

DRAFT

**PUBLIC LIBRARY
POSITION STATEMENT**

2003

of

the London Borough of Harrow

for

**submission to the
Department for Culture, Media and Sport**



HARROW LIBRARIES

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Foreword

Readers unfamiliar with the purpose and required content of this document are referred to the covering committee report to Education Consultative Forum, Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Cabinet in September/October 2003. Guidance on the statement was provided by DCMS and is available at www.libplans.ws/guidelines/2003/default.asp. The document "Framework for the Future" is available at www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003.

Its main purposes are to provide evidence that the authority has policies and practices to implement "Framework for the Future" in line with local needs and that it is meeting public library standards and has a realistic provision of resources.

1. Corporate Vision

1.1 Vision and ambition for the library service

Harrow Council's vision:

"In Harrow we will strive for a community

- Where everybody is able to enjoy healthy and happy lives in an environment which is clean, safe and secure.
- Which is cohesive and strong
- Where all have the widest range of opportunities to succeed and the capacity to achieve their aspirations
- Where no-one feels excluded
- Where young people have a strong voice and are heard "

To achieve the vision, the Council is focusing on the five key corporate strategic priorities

- (a) Enhancing the environment in Harrow
- (b) Strengthening Harrow's local communities
- (c) Promoting Harrow as a centre of lifelong learning
- (d) Improving the quality of health and social care in Harrow
- (e) Developing a prosperous and sustainable economy in Harrow

The library service is involved in the entirety of the vision and the corporate strategic priorities because of its points of contact with 1.4 million visitors a year at strategic points in the borough. If nothing else, it would provide a shop window for information about how the Council was achieving its vision through its strategic priorities and actions.

However, the service has a particular vital role in (c) above, which in its expanded version continues:

"by offering the highest quality education service, by raising aspirations and outcomes of achievement, and by providing activities for cultural, artistic and leisure pursuits which reflect the profile and the interests of all local communities. "

The service is also seen as an important contributor to (b) above which continues "by promoting social inclusion amongst all our residents both young and old."

The capacity of the authority to meet its vision for the library service appears high, with external factors* as the only ones likely to prevent success (*Examples are funding for sustaining the People's Network, central government grants for local services, and problems in recruitment of qualified librarians, especially in London).

The evidence is:

- An Education Service Strategy which promotes and continues to develop local learning communities, by seeking to enhance the capacity of learners of all ages and backgrounds, by ensuring a full range of human learning experiences, by improving the quality of the lives of all learners and by creating a socially cohesive society. The detail of the strategy recognises the importance of library opening hours and the People's Network. In particular it endorses the Library Plan target to increase the number of library visits, with an emphasis on libraries in those areas of the borough that are more disadvantaged. In 2002/03 visits to the three libraries in these areas (Bob Lawrence, Roxeth and Wealdstone) rose by between 13% and 23% above 2001/02 levels because of the increased opening hours.
- Committed funding for 2003/04 and 2004/05 to expand opening hours in March 2004 to meet fully DCMS standards for aggregate opening hours and the 45 hours/week minimum for larger libraries. This is on top of funding in 2001/02 to improve staffing and opening hours at six libraries from 25.5 hours/week to 40 hours/week.

- Funding in 2003/04 to increase the bookfund by inflation and by £40k above base budget to meet public library standards.
- Expansion of outreach activities including family learning groups, children looked after (both in foster care and in residential homes).
- Commitment to expenditure and planning on further disabled access improvements to libraries as part of a corporate strategy.
- Plans for installing accessibility hardware and software in 2003/04 to provide greater access to People's Network terminals.
- Allocation of I.E.G. funds for future 24/7 access to the library management system via the Internet, enabling home checking of stock, renewals and reservations.
- The placement of libraries along with arts and culture in the new People First directorate (mainly former Education and Social Services).
- The tackling of the corporate base budget to provide a good base for existing levels of service, greatly reducing the possibility of temporary expenditure freezes which affected the library service in 2002/03.
- The corporate funding to upgrade low specification I.T hardware - this could benefit the library service by up to 97 replacement terminals.
- The concentration in the New Harrow Project on a customer-focused area service delivery (a role with which the library service is very familiar)
- A commitment to regeneration and partnership projects such as the Wealdstone Community Centre due to open in Autumn 2004 which will provide a modern library within a multi-purpose building used by other agencies and partners.
- A Council-wide commitment to the Investors in People standard for which the Education Department was re-accredited in 2003.
- A Council-wide Best Value review of "First Contacts" which recognises the potential for further use of libraries.
- The approval in July 2003 of a draft Town Centre Development Strategy which recognises the importance of the presence of a new well-located, modern public library as a landmark point in the town centre development, and linked to a Council Information Point.
- Existing well-located and well-used libraries. All are on public transport routes and use as measured by issues/capita is the highest in outer London, and visits are increasing.

