



# **Review of Library Provision in Bracknell Forest**

**Report by a Working Group of the  
Lifelong Learning and Children's Services  
Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**February 2007**

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All the staff in all Bracknell Forest's libraries, and especially Birch Hill

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 21 September 2005, the Lifelong Learning and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered priorities for its future work programme and established a working group consisting of Councillors Mrs Birch (lead member) and Mrs Beadsley, Miss Richardson (Teacher Representative) and Mrs Whitbread (Parent Governor Representative) to undertake a review of libraries.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Working Group's review was to look at library stock, facilities and locations to ensure that they were fit for purpose and met users' current and future needs with a view to increasing library usage and book reading.
- 1.3 A key objective of the review was to encourage the development of a library and information service fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and this led the Working Group to seek to inform future library provision associated with the new civic hub which would replace the existing Bracknell Central Library. The Working Group also sought to investigate trends in library usage and book reading and to identify possible methods of reversing any downward trend.
- 1.4 The scope of the review has been to map the current library and information service, including library location, opening hours, stock, range of services and use of volunteers and technology. Exploring the take up of library services, the role and extent of the Mobile Library Service, library provision for the elderly, the library on-line ordering service and the age profile of library users were also included together with exploring libraries and library management systems outside the Borough.
- 1.5 School libraries were excluded from the scope of the review.

## 2. Investigation and Information Gathering

- 2.1 The scene for the review was set by the Council's Assistant Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries (Learning, Achievement and Libraries) who briefed Members in respect of changes to the Library and Information Service following its transfer to the Education, Children's Services and Libraries Department. These consisted of the introduction of a vision statement and re-structuring of the service featuring a new staffing structure.
- 2.2 Following an initial meeting to scope the review, the Working Group interviewed many witnesses, including the Assistant Director, the Head of Libraries and Information, the Library Stock Services Manager and the Library Community Services Manager. These officers gave a useful insight into the Library and Information Service including details of sources of relevant background documents, the national library service standards, stock management, library usage trends and profiles, the mobile library service, access issues, use of volunteers, technology in libraries and anticipated civic hub library services.
- 2.3 The Working Group received a progress update in respect of the development of proposals for new library provision in the civic hub and the associated cultural aspects from the Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Culture and Visual Environment, respectively.
- 2.4 The Working Group visited libraries in the Borough, paying particular attention to the new Crowthorne Library, which was much improved and served as a template for future library provision. The visit to Bracknell Central Library provided an opportunity for the Working Group to inspect stock and gather information regarding stock selection, ordering, receipt, distribution and storage and the treatment of old stock.
- 2.5 The review also looked at libraries and associated management systems outside Bracknell Forest and featured a visit to the newly refurbished 'state of the art' Ascot Durning Library in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, where the Working Group interviewed the Royal Borough's Head of Library and Information Services and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services. Information was also gathered in respect of the new Jubilee Library in Brighton which was considered to be a fine example of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century library including a shop, café and conference facilities.
- 2.6 In order to gain views in respect of the Borough's Library and Information Service, the Working Group prepared questionnaires to survey librarians and library service users which were distributed during visits to Bracknell Forest libraries. The questionnaires sought information as to the age profile of users, purpose and frequency of library visits, area of users' residence, valued services, unused services, desired new or enhanced services. The results of the survey are attached at Appendices 1 to 3.

### 3. Findings

#### **Bracknell Forest's Library and Information Service**

- 3.1 Following its transfer to the Education, Children's Services and Libraries Department, the Library and Information Service had been re-structured to secure provision of a good frontline service by skilled staff. The mobile library service, which benefited from the assistance of volunteers, had been re-organised to serve the vulnerable and those with mobility problems and visited all residential homes in the Borough on a regular basis. The library service was a statutory service to which ten national public service standards applied. Following the opening of the new Crowthorne Library, Bracknell Forest met nine of these ten service standards and if assessed against them at the present time, would be rated as a four star service and not its current three star ranking. However, a new set of standards would be introduced.
- 3.2 Much demand for library services was from home taught children and those learning English as a second language. As the Council's courier service returned loan material to the branch of source, it was possible for borrowers to return items to any branch in the Borough. ICT in libraries was very popular and there was often 100% use of computers and requests for greater provision. This impacted on the need for reference books and materials as these could be replaced with on-line information. All library staff received some ITC training to assist users where necessary.

