

**DRAFT**

**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**POSITION STATEMENT**

**AND**

**STANDARDS REPORT**

**2004**

**of**

**the London Borough of Harrow**

**for**

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





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## Foreword

Guidance on the Public Library Position Statement and Standards Report (PLPSSR) was provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and is available at [www.libplans.ws](http://www.libplans.ws). The document "Framework for the Future" is available at [www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2003](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003). Guidance is drawn mainly from "Framework for the Future" (2003) and draws on DCMS's responsibilities under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

The main purposes of the PLPSSR are to provide evidence that Harrow has policies and practices to implement "Framework for the Future" in line with local needs and the corporate vision and that it is meeting national public library standards and local targets by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. It also provides evidence of progress since national standards were introduced in January 2001.

Assessors appointed by DCMS recommend two scores. Firstly, overall evidence about implementing "Framework for the Future" (in line with local needs and the corporate vision). Secondly, the evidence of the authority's response to public library standards (and local targets) by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 and progress since the introduction of the national standards in 2001. The two scores contribute to the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Harrow Council.

### Statement by Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning

This document has political backing within Harrow Council.

Councillor Bill Stephenson.

## 1. Corporate Vision

### 1.1 Corporate Vision and ambition for the library service

Harrow Council's Corporate Plan provides the Council's vision, mission and corporate strategic priorities for 2004 – 2006.

#### "VISION

We are proud to live in Harrow because of the richness of our cultural backgrounds and diversity of our communities. We are ambitious for the future of our children, our town and our place in London.

For these reasons we want to enhance the life opportunities for everyone, by improving the quality of life, freeing everyone to achieve their potential and removing barriers to personal development and community growth.

In Harrow we look forward to a community

- Where everybody can aspire to a better life for themselves and their families.
- Where diversity can be celebrated and social cohesion promoted.
- Where everybody has an equal chance to fulfil their potential.
- Where the quality of life is enhanced by a safe, secure and clean environment.
- Which is a true learning community where standards of education are rising and there is wider participation in lifelong learning
- Where good health and social care is available to all who need those services.
- Where there is a vibrant local economy.
- Where there is a strong sense of civic pride.
- Where there is a dynamic Council supported by a valued workforce, working in partnership with the community to improve public services. “

#### "MISSION

The Council will strive to fulfil its vision and become recognised as a good provider through the implementation of the New Harrow Project, sustained by a rolling three year Medium Term Budget Strategy.

The New Harrow Project will seek to raise all Council standards of service so that there is a real improvement for residents and users. “

Harrow is improving and has been upgraded by the Audit Commission to “Fair”. The Council is determined to continue this improvement and to achieve “Good” status as soon as possible within the next 2 years.

To continue this improvement the Council has launched the New Harrow Project. The Project has five main parts:-

- The achievement of financial stability to aid the planning and delivery of services.
- A rebuild of the organisation. Four new directorates have been created and new Chief Officers appointed. A review of the middle management is now underway.
- The area assessment and delivery of services. Through an Area Director in each directorate all services that can be delivered on an area basis will be so delivered.
- The creation of a new IT Strategy and partnership arrangements to update the IT support infrastructure to enable improvements in service delivery.

- The establishment of a performance management system throughout the Council to help drive through the changes necessary to achieve radical improvements in the performance of the Council.

All five strands of the New Harrow Project have benefited or are about to benefit the library service (see the evidence below).

To achieve its vision the Council is focusing on six major priority areas including lifelong learning priorities (3). Within this particular priority area, 3E is “Improving the Borough’s library provision” with the outcomes of (i) the implementation of the Library Position Statement including a phased programme to increase library opening hours and (ii) plan for a new central library in Harrow town centre as part of a town centre development plan.

The library service has a role as a shop window for information about how the Council is achieving its vision through all its strategic priorities. However, the library service also has direct participation in other strategic priorities and outcomes, e.g. promoting good community relations by the promotion of arts and cultural activities that celebrate cultural diversity and achieving a Council workforce that is representative of the local community; developing support for local communities by establishing links with the health and voluntary sectors to support local communities and by being involved with school cluster groups that are becoming the focus for inter-agency working to identify and assist those in need of services; improving the standard of learning for all age groups by the development and diversification of learning opportunities; safeguarding children by a wider range of services for disabled children and their carers and improvements in the life chances for looked after children; and promotion of benefit take-up.

