

THE LIBRARY SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY

**Local Committee for Mole Valley
24 September 2003**

KEY ISSUE:

This report updates the Local Committee on the Library Service in Mole Valley and seeks members views on the future direction of the service.

SUMMARY:

This report shows the current context to library services in Mole Valley. It identifies local issues and service developments, and seeks the opinion and advice of the Local Committee on self reliance issues and the future direction of the mobile library service.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee in Mole Valley should

- (i) Note the range of service developments in Mole Valley.
- (ii) Advise on the role of the Library Service in promoting self reliance.
- (iii) Advise on how to respond to the opportunities offered by the Mobile Library Service in developing library provision.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY

- 1.1. Library services in Surrey are provided through a network of 52 libraries and six mobile libraries. Mole Valley is served by four static libraries and one of the mobile libraries. The service is provided to all ages from very young children to older people who are housebound or who live in residential homes.
- 1.2. Each of the 52 static library service points is allocated to one of five bands of library that defines the level and scope of services offered. The banding policy influences the range of services provided in a particular library but the network of libraries provides access to the whole range of services.
- 1.3. Of the four static libraries serving Mole Valley, Dorking is a Band 2 or town centre library, and Ashted, Bookham and Leatherhead are Band 3 or small town libraries.

2. PERFORMANCE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. Appendix 1 shows a range of performance data for the static libraries in Mole Valley compared with the average for those in the same band. Whilst issue figures continue to fall, visits have increased countywide and significantly in the larger libraries, with an increase of 5,000 visitors to Dorking Library this year.
- 2.2. We are currently undertaking research on patterns of use in libraries as well as consulting with users and non-users on ways to improve the service. A survey in 5 libraries, one in each band, showed that the largest age band of users in all libraries was that between 20 – 40 years of age. The results of this research will inform the changes we make to the way we offer our services in all libraries. Our target is to increase issues as well as visitors across all libraries.
- 2.3. A recent Audit Commission report “Building Better Library Services” stressed that libraries needed to improve the quality of the buildings from which they offer services, ensure that services are pleasant to use – learning, in particular, from bookshops, and build awareness among non-users of the services that libraries can offer. The Office for Public Management has been undertaking stakeholder engagement (including elected members) to assist the management of the service in finding one or more strategic partners to invest in libraries. This is one of the strands of the “Transforming Surrey Libraries” programme, designed to improve libraries and increase use.
- 2.4. The Library Service in Mole Valley has responded to the latter through a wide range of promotional activities.
 - Across Mole Valley a wide range of displays and stock promotions take place which aim actively to promote reading, increase the use made of the stock and broaden readers horizons. The “Pile ‘em High” promotion has proved popular. This takes the bookshop approach to the presentation of

stock with stock being displayed on tables. Central to this is the provision of multiple copies. The promotion aims to provide the public with popular hardback titles but also through a wide range of paperback fiction to encourage readers to try something new at the same time as taking a title by a popular author. As research shows many customers are only in the library for a short time it provides a method of quick selection for them. The promotion is running in seven libraries in Surrey . A children's Pile 'em High called "The Incredible Heap" is at Leatherhead library and is now well established and proving to be very popular.

- Ashted Library has been featuring the BBC Big Read with a display featuring books in the top 100 place where people can pick up an extra book whilst they queue at the counter, which has proved very popular. They have also had an interesting promotion called The Mind's Eye which promotes non-fiction titles to stretch the mind and the imagination.
 - The staff at Bookham participated in the Village Day "Fin, Fur and Feathers", using the event to publicise all the services offered by the library. The monthly library Reading Group continues to be well supported.
 - Dorking Library hosted school visits from St Paul's School, year 3 and St Martin's Church of England School. Annette Butterworth spent the day with 3 classes, 105 Children from St Martin's talking about her books.
 - The Summer Reading Scheme, The Reading Planet was extremely popular with 100 children (52 girls and 48 boys) who had read 10 books collecting certificates at Ashted Library.
 - As part of the Mole Valley Literature Festival Arts Alive, Dorking Library hosted a talk by Peter Conradi about Iris Murdoch, with an audience of about 50 people.
 - There are Reading Groups being run in Bookham & Leatherhead Libraries, which are very popular with the customers and staff alike. Reading Groups. The Open Reading Group at Dorking Library is popular with people who like to comment on the books without attending a meeting. This has proved so popular that they have now started a Reading Group that meets in the library.
- 2.5. Improving the quality of library buildings is a more difficult task. Some minor improvements to furniture have been made over the last year.
- Bookham Library has been redecorated internally, its first since it moved to the new premises in 1990. It had a new carpet and some furniture was replaced. Customers and staff have both been very pleased with the results.
 - In late January/early February the Conservatory roof at Leatherhead was resurfaced after a wait of 2 years and 3 months – work included the installation of new timbers and joists as well as new air bricks. The lead work was all renewed and extra guttering put in. The expected redecoration to make good the surface has not yet been done.