#### **Library Questionnaires**

- 3.3 Set out below are summaries of the findings of the surveys of library users and librarians. The full survey results are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.

#### **Analysis of Key Library User Questionnaire Findings**

##### Response Level

- 3.4 The questionnaire response level is high for Ascot Heath (66) and reasonable for Birch Hill (28) but possibly too low to be representative where Bracknell Library (13) and Great Hollands Library (14) are concerned.

##### Age Profile

- 3.5 The age profile of library users possibly reflects the local demographic for each library area e.g. there is a high number of users of Birch Hill Library under the age of 16 years and the largest age group of Ascot Heath Library users is 40-55 years. However, the latter age range is the second highest at Birch Hill and joint highest with the 56-69 years age group at Bracknell Library. The latter age range is the most frequent user of Great Hollands Library.

##### Frequency of Visits

- 3.6 Weekly visits are significantly the most common, followed by monthly visits and then those of two or three visits per week.

### Purpose of Visit

- 3.7 Borrowing books is significantly the most popular reason for visiting all the libraries other than Great Hollands Library, followed by borrowing DVDs and CDs etc, using the internet and reading reference books. This trend is confirmed by the responses received from the librarian questionnaire.

### Area of Residence

- 3.8 The questionnaire responses indicate that the majority of users reside in the locality of the libraries visited.

### Valued Existing Library Services

- 3.9 The responses indicate that users value all existing library services.

### Desired New or Enhanced Library Services

- 3.10 The majority of responders seek an enhancement of existing services such as a wider range and more frequent turnover of DVDs, magazines, journals and books; extended opening hours; full customer access to all library areas; more children's groups / story time; a larger number of information leaflets; increased display shelf space; free stock requests from other libraries; and increased internet access and use. Desired new services largely relate to the provision of toilet and café facilities, air conditioning and the sale of stamps.

## **Analysis of Key Librarian Questionnaire Findings**

### Response Level

- 3.11 Given the limited staffing of libraries, the response level from Ascot Heath and Birch Hill is good and it is useful to receive the views of a community librarian (Bracknell, Birch Hill and Binfield Libraries). The response from Bracknell Library raises some specific issues around service organisation and provision.

### The Future of the Library and Information Service

- 3.12 Although the responders recognise that books and audio material will and should remain an essential core of libraries to continue catering in particular for the elderly population and to provide a non-threatening environment for children to enjoy reading books, they foresee that libraries will increasingly become an information and learning resource for local communities with a greater emphasis placed on IT. Wider out of hours use of library buildings and the introduction of coffee shops are also envisaged.

### Purpose of Visits to Libraries

- 3.13 Borrowing books remains the most popular reason for visiting libraries, followed by use of the internet, obtaining information, consulting reference books and borrowing DVDs, audio cassettes and CDs.

### Existing Library Services / Facilities

- 3.14 Requested library services / facilities which are not currently available consist of scanning at Ascot Heath; loan of music CDs and computer games and

provision of terminals where children can play computer games at Birch Hill; and the use of customer discs in library PCs at Bracknell, Birch Hill and Binfield.

### Unused Library Services

- 3.15 The Ascot Heath and Community librarians report that there are no unused services / facilities at present. However, a Birch Hill librarian finds that the teenage section of that library is under utilised other than by one or two individuals who make good use of it.

