SUMMARY

This report summarises the performance of New Malden and Old Malden 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 the Maldens and Coombe 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. New Malden Library had the highest increase in library visits in the borough and Old Malden Library had an 18% increase in new members, the second highest in the borough. 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 New Malden and Old Malden 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. New Malden and Old Malden libraries are part of the social fabric of the Neighbourhood and contribute to the Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood Community Plan priorities of encouraging greater community spirit, contributing to the community hubs concept of giving people access to what they need to lead happy and healthy lives and providing a wide range of positive activities for children and young people.

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 Library Service 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 the 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
   - 9% increase in new members
   - 4% increase in children’s issues
   - 8% increase in youth issues

6. The standout performance in 2010/11 was work with children and young people 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. Online renewals and reservations are increasing year on year with more and more customers going online to manage their library account.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: NEW MALDEN LIBRARY

8. A selection of performance data relating to New Malden and Old Malden 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. New Malden Library performed very strongly against a range of Key Performance Indicators in 2010/11 with:
   - 8% increase in library visits
   - 9% increase in library membership
   - 2% increase in issues
   - 76% increase CD issues
   - 8% increase in adult DVD issues
   - 3% increase in children’s issues
   - 19% increase in youth issues
   - 19% increase in children’s DVD issues

10. More competitive pricing and the introduction of regular special offers has reversed the decline in DVD and CD issues. The 8% increase in library visits was the highest increase in visits in the borough and the 9% increase in registered members was the second highest in the borough.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

11. This increased usage is the result of a carefully targeted programme of activities aimed at bringing a wide range of people into the library and meeting a range of community needs. These include:
   - a Back to Work group for jobseekers
   - a Silver Surfers’ Club, delivered in partnership with the U3A, which helps older people to get online
   - Partnership working with Kingston Adult Education and the NHS to deliver a very successful New Start ICT class for people with mental health problems
   - Partnership working with Kingston Voluntary Action to run introductory IT courses for refugees while a series of activities for ESOL parents aimed to help them support their children’s development
   - a regular It’s Never Too Late to Learn ICT course
   - A monthly New Malden Library Readers’ Group
   - Introductory Family History sessions to familiarise people with Ancestry, the online family history resource available in libraries
   - Heritage Open Day tours, attracting a large and varied audience to find out more about the unique design of this Grade 11 listed building
   - An exhibition of Kingstonian FC which was extremely popular with the local community
   - Participation in Neighbourhood activities including attendance at the Malden Fortnight, Neighbourhood Open Days and school celebrations to take the library out into the community and reach new audiences.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

12. Work with children and young people went from strength to strength in 2010/11. Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood had the highest number of children and young people completing the Summer Reading Challenge in 2010 with an 86% increase on 2009.

13. Baby Rhymetimes are over-subscribed with a 3% increase in attendance across the two Neighbourhood libraries.
14. A weekly Homework Club, Manga art drawing and photoshop workshops provided positive activities for teenagers while African drumming workshops were part of a programme celebrating Black History Month.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: OLD MALDEN LIBRARY

15. While visitor numbers fell by 5% and issues by 3% at Old Malden Library, it has performed very well in other areas with:
   - 18% increase in new members
   - 2% increase in children’s issues
   - 151% increase CD issues
   - 8% increase in adult DVD issues
   - 42% increase in children’s DVD issues

The 18% increase in new members was the second highest of any library in the borough. Work with children and young people is a growth area at Old Malden Library and a new Children’s Librarian has been appointed to work across the two Neighbourhood libraries to further increase use by local families, schools and young people. Children’s issues are 40% of total issues but there is capacity to increase this with the growing number of young families settling in the area. Savings in management costs with the appointment of a Neighbourhood Library Manager in April 2010 enabled investment in longer opening hours at Old Malden. The branch now opens half an hour earlier at 9.30 am and remains open during Saturday lunchtimes.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

16. The Library Service supports a flourishing adult reading culture in the Borough and the Old Malden Readers’ Group is a well-established and thriving group. Two author events by local poet India Russell and local author Pamela Pickton were well-attended in 2010/11. Old Malden is the only library to have a Friends’ Group, contributing a strong local voice to the service and this group ran a successful book sale in association with the Local Horticultural Society’s plant sale. Working with Kingston Adult Education’s Family Learning team, a range of IT courses for parents and children were delivered. Supporting digital inclusion for everyone in the community is an important role for the Library Service and IT courses aimed at getting older people online, such as It’s Never Too Late to Learn, are very popular at Old Malden Library. Family History taster sessions, class visits from local schools, coffee mornings, Baby Rhymetimes, local ward councillors’ surgeries are all part of what Old Malden library offers as a community hub helping local people to develop new skills, feel connected and lead happy and healthy lives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The budgets for New Malden and Old Malden libraries are held within the Neighbourhood and there were two budget pressures in 2010/11: one as a result of having to replace lead stolen from New Malden Library roof at a cost of £6,000 and the second as a result of the reduction in income from New Malden Hall which fell short of its income target by £6,500.
18. The stolen lead was replaced with zinc which should act as a deterrent against future theft. NPS, the Council’s building and maintenance partner, reviewed security on the site and some improved security measures have also been put in place.

19. New Malden Library Hall has a number of disadvantages that make it harder to hire out than other library halls, particularly the lack of kitchen facilities. A number of measures were taken throughout the year to increase rentals and there was some improvement in the second half of the year but not enough to meet the income target. Despite these pressures, the overall budget was balanced at the end of the financial year helped by staff turnover and a reduction in the rateable value of Old Malden Library with a refund of just under £2,500.

DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2011/12

The libraries in Maldens and Coombe are performing well but there is a continuing need to engage with local communities and bring new people into libraries. The Korean community is a very well-established part of the New Malden Neighbourhood but little is known of their history in the borough and there are no official records in the Archives or Local History collection. There are plans to redress this through an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to record the history of the Korean community in Kingston. Community consultation is currently underway working with local Korean churches and cultural and social groups as the first step in submitting an application to the HLF.

20. There are also wider initiatives across the Library Service that will impact on New Malden and Old Malden libraries in 2011/12:

- A new Library Management System will be available from mid 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

21. There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.
NETWORK IMPLICATIONS (if any)

22. 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
• Maldens & Coombe Neighbourhood Community Plan