The Corporate Plan seeks to support the Community Strategy for Harrow (a document agreed with the strategic partners through the Harrow Strategic Partnership). The Community Strategy 2004 identifies seven focus areas towards meeting the vision of “a borough that is safe, clean, healthy and prosperous, with equal life opportunities for all – a friendly and vibrant place to be”. This document refers to regenerating and empowering the community through learning and refers both to the Public Library Position Statement and actions such as extending library opening hours, considering Sunday opening of libraries, Black History Month, achieving Public Library Standards (e.g. increasing visits), 24/7 access to the catalogue, the replacement Wealdstone Library and planning for a new central library in the Town Centre development. The Strategy also refers to the Cultural Strategy (2003-2008) which itself devotes four pages to the library service and has extensive links with the Public Library Position Statement and the library service objective which states that “The library service will be a focal point in the community for the appreciation of and information on cultural activities, recognising its responsibility to the varied literatures, arts and music of its community. It will support literary culture by providing access to writing and will actively promote the importance of reading. It will support musical culture by access to a wide range of recordings and performance sets and will accommodate exhibitions of the visual arts. It will contribute to the Cultural Strategy for Harrow.”

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 continuing problems in recruitment of qualified librarians, especially in London).

The supporting evidence for the above statement is:

- An Education Service Strategy linked to the corporate vision 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, in 2003/04 they rose further by between 6% and 17% above the 2002/03 base.

- Funding was provided for 2003/04 and 2004/05 to expand opening hours at all libraries in March 2004 to meet fully DCMS standards for aggregate opening hours and the 45 hours/week minimum for larger libraries. This was 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 enabling the library service to improve on both Public Library Standards for stock. This is being sustained in 2004/05 by an inflation allowance. This increase has enabled the evolution of the range of stock with a greater range of ethnic minority interest newspaper and magazines, the roll out of DVD and video loan collections to all libraries by April 2005 from July 2004 (initial tranche of 3 libraries) and the expansion of music CD collections including at the new library in the Wealdstone Centre.
- Increases in resources and improvements in their use have led to 24 out of 29 Public Library Standards being met by April 2004.
- Expansion of outreach activities including family learning groups, children looked after (both in foster care and in residential homes) through joined up working with other Council units.
- Introduction of a monthly signed story telling session for hearing-impaired under fives or hearing-impaired carers of under fives.
- Commitment to expenditure and planning on further disabled access improvements to libraries as part of a corporate strategy. Work commenced in 2003/04 and is continuing in 2004/05. Examples include disabled persons toilets, power-assisted entrance doors and improvements to disabled access ramps.
- Budgeted plans for installing accessibility software in August 2004 to provide greater access to People's Network terminals.
- Allocation of I.E.G. funds for 24/7 access to the library management system via the Internet from May 2004, enabling home checking of stock. Self renewals and reservations are being tested currently.
- The Council recognised the importance of the library service within its new structure for the People First directorate (chiefly former Education and Social Service departments). The library service is placed with its own 3<sup>rd</sup> tier Group Manager within the department of Learning and Community Development alongside colleagues in Achievement and Inclusion, Lifelong Learning, and Community and Culture.
- 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 attainment of stock standards in 2002/03.
- The corporate funding to upgrade low specification I.T hardware - this has benefited the library service by about 80 replacement terminals in 2003 and 2004. A sum of £15,000 has been committed to improve the ICT infrastructure for libraries. An IT officer was temporarily seconded in early 2004/05 to deal with a backlog of ICT problems.
- The concentration in the New Harrow Project on a customer-focused area service delivery meeting local needs (a role with which the library service is very familiar)
- The local library service is involved in two local partnerships (ha2cando and the Canons cluster) based on clusters of schools which involve working across the Council (e.g. social workers and education welfare officers) and with external agencies (e.g. police and Primary Care Trust). This aim is to take preventative action to assist children and their families where the children are potentially at risk of being referred. These have grown out of the authority's Local Public Service Agreements.
- The preparation of an action plan for enhancing area working arrangements by libraries.

- A commitment to regeneration and partnership projects such as the Wealdstone Centre opening in late 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, and for which the whole Council is reapplying.
- 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. In July 2004 the Town Centre Development Strategy Panel will consider the brief for a feasibility study for performance and exhibition spaces including a possible co-location with the new library.
- 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.

### Public value

The cost effectiveness and cost efficiency of the library service has been recognised. In 2001, the library service was delivering the highest borrowing levels per capita in outer London and was reaching its minority communities (comparison of ethnicity data of users with census data), but was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 20 on net expenditure. Net costs per loan were low. The authority has committed itself to meeting the public library standards in order to meet local aspirations and government targets and provide an even more effective service with better stock, opening hours and web access.

The library service has received significant increases in funding in the last two years of over £400,000 to enable it to meet all but five of the public library standards or sub-parts of standards, to improve decoration and promote the services. However, the Council is still actively looking for further improvements in access and social inclusion. Officers have been instructed to cost Sunday opening of the central libraries and to improve concessions and exemptions from fees and charges for both youngsters and senior citizens.

