SUMMARY

This report summarises the performance of Kingston and Tudor Drive libraries in 2010/11 against the objectives set out in the Kingston Plan: Kingston’s Vision for 2020, the Cultural Strategy 2008-2012, the Children and Young People’s Plan 2009-13 and Neighbourhood Community Plans. The report also sets out the specific achievements of the library service in Kingston Town Neighbourhood. The Service overall has increased its work with children and young people and has seen the introduction of e-books and e-audio. A new Library Management System is being introduced in conjunction with 15 other library services including three neighbouring boroughs. Kingston Library had the highest increase in library membership and children’s issues in the Borough and the Community Library Service continues to deliver books and talking books to housebound residents and various residential home schemes. The report also notes how the Library Service has responded to budget pressures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that

1. The performance information for 2010 / 11 is noted;
2. The improvement plans for 2011/12 are noted.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To provide information on the performance of Neighbourhood libraries in 2010/11.

BACKGROUND

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the performance of Kingston and Tudor Drive libraries in 2010/11.

2. Whilst the Library Service is overseen at a strategic level by the Executive Member for Education for All, Cllr Liz Green, each Neighbourhood has responsibility for branch libraries and library halls operating within their neighbourhoods. Libraries are part of the social fabric of Neighbourhoods providing welcoming, neutral and safe places for communities to come together and develop the ties that are essential for local well being, quality of life and community cohesion. As social, cultural and learning hubs Kingston and Tudor Drive libraries will contribute to the Kingston Town Community Plan priorities when they are agreed.

3. The performance of Kingston’s Library Service in 2010/11 is against the backdrop of proposed large scale closures of libraries in London and across the country as a result of cuts in government funding to local authorities. The recommissioning of
Library Service Strategic Services in 2010/11 contributed to savings of £172,000. A one off 50% cut in the Book Fund delivered further savings of £160,000 for 2011/12.

4. The One Council Customer First and Commissioning projects include all the universal services of choice within Neighbourhoods. For the Library & Heritage Service work streams include:
   - Implementation of a new Library Management System
   - Re-commissioning of the Heritage Service
   - A review of library assets alongside other Neighbourhood assets such as youth centres
   - Investigation of the shared management of Library & Heritage services and other alternative governance options with Sutton and Richmond
   - The relocation of the Local History & Archive Service from the North Kingston Centre by September 2013.

OVERVIEW OF LIBRARY PERFORMANCE IN 2010/11

5. The Library Service continued to develop in 2010-11 with growth in several areas including:
   - 1% increase in overall issues
   - 4% increase in children’s issues
   - 8% increase in youth issues
   - 9% increase in new members

6. The standout performance in 2010/11 was work with children and young people, a priority for the Library Service, with significant increases in issues, attendances at literacy activities such as Baby Rhymetimes and participation in the Summer Reading Challenge. The increase in youth issues reflects the strong programme of reading related activities delivered through secondary schools such as Youth Book Groups, the Literary Quiz, the Youth Book Award and the Writer in Residence for Young People. Children’s issues now represent 42% of total library issues while children and young people aged 0-17 represent just 22% of the overall borough population.

7. The main area of service innovation in 2010/11 was the introduction of e-books and e-audio. Digital technologies have the potential to transform library services in the future, breaking down barriers, bringing libraries into the 21st century and meeting the needs of a new generation of library users. There is a growing audience for e-services and there are currently 1200 items available for users to download, read online or listen to. A wide range of online reference resources give customers access to up to date information 24/7. The most heavily used online reference resource is Ancestry reflecting a strong interest in family history. Online renewals and reservations are increasing year on year with more and more customers going online to manage their library account.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: KINGSTON LIBRARY
8. A selection of performance data relating to Kingston and Tudor Drive libraries is set out below. Full details and commentary on the performance of all libraries is available in the report Kingston Library & Heritage Service: Key Performance Indicators 2010/11 which has been circulated to councillors and is available on the website at: http://www.kingston.gov.uk/browse/leisure/libraries/documents_and_plans.htm

9. Despite the three month unplanned closure of Kingston Library following the theft of lead from the roof and the resultant water damage to the interior of the library, it performed strongly against a range of Key Performance Indicators:

- 4% increase in issues
- 28% increase CD issues
- 13% increase in library membership
- 14% increase in children's issues
- 27% increase in children's DVD issues

10. The 4% increase in issues reflects the importance the Library Service places on encouraging people of all ages to experience and enjoy reading. Kingston Library runs a popular adult Reading Group and supports a second group at the Bradbury Active Age Centre. A Reading Group for Carers has been set up with Adult Social Care and Kingston Library has a special collection of books aimed at this group. The presentation of stock, a wide range of changing displays, new Quick Choice collections and a focus on promoting new books all contribute to the increase in borrowing at Kingston in 2010/11. More competitive pricing has reversed the decline in CD issues. Children's DVD issues continue to perform strongly which are not affected to the same extent as adult DVDs by the growth in online suppliers. The 13% increase in registered members was the highest in the borough. Three particularly successful activities aimed at bringing new people into the library were held in 2010/11:

- Celebration of the UN International Year of Biodiversity with book displays, talks, family learning activities, quizzes, competitions organised in partnership with Kingston University, Transition Town Kingston and other local environment groups
- Outreach work during Freshers’ Week at Kingston University aimed at encouraging students to join the library culminating in an event at Kingston Library where students were given library tours, healthy eating demonstrations by Sainsbury’s and information on volunteering.
- The first national World Book Night celebration which attracted over 100 people to Kingston Library with performances from local poetry group Rhythm and Muse and Tiffin Boys’ close harmony choir.