### **Civic Hub Library Provision**

- 3.16 The Working Group learnt that the new civic hub library would constitute an important part of the town centre located in close proximity to retail areas and Council offices. With a proposed floor area of 2,500 square metres, the new library would be 1,000 square metres larger than the existing Bracknell Central Library providing the opportunity to re-arrange and reorganise the local studies stock with a view to enhancing that provision. It would include display space and comprise a significant part of the civic hub being located on part of the ground floor of the building opposite a café and on all of the first floor as a continual and contained space. Attractions to draw customers to the upper floor would be required. Although the layout of the new library was yet to be finalised, it would have varying 'degrees of vibrancy' featuring quiet areas to the rear with the appropriate acoustic environment for studying and discussion / reading / writing groups from where a gradual transformation to a more lively quick pick and browse area towards the entrance of the library would occur without altering its open plan layout. Design assistance would be required to ensure creative use of space, to maximise the amount of stock on display in the library without creating a cluttered appearance and to facilitate exhibitions. In addition to traditional library services, the following services would be available from the civic hub library:

- Lending stock, quick pick and browse
- Reference stock, newspapers and magazines
- Local studies
- Children's stock and area for story times and class visits
- Digital signage
- Areas for discussion and reading/writing groups
- Areas for exhibitions of a local nature and potentially in partnership with national museums
- Events such as small scale musical performances
- ICT access for e-mail, Council information, knowledge and leisure
- Home Library stock for volunteers to choose material from and for staff to deliver to residential homes and day centres
- Study areas
- Potential learning suite involving ICT and skills

- 3.17 The High Street car park would be located close to the library to facilitate access. Opening hours was a possible issue for the new library owing to its location within the civic hub and careful planning to facilitate late opening without threatening the security of other areas of the building would be required. The introduction of a self-issue loan scheme with reduced staffing would facilitate longer opening hours. The Home Library service would be housed

centrally within the new library resulting in stock also being available to the general public and reducing staffing issues.

### **Crowthorne Library**

- 3.18 On 24 July 2006 the Working Group visited the new Crowthorne Library, which had moved into new purpose built premises in Crowthorne High Street in January 2006, and were shown around the facilities by the Branch Supervisor.

#### **Environment and Location**

- 3.19 Members appreciated the overall design and colour scheme for the library (colours, decoration, finishes etc) and found it spacious and quiet for a compact facility. Although large format books did not fit easily onto lower shelves, the low shelving units provided an open, airy feel to the library. There was a good children's area with low level seats, boxes for picture books and shelves of DVDs and videos which was located towards the rear of library away from the main doors for security. An area focussed on teenage/young adult material included two PCs and an informal seating area featuring a sofa and coffee table which facilitated browsing. A conscious effort had been made to avoid "negative" signs asking people not to do things (with the exception of CCTV warning signs), improving the uncluttered look of the library without increasing behavioural problems. The library's new central village location aided accessibility and ease of use and was a significant improvement over the previous location. Initial concerns regarding parking had not been realised. The mixed development new build was sympathetic and attractive and the public space outside the library was well used without incurring vandalism.

#### **Stock**

- 3.20 The library utilised themes or categories to display stock in an accessible manner similar to a book shop. There was a good selection of new fiction and popular crime novels. Although practical limits on space meant that academic or non-fiction subjects were least well catered for, the free request system for inter library loans worked well and helped boost interest in the library. Video and DVD lending were popular as there was no video shop in Crowthorne but there was less demand for CDs. Saturday tended to be busiest day for visits although not necessarily for borrowing. Large print books were helpfully displayed by the windows, making good use of natural light, and the design and layout had been influenced by practical experience of staff. Despite not having a budget for them, magazines, either donated or ex-display copies, were also a popular choice for borrowers and browsers. They were also appreciated by people newly arrived to the UK as an accessible way to improve language skills. The 11 PCs were well used, with introductory courses to the internet being a popular "gentle" way to learn new skills.