### Evaluations of the library service by residents

- The triennial Residents' Attitude Survey by MORI (October 2003 – January 2004) showed a rise of 4% in satisfaction with the library service from 62% to 66%. According to MORI this places Harrow as ranked 8<sup>th</sup> = out of the 29 London boroughs using the MORI questionnaire.
- The Public Library User Survey conducted in all libraries in October 2003 according to IPF methodology also showed further improvements in library user satisfaction.
- Overall rated very good and good by 85.9% of respondents.
- Staff helpfulness rated very good and good by 85.8% of respondents
- Staff knowledge and expertise rated very good and good by 92.3% of respondents
- Information and enquiry services rated very good and good by 88.9% of respondents
- Children's services rated very good and good by 80.5% of respondents
- The Children's Public Library User Survey was conducted in 2002 for the first time. This showed children's satisfaction levels meeting DCMS standards for them.

## 2. Response to "Framework for the Future"

### 2.1 Books, reading and learning

#### Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

##### Strengths

- Highest issues per capita in outer London



- Second highest reservation requests per capita in outer London, which assists provision of a broad and popular range of stock

- High percentage of gross budget spent on stock (despite Harrow ranking low on net expenditure/capita in outer London). 14%, and ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in outer London in 2000/01. The 2002/03 comparative data from CIPFA indicates a slippage to 9.6% and ranked 13<sup>th</sup>; however, this is because of the mid-year reduction of £100k. In 2003/04 the base budget was restored with a book inflation allowance plus £40k towards the target of DCMS standard for replenishment rate of stock. Comparative data for 2003/04 is not available yet.
- Good selection processes (mix of standing orders, stock picks from general and specialist suppliers, use of electronic and printed selection tools and approval collections for children's books).
- Use of staff's and public's expertise in selection.
- Use of WELLSTOC consortium for purchasing the majority of stock and of the CILLA co-operative for purchasing Indic language materials.
- Cross section of staff involved in reader development training and work.
- Expanding number of reading groups, both for adults and children (Chatterbooks). For example, Gayton Library has started a second group and the adult reading groups total is now eight.
- Links with national schemes for encouraging reading, e.g. Summer Reading Challenge for children, which has high uptake in Harrow. (2,320 children in 2003)
- Free use of People's Network terminals for blocks of one hour for learning opportunities.
- High levels of use of People's Network PCs. (Over 50% of overall capacity used; queues at some libraries)
- Expansion of range of ethnic minority interest newspapers and magazines in 2003/04.
- Addition of Tamil in May 2004 to existing range of mother-tongue stock.
- Good links with Literature Development work in Harrow and West London (Westwords2) (for example, the continuing Read Routes campaigns).
- New postholder for manager of young people's work (School Library Service and children's public library service) has had lifelong learning specifically added to her responsibilities. Work has developed with schools and Early Years service on family learning events (for example, visits to Kenton Library).
- Weekly under-fives story times at all libraries have been supplemented in 2004 by a monthly signed story session at the central lending library. The stories are signed by people with British Sign Language Level 2 qualification. The initiative was started with the input of a signer employed by the Council for customer interface at the Civic Centre. A volunteer parent has taken over the role of signing. The sessions are benefiting both hearing-impaired children, and hearing-impaired parents with children without hearing impairments. The initiative has been supplemented with a collection of books and videos for hearing-impaired library users. Library staff have worked with other Council services and voluntary agencies.
- Baby Bounce sessions piloted at Hatch End Library are being extended to more libraries – involving carers and children. At present two libraries are experimenting with similar sessions.
- Self-help collections of leaflets and booklets arranged in a constructive and well-indexed manner are available for consultation at all libraries providing information on a wide range of topics.
- Staff in regular contact with other specialist professional staff, e.g. Music Librarian (IAML) and Children's Librarians (ASCEL and YLG).

### 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.
- Lack of space that can be made private (limits use of buildings for e.g. tuition, surgeries, community group meetings, social inclusion ventures such as domestic abuse counselling).

### Challenges

- High rate of use (highest book borrowing/capita in outer London). (2002/03 CIPFA)
- Second highest stock turnover in outer London. (2002/03 CIPFA)
- Problems with obsolete rolling stock housing reserve stock, local history, school library service project collections, etc.
- Reaching non-users, e.g. encouraging teenagers, elderly Asians and African-Caribbean through music and film.
- High rate of reservations (2<sup>nd</sup> highest as percentage of borrowing in outer London and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest per capita – 2002/03 CIPFA).
- Over 100 languages spoken in homes of school children of Harrow.

### Policy and practice headlines for adults and children

- Requests for any book, recording (for over 12s) or score legally available will be attempted to be met by purchase or borrowing by inter-loan library services. No extra charge for out-of-borough items.
- Provision by age begins at children's board book level.
- 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 that lend fiction).
- Access to large print for children.
- 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 is used to improve choice.
- Wide variety of recorded music from all parts of the world.
- 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.
- Responsive to demand for different formats/media, e.g. spoken word CDs, DVDs and videos for children.