2. Response to "Framework for the Future"

2.1 Books, reading and learning

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- High percentage of gross budget spent on stock (despite Harrow ranking low on net expenditure/capita in outer London). 14%, and ranked 4th in outer London.
- Good selection processes (mix of standing orders, stock picks from general and specialist suppliers, use of electronic and printed selection tools).
- Use of staff's and public's expertise in selection.
- Use of co-operatives for purchase with freedoms to achieve best deals (WELLSTOC and CILLA).
- Cross section of staff involved in reader development training and work.
- Expanding number of reading groups
- Links with national schemes for encouraging reading, e.g. Summer Reading Challenge for children, which has high uptake in Harrow.
- Use of People's Network terminals for blocks of one hour for learning opportunities.
- High levels of use of People's Network PCs.

Constraints

- Stock size limited by shelf space, hence hard to increase stock choice on open or closed access.
- Local history materials housed in poor environmental conditions, split between two sites, not fully catalogued, and mainly only monographs on the on-line catalogue.
- Rising cost of reference books, and of standard texts in areas such as computing, law and medicine.
- Space for group activities limited in some libraries.

Challenges

- High rate of use (highest book borrowing/capita in outer London).
- Highest stock turnover in outer London.
- Problems with obsolete rolling stack housing reserve stock, local history, school library service project collections, etc.
- Reaching non-users, e.g. encouraging some teenagers
- High rate of reservations (3rd highest as percentage of borrowing in outer London).

Policy and practice headlines for adults and children

- Requests for any book legally available will be attempted to be met by purchase or borrowing by inter-loan library services.
- Provision by age will begin at children's board book level (not rag books because of hygiene).
- A wide range of stock is purchased particularly in response to heavy demand for new fiction and non-fiction.
- Stock range takes into account needs of disabled people (e.g. large print books and spoken word recordings at all libraries lending fiction).
- Stock range reflects cultural interests of the residents and cross-border users. This includes Asian and European languages and appropriate formats including newspapers, magazines and recordings.
- Stock rotation will be used to improve choice
- Where the level of demand does not justify extensive stock, the preference is for a few larger special collections rather than many offering little choice locally (e.g. some minority Asian languages).
- Provision for children should provide enjoyment and fun to encourage reading and not be skewed to "educational" books.
- All children's events to have a book-related theme.
- Encourage reading by presentation of selections, use of displays, etc.
- Develop 'Easy Read' collections.
- Encourage informal and formal learning by all ages.
- Encourage both browsing and purposive borrowing with a staffed readers' adviser desk in each library.

Activities to develop and evaluate practice

(priorities are shown with targets and/or timescales)

- Expansion of reading groups in 2002/03 and 2003/04 (exceeded 2002/03 target)
- Expansion of weekly under 5's story times at all children's libraries to additional days at some libraries and experiment with 4-7 age group on a Saturday at one library in 2002/03.
- Explore possibility of Bookstart programme with health service in Harrow in 2003/04 (outcome subject to external funding arrangements).
- Experiment further with teenage collections (e.g. @ the Edge at Gayton Library) in 2003/04 with possibility of teen reading group.
- Expand provision of mother tongue stock to include Tamil by December 2003.

- Extend range and number of ethnic minority interest newspapers and magazines in Arabic, Chinese, English and Gujarati by October 2003.
- Continue evaluation of reader development work by monitoring attendance, stock use and feedback.
- Continue involvement in regional and sub-regional reader development projects including Wit Lit (LLDA Read Routes programme on comic literature) and Westwords, a N.W. London writer and reader audience development programme led by co-ordinator based in Arts and Leisure Services, Harrow.
- Continue use of national schemes (e.g. Summer Reading Challenge and Orange prize).
- Implement Chatterbooks groups (sponsored by Orange) by March 2004.
- Increase publicity for reading groups in 2003/04.
- Increase publicity for under fives' story times in 2003/04 (including possibility of ongoing publicity to applicants in school reception classes).
- Meet public library standards for stock additions and replenishment rate by March 2004.
- Analyse comments from PLUS surveys and feedback forms to identify new or current demands.
- Pilot Information, Advice and Guidance scheme at Gayton Library in Summer 2003.
- Ensure ESOL and WEA classes have appropriate venues or alternative times if affected by library moves or changes in opening hours in 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- Review Gatsby Project summer term 2003 pilot of after school club for children looked after at Gayton Library.
- Work with new Children's division of People First and continue work with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Continue co-operation with LLDA projects LLiL (referral scheme) and WiLL (access by Z39.50 protocol to catalogues of London's libraries and museums).
- Library Services Manager to continue work chairing ALCL's ILL Working Party during a time of change and development of interlending service provision.
- Develop potential partnership opportunities for formal and informal learning at Wealdstone Community Centre (October 2003 - December 2004).

