

Sharing Responsibility for Libraries: “More than a Library”



Mobile and Outreach Services

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/libraries

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Sharing Responsibility for Libraries Programme: More than a Library!

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Mobile and Outreach Services

Current Facilities and Activities

Signposting to Council Services
Base for outreach services
Community asset



Facts and Figures

<i>Premises:</i>		<i>Not Leased</i>		
Period of Usage	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	
Issues	14,739	16,931	19,032	
Number of books/other items	4,729			
Active Borrowers (Card Users)	420	442	452	
Footfall (Library Visitors)	7,008	7,831	8,234	

Costs

Cost of running the Service (2014/15)	£65,650
Cost per visit	£9.37

Based at Central Library 01908 254050
555 Silbury Boulevard
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3HL

central.library@milton-keynes.gov.uk
www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/libraries

Items Available From the Library

Books
DVDs
CDs
Large Print Books
Audio Books

Operational Hours

Mon	Yes
Tues	Yes
Wed	Yes
Thurs	Yes
Fri	Yes
Sat	No
Sun	No

Ideas for this Library

The Council needs to save £449k from its library budget by April 2018 and is currently exploring ways in which library facilities can be shared or transferred and services continued at significantly reduced costs.

We invite proposals from organisations who are interested in any of the following:

- Providing a community managed library (buying back some/all core services);
- Sharing the facility and providing us with an income;
- Commercial partnerships;
- Providing library services.

For further information please contact:
sharinglibraries@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Introduction

The Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) as well as the Equality Act (2010) require local authorities to make specific provision for people who find it hard to access services. The Mobile Library supports the Council's statutory duty to deliver a "comprehensive and efficient library service to all residents" of Milton Keynes.

The Mobile Library provides a free library service to rural and urban areas that do not possess a static service point. It is valued by both service users and Council officers as an important outreach service addressing issues of social exclusion. Locations throughout the Borough are visited on a weekly or fortnightly basis as well as visits to partner agencies such as Children Centres, sheltered housing and a range of other community locations that target families and need additional support.

The national trend is to scale down mobile fleets (e.g. Devon County Council from eight to four mobiles in 2014). Milton Keynes Council has only had one mobile library since its inception in 1997.

Sharing Responsibilities: The Context

In February 2015 the Council proposed a review of libraries as a part of the budget to take effect from April 2015. Over the next three years Milton Keynes Libraries needs to secure an additional total of **£449k** in savings.

This has to be delivered against a need to comply with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 under which all local authorities have a statutory duty to deliver a "*comprehensive and efficient library service*" to all people who are resident, work or are in full time education in the Borough. The Act lays out the services that must be provided including the provision of facilities to borrow books, audio visual items, charges that can be levied, and the fact that local authorities "*must encourage adults and children to make full use of the service and provide advice*."

The 2014 Independent Library Report published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport emphasised that libraries are about much more than just loaning books. The expectations are for a whole range of services and community activities to be provided for people of all ages.

Milton Keynes Council became a Co-operative Council in 2014 and is committed to services which nurture strong communities but recognises that they cannot do this alone, particularly in these very challenging financial times. The Council is talking to a wide range of local bodies and individuals about sharing responsibilities and developing options together. This document reflects this approach and the future direction of Milton Keynes Libraries.

The Council's "Eight Point Core Library Offer"

To focus conversations, the Council has identified core services that it is committed to providing long term, in order to serve the community across the Borough in each of the nine libraries and the mobile library. This is about the fundamental provision of books and materials as well as access to information and information technology with the aim of contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities.