### Activities to encourage participation across the full range of informal learning

- All children's events to have a book-related theme.
- Encourage reading by presentation of selections, use of displays, etc.
- Develop 'Easy Read' collections to meet the needs of users with basic skills.
- Encourage informal and formal learning by all ages – priority is given to publicising educational courses.

- Encourage both browsing and purposive borrowing with a staffed enquiry/information desk in each library.
- Provide list of music tutors in the music library.
- Host family learning events with schools in some libraries
- Library staff speak to PTAs etc about library services
- Liaise with schools to promote under 5's story sessions to applicants for nursery and reception class places.
- Host local hobbyists events during library opening hours to promote interest in learning about coins, chess, jewellery-making, etc.
- Maintain a Register of Private Teachers of Music, provide "Learning to Play ....."  
Stock and loan performance material free of charge to local music societies.

#### Activities to develop and evaluate practice

(priorities are shown with targets and/or timescales)

- Use Audit Commission Stock Health Check to monitor selection of adult fiction and poetry books by end of September 2004 and, if necessary, take appropriate action, e.g. review selection practices.
- Maintain waiting lists for reading groups and expand number of groups where appropriate in 2004/05
- Monitor Bookstart programme with health service in Harrow begun in June 2004 by measuring resultant new library registrations by March 2005.
- Monitor and experiment further with teenage collections (e.g. @ the Edge at Gayton Library) in 2004/05 with possibility of teen reading group.
- Monitor take up of provision of mother tongue stock, especially new Tamil stock. Evaluate and use experience to expand to other locations, if appropriate, by June 2005.
- Monitor use of ethnic minority interest newspapers and magazines in Arabic, Chinese, English and Gujarati added in late 2003/04. Review by February 2005.
- Continue evaluation of reader development work by monitoring attendance, stock use and feedback.
- Continue involvement in regional and sub-regional reader development projects, e.g. LLDA Read Routes programme and Westwords2, a N.W. London writer and reader audience development programme. Projects have their own built in evaluation procedures and timescale.
- Continue use of national schemes (e.g. Summer Reading Challenge and Orange prize) in response to Feedback from parents and library users. Evaluate Summer Rollercoaster by October 2004.
- Evaluate Chatterbooks groups (sponsored by Orange) started in 2004 by March 2005.
- Increase publicity for reading groups through BookChat colour brochure, posters, and press articles during 2004/05.
- Increase publicity for under fives' story times in 2004/05 (including ongoing publicity in other languages to applicants in school reception classes).
- Meet suggested public library standard for stock additions of children's books by March 2005.
- Write to lapsed older readers offering Housebound Library Service if appropriate (pilot winter 2004/05)
- Continue to analyse comments from PLUS surveys and feedback forms to identify new or current demands. Annual review of Feedback forms in July.
- Continue liaison with manager of Gatsby project in improving life chances of children looked after and develop appropriate activities during 2004/05.
- Bounce and Rhyme experiment at Hatch End Library to be evaluated in 2004/05 and best practice rolled out to other libraries as appropriate.
- Work with new Children's division of People First and continue work with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. E.g. Bookstart commenced 2004 and annual exhibitions for Foundation Stage conference.

- Continue co-operation with LLDA projects LLiL (referral scheme) and WiLL (access by Z39.50 protocol to catalogues of London's libraries and museums). Monitor use of Harrow catalogue.
- Continue to chair 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 Centre where a replacement library is opening late Autumn 2004. Meeting regularly with partners.

#### Links with the Education Development Plan

- Support of early learning that enriches a child's development through the provision of suitable materials for the Under Fives and weekly storytime sessions in libraries.
- 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.
- Maintain staff involvement in the Borough's literacy programme.
- Maintain – through a service level agreement – School Library Service's provision of project loan collections, advice and guidance, and a stock purchasing service for first and middle schools. The majority of LEA schools have signed up to this provision.

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 to give 24/7 access to catalogue and personal membership records. Currently testing self renewal and reservation procedures. Enabled 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 library staff.

- Service Level Agreement with Council IT services for People's Network.
- Library link featured on home page of [www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk)
- Capital funding (£25k) for work in 2004/05 on replacement of library management system.

### Constraints

- Problems of updating software on People's Network PCs and maintaining security of network.
- Pressure on corporate IT staff resources leading to inadequate and inconsistent support for development (Library issues currently being addressed).
- 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).

### Challenges

- Learndirect 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); but MLA tackling problem.
- Sustainability of People's Network hardware and software.
- Selection of cost-effective and appropriate assistive hardware 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, including links to best web sites for various subject categories and links to reading development web-sites.