Links with the Education Development Plan

- Support of early learning through the provision of suitable materials for the Under Fives and weekly storytime sessions in libraries that enrich a child's development.
- Assist children in their educational development by providing a variety of materials that can be used to support and complement school education.
- Provide children with the opportunity to develop and enhance their study skills through class visits to the library.
- Work with schools to develop and encourage literacy in disadvantaged groups, i.e. with Family Learning Groups visiting the library and staff involvement in school based sessions.
- Support literacy and developing reading through ICT, in particular through free Internet access.
- Use the summer National Reading Challenge to help children to continue to learn during the summer holidays.
- Staff involvement in the Borough's literacy programme.
- School Library Service integrated with public library service staff, and providing advice and guidance, access to in print collections of books for First and Middle school libraries, and bespoke project loan collections. All provided through a service level agreement to which most LEA schools are signed up.

Specific EDP priorities with which the library service links are

Priority 1 - Securing consistently high quality foundation stage education (including improving standards in literacy).

Priority 2 - Continuing to raise achievement at Key Stages 1 -2 (including continuing to improve standards in literacy).

Priority 3 – Improving continuity and progression of learning to raise achievement at Key Stage 3.

Priority 5 - Increasing inclusion and improving learning for underachieving groups (including promoting equality and improving the life chances of children looked after) and providing guidance on developing coherent and effective catch up programmes.

2.2 Digital citizenship

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- Established 2Mb links between all libraries, Council IT services and ISP.
- Over 150 NOF-funded People's network PCs in place, with booking and print management system.
- Funding from I.E.G. capital for web-enabling library management system by December 2003 to give 24/7 access to catalogue, personal membership records, renewal and reservation procedures. Enabling participation in the pan-London Z39.50 project WiLL (What's in London's Libraries) to link London public library catalogues, community information files and museum holdings.
- Participation as provider in national "Ask a Librarian" service.
- ICT training (NOF-funded) of nearly all library staff by March 2004.
- New Service Level Agreement with Council IT services.

Constraints

- Problems of updating plug ins on People's Network PCs and maintaining security of network.
- Council IT staff resources for development.
- No funding for digitisation of collections (e.g. local history)
- Limited data available to date on use of library web pages on Harrow Live web-site. (New monitoring system being purchased).
- Limited presence of library service on Harrow Live web-site.
- Problems of access to some training CD-ROMs.

Challenges

- Learndirect to have national linkage with People's Network (need to overcome time and administration problems).
- Some national providers not understanding complexity of maintaining security and providing software they require (a national problem).
- Sustainability of People's Network hardware and software.
- Selection of cost-effective and appropriate assistive technology in association with Harrow Association of Disabled people and Middlesex Association for the Blind.
- Increasing demand for access to terminals, particularly at libraries with few terminals because of space limitations.
- Potential development of a library web-site.

Policy and practice headlines for adults and children

- People's Network open to members and non-members of library, but easier to advance book with membership.
- All users of People's Network terminals have to acknowledge an Acceptable Use Policy.
- Staff, when suitably trained, provide basic assistance to IT newcomers to access e-mail and web-sites via People's Network terminals.
- Constraints of number of machines and space mean that levels of filtering are identical for adults and children; a parental consent policy has been adopted.
- Assistive technology will be available on at least one terminal at each library.
- A booking system with limits on advance booking helps share out the opportunities to use the free of charge service.
- Staff guidelines are being developed further to control potential abuses of the system.
- Library members may access their own records on the library management system by use of their PIN numbers.

Services that users may access electronically in libraries and remotely

In library

- OPACs (library catalogue, community organisations details, book lists, etc).
- Own membership record and account.
- Web-based e-mail services.
- Web-sites
- Harrow Live web-site pages about library service (inc. map, locations, opening hours, facilities, lists of reading groups, story times and language collections).
- Subscription services such as Newsbank, free at point of use.
- Other library catalogues on-line e.g. British Library and many London libraries.
- MS Office software (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) on People's Network terminals.