Milton Keynes Council is committed to offering the following in all libraries across the Borough:

1. Access to ten library service points
2. A professional library service led by qualified Librarians, promoting literacy and engagement for adults and children through specialist departments
3. Support literacy, lifelong learning as well as learning for early years and school age
4. Support digital literacy and digital inclusion
5. Provide space and support infrastructure for people to work, study, research and engage their leisure time
6. Promote digital access for all citizens
7. Successful partnerships in place with stakeholders, communities and volunteers
8. Tackle social isolation by providing quality and welcoming community buildings and connecting citizens

Performance and Use

Milton Keynes Libraries carry a stock of over 250,000 books, DVDs, CDs and audio books which are shared across all the libraries in Milton Keynes. One million items were issued in 2012/13 falling to 850,000 items in 2014/15. Nationally book lending is in decline and this is reflected in the book issues across all Milton Keynes Libraries.

Central Library is the busiest of all of Milton Keynes libraries accounting for 59% of all visits in 2013/14. Visits to the other libraries vary from 2-9% of total footfall.

Milton Keynes Libraries currently employs **54.89 full time equivalent staff** across all its locations. The figure for Central includes staff who provide functions for the entire service including management, stock provision, outreach and mobile services.

The deployment of volunteers has become increasingly important to the functioning of the libraries and currently there are 102 people volunteering their services. The volunteers are supported through a Volunteer Co-ordinator based at Central Library. Volunteer roles have been created to support the services available and to complement, but not replace, paid staff.

As in all walks of life, **digital technology** has become increasingly important. Digital services in Milton Keynes libraries allow them to be used **24/7** by being available to people outside of the physical building of their local library, wherever in the world they might be. Not only can people access services, but they can also renew and reserve books, DVDs and CDs as well as accessing the stock catalogue, online databases, read newspapers and make payments. In general, the use of these is growing.

The biggest growth has been in the use of eAudio and eBooks, the figures would be higher if more digital stock was made available by the UK publishers. This is an issue facing all UK libraries and is being addressed at a national level as publishers will not permit the release of Kindle books and other similar products.

One of the early savings identified in the libraries was for the introduction of self-service terminals in all of the libraries. This will save £78k in 2015/16 and £88k in 2016/17 across all the libraries by releasing customer facing staff from tasks such as issuing and returning items and managing customers' accounts. This then frees them up to undertake other duties and improves stock management and security. The introduction of self-service terminals has resulted in a reduction of 8.5 full time equivalent posts.

Developing Options Together

There can be no doubt that the face of public library services is changing. Public libraries provide a vital function in local communities and are valued by those who use them whether to borrow a book, find a quiet place to work, access Wi-Fi, meet people and so on. However the way services have to be provided has to change, especially in the light of reducing finance.

Given the scale of the financial challenge, the Council cannot do this alone. It is seeking more collaborative models for the delivery of library services within localities across the Borough which is very much in keeping with the Council's status as a Cooperative Council. "Sharing Responsibilities for Libraries" is an opportunity to look at what may be possible in the future. The communities of Milton Keynes have an exciting opportunity to shape that future and this will only happen through active engagement with all sectors of the community.

This document sets out a number of proposed ideas that have been developed so far for both improving the libraries and for delivering savings and efficiencies. A number of these savings proposals build on some very successful relationships with parish and town councils, the voluntary sector as well as local citizens. They highlight how the use of some of the larger library buildings can be maximised. They also build on best practice from elsewhere in the country. It provides information about how the building and non-core library services could be shared with others so that the Council can focus its financial and staff resources on the core library provision.

The Council are seeking ways in which they can further share responsibilities for library delivery across the Borough and would welcome ideas from library customers, businesses, charities, community groups, ward councillors, parish and town councils and other stakeholders, to enable greater local input and reduced Council resources. As part of this, the Council will be running a series of Community Engagement sessions to hear your views, ideas and your offers of help, and would encourage anyone who is interested in their local library to come along or to complete the online questionnaire.

Staffing

The Mobile Library is single staffed with a Lead Library Customer Assistant (Mobile Library) who drives the vehicle, provides customer service and assists with the stock provision and outreach events. The driver needs to have a LGV licence to drive this type of vehicle.