#### **Other Facilities**

- 3.21 The CCTV system assisted staff in monitoring the library and increased the sense of security. Public notices were displayed on a plasma scheme, giving the library a 'high technology' feel, in addition to being available in hard copy. The partitioned meeting area was well used and provided useful space for periodicals and a small non-fiction reference selection. It was helpful that the office space was located behind the counter, for security purposes, and that it



also had access to the meeting room, for catering needs. In addition to the full-time library supervisor, there were 7 part time staff providing a degree of staffing flexibility. Although there was often only 2 staff on duty per session, 3 staff was viewed as more appropriate given the library's central position and popularity.

### Use

- 3.22 The library was used by residents from both Bracknell Forest and Wokingham. A summer reading scheme was planned for the school holidays and there had already been a great deal of interest with 50 plus requests already. Class visits from local schools had worked very well in introducing children to the library and reading, with several children subsequently returning with their families. The evening reading group held in the meeting room was also a successful venture. The limit on numbers (at the time of the visit 12 with more on the waiting list) was due primarily to availability of multiple copies of books.

### **Ascot Durning Library**

- 3.23 The Working Group visited the new Ascot Durning Library where they met the Head of Library and Information Services and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to inspect the library and learn about library and information service provision in that neighbouring Berkshire unitary authority.
- 3.24 The Ascot Durning Library was recently refurbished, state of the art and, although not a central library, was considered to be the best example of the service in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The library had enjoyed a well publicised opening by the Earl and Countess of Wessex in order to raise its profile and encourage users. Borrowing operated via a quick choice and fast stock turnover system consisting of a self-service personal computer with radio frequency and a bar code reader linked to the library management system. The computer was positioned on a height adjustable desk to cater for all borrowers including wheelchair users and issued clients with a receipt stating the stock return date. Attractive, light-weight, durable and mobile display stands were utilised and the library featured a plasma display screen and staff pod in place of a traditional counter. The library was often staffed by a single worker and included a children's area with attractive décor, rugs and toys. Six computer terminals and a fee-charging printer kiosk were available to users. The library was sometimes over-subscribed due to the fixed amount of seating and usage figures were recorded. Lighting in the library featured recessed ceiling lights and fanlight windows and its building was shared with the Parish Office and included a canteen which was available for leasing and community activities.
- 3.25 As much information was available on-line, the range of traditional reference books was limited and the library stock consisted mainly of popular fiction. On-line services, which were available at all times to library users at home via their library cards and pin number, featured 100 titles including the Oxford English Dictionary and also broadsheet newspapers. The Library and Information Service paid a subscription to suppliers in order to make these articles available to library users. Libraries in the Royal Borough were open for a minimum of 23 hours per week and mainly in the afternoons to cater for visits from children after school hours. Residents, including non-library users, were consulted each

year in respect of library opening hours and the last indication had been that residents were satisfied with the current arrangements. Opening hours were also dictated by the availability of resources. Maidenhead Central Library was open until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays which were the busiest days. Friday evenings were quieter and it was hoped to pilot a Sunday opening slot although a reduction in resources elsewhere would be required to enable this. Maidenhead Library had recently become a Grade II Listed Building and therefore plans for its refurbishment and modernisation had been abandoned.