### Policy and practice headlines for adults and children

- People's Network open to members and non-members of library, but advance book booking available to members only. Ease of access important for social inclusion.
- All users of People's Network terminals have to acknowledge an Acceptable Use Policy.
- Staff 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 software technology available on at least one terminal at each library from August 2004, followed by introduction of assistive hardware in remainder of 2004/05.
- A booking system with limits on advance booking helps share out the opportunities to use the free of charge service.
- Self booking kiosk to be introduced initially at the library with the most People's Network PCs.
- Staff guidelines have been developed to control potential abuses of the system.
- Library members may access their own records on the library management system by use of their membership and PIN numbers.
- Library staff record and share useful web-sites for staff and public use.

## 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 by use of membership and PIN details.
- 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, Oxford Reference Online, and Times Digital Archive 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 is web-enabled and provides 24/7 access to the catalogue and membership accounts. Self renewal and reservation procedures are being tested at time of writing.
- Subscription services, where possible, are made available remotely by use of library membership number.
- Membership forms will be made available by the Harrow Live web site which is undergoing a further revision using PLAWS2 protocol.

### Involvement in Harrow's e-government strategy

- Libraries are represented with two other People First staff (representing education and social services) in meetings with an IT Relationship Manager to feed in developments to the Council'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, but few people used it and the service was withdrawn.
- The library service is exploring videophone links to a signer to enable hearing-impaired library users to access a wider range of services.
- Future developments may depend upon decisions 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.
- The new library in the Wealdstone Centre will share a telecommunication structure, for computing and voice links, with a partner and with Council offices.
- The library service is represented on the small working party of People First staff developing the Harrow web-site.

### Activities to develop and evaluate practice

(priorities are shown with targets and/or timescales)

- The web-enabled library management system development is using a management system to monitor hits (annual).
- Ongoing work on the web enablement project will address the issue of library presence on the web-site. An improved presence six months after PLAWS is upgraded is the target.
- The booking management system for the People's Network terminals will be used periodically to monitor usage (ongoing) as was required for the ALCL promotion of People's Network terminals in April 2004.

- The feedback forms relating to ICT use will continue to be monitored and analysed (annual analysis).
- The usage of online subscription services will be monitored (ongoing).
- 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. Initial evaluation will be 6 months after introduction of each service.
- 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 MLA, such as an electronic reference library, and monitor use and costs (in MLA's current work programme).
- 24/7 automated telephone renewal systems will be considered in conjunction with future changes of the computerised library management system. A preliminary review of the public library management system market is being undertaken in 2004/05 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 has developed an Adult Community Learning web-site using London Government On-Line funding. Managers will ensure that library staff are aware of its existence and promote it to the public. (July 2004 +)
- Self-issue and return terminals are an essential part of the brief for the new central library in the town centre (time scale dependent upon wider issues).

### 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 and 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 were improved in 2002/03 and again to DCMS standards in March 2004 (see section 3.1).
- Housebound Library Service serves c.480 individuals in their homes on four week rota and serves 62 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 2004/05 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.
- All libraries have had new external opening hours signs in the new corporate colours of the Council. Internally they have been badged with People First signage.
- Libraries are used by electoral services to promote registration on the list of voters.
- Two libraries act as polling stations.
- The literary culture of differing ethnic minorities is actively promoted to all (e.g. "Made in Britain" – writings by British ethnic minority writers) and reading groups are widening



their members range of reading. The library service actively participates in Black History Month events.

- A wide range of world music promoting social cohesion and enhancing the quality of life of isolated users.
- Under-fives story telling sessions use stories from the different cultures represented in Harrow.
- Those receiving awards from the Mayor for the Summer Reading scheme and who are representative of the different cultures in Harrow meet together to receive the awards and exhibit their work.
- All primary schools are encouraged to bring classes of children to the local public library to give them access to a valuable community facility of which the parents may be unaware.
- Library spaces are used for exhibitions, events in the annual Harrow Arts Festival and the Words Live events, celebration of local cultures, surgeries for external bodies such as Department of Work and Pensions, Inland Revenue, Harrow in Business (Asian Business Week), and Harrow Association for Disabled People, and consultation by planners on major schemes (e.g. development of local supermarket at North Harrow).
- Libraries are actively involved in the meetings of two Local Public Service Agreement projects based around clusters of schools and working with local partners (see section 1.1 above).

### 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 (giving rise to opportunities)

- 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 possibly 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 appealing to all users of a strong retail centre.
- Involvement if any PFI bids for community schools are successful.
- Working in positive partnership with other agencies at the Wealdstone Community Centre due to open in late Autumn 2004.
- Reaching out to those harder to reach because of geographical location, lack of experience of a good library, educational attainment, etc.
- Active participation in the community plan as it begins to be formulated.

### 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 Centre opening in late Autumn 2004 is the most cogent example of an activity to reach users and non-users and encourage the community identity of an area.

- Sunday opening is under review for 2005/06 to enable a wider cross-section of the public to use library services.
- Review of fees and charges for young teenagers and senior citizens is in progress.