Remotely

- The library management system will be web-enabled by December 2003 which will provide opportunity for 24/7 access to the catalogue, membership accounts, and renewal and reservation procedures. I.E.G funded; project has commenced.
- Membership forms will be made available by the Harrow Live web site which is under revision.

Involvement in Harrow's e-government strategy

- The People's Network terminals give free access to the Council web-site and may be used as means of communicating with the Council or making payments (advertised in the Council's magazine delivered to all households in the borough).
- The service has experimented with videophone technology to link to the Trading Standards service.
- Future developments may depend upon decision in relation to the Best Value review of First Contacts (e.g. call centre, first stop shop, one-stop shop and other options).
- Outlying services will have improved telecommunication links long-term.

Activities to develop and evaluate practice

(priorities are shown with targets and/or timescales)

- The web-enabled library management system development will incorporate a management system to monitor hits (by December 2003).
- Ongoing work on the web enablement project will address the issue of library presence on the web-site.
- The booking management system for the People's Network terminals will be used periodically to monitor usage (ongoing).

- The feedback forms relating to ICT use will continue to be monitored and analysed (annual analysis).
- The assistive technology (e.g. voice reading of screen, large font size on screen, large keys on keyboards) will be evaluated in conjunction with disabled users and organisations. Equipment will be installed in 2003/04 subject to Council IT staff resources.
- The new Service Level Agreement for the People's Network with the Council's I.T. service has built in regular reviews of service provision.
- The library service will respond positively to national projects by Resource, such as an electronic reference library, and monitor use and costs (in Resource's current work programme).
- 24/7 automated telephone renewal systems will be considered in conjunction with possible future changes of the computerised library management system. A preliminary review of the public library management system market is being undertaken in 2003/04 as a prelude to replacing or upgrading Harrow's system.
- Automated telephone communication or e-mailing of library members about overdue books and reserved stock requests will be researched, also in conjunction with any changes of the library computer system.
- The experience of other authorities permitting direct ILL requests by the public will be reviewed as such projects occur (no date).
- Harrow is developing an Adult Community Learning web-site using London Government On-Line funding for launch by March 2004.

2.3 Community and civic values

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- All eleven library premises are well located on public transport routes. 11 on bus routes, 3 near main line rail stations & 9 near underground line stations.
- Good co-location with Civic Centre (1), shopping areas (8), superstore/arts centre/swimming pool (1), clinics (2), Social Services office with public reception (1), polling stations (2). None are located in back streets, parks or other "hidden" locations.
- Harrow's library buildings have been an enduring part of the community landscape with no closures, over the last 50 years, except when being replaced with larger and/or better located premises.
- They all provide safe, welcoming network spaces open to all; if necessary using CCTV to ensure safety.
- Access hours have been improved in 2002/03 and will be again to DCMS standards in March 2004 (see section 3.1).
- Housebound Library Service serves c.550 individuals in their homes on four week rota and serves 74 residential or similar institutions.
- A multi-racial workforce, particularly amongst the younger Saturday Assistants and the Library Assistants, reflecting the local community.
- Corporate funding in 2003/04 and following years for disabled access improvements to the Council's public buildings including libraries. The library service is recognised as an important beneficiary because of its level of use.

Constraints

- Some libraries, because of space limitations, restrict activities the library service wish to provide to meet local needs (e.g. lack of space for sufficient public access terminals, children's activities or meetings).
- Separation of two major functions of a central library (central lending library one mile from central reference library).

Challenges

- A lack of younger full-time staff to reflect more accurately the local population age structure; perhaps deterring younger members of the community.
- The approved draft Town Centre Development Strategy which incorporates a central library nearer the heart of the Harrow town centre co-located with a Council Information Point and a multi-function arts space. This could be the opportunity to provide an architecturally prestigious library bringing together the function of the central reference library and central lending library providing an attractive neutral personal space in the heart of the town centre.
- Involvement if any PFI bids for community schools are successful.
- Responding to the consultation meetings with Wealdstone residents when considering the Wealdstone Community Centre.
- Working in positive partnership with other agencies at the Wealdstone Community Centre due to open in Autumn 2004.
- Reaching out to those harder to reach.
- Active participation in the community plan as it begins to be formulated.
- Possible introduction of car parking charges for public at Civic Centre site.