- 3.26 The Royal Borough utilised one container library which was rotated between three different sites. A new Children's and Community Centre was being provided at Woodlands Park on the outskirts of Maidenhead and it was hoped to introduce a library container service to the area which had previously been without library facilities.
- 3.27 Although consistent staffing arrangements were sought, some rotation between staff and library supervisors was required to fill vacancies and keep libraries open. Although dual working was ideal, some single-working in libraries was necessary and in such circumstances staff had access to a panic alarm and individual library buildings had a linked alarm system to summon assistance. Although risk assessments had indicated that lone-working presented low risks, there were issues with associated legislation.
- 3.28 A sudden increase in membership take-up had followed the opening of the refurbished Datchett Library and 300 requests for new library cards had been received in the first weeks which equated to more requests than usually made over a year. Take-up following refurbishment of Ascot Durning Library had been slower and the reason for this was felt to be that this library was less visible and would gain from larger signage. The library benefited from adjoining designated parking in Ascot High Street except on race days.
- 3.29 Fifteen to nineteen years was a high library user group followed by the thirty-five to forty-five years age group and many library borrowers also purchased books. There were 30 reading groups across the Royal Borough and a teenage reading group at Maidenhead whose membership extended to 19 years of age although the majority of readers fell into the 13-14 years age group. It was hoped to expand the teenage reading group initiative. Publishers supplied unproofed new titles for feedback from reading groups who usually met within library opening hours and often within libraries themselves drawing the attention of other library users to their existence. There was also a Chatterbooks Group which catered for the 9-11 years age group to encourage their interest in reading. Visiting authors were a feature of the libraries in the Royal Borough including the shared community and school libraries, such as the integrated library facility at Datchett, that were located on school sites.
- 3.30 The library management system utilised by the Royal Borough was web based and operated in a similar fashion to the Amazon website interface. It had been selected following much research and was shared with several other library authorities across the Thames Valley with the Royal Borough acting in the lead role. It was a procured web based system that could be slightly tailored to individual authorities' requirements and hosting and linking was performed by the supplier. It was possible for other authorities to join the system which was the subject of a five year contract with a two year extension. Hampshire County Council operated a uniform system provided by the same supplier enabling interaction with the Thames Valley system. Although the Royal Borough did not

have an on-line e-book facility at present, a small service development team was currently exploring this provision and the BBC was also looking into on-line reading services. An electronics company had developed a provision for readers to buy on-line and download e-books.

### **Learn Direct Project**

- 3.31 In October two members of the Working Group met at Whitegrove Library with Fiona Atkinson and Alan Bennett of Learn Direct. He explained the history, aims and general organisation of the Learn Direct Project. This provides services for the Ufi (University for Industry). It has a remit from the government to provide learning courses for 16+ students outside traditional learning environments.
- 3.32 Courses are designed to help people build up IT and Skills for Life enabling them to work towards qualifications which equip them for the workplace. Students include those who have taken time off to look after young children, people who wish to change their career, or learn more IT skills (mainly the elderly to enable them to use the internet or be computer literate).
- 3.33 Many of these courses are delivered online and allow the students to take up courses that fit their own circumstances and timescale. It means they are not tied to term dates and can fit e-learning around their work pattern. Students can study any time on-line at the library free of charge but the courses cost £30 for a level one course (approximately 15 hours), and between £60 and £80 for other levels. IT courses are Level 1 to 3 or 4, Skills for Life courses are Level 1 and 2. Tutors visit Whitegrove every Monday to 'troubleshoot', sign up new people to take the courses and facilitate examinations (although students can take exams at Wokingham Library, where there is a centre). The courses can be undertaken in small units but might involve longer programmes building towards qualifications. There is an advice component which can help students to find their level of entry to study, select their courses and identify assessment and qualification channels. There are courses in numeracy, literacy, languages, home and office skills and more specialist IT skills. There are also many business management courses which are subsidised. Courses can be undertaken at home, work or in nationwide centres. Libraries with their IT facilities offer an ideal site for some of these courses and these are in operation in Woodley, Earley and Wokingham.

There are currently 39 students registered at Whitegrove including some learners from Brakenhale School. Crowthorne Library is proposing to launch Learn Direct on Thursday 1 March and tutors will be available every Thursday at the library.