- In response to various comments from customers, Dorking Library have moved the reference section out of the Learning Access Point and created a space in the non-fiction room. This has been greeted positively by users.

The views of local members on ways to improve the shelving and presentation of stock and refurbish the physical environment of libraries in Mole Valley through existing no growth budgets would be welcomed.

3. PROMOTION OF SELF RELIANCE THROUGH THE LIBRARY SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY

- 3.1. The Library Service has responded to the County Council policy of promoting self reliance by developing and improving access to literature and tools for literacy, information, e services and lifelong learning through the network of libraries and through community based delivery where suitable and viable.
- 3.2. The People's Network project, a national initiative funded from the National Lottery via the New Opportunities Fund, has enabled the installation of Internet terminals for public use in all Surrey libraries. The smallest libraries have a minimum of two terminals for public use. The provision of ICT facilities in libraries enables electronic access to information, services and learning opportunities for self-directed library users, assisted and supported by library staff. All library staff have received information technology training to increase their skills in supporting library users.
- 3.3. The Learning Access Point at Dorking Library has been granted its final year of funding from the Learning and Skills Council. It became a Learndirect Centre on 1st July 2003, which has broadened the range of courses offered. These courses are popular as lifestyles today call for flexibility in learning. They are on line courses which are broken down into small chunks and enable people to learn at their own pace and dip into and out of them whenever they like. In addition the staff are running workshops for a number of different users groups, including over 45's on a monthly basis.
- 3.4. The Library Service responds to the cultural diversity of Surrey by the provision of bookstock and other material in many languages other than English in the larger libraries. Smaller libraries can also obtain this stock on demand.
- 3.5. A service agreement with the WRVS ensures a library service to housebound people, delivered by volunteers. The service operates from all libraries in Mole Valley. 20,000 bookmarks have been distributed across all libraries in the county to promote the housebound service to volunteers and users. The bookmarks were produced in partnership with the National Osteoporosis Society and at no cost to the library service.
- 3.6. The Library Service, in partnership with the local Health Authority, makes contact with each child and his/her parent or carer at the age of eight months through the Bookstart initiative. An attractive pack of books and material to encourage word play, using books with babies, and information

on library membership, is given out at the eight months hearing check clinic. 748 packs were distributed in Mole Valley in the last year.

- 3.7. By the autumn of 2003 15 libraries will have adaptive technology on one PC to enable disabled people to fully benefit from on-site on-line services. The 15 libraries have been selected after discussion with Surrey Association for the Visually Impaired, and spread around the county having regard to the concentration of visually impaired people. Two of the libraries are Dorking and Leatherhead. The PC will be located on a wheelchair-friendly computer workstation. The terminal will have a track ball mouse, large monitor and a headphone. It will use Dolphin Supernova reader magnifier screen magnification and screen reading software. The service will be promoted through community groups representing the visually impaired.
- 3.8. The Library Service has responded to the needs of the communities and has joined the North Leatherhead Self Reliance Group and will be contributing to the process, supporting the Children's Centre and promoting Bookstart more actively with Health Visitors. Also, as part of the Mole Valley Community Learning Partnership, the library service is supporting the project on Access to Learning in Rural Areas.
- 3.9. These initiatives aim to bring reading and learning to children, parents and carers and create a positive awareness of the library service that will bring them into the library in the future.

4. MOBILE LIBRARY PROVISION

- 4.1. In Surrey four mobile libraries visit 163 sheltered housing units every four weeks as well as 167 village and similar isolated communities every week or fortnight. A larger mobile library serves communities in ten urban areas every week. A dedicated mobile library visits 210 residential homes for elderly and disabled people across Surrey every three months to exchange deposit collections.
- 4.2. Issues of items from the Mobile Library Service have declined by approximately 30 % between October 1998, when the last major changes to the timetable schedules took place, and June 2003. The service is still used by about 7,500 people, the majority of whom are elderly people who rely on it for their reading and social contact.
- 4.3. The mobile library fleet consists of three new vehicles, a new Residential Homes Mobile, the new Urban Mobile, and one new standard mobile library. A second new standard mobile library is due for delivery in late 2003. There is a need to review provision to determine how far in the future we will require further replacement vehicles for the other two mobiles.
- 4.4. The Community Services Committee of the County Council agreed in March 1998 that the Mobile Library Service policy is to serve communities that are more than two miles from a static library. Stops are provided which achieve an average of more than ten book issues per visit. The length of each visit is determined by the formula of 1.5 book issues per minute. Sheltered housing complexes receive a visit of at least 20 minutes every four weeks.