Policy and practice headlines for adults and children

- Libraries should be designed and staffed to be welcoming, friendly, neutral spaces, safely accessible for the whole community regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and age.
- Libraries should be located in centres of community activity with good transport links and open for convenient hours.
- Libraries should be for "us - the community", not "them - the staff".
- Children should be treated as important individuals in their own right.
- All users should receive a service delivered within an equal opportunity ethos by a staff recruited under the corporate equal opportunities code of practice.
- While current library users are not to be neglected, lapsed and non-users are to be encouraged to use the library services and those services should be amended to remove unnecessary barriers to use.

Actions to assist library users and non-users to develop citizenship and to encourage a community identity.

Several of the appropriate actions are listed above under the lists of strengths and challenges. At the time of preparation of this statement the planning for the replacement Wealdstone Library within the Wealdstone Community Centre opening in Autumn 2004 is the most cogent example of an activity to reach users and non-users and encourage the community identity of an area.

Plans to improve and develop customer services

The authority has completed the first phase of a Best Value review of First Contacts and how the Council delivers its services. The library service was represented on the working group. The report had to acknowledge that the levels of visits and calls to the library service were so high that they could mask the detail available from other first points of contact in the Council.

Decisions on the best method(s) of providing First Contact with Council services have yet to be made. One option noted was the use of libraries to provide Council surgery facilities; however, this possibility is limited by size and lack of separate private areas in Harrow's libraries.

Decisions made include use of guidance on provision for visually impaired people (e.g. use of Arial 12 font), the introduction of induction loops for hearing impaired people at reception points (including libraries), and plans for textphones. Library staff have been involved in piloting an e-learning package on serving disabled people. Internally, the library service has

been running a customer care course for its staff and a reference enquiry skills course. It has participated in a sub-regional unobtrusive testing of its enquiry service and will analyse the outcomes to improve enquiry services.

The Council is introducing new badges, similar to ones already in use by the library service. The library service will adopt the new design to maintain the corporate image. Similarly the Council will be introducing corporate comments cards comparable to the ones already in use in the library service. A new corporate complaints system has been set up.

Actions to develop and evaluate practice (timescales and targets included)

- Annual review of user satisfaction will continue by analysis of feedback forms, complaints, letters and e-mails, PLUS survey results and comments, and the triennial survey (due in 2003) on customer satisfaction for a BVPI.
- Unobtrusive testing of enquiry services (referred to above)
- Statistics of new members will be monitored, as will statistics of borrowing and visits (annually).
- The service will focus on delivering a more approachable and self-help service with a particular emphasis on encouraging use at Bob Lawrence, Roxeth and Wealdstone libraries. The target will be increased visitors for 2002 to 2006 as in the Education Strategy. This will be enabled by enhancing stock and facilities, and in the case of Wealdstone Library by design of the new library's layout and services.
- The library service will continue to act as a shop window for the Council's services and for community organisations, by continued encouragement of the use of display facilities and the on-line community organisations listing.

2.4 Building capacity to deliver transformation

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- New Harrow Project with its four-fold emphasis on (i) building an appropriate management structure, (ii) provision of a realistic base budget to deliver services and with a Medium Term Budget Strategy, linked to a three year plan for capital expenditure, (iii) setting a Council-wide ICT strategy and upgrading old low specification ICT hardware, (iv) and providing an area based service delivery where appropriate.
- The library service will be linked with arts and culture and will be in a lifelong learning division of People First (mainly Education and Social Services).
- liP status renewed in 2003.
- Recent reviews of job descriptions of Branch Librarians and Principal Librarians.

Constraints

- Managerial time availability when providing a well-used service with comparatively low resources (1st in outer London for issues/capita, 15th for net expenditure per capita - CIPFA 2001/02)
- Potential partners with different agendas from each other.
- Funding for new activities or to transform old ones.

Challenges

- Potential partners with varying agendas.
- Identifying what is best value for Council and not already being delivered satisfactorily by other agencies.
- Making good use of performance management processes being introduced by the Council.
- Ensuring the library service makes the most of the New Harrow Project.

Actions to improve leadership, staff capacity and skills

- Six monthly staff development reviews.
- Use of permanent and short-term working parties, liaising with partners.
- Use of internal and external training skills (e.g. internal library courses on customer care, reference enquiry skills, display skills and use of the West London libraries SKILLS training co-operative to provide coverage of wider regional and network library issues and attendance at events and seminars organised by LLDA).
- Use of the Council's management development centres for senior staff.
- Encourage staff to share good practice across the service.