## 4. Observations / Conclusions

- 4.1 From its investigations, the Working Group concludes that libraries are hubs of their communities, as evidenced in the surveys undertaken as part of the review, and offer valued meeting places for all, particularly the elderly and isolated.
- 4.2 Members feel that the Library and Information service is proactive pursuing strategies for book selection and display, library layout, signage, promotional events and ICT.
- 4.3 Library location and layout is thought to be crucial to vibrancy as, despite its appeal, the Ascot Durning Library appears under utilised owing to its remote siting and limited signage.
- 4.4 Accessibility is an important library feature and consideration should be given to physical access, parking and opening hours.
- 4.5 Volunteers are a valued commodity assisting with the home library service and use of further volunteers could be made especially where funding constraints limit services.
- 4.6 As reading groups and book clubs appear popular and over subscribed they could be extended for all age groups in libraries across the borough.
- 4.7 There is a valuable link between libraries and education and the Working Group would like to see this extended, e.g. via ICT learning suites as approximately 20% of adult are said to have limited literacy skills. This has been commenced with Learn Direct.
- 4.8 A coffee shop and toilets would be a welcome addition to a library.
- 4.9 It appears that some users are unaware that they can return loan material to any library in the Borough as the courier service will return items to the library of origin. Wider promotion of this facility would be beneficial.
- 4.10 Themed display of books, e.g. a best sellers section, facilitates borrowers' selection.
- 4.11 Users have an expectation of a 24/7 service and means of increasing opening hours and accessibility would be welcomed. This may include an on-line reference facility of reference texts such as the Encyclopedia Britannica available to users at home 24/7, a self-issue loan scheme, electronic ordering of loan items for home delivery at a charge, an out-of-hours return 'drop box' or introduction of e-books.
- 4.12 The 'Bookstart' project, which introduces young children to reading, is important and should be continued.
- 4.13 As much demand for library services is from those learning English as a second language, the provision of translation information would assist.
- 4.14 Users appear to be more satisfied with the re-organised mobile library service which is more personalised than that previously provided.
- 4.15 Modernisation and increased use of ICT is necessary for libraries to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where their role is seen to be moving towards promoting reading and learning, enabling access to digital skills and services and encouraging community cohesion and civic values.

## 5. Recommendations

### **General Recommendations**

- 5.1 As teenagers represent the lowest library user age group (2% of borrowers), further work to provide appropriate stock and surroundings should be undertaken to encourage them to make greater use of libraries and develop reading habits.
- 5.2 Internal and external library signage should be reviewed and updated where necessary.
- 5.3 The provision of further ICT learning suites in libraries should be pursued if possible to provide learning opportunities for adults with limited literacy skills in a non-threatening environment in conjunction with adult education co-ordinators.
- 5.4 Consideration should be given to introducing an on-line system enabling library users to access reference materials at all times from their homes utilising their library card and a pin number.
- 5.5 The Library and Information Service could make greater use of volunteers to enhance and expand its services, to engage residents in promoting the libraries as a community place.

### **Recommendations Concerning the Civic Hub Library**

The new civic hub library should:

- 5.6 be flexible to facilitate development and adaptation to meet future needs;
- 5.7 have an exhibition style to facilitate public art, heritage collections and other displays as an entrance feature and be light and airy with planting;
- 5.8 feature flexible low level display shelving and versatile furniture which can be re-arranged to accommodate displays/events etc;
- 5.9 locate the children's area on the ground floor to facilitate access;
- 5.10 include an ICT learning suite, preferably in a separate room with links to the library, preferably featuring a Learn Direct outreach centre;
- 5.11 utilise electronic signage and boards both within and outside;
- 5.12 offer a 'quick pick and browse' self-issue loan scheme to speed borrowing and free staff for other duties and extended opening; and
- 5.13 Include a loan material 'drop off' facility to enable return of borrowed items outside opening hours.