#### 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 analysed the outcomes to improve enquiry services. A Harrow manager chaired the process. The analysis for May/June 2004 showed an improvement in both accuracy and depth of the answers and in customer care skills. Harrow was ranked first out of the nine participating library authorities.

The Council introduced new badges, similar to ones previously in use by the library service. The library service adopted the new design to maintain the corporate image. Similarly the Council has introduced 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 (next due in 2006) on customer satisfaction for a BVPI.
- Unobtrusive testing of enquiry services (referred to above) – maintain the improvement in Summer 2005 tests.
- Statistics of new members monitored, as are statistics of borrowing and visits (annually). The target is increased visits which include non-borrowing use.
- The service is focussing 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 is increased visitors for 2002 to 2006 as in the Education Strategy.

This will be enabled by enhancing stock and facilities (e.g. adding DVD collections) in 2004/05, and in the case of Wealdstone Library by design of the new library's layout and services (opening late 2004).

- 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. The poster display policy is under review and will be completed by October 2004.

## 2.4 Building capacity to deliver transformation

### Short analysis of key strengths, constraints and challenges

#### Strengths

- New Harrow Project with its five-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) providing an area based service delivery where appropriate, and (v) performance management. All have benefited the library service.
- The library service is linked with arts and culture and lifelong learning services within the Learning and Community Development department of the People First Directorate (mainly former Education and Social Services departments)
- liP status renewed in 2003, and being planned Council-wide for 2005.
- Recent reviews of job descriptions of Branch Librarians and Principal Librarians, taking into account Council priorities such as lifelong learning, social inclusion and area service delivery.
- An experienced and committed library workforce working well within local teams and cross-borough teams.

#### Constraints

- Managerial time availability when providing a well-used service with comparatively low resources (1<sup>st</sup> in outer London for issues/capita, 12<sup>th</sup> of 17 reporting for net expenditure per capita - CIPFA 2002/03)
- 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 detailed on pages 4 and 5.

#### Actions to improve leadership, staff capacity and skills

- Six monthly staff development reviews.
- Use of permanent and short-term working parties using staff at all levels, liaising with partners.
- Use of internal and external training skills (e.g. internal library courses on customer care, reference enquiry skills and display skills and use of the very cost-effective West London libraries SKILLS training co-operative chaired by a Harrow manager to provide

- coverage of wider regional and network library issues, and attendance at events and seminars organised by LLDA and ALM (London)).
- Use of the Council's competency development centres for staff as they are provided in the next year. Highest grade managers already involved in competence assessment centres.
- Encourage staff to share good practice across the service through meetings (e.g. Senior Library Assistants or Service Point Managers), by teams on reader development, and by e-mail.
- Adjust work timetables to release managers for important projects (e.g. Wealdstone Centre)

#### Activities to develop and evaluate practice

- Collection and review of training needs by line managers for submission of annual training plan for departmental approval, subject to departmentally decided criteria.
- Review partnerships at Senior Management Team and Service Point Manager meetings, if no formal mechanism in existence.

#### Partnerships (mostly ongoing)

Black History Month steering group

Brent and Harrow Consumer Support Network

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.

Community Legal Services Partnership

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

Arts service - Cultural Strategy, Arts Plan, Words Live.

Early Years and Child Development Partnership

Bookstart/PCT health visitors

Orange - reader development work, inc Chatterbooks

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

Westwords2 – West London co-operative for reading and literature development.

SKILLS - West London library training co-operative

WELLSTOC - West London Libraries Stock purchasing consortium.

Pensions Service sessions by Department for Work and Pensions

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

Possible partnership between Community Legal Service, LLDA and 3 library authorities (inc. Harrow) to bid for funding to pilot a family legal information gateway.

Primary schools promoting under fives story-times and libraries to parents applying for nursery and reception class places.

Youth Offending Team – placement at a library.

#### Priorities

- Involvement in the community plan, meeting Council timescales.
- Development of partnerships for Wealdstone Centre opening late Autumn 2004.
- Expansion of involvement in area based delivery of services when Council's area based managers are appointed.

### 3. Public Library Standards: Information relating to standards met or not met in the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

3.1 Public library standards - "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries " PLS 1 to 18.

24 out of 29 Public Library Standards and their subsections were met by April 2004.

The Public Library Standards Achievement Report with information about Harrow's performance in each of the designated national standards and part standards (i.e. PLS 1 to 18 less 10 and 16) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 was submitted by the deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004.

- PLS 2(ii) relates to mobile libraries and is not applicable to Harrow.
- As permitted, data for PLS 12(i), 13(i), 14(i) and 15(i) comes from the most recent adult Public Library User Survey in October 2003.
- As permitted, data for PLS 12(ii), 13(ii), 14(ii) and 15(ii) comes from the most recent children's Public Library User Survey in October 2002.

Three standards were achieved for the first time and one was no longer achieved.