Activities to develop and evaluate practice

- Collection and review of training needs for submission of annual training plan for departmental approval, subject to departmentally decided criteria.

Partnerships (* refers to future plans)

Partnership with Older People (Better Government for Older People) (POP) panel on information, e.g. 150 senior citizens attended an Access to Information event at Civic Centre Library on a Sunday in 2003.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) - pilot at Gayton Library

Community Legal Services Partnership

Wealdstone Community Centre - Youth Service/Connexions, Choice4All, PCT.

Arts and Leisure service - Cultural Strategy, Arts Plan, Words Live, Westwords, etc.

Early Years and Child Development Partnership

* Bookstart/PCT health visitors

Orange - reader development work

London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA) - Reading Routes, WiLL, LLiL, Young Cultural Creators, etc

SKILLS - West London library training co-operative

WELLSTOC - West London Libraries Stock purchasing consortium.

Harrow College - ICT training of public in library using "trainee" tutor under supervision.

Trading Standards videophone links

Pensions Service sessions

Harrow Talking Newspaper – produce cassette listing spoken word cassettes available

Helpline – promote Housebound Library Service (HLS)

Volunteer Bureau – volunteer drivers for Housebound Library Service (HLS)

Linkup- using staff with special needs

Priorities

- Involvement in the community plan, meeting Council timescales.
- Development of partnerships for Wealdstone Community Centre opening Autumn 2004.

3. Public Library Standards: Information relating to standards met or not met in the financial year to 31st March 2003.

3.1 Public library standards - "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries " PLS 1 to 19.

Of the 19 main standards PLS2(ii) relating to mobile service points is not applicable to Harrow which has less need of a mobile service than other outer London boroughs given the meeting of PLS1 (distance from library) by static libraries only; and PLS16, quality index for stock, has not yet been defined.

The majority of standards were already met by the library service at 31st March 2003; where they are not yet met the Council intends to meet them by 31st March 2004, with one exception. Where standards are already met, the intention is to maintain or improve upon current attainment; there are exceptions, e.g. an improvement in the opening hours to reach the aggregate opening hours standard (PLS3(ii)) will mean a drop in the percentage of aggregate opening hours that fall outside 9am to 5pm on weekdays (PLS3(ii)), this will occur because of the local need to introduce lunchtime opening at branch libraries, Friday afternoon opening at all libraries, and Wednesday opening at two central libraries.

The Council has already committed £400,000 across 2003/04 and 2004/05 (full year effect) to provide staff to meet the opening hours standards for aggregate opening hours (PLS3(i)) and percentage of larger libraries open at least 45 hours per week (PLS4), to provide additional stock to meet annual items added through purchase (PLS17) and replenishment rate (PLS18). The library service was on target to meet PLS17 again in 2002/03, but a departmental financial difficulty outside the library service meant that £100k of library stock funds had to be frozen in 2002/03. Revisions to departmental base budgets should prevent a reoccurrence.

The funding also includes a small sum for internal decorations and marketing towards meeting the recommendation of the Audit Commission's "Building Better Library Services" and to improve visitor numbers. (At 2001/02 Harrow ranked 10th in outer London for visitors per capita, even though it had six libraries open only 25.5 hours/week compared with 40 hours/week in earlier years).

The one exception to planning to meet the standards is the number of library visits per 1000 population. Outer London boroughs have been set the highest target in the UK of 8,600 per year, based upon an upper quartile figure; only one outer London borough achieved that in 2001/02. Harrow, with the highest levels of borrowing per capita in outer London achieves less than 7,000 visitors per year. Even with increased opening hours and the People's Network installed it is unrealistic to expect increases in visitors of over 30% in one year. It is noted that the outer London borough with the second highest visits/capita only achieved 95% of the standard. It is hoped that DCMS will seriously consider amending the standard when reviewing the standards after March 2004.

Officers have already provisionally identified a potential nominal growth sum of £50k for future years in case any standards rise above Harrow's current level. However, there is, of course, no commitment to this sum before DCMS announces any revisions to the standards after March 2004.

The visits to the library web-site will increase in 2003 when the library management system is web enabled, allowing 24/7 access to the catalogue, members' own accounts, and renewal and reservation procedures. The Council has provided a sum of £15k from the first I.E.G. grant tranche to the Council. The library service will also be contributing to the cost of monitoring software to be purchased.