### Summary of Responses to Library User Questionnaire 2006

\* These are interesting because they highlight where users have misconceptions, so information needs to be presented in a different way perhaps.

| Number of Responses: |  |            |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| Ascot Heath          |  | 66         |
| Birch Hill           |  | 28         |
| Bracknell            |  | 13         |
| Great Hollands       |  | 14         |
| <b>Total</b>         |  | <u>121</u> |

## 1. AGE PROFILE OF LIBRARY USER

### Ascot Heath

| Under 16 | 16-25 | 26-39 | 40-55 | 56-69 | 70 + |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 5        | 2     | 14    | 19    | 11    | 15   |

### Birch Hill

| Under 16 | 16-25 | 26-39 | 40-55 | 56-69 | 70 + |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 10       | 4     | 4     | 6     | 4     | 0    |

### Bracknell

| Under 16 | 16-25 | 26-39 | 40-55 | 56-69 | 70 + |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1        | 1     | 1     | 4     | 4     | 2    |

### Great Hollands

| Under 16 | 16-25 | 26-39 | 40-55 | 56-69 | 70 + |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 2        | 0     | 2     | 2     | 8     |      |

### Total

| Under 16 | 16-25 | 26-39 | 40-55 | 56-69 | 70 + |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 18       | 7     | 21    | 31    | 27    | 17   |

## 2. FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO LIBRARIES

### Ascot Heath

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Bi-Annually | Annually | Other  |
|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|----------|--|
| 1     | 39     | 20      | 1         | 0           | 0        | 1 x 2 per week<br>1 x 2/3 per week<br>1 x 2 weekly<br>1 x 2-3 weekly<br>1 x 3 weekly |

### Birch Hill

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Bi-Annually | Annually | Other          |
|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 1     | 19     | 6       | 1         | 0           | 0        | 1 x 2 per week |

### Bracknell

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Bi-Annually | Annually | Other            |
|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------------|
| 0     | 9      | 3       | 0         | 0           | 0        | 1 x 2/3 per week |

### Great Hollands

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Bi-Annually | Annually | Other   |
|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|----------|---|
| 4     | 4      | 1       | 1         | 0           | 0        | 1 x 3 per week<br>2 x 1/2 per month<br>1 x 3 weekly |

### Total

| Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Bi-Annually | Annually | Other |
|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------|
| 6     | 71     | 30      | 3         | 0           | 0        | 11    |

### 3. PURPOSE OF LIBRARY VISIT

|                            | Ascot Heath | Birch Hill | Bracknell | Great Hollands | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| Borrow books               | 65          | 28         | 12        | 10             | 115   |
| Consult reference books    | 19          | 10         | 8         | 9              | 46    |
| Borrow videos/<br>DVDs/CDs | 31          | 14         | 7         | 3              | 55    |
| Borrow audio tapes         | 19          | 3          | 0         | 0              | 22    |
| Use the internet           | 23          | 12         | 4         | 12             | 51    |
| Obtain information         | 1           | 8          | 7         | 2              | 18    |
| Read books                 | 0           | 2          | 0         | 0              | 2     |
| Read newspapers            | 0           | 2          | 0         | 1              | 3     |
| Buy books                  | 0           | 0          | 1         | 0              | 1     |
| Borrow magazines           | 0           | 0          | 1         | 0              | 1     |
| Photocopying               | 0           | 1          | 0         | 0              | 1     |

#### 4. WHERE YOU LIVE

|                   | Ascot Heath | Birch Hill | Bracknell | Great Hollands | Total |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| Ascot             | 30          |            | 2         |                | 32    |
| Ascot Heath       | 2           |            |           |                | 2     |
| Binfield          |             |            | 1         |                | 1     |
| Central Bracknell | 4           | 27         | 5         | 14             | 50    |
| Crowthorne        |             |            |           |                |       |
| North Ascot       | 11          |            |           |                | 11    |
| Reading           |             |            | 1         |                | 1     |
| Sandhurst         |             |            |           |                |       |
| South Ascot       | 2           |            |           |                | 2     |
| Warfield          | 1           |            | 1         |                | 2     |
| Winkfield         | 16          | 1          | 3         |                | 20    |