Vehicle

The Mobile Library is a DAF vehicle with access lift and is fitted out internally to replicate a library and badged to match static service points. The vehicle was purchased for £110,000 in December 2009 and financed from the Council's capital programme. Replacement is anticipated in 2020. The Mobile Library operates out of the Central Library for library services and is parked overnight at Synergy Park where it is also maintained.

Usage

The vehicle is used between 08:00 – 17:30 Monday to Friday and for occasional planned weekend events. The Mobile Library provides all types of books, CDs and DVDs for adults and children as well as access to wider library services. It signposts residents to other Council services.

Although the service is open to all, the general public do not tend to use it when it is parked outside a home or sheltered housing location, assuming it is only for residents.

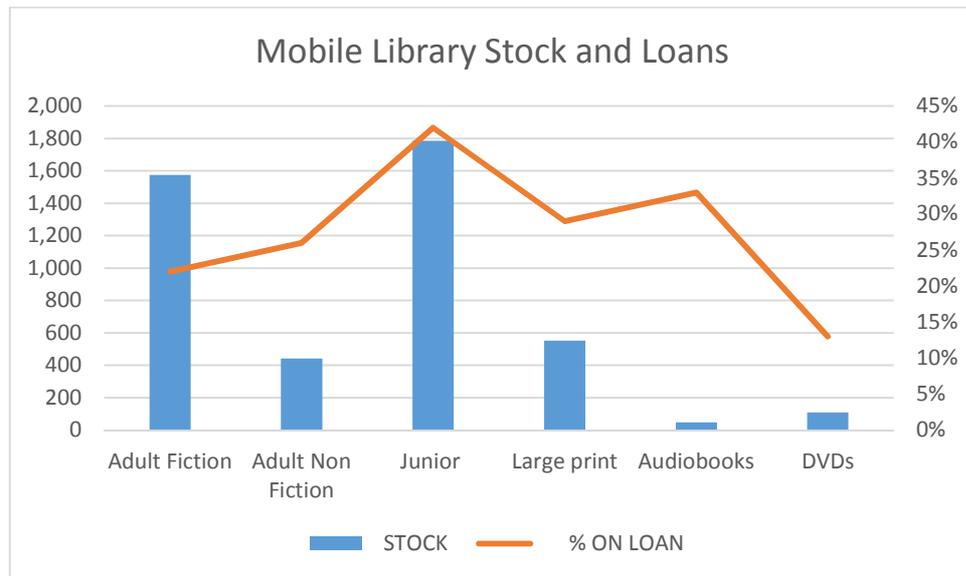


Figure 1 - Mobile Library Stock and Loans

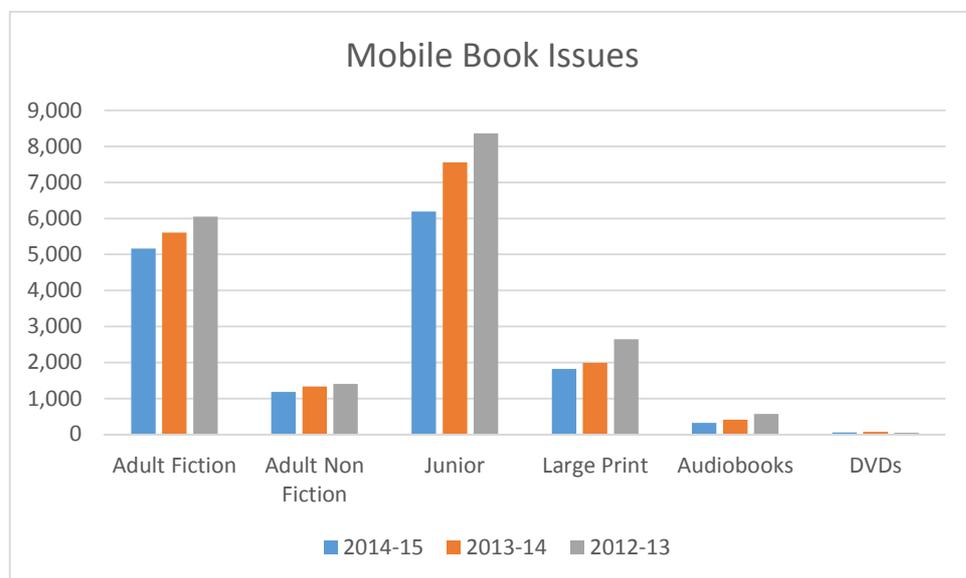


Figure 2 - Mobile Library Issues

Mobile Library Headcount Figures April 2014 – March 2015

There were 7,008 visits by customers in 2014/15 which can be broken down as follows:

- 14 stops on deprived estates 15% of customers
- 12 stops in rural areas 22% of customers
- 17 stops sheltered housing 20% of customers
- 28 stops Community Centres/nurseries 43% of customers

Mobile Library Stops

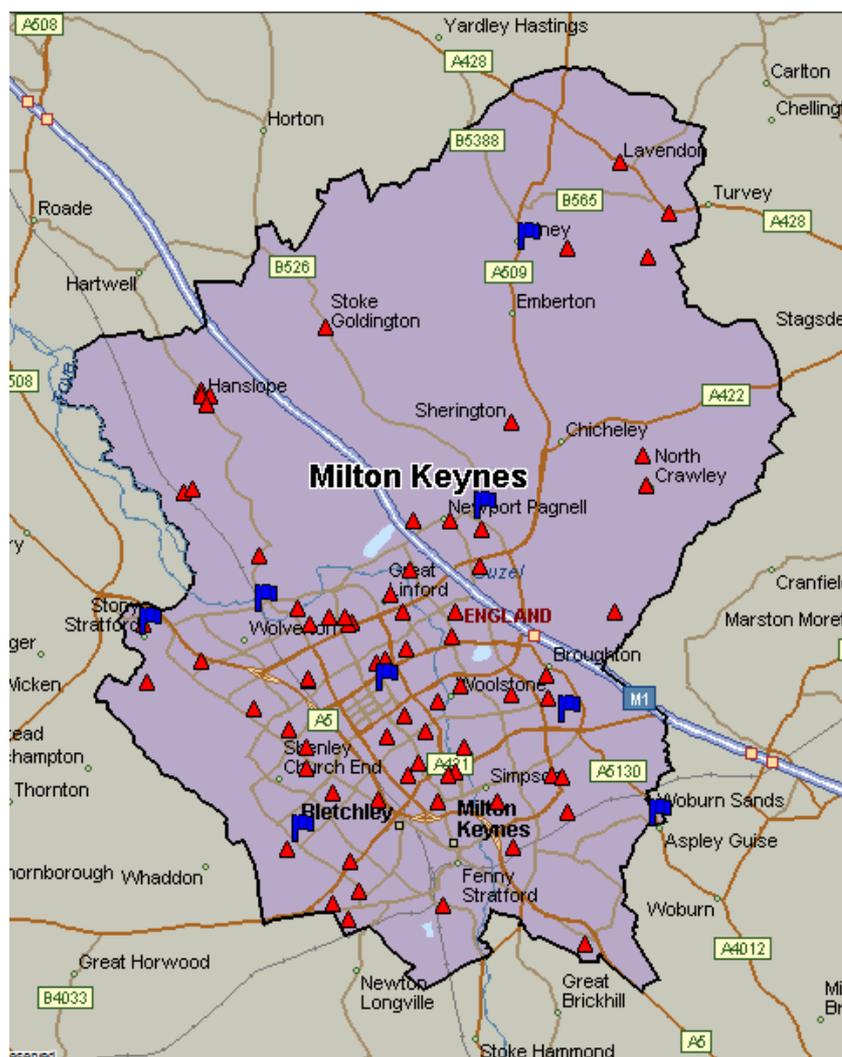


Figure 3 - Mobile Library Stops

There is an annual review of all Mobile Library stops to analyse usage due to pressure for other stops and requests to visit target areas of deprivation. As there is only one vehicle, the frequency and length of stops are not always able to satisfy demand.