The Children's PLUS survey was carried out for the first time in 2002, showing that Harrow does meet the children's satisfaction rate standards. Unfortunately, advice from PLUS administrators about the pattern of PLUS surveys means that Harrow is unable currently to show any improvements in the adult satisfaction rates; a major triennial survey of all libraries in Autumn 2003 for Best Value Performance estimators is expected to show significant improvements upon the previous measure in 2001/02 which have had to be used for 2002/03.

A couple of standards, PLS1(i) and PLS1(ii) relating to distances of households from libraries, might fail to be met if neighbouring library authorities closed libraries near Harrow's border. However, there are no known plans for them to carry out such actions; nor are there any such plans in Harrow which might adversely affect other library authorities.

3.2 Public Library Standards - Local Targets identified in "Comprehensive, Efficient and modern public libraries"

The local targets for 31.3.2003 were:

	Service	Description
A	DP, SE	Install two more induction loops by March 2003
B	DP, SE	Install textphone system at a major library by March 2003
C	DP, SE	At least one library to have three or more of large font on screens, Braille or speech output, large keyboard, joystick-assisted roller ball by December 2002, with the process continuing into 2002/03
D	EM, SE	Participate in "ImaginAsian" programme and in pan-London reader development programmes
E	CH	Run Summer Reading Challenge in 2002 and 2003
F	SE	People's Network installed by December 2002
G	SE	Increase opening hours of "part-time" libraries by April 2003
H	CH	Conduct Children's PLUS survey and compare results with standards. Plan improvements if required. By February 2003
I	CH	Improve on DCMS standard for purchased additions of stock per capita and progress towards replenishment stock rate by March 2003
J	CH	Children's loans >25% of total loans
K	CH	Replenishment rate of children's stock >12% per annum
L	EM	The percentage of active library members (defined as borrowing stock from the service in the last 12 months) who are from ethnic minority communities should be equal to or greater than the percentage in the resident population.

Key:- CH services to children; DP services to people with disabilities;
EM services to ethnic minority communities; and SE services to socially excluded people

All local targets were met except for A, B, C, I, K.

- A was only partially met because of difficulties incurred in testing one particular induction loop; only one more loop was installed by March 2003. However, a further six have since been installed.
- B conflicting advice on a suitable textphone system means that the target date has been delayed to March 2004.
- C Major delays in installing the People's Network terminals and a working version of the booking and print management software meant this is now a target for March 2004.
- I and K were both adversely affected by the departmental freeze of £100k of the library stock fund, and the targets were not met; however, they will be met in 2003/04.

Local targets for 2003/04

- A modified to install induction loops in all libraries by March 2004
- B modified date - March 2004
- C modified date - March 2004
- E modified date - 2003 and 2004
- G meet DCMS standard on opening hours by 31st March 2004
- I modified date - March 2004
- J, K and L retained. L is a challenging target which has been met in line with the increase in the percentage of the population of ethnic minority origin.

4. Resources

4.1 Spaces

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- Well-located library sites with good public transport links (see 2.3 above)
- Good geographical spread of libraries

Constraints

- Limitations of size (e.g. Bob Lawrence and Hatch End libraries)
- No separate meetings room, except at one library
- Separation of central reference and lending libraries by a mile
- Limitations of fixed wooden shelving in a few libraries
- Lack of disabled access to Rayners Lane Library
- Local listing of Kenton Library

Challenges

- Overcome disabled access difficulties
- Acquiring funding for refurbishing libraries
- How to provide public toilets in space constrained libraries
- Working with partners at Wealdstone Community Centre, with access to several meetings rooms
- Potential for working with PCT on two sites where library is adjacent to a clinic
- No major refurbishing of libraries within last 30 years
- Structural problems of Gayton Library
- Security of Gayton Library
- Fire safety systems - modern installations required

Resources

- Corporate DDA funding made available over next three years for public Council premises; not all work yet costed.
- Wealdstone Community Centre - £50k growth in running costs of all Council stakeholders approved.
- Discussions at officer level have been initiated on funding for refurbishing libraries, say £100k per annum
- Capital bid for CCTV for Gayton Library submitted
- Capital bid for fire safety systems submitted
- Needs identified in the Corporate Asset Management Plan
- Political will to develop the Town Centre and incorporate a new central library

Timescales

- There are no plans for extending or relocating smallest libraries. The draft Town Centre Development Strategy indicates that a decision on the central library will be required within 12 to 18 months. This central library might be a replacement for Gayton Library only, or also incorporate the functions of the Civic Centre Library as well. Bids are in for various capital works - the priority level is not yet known. The potential for working with PCT will be dependent upon the PCT's own agenda and timescales.