11. While Kingston’s visits declined by 17% and computer usage by 28%, the unplanned three month closure was largely responsible for this. Up until 2010/11, Kingston has had the highest number of visitors and use of public access PCs across the service.
12. In 2010/11 the Community Library Service delivered books and other material to 79 housebound readers in the Kingston Town Neighbourhood and 18 homes and sheltered housing facilities in the Neighbourhood receive collections of books and talking books for residents.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

13. Research published by the National Literacy Trust indicates that children who use the library are twice as likely to be above average readers. Children’s library use continues to flourish at Kingston reflected in the 14% increase in children’s issues, the highest increase in the Borough. A range of fun literacy events encourage parents to use libraries with their children from the earliest age and Kingston’s weekly Baby Rhymetimes and Storytimes are particularly successful. Attendance at Kingston’s weekly Baby Rhymetime session increased by 22% in 10/11, attracting over 2000 attendances. The weekly Rhymetime session delivered by the Library Service at the Rose attracted over 4000 attendances, a 14% increase on the previous year. This outreach session is a good way of reaching parents who do not usually access the library.

14. The Summer Reading Challenge, which helps prevent the “summer reading dip” in achievement and motivation had a 13% increase in the number of children completing the challenge across the two Neighbourhood libraries. Through these literacy programmes, combined with a strong partnership with local schools and a regular programme of class visits to the library, local children are given wide ranging support and encouragement to use local libraries and engage with books and reading from the earliest age.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: TUDOR DRIVE LIBRARY

15. Tudor Drive Library is a thriving community library and continued to perform very strongly against a number of Key Performance Indicators:

- 2% increase in issues
- 4% increase in visits
- 7% increase in registered members
- 9% increase in computer usage
- 5% increase in adult DVD issues
- 6% increase in children’s issues

16. The increase in issues, visits and registered members in 10/11 demonstrates the value of community libraries in meeting local needs, particularly in times of austerity. Developed through the Kingston Town Steering Group, the library was successfully launched as a community hub in October 2010 providing the following services:

- Help with accessing Council information using two new dedicated PCs
- Advice on looking for work from a Next Steps Advisor
- Advice from the Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Information on local Adult Education classes
- Free health checks
- Local history display
- IT taster sessions
17. Since then the Smart Communities project has been launched in partnership with Kingston University and Latchmere School further reinforcing Tudor Drive Library’s role as a community hub. The library will act as a centre for the project, hosting an eco library of green gadgets that the community will be able to borrow as part of a long term project to change people’s attitude to energy consumption.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

18. Work with children and young people is a very important part of the service delivered from Tudor Drive Library with a regular programme of weekly activities to bring parents and children into the library. It continues to have the highest proportion of children’s issues of any branch in the Borough with children’s issues representing 60% of overall issues, demonstrating the value of community libraries in meeting the needs of local families. Having a local library within walking distance is particularly important for families with young children and is a determining factor in library use. Partnership working with local schools is particularly strong at Tudor Drive Library and two local schools, Latchmere and Fern Hill, had the highest number of children participating in the Summer Reading Challenge in 10/11, 661 and 472 respectively, closely followed by St Agatha’s with 412 children taking part. With the active encouragement of local schools a large number of children and their families are regularly using the library and taking part in activities to boost literacy and reading for pleasure.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19. The main financial pressure in 10/11 was the cost of replacing the lead stolen from the roof of Kingston Library and repairing the interior of the library following extensive water damage. However, because of the implications for the Neighbourhood responsive maintenance revenue budgets, it was agreed that the £34,564 cost could be charged to Capital and met from Capital Resources. English Heritage approved the replacement of lead with zinc which is likely to be greatest deterrent in terms of future theft from the roof. Following consultation with the police, security has also been tightened on the site.

20. The income from Tudor Drive Hall at £20,967 did not meet its income target of £22,000 due to the midyear cancellation of a regular annual booking but the shortfall was made up from savings in other areas, including a change in the cleaning contact which produced a saving. The hall is a popular and well-used local resource and the Library Service will continue to promote and develop its use.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2011/12

21. The libraries in Kingston Town Neighbourhood are performing very well but the Library Service will continue to focus on engaging with local communities and partnership working with community organisations to meet community needs and bring new people into libraries.

22. The following initiatives will impact on Kingston and Tudor Drive libraries in 2011/12:

A new Library Management System will be available from September streamlining customers’ access to online services and the catalogue. By joining with 15 other London library services, including the neighbouring boroughs of
Richmond, Wandsworth and Merton, Kingston library users will have access to over 6 million items of stock through a shared catalogue. It will transform how we communicate with customers making much greater use of digital technologies such as SMS, email and social media.

- Kingston’s first Poet in Residence, local poet Alison Hill, has just been appointed. A year long programme of activities is planned as part of the residency, which aims to widen the audience for poetry, encouraging people to get involved in reading, writing and attending poetry events at libraries and heritage settings across the borough.

- The appointment of a Writer in Residence for Young People, Jim Carrington, is part of an ongoing programme to engage young people with books and reading.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.

NETWORK IMPLICATIONS (if any)

24. There are no network implications associated with this report.

Background papers: held by the author of the report Grace McElwee tel. 020 8547 6423, e-mail: grace.mcElwee@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

List all background papers here
- Kingston Library & Heritage Service Key Performance Indicators 2010/11
- CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2010/11