Finance

The cost of running the mobile library in 2014/15 was £65,650 of which two thirds are attributed to central costs.

Looking to the Future

The Mobile Library has a fixed amount of space for stock. There is a standing order with the book supplier and it receives every copy of the top ten selling fiction and non-fiction titles. Stock is also regularly exchanged with the Central Library.

The Mobile serves both rural and urban areas so has a very mixed usage but with a higher proportion of older users. This accounts for the high levels of large print and audiobooks on loan.

The Mobile Library is on the road Monday-Friday during normal working hours and with only one driver, the option to expand the service would be to increase usage during evenings/weekends and this would entail using a second driver. At present there is no cover and if the driver is ill or on holiday the service is cancelled.

Options

- No provision – service ceases to operate, but this may affect the Council's legal obligations.
- No change – service is maintained at current levels.
- Extend provision out of core hours by using the vehicle evenings and weekends for library service. This would require an extra driver (0.5 full time equivalent). The vehicle offer could also be extended to outside organisations which could contribute to library income targets (e.g. parcel delivery).

Outreach Services

Introduction

Woughton is a priority area which was identified by the Future Libraries Review. Since the publication of that report much has been achieved in engaging the local community through outreach library developments.

In 2011 The Future Libraries: Milton Keynes Report recommended:

- *that additional library provision should be made in the Woughton Ward. This recommendation highlights the potential for linking service provision from Kingston with Woughton. (Recommendation 2)*
- *It is important that the outcomes are customer-oriented and delivered by community engagement and the proposal is to engage with local communities throughout the programme. (Recommendation 23)*

In November 2012, a Community Engagement Workshop was held with local representatives including councillors, teachers and community workers. Key requirements identified by the community were:

- Deprivation levels in Woughton Ward provide a challenge, particularly in terms of education, low levels of car ownership, and high levels of people with disabilities;
- Library fines were identified as a key issue;
- Collaborative working was necessary between libraries and schools, women's groups and coffee mornings;
- Libraries needed to experiment with new initiatives in Woughton.

The Programme

The aim of the Woughton Project is to increase active library users in the area and to engage young people and adults in a sustainable way by December 2015.

In 2012, research and community engagement was undertaken to define the need. This research led to the production of a new project programme.

Following this initial engagement a series of meetings with significant groups and organisations was held. This was focussed on Beanhill and Netherfield, concentrating on Children's Centres and schools. This led to Librarians visiting all the schools to promote national initiatives such as World Book Day, the Summer Reading Challenge and the Booktime Project in Autumn 2013.

Meetings were held with Children's Centres to develop Bookstart Bear Clubs. This built on the success of the Children's Centres' work with hard to reach families linking to Bookstart Book Corners, an early years prevention programme.

Discussion within community settings led to the introduction of two additional Mobile Library stops in the Woughton area starting in October 2013.

Outreach work involving schools and community centres has included book gifting to children and talking to their parents about book sharing, reading and library services for children and families.

In January 2014, funding was received from Arts Council England for a project called Digitalis. Digitalis was established to address the wider need for libraries to develop high quality arts activities, new technology and audience development to promote literacy, particularly in deprived areas.

Conclusions

The outreach work in the Woughton area has been very effective in changing the way people use and view libraries. It is clear that a combination of the intervention work along with the Mobile Library visits is working in encouraging people of all ages to read. At this point in time, it is clear that people who are engaging do not wish to travel to their nearest physical library in Central Milton Keynes and nor do they travel into the neighbouring communities. They prefer to remain within their own communities and this would make the provision of any permanent provision difficult even if it was a service that they wanted to use.

The regeneration plans for the area might change this perception as the population profile may change as a result, but this will need to be investigated once the regeneration plans become clearer.

The work has focussed on areas in the Woughton ward, however, there are other areas that would benefit from similar interventions as their usage of libraries is low. These areas include West Bletchley and Stantonbury. Consideration needs to be given to the extension of the service to these areas.