4.2 Stock

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges (see also section 2.1 on books)

Additional points to those in 2.1 to note are:

Constraints and Challenges

- Spoken word recordings in demand are expensive
- Video/DVD price constraints imposed nationally by producers with regard to rental copies
- Unknown costs of national offers e.g. Resource's planned electronic reference listing.

Resources

Given recent increases in the stock fund, it is probable that expenditure would be capped at current base level plus inflation. However, it should be noted that any switch of funding to electronic resources would reduce the service's ability to meet the current standard for acquisitions per annum and replenishment rate.

The timescale for a national electronic reference library is unknown, nor is it known whether Resource or library authorities will fund such provision. The service will need to consider the attractions of the lesser differential between rental and sell through DVDs as it plans to install collections in 2003/04. Stock rotation will be used to deal with issue of choice and costs of spoken word recordings.

A bid for capital funding for a replacement rolling stack has been made. Providing a better environment for local history materials will not be considered until the future of a new central library in the town centre is resolved within one to two years time.

4.3 Staffing

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

Strengths

- Well motivated staff
- liP status

Constraints and Challenges

- Although recruitment of Saturday Assistants and Library Assistants attracts a large number of applicants and sufficient ones of the requisite calibre, there are problems in recruiting professionally qualified librarians. The issues are national, but possibly more acute in London because of housing costs (library and information services market expanded within the commercial sector, low output from university departments of qualified students, comparatively low pay for graduate profession, and perceptions of local government).
- Allied to the above is the age profile of the qualified librarians which suggest that there will be problems over the next 5 - 10 years in recruiting replacements and developing new leaders.

Resources

The authority has committed funding for staff levels to meet public library opening hours standards.

In the longer term the authority will need to consider adjustments to pay to attract qualified librarians in the London market; however, given the scale of the problem (Bob Usherwood's report), the service may have to consider other options such as "home grown" staff (trainees) and para-professional staffing. Recruitment difficulties indicate that there will be a need to review staffing and pay structures.

4.4 ICT

Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges (see also section 2.2)

Strengths

- Installation of People's Network PCs with MS Office software with 2Mb link to ISP.
- New staff structure in the Council's IT services to provide a more responsive, better staffed, service.
- New Service Level Agreement with the Council's IT service to maintain the People's Network
- New Corporate approach to upgrading old low specification hardware
- About to web-enable the library management system and link it for searching via Z39.50 protocols to WiLL (What's in London Libraries) portal.

Constraints and Challenges

- Limited Council IT staff resources for developmental work
- Changes in computerised inter-library loans systems market
- Z39.50 v union catalogues
- Potential development of WiLL by LLDA in 2003/04+
- Sustainability of People's Network
- Installing appropriate assistive technology in 2003/04 using existing funding
- Provision of PCs that meet increased demands made on them by staff on enquiry desks and in support services

Resources

The Council has provided £600k in 2003/04 for upgrading IT hardware across the Council. At this stage it is not known what proportion of 97 low specification machines in libraries will be replaced and what the library service will have to pay towards the upgrading costs.

The inter-library loans database and software market may be affected by a Resource attempt to achieve the goal of a national union catalogue. Costs cannot be predicted at this stage. The recent take over of LIBPAC by OCLC-PICA may have effects on competition and prices; but none known at the time of preparation of this report.

GLOSSARY

ALCL	Association of London Chief Librarians
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator (set by the Audit Commission)
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CILLA	Co-operative of Indic Language Library Authorities
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DVD	Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc
EDP	Education Development Plan
ESOL	English as a Second or Other Language
IEG	Implementation of Electronic Government (all local authorities have had to produce statements to attract funding)
ISP	Internet Service Provider
LLDA	London Libraries Development Agency (supported by all London boroughs and Association of London Government)
LLiL	Libraries and Learners in London (a referral mechanism involving public and academic libraries)
MS	MicroSoft
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PLS	Public Library Standard (set by DCMS, based upon upper quartile 1999/2000, and to be achieved by April 2004)
PLUS	Public Library Users Survey (self-administered survey following a national methodology, which is maintained by the Institute of Public Finance. IPF also provide the data analysis for Harrow)
WEA	Workers Educational Association, affiliated to the University of London
WELLSTOC	West London Libraries Stock purchasing consortium (Harrow is a founder member)
WILL	What's in London's Libraries. (LLDA project which will provide portal to view London's library catalogues using Z39.50 protocol. It is expanded to include community organisation databases and museum and archive catalogues).