the week; or for those who wish to access the services as a family during the weekend.	<p>Library services can be accessed across the network throughout the week, with various opening hours in place across the tiers of the service.</p> <p>It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months</p>

	Sunday opening, due to this being a day of religious observance for those of Christian faith.		While it is recognised that not all customers will find these opening hours suitable, Sunday and bank holiday opening has so far proven popular, with 48,924 visits during the last twelve months.	
Disability	<p>Concerns were raised during the review of the service about access for customers who may be unwilling or unable to travel further/to an alternative branch following the closure of their local branch.</p> <p>The NBCs are now operational in accessible community buildings within each of the five areas where a library branch closed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs have longer opening hours than the previous branches.</p>	<p>Of the five areas where a branch closed, considerations around disability are likely to be most relevant to Tonge, the Orchards, and Halliwell – where poor health and disability are in greater than average prevalence – and Heaton, which has an older than average population.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library branch closures, for example through the NBCs and the Library Link service, as discussed in the right hand column.</p>	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – in particular those who have a disability or infirmity which may affect their ability to access the service - and the council's statutory requirements.	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>NBCs are now operational in the five neighbourhoods where a library branch closed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs have longer opening hours than the previous branches.</p> <p>The library link home delivery service continues to be available for those who are housebound or unable to physically visit a library building. Actions put in place since the six month review, has included a new engagement process which enables staff to work with partners such as the NHS, Age UK to disseminate information ensuring that those in greatest need can access the service. Staffing support for this service remains in place. Forty-two new customers have joined the service following the changes.</p>

				<p>The promotion of Library Link and the NBCs are priorities for the coming months.</p> <p>In addition, large print stock remains available across the network and, where requested, this has been increased at NBCs.</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to disability. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months.</p>
Gender (including gender reassignment)	Traditionally, the library service is used more by women than by men. For this reason, women are more likely to have been affected by the changes to the service than men	Women are more likely to have been affected by the changes to the service than men, because they make up the majority of the customer base. However, significant steps have been taken to design a network which continues to be accessible to people from across Bolton	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.	The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. No particular issues in relation to gender have arisen during implementation. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months
Age	The impact on children and young people; and on older people was of particular concern through the public consultation.	Of the five areas where a library branch has closed, age is a particularly relevant consideration for Tonge and Halliwell, where the population is younger than the borough average; and	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to ensure that children and young people and older</p>

		<p>Heaton, which has a higher than average older population.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library branch closures, as discussed in the right hand column and at this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to age.</p>	<p>make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – particularly children, young people and older people - and the council's statutory requirements.</p>	<p>people are not excluded from service provision. Steps include increased opening hours at Central Library, Museum and Aquarium – which has proved particularly popular with families; the establishment of NBCs; and the ongoing use of Library Link. In addition, community activities continue to be held across the network.</p> <p>In addition, a series of actions coming out of the six month report have enhanced this service. For example, a new museum education offer informed by local teachers, was introduced in September, 2012</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to age. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months</p>
Sexuality	<p>While little information is available on sexual orientation within Bolton's communities, no particular concerns with regard to sexuality have been identified during implementation.</p>	<p>No adverse impact has been identified in relation to sexuality to date.</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months</p>

<p>Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity)</p>	<p>Considerations around caring status are closely linked to issues around disability and age – i.e. where a person provides care for a child or young person; or an adult who has a disability or infirmity. Issues relating to disability and age are set out in the respective sections of this table, above.</p>	<p>Of the five areas affected by library closures, Astley Bridge and Tonge have a higher than average proportion of people who care for someone who has a long-term illness or disability. Tonge and Halliwell have a younger than average population, meaning that there is likely to be a greater proportion of houses with dependent children.</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library closures. The needs of older people, children and young people, and people who have a disability – and those who care for them - have been of particular concern, and mitigation such as NBCs and Library Link are particularly important.</p> <p>As a result of the six month review, priorities were established to develop a joined up offer for families at the Crescent in line with Council priorities. As part of this work, 12 new family trails have been produced at the Crescent over the last year.</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to caring status. It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>No particular concerns with regard to marriage and civil partnership have been identified during implementation</p>	<p>No adverse impact has been identified in relation to marriage and civil partnership to date.</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. On the whole, customer feedback during the first six months has been positive and constructive; it is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months.</p>

			meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.	
Socio-economic	Concerns about geographical accessibility; accessibility for those who do not have a car or cannot afford to travel to a new library branch; and for those on low incomes who rely on free library services such as ICT, were key concerns through the public consultation.	Of the five areas where a library branch has closed Tonge, the Orchards and Halliwell serve areas with high socio-economic deprivation. Astley Bridge and Heaton serve some pockets of disadvantage.	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – particularly for those who are on low incomes and/or living in areas of socio-economic deprivation - and the council's statutory requirements.	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>The NBCs – while not replacements libraries - were an important part of the mitigation for the areas of high socio-economic affected by the library closures, since they ensure that access to library services remains available in the affected neighbourhoods.</p> <p>As a result of the six month review a number of priorities were identified across the service. For example, Job Centre Plus and the Ask Bolton Libraries team has created guidance notes and briefing sessions for staff in areas such as on applying for Jobseekers Allowance Online, using Universal Jobmatch, setting up email accounts to assist service users.</p> <p>Importantly, the NBCs include free ICT provision, and staff continue to support people to get online across the network as a whole. Furthermore, by basing the NBCs at community buildings, the library services have been brought together in one place with partner provision. The</p>

				<p>NBCs are each running community activities, based on the needs and interest of their communities.</p> <p>It is proposed that the service model be reviewed again at 24 months.</p>
Other comments or issues	<p><i>Staff</i></p> <p>The implementation of the new library model has had an impact on staff – both in reductions to overall staffing numbers and structures; and in relation to how, when and where staff work. Across the service as a whole, staffing numbers have reduced, and this has been managed through voluntary leavers and vacancy management. Care has been taken to work with staff as far as possible and practical, to manage the implementation of the changes and to keep staff informed.</p>			
<p>Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate.</p> <p>If you have undertaken consultation as part of the proposal, the consultation manager will upload it on to the corporate database.</p>			<p><i>Evidence used:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management information such as visitor numbers, loans data, ICT usage etc. • Information on events and activities across the network • Customer feedback 	

5.a Are there any gaps in your evidence or conclusions that make it difficult for you to quantify the potential adverse impact?

The analysis set out in the report and EIA has been based on detailed performance information from across the library network, and feedback from customers about the new model.

As agreed in 2011, the implementation of the new model of service delivery will be kept under review. Detailed performance data and customer feedback will continue to be captured, and performance will next be formally reviewed. Subject to Cabinet Member approval, the service model will be reviewed again at 24 months.

5.b If so, please explain how you will explore the proposal in greater depth or please explain why no further action is required at this time.

Please see 5a, above.

You may wish to consider undertaking secondary data analysis, further consultation or research or investigating best practice. If you are planning to undertake further consultation or research as a result of this EIA, please contact the Consultation Manager on ext. 1083.

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Departmental Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjustments to remove barriers / promote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – proceed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and rethink - the EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report Officer

Name: John Rowlands

Signature: JR

Date and Contact No: July 2013

Departmental Equalities Lead Officer

Name: Kate Smith

Signature: KS

Date and Contact No: July, 2013