The five standards not met were:

- PLS 9(iii) Percentage of requests for books met within 30 days.
- PLS 11 Number of library visits per 1,000 population.
- PLS 12(i) Percentage of adult library users reporting success in obtaining a specific book
- PLS 14(i) Percentage of adult library users rating the knowledge of staff as "good" or "very good".
- PLS 18 Time taken to replace the lending stock on open access or available for loan.

PLS 9(iii)

The requests standard for 30 days had been met in the previous year. It is believed that the failure in October 2003 survey was because the mid-year reduction of the stock fund in 2002/03 by £100k (c.20%) meant that some of the less in demand stock was not purchased. Where these titles were requested in 2003/04 and were out of print, Harrow had to obtain lending copies by borrowing from other libraries who would be getting comparatively high usage still from stock only a year old. This meant delays in the inter-library loans process. These delays were made worse in 2003 when the local sub-contractor working for the national courier service used by public libraries failed to abide by the terms of the contract. Protracted correspondence between the courier's national service manager for libraries and Harrow's Library Service Manager only ceased in early 2004 when the local sub-contractor was replaced and the service improved significantly.

PLS 11

The number of visitors per 1,000 population did increase significantly, but still did not meet the standard. It should be noted that outer London boroughs have been set the highest standard in 2001 (based upon the upper quartile position from earlier comparative data). The latest comparative data from CIPFA for 2002/03 shows that for the second successive year only one authority (Richmond) met the outer London standard of 8,600 visits for 1,000 population. Harrow with 6,565 visits per 1,000 population was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 19 reporting boroughs. The most recent measure for Harrow (October 2003) is 7,078 visits/1,000 population; this is 17.7% below the standard. In its consultation papers on revising the standards for post 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, DCMS appears to acknowledge the need for recalibration of this important indicator.

Harrow's visitor count should increase in 2004/05 with the effect of an average 22% rise in opening hours from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004. The central lending library (Gayton Library) saw a visitor increase of 17% in the first three months of increased opening; however, it should be noted that this library had a rise of nearly 35% in opening hours.

### PLS 12(i)

The success in obtaining a specific book has increased markedly from 47% to 58%, but is still short of the target of 65%. Part of the reason is likely to be the fact that the survey was carried out in October 2003, but the book purchasing in 2003/04 became over-concentrated to the end of the financial year. The success rate should improve in 2004/05 with the extra stock spending in 2003/04 and 2004/05 resulting in more new stock in the libraries.

Only two outer London boroughs were reported as attaining this target as at 2002/03. Harrow has the disadvantage of the highest issues per capita and the second highest stock turn in outer London, reducing the choice on the shelf at any one time.

### PLS 14(i)

The rating of the knowledge of staff as "good" or "very good" remained the same at 92%, compared with the standard of 95%. Again this was measured in October 2003. The May/June 2004 unobtrusive testing of the enquiry service in a co-operative of nine London boroughs placed Harrow at the top. This follows on from a year of in-house enquiry skills courses.

Although the training should improve the staff expertise, it will not be measured again until October 2006 if IPF PLUS survey timetables are followed.

### PLS 18

The replenishment rate for the lending stock improved significantly from 8.6 years to 7.7 years towards the standard of 6.7 years. The concentration of purchasing towards the end of 2003/04 meant that although a significant amount of additional stock had arrived it was not catalogued and available for loan until 2004/05. Calculations suggest that the replenishment rate would be better, if these late purchases had been counted, but not sufficient to meet the standard. A bid will be made for an increase to the stock fund for 2005/06. The carry forward bulge for 2003/04 plus a "normal" year's purchasing in 2004/05 is likely to place the library service near the standard for that year only. The comparative data for 2002/03 shows that Harrow was within the actual upper quartile for outer London boroughs.

Harrow has progressed in meeting the standards significantly since March 2001 as shown in the electronic Public Library Standards Achievement Report. An anomalous effect of achieving the important aggregate opening hours standard and the standard for opening hours of larger libraries is that the percentage of aggregate opening hours that fall outside 9am to 5pm on weekdays (PLS 3(ii)) has declined. However, that particular standard set after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001 is still met.

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

The local targets for 31.3.2004 were:

- Services for people with disabilities
  - Install induction loop systems in all libraries by March 2004 (Achieved)

Six systems were provided through the Council's First Contact programme. The remaining ones were funded by the library service. They are portable induction loop systems installed on enquiry desks where staff can handle both enquiries and the routines of issue and return of stock and applications for membership.

Continual background noise from the main telephone handset and electronic cash registers is avoided. The deadline was met.

- Install textphone system at a major library by March 2004 (Achieved)

A textphone was installed at Gayton Library (the central lending library with the highest usage) in March 2004. The number is being added to all library publicity as it is reprinted.

- 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 March 2004, with the process continuing into 2004/05. (Not achieved in full).