- 4.5. A small number of changes to the Mobile Library schedules are proposed from January 2004 to match demand as effectively as possible to the available vehicle resources and build into the schedules sufficient time for maintenance of the vehicles. Members have been informed of any changes in their electoral division.
- 4.6. The Library Service is undertaking a more wide ranging countywide stop by stop analysis based on the number of issues of items over the last year. It will follow the Committee policy of 1998 to identify the stop length required to deliver the general public service to the village and isolated communities on a minimum fortnightly basis. The minimum length of the four weekly visits to sheltered housing complexes would remain at 20 minutes.
- 4.7. This review of provision offers an opportunity to find the capacity within the Mobile Library schedules to promote self reliance through library services.
- 4.8. Comments and ideas from members of the Local Committee on specific areas in Mole Valley where library provision could be developed through the Mobile Library Service are invited.
- 4.9. The Mobile Library Service has the potential to support social inclusion work by offering new and traditional approaches in enhancing access to reading, books and ICT. The resources committed on the service could be used cost-effectively to help address social inclusion whilst ensuring that the current users still receive the service that they value.
- 4.10. The vehicles could promote self reliance by visiting clinics and forging a tangible link between the Bookstart scheme and the Library Service and also extend the service beyond its traditional boundaries by serving travellers and visiting hostels and shelters.
- 4.11. There may also be the capacity to add new stops to the schedules in response to demographic changes such as population growth as a result of new housing developments and introduce stops at railway stations when commuters are returning in the evenings and at out of town shopping centres.
- 4.12. The design of the new vehicles has the flexibility to accommodate ICT provision. Some funding has been made available in the budget for the Libraries Division of Community Services.
- 4.13. In terms of cost per issue the costs of mobile libraries are similar to static libraries. With 7,500 active users of the current mobile library service, alternative individual delivery services that have been suggested such as books by mail, village shop libraries and transporting users to main town libraries are not cost effective.
- 4.14. The service is a countywide one with schedules that go across District and Borough boundaries. Serving over 500 locations in the county with a fleet of mobile libraries requires detailed timetable planning.

- 4.15. There is a particular issue in timetable planning concerning the current and likely potential for children's use after school. There are unfortunately more communities requiring a service at this time than vehicle capacity available. A survey has been carried out of the use after 3pm by children of the current stops which will help in identifying those communities which could have a service at other times and free up that crucial time for other children. Every effort will be made to accommodate local preferences for service within a countywide objective of making the maximum public use of the vehicles.
- 4.16. Mr Chris Phillips, the Area Manager with countywide responsibility for the Mobile Library Service, is offering to meet members informally over the next few weeks to discuss the local position in further detail.
- 4.17. Annex 2 lists the current timetable of stops for Mole Valley along with an analysis of the number of items issued at those stops.
- 4.18. The advice of members of the Local Committee on possible options to respond positively to the opportunities offered by the Mobile Library Service will be greatly valued.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Sally Parker, Area Manager (Libraries) Mid

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01372 363920

EMAIL ADDRESS: sally.p@surreycc.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Local Committee in Mole Valley 11
September, 2002

Appendix 1

PERFORMANCE OF THE SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY

The table below shows a range of performance data for the static libraries in Mole Valley compared with the average for those in the same band in Surrey.

Library	Hours Open Per Week	Issues 2002/03	Visits 2002/03	Public Floor Space In Square Metres	Issues Per Hour	Visits Per Hour	Issues Per Square Metre	Visits Per Square Metre
Dorking	42.5	258,350	168,992	335.90	116.9	76.5	769.1	503.1
Average Band 2	40.4	228,407	181,768	468.99	108.9	86.6	487.0	387.6
Ashted	32.5	134,907	88,901	161.92	79.8	52.6	833.2	549.0
Bookham	32.5	122,136	88,165	144.84	72.3	52.2	843.2	608.7
Leatherhead	32.5	131,717	96,884	280.42	77.9	57.3	469.7	345.5
Average Band 3	34.0	124,051	91,604	283.84	70.1	51.8	437.0	322.7

In 2002/03 Mobile Library 5 served 2097 stops and failed to visit 86 stops due to vehicle problems. It issued 34,884 items.