This will not be met until late 2004. There have been problems in assessing and installing the software. All libraries had large font capacity by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

- Services for ethnic minority communities

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. (Achieved) (48.6% from minority ethnic groups; 2001 census 41.2%).

- Services for socially excluded people

- The first three targets were the same as for services for people with disabilities.
- Meet DCMS standards on opening hours by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. (Achieved from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004).

- Services for children

- Improve on DCMS standard for purchased additions of stock per capita and progress towards replenishment stock rota by March 2004. (Achieved)

The overall additions and replenishment rate standards were met by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. Achievement of the "suggested" sub-target for additions of children's books was improved but narrowly missed; in 2004/05 it will be achieved by redirecting an extra £5k of the stock fund to the purchase of children's book stock.

- Children's loans >25% of total loans (Achieved)  
28% of overall loans were for children in 2003/04
- Replenishment rate of children's stock >12% per annum (Achieved)  
13% of children's stock was replenished in 2003/04
- Run Summer Reading Challenge in 2003 and 2004. (Achieved).

#### 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
- Good co-locations (see 2.3 above)
- CCTV assists security at two libraries to improve security of users.
- Access hours meet DCMS standards
- Funding in 2003/04 and 2004/05 for works to improve access for disabled people.
- Easily identifiable buildings with standard opening hours signs in corporate colours.
- Toilet facilities being improved or installed; including baby changing facilities



### 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
- Kenton Library is a listed Grade 2 building.

### 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 2003/04-2005/06 for public Council premises; not all work yet costed.
- Wealdstone Centre with library opening late 2004 (replacing poor design) - £50k growth in running costs of all Council stakeholders approved.
- Discussions have been initiated on capital funding for refurbishing libraries, £70k made available in 2004/05, with future funding possible.
- 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 the 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. The potential for working with PCT at two sites will be dependent upon the PCT's own agenda and timescales.
- DDA – related works are being completed in 2003/04 and 2004/05.

## 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. MLA's planned electronic reference shelf.

- Music recording loans in Harrow are rising, but reported as declining elsewhere.

### Resources

There have been recent increases in the stock fund to meet DCMS standards for additions and replenishment rate and there have been inflation allowances. The library service will be bidding for a further increase in 2005/06 to meet the replenishment standard. 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 MLA or library authorities will fund such provision. Income from DVD loans from 2004/05 will assist the purchase of new stock. 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 at the Civic Centre Library 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, many with considerable experience of Harrow and of library and information work.
- The library service as part of the former Education Department achieved IIP status, and will take part in a reapplication involving the whole Council in 2005.
- Training through internal courses, SKILLS, LLDA and ALM (London)
- Increasingly reflecting diversity of the local community.
- Staff responded well to timetable changes (necessary for changes in opening hours at all libraries) because of commitment to public service.

#### Constraints and Challenges

- Although recruitment of Saturday Assistants, Lunchtime 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 expansion within the commercial sector, low output from university departments of qualified students, comparatively low pay for a graduate profession, and perceptions of local government.
- Allied to the above is the age profile of the qualified librarians which suggest that there may be problems over the next 5 - 10 years in recruiting replacements and developing new leaders.
- Dissatisfaction of staff with the application of a Single Status Agreement in Harrow, which the Council is addressing.

### Resources

The authority has committed funding for staff levels to meet public library opening hours standards and the local implications of the Single Status agreement.

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; this would tie in with the job evaluations as part of the Single Status Review in 2004/05 +.

#### 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
- The library management system web-enabled and about to be linked 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 developments of WiLL by LLDA in 2004/05
- Sustainability of People's Network
- Installing appropriate assistive technology in 2004/05 using existing funding

##### Resources

The Council provided £600k in 2003/04 for upgrading IT hardware across the Council. Eighty low specification machines in libraries were replaced, with the library service having to pay for new monitors.

The inter-library loans database and software market may be affected by a MLA attempt to achieve the goal of a national union catalogue. Costs cannot be predicted at this stage. The take over of LIBPAC by OCLC-PICA may have effects on competition and prices, particularly as the functionality of V3 Web is marketed to Unity users.

The restructuring of the library network interface with the main Council network is being funded from New Harrow Project funds.

£25k capital earmarked in 2004/05 for investigation of the replacement of the library management system which is having its final software release installed in September 2004.

Council funding provided for the broadband link to the new library site at Wealdstone Centre opening late 2004.

## GLOSSARY

ALCL	Association of London Chief Librarians
ALM (London)	Archives, Libraries and Museums (London)
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)
ILL	Inter Library Loans
IPF	Institute of Public Financial (commercial activities arm of CIPFA)
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)
MLA	Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource), the non-governmental organisation reporting to DCMS.
MS	MicroSoft
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PLAWS	Personalised Local Authority Web Site
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)
SKILLS	Co-operative of West and central London libraries for training staff
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).