Appendix 2

MOBILE LIBRARY STOPS IN MOLE VALLEY

<u>Address</u>	Community	Frequency	Day	Time	Minutes open	Target issues per visit	Actual Issues per visit Oct 2002-June 2003
Clump Avenue	Box Hill	Weekly	Mon	14.10-14.45	35	53	35
Village Green	Brockham	Weekly	Mon	15.00-15.30	30	45	32
Tynedale Road	Strood Green	Weekly	Mon	15.40-15.55	15	23	15
Turner House	Beare Green	Once in 4 wks	Mon	10.00-11.00	60	90	48
The Plough	Coldharbour	Once in 4 wks	Mon	11.15-11.45	30	45	20
Ribblesdale	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Mon	12.05-12.45	40	60	49
Holmesdale Road	North Holmwood	Weekly	Tue	09.45-10.00	15	23	6
New Barn Lane	Newdigate	Weekly	Tue	10.15-10.25	10	15	7
Post Office	Newdigate	Weekly	Tue	10.30-10.45	15	23	9
White Hart	Beare Green	Weekly	Tue	10.55-11.05	10	15	7
Rickwood Park	Beare Green	Weekly	Tue	11.15-11.25	10	15	9
Bennetts Wood	Capel	Weekly	Tue	11.35-11.45	10	15	6
Recreation Ground	Capel	Weekly	Tue	11.55-12.10	15	23	7
Cricketers Close	Ockley	Fortnightly	Tue	12.25-12.40	15	23	10
Elmers Road	Ockley	Fortnightly	Tue	12.25-12.40	15	23	11
Warwick Road	South Holmwood	Weekly	Tue	15.15-15.25	10	15	9
Chart Downs Estate	Chart Downs	Weekly	Tue	15.40-15.55	15	23	11
Oakridge	Goodwyns Estate	Weekly	Tue	16.05-16.20	15	23	3
Douglas House	Bookham	Once in 4 wks	Wed	09.50-10.10	20	30	33
Southey Court	Bookham	Once in 4 wks	Wed	11.00-11.30	30	45	39

LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR MOLE VALLEY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2003, **ITEM 7**

<u>Address</u>	Community	Frequency	Day	Time	Minutes open	Target issues per visit	Actual Issues per visit Oct 2002-June 2003
Canterbury Court	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Wed	09.45-10.25	40	60	52
Turville Court	Bookham	Once in 4 wks	Wed	10.45-11.25	40	60	36
St.Johns	Leatherhead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	10.00-10.40	40	60	35
Clements House	Leatherhead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	10.50-11.15	25	38	24
Holly Court	Leatherhead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	11.25-11.50	25	38	19
Greville Court	Ashtead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	12.00-12.25	25	38	27
Griffin Court	Ashtead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	13.35-14.10	35	53	54
Brookers House	Ashtead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	14.20-14.40	20	30	29
Mole Valley Place	Ashtead	Once in 4 wks	Wed	14.50-15.05	15	23	37
The Burrell	Westcott	Weekly	Thu	10.00-10.15	15	23	14
Hanover Court	Dorking	Weekly	Thu	10.25-10.40	15	23	18
Servite House	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Thu	10.50-11.50	60	90	62
Village Hall	Mickleham	Fortnightly	Thu	12.05-12.30	25	38	7
Station	West Humble	Fortnightly	Thu	12.40-12.50	10	15	6
Sondes Place	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Thu	11.25-11.45	20	30	24
Dyson Court	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Thu	11.55-12.15	20	30	23
Bartholomew Court	Dorking	Once in 4 wks	Thu	13.25-14.10	45	68	39
Aperdele Road	Leatherhead	Fortnightly	Fri	09.45-10.00	15	23	6
Montgomer/Silver Ct	Leatherhead	Once in 4 wks	Fri	11.00-12.00	60	90	30
Keswick Court	Bookham	Once in 4 wks	Wed	10.15-10.50	35	53	5
Scarlet Arms	Wallis Wood	Weekly	Tue	13.55-14.05	10	15	4
Watercress Beds	Abinger	Weekly	Thu	14.45-14.55	10	15	12
Evelyn Cottages	Abinger Common	Weekly	Thu	14.25-14.35	10	15	6

LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR MOLE VALLEY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2003, **ITEM 7**

<u>Address</u>	Community	Frequency	Day	Time	Minutes open	Target issues per visit	Actual Issues per visit Oct 2002-June 2003
Pound Crescent	Fetcham	Weekly	Thu	16.30-17.00	30	45	8
William Evelyn Court	Wotton	Once in 4 wks	Thu	10.50-11.15	25	38	32
Felday Cottages	Holmbury St.Mary	Fortnightly	Fri	09.45-10.05	20	30	19
The Green	Holmbury St.Mary	Fortnightly	Fri	10.15-10.30	15	23	15
Village Hall	Fetcham	Fortnightly	Fri	10.15-10.30	15	23	8
Kenward Court	Brockham	Once in 4 wks	Mon	16.00-16.40	40	60	35
Atkinson House	Betchworth	Once in 4 wks	Tue	14.45-15.05	20	30	27
Village Hall	Charlwood	Weekly	Thu	11.00-11.20	20	30	14