#### 5. VALUED EXISTING LIBRARY SERVICES

##### Ascot Heath

- Wide knowledge of friendly, helpful, pleasant, courteous, competent and efficient staff make library visits a pleasure and help with internet use.
- Children's books, tapes, events, courses and holiday activities.
- 'Bookstart' sessions/packs and Bookcrawl/Reading Rollercoaster/Voyage etc.
- Local activities/clubs for children and adults.
- Range of audio tapes, videos, DVDs and CDs to borrow.
- Fantastic wide ranging and varying selection of books for children and adults.
- Books to borrow and reference books.
- Stock reservation service.
- Local and national book search service.
- Prompt and impressive book ordering service, often involving other libraries, enables borrowers to track down other editions of an author's work and read anything they wish to.
- Good turnover of books.
- Supply of newspapers and periodicals.
- Computer and internet access/services.
- Book ordering and on-line index.
- Reading hour.
- Magazines to read.
- All the services are invaluable and of great value to the entire family.
- Having a local and accessible library in a convenient location and all its services.
- Late and convenient opening hours.
- Use of a photocopier.
- Availability of local information/leaflets and that of services/books available in other areas.
- Libraries are an essential part of the community.
- The library gives children an opportunity to become accustomed to handling books.
- Bracknell Reference library.



### **Birch Hill**

- All library services (Birch Hill and Bracknell)
- Library seating.
- Free computer/internet usage and on-line requests.
- Reference library and information.
- Wide range of fiction and non-fiction books to borrow.
- Book ordering service including obtaining books from the wider area.
- The library is 'child friendly'.
- The children's area, its seating and absence of necessity to remain completely quiet.
- Children's books and story tapes.
- Supply of newspapers and magazines to read.
- Availability of videos, audio tapes and CDs to borrow.
- Use of a photocopier.
- Information on local matters and events.
- Free brochures.
- Staff knowledge and friendliness.

### **Bracknell**

- All library services.
- Wide range of books to borrow.
- Reference books, magazine and book loan, history section, telephone directories, maps, music (sheet and books) and book sales.
- Selection of CDs and games.
- Facility to locate, order and renew loans on-line and to check which books one has on loan.
- Friendly and helpful staff.
- Internet access.

### **Great Hollands**

- All library services.
- Internet access.
- Large print stock.
- Helpful staff.
- Reference section.
- Books to borrow.
- Newspapers and magazines to read.

## **6. DESIRED NEW OR ENHANCED LIBRARY SERVICES**

### **Ascot Heath**

- A few more DVDs.
- A couple of larger chairs in the children's area.
- More frequent turnover of stock, including audio cassettes.
- Wider range of magazines/journals.
- More local information leaflets.

- Greater availability of rarer books, CDs and videos especially foreign language titles.
- Sale of postage stamps.
- Provision of toilets and a coffee machine.
- Longer opening hours/open a few more evenings.
- Computing for absolute beginners.
- A regular children's group on Friday or Saturday.

### **Birch Hill**

- More, and a wider range of, books to borrow.
- Free requests for stock from other libraries.
- Increased display shelf space to limit the number of books discarded.
- More CDs, videos and DVDs to borrow.
- Longer free internet use and more internet terminals.
- Longer opening hours, particularly at smaller libraries on Saturdays, and Wednesday opening.
- Weekly story time for children.
- More staff.

### **Bracknell**

- More attentive customer service i.e. assistants not making telephone calls whilst dealing with customers.
- Friendlier customer service and wearing of name badges.
- More DVDs and books to borrow.
- Air conditioning in hot weather – the upper floor is unbearably hot.
- Full customer access to all floors.
- Provision of toilets.

### **Great Hollands**

- Café and toilet facilities although one responder is against café facilities as he/she feels that more books will become damaged as a result.
- More new books.
- Extended opening until 7:00 p.m. Monday to Friday to enable workers to access internet facilities at the end of their working day.
- Increased focus on core functions.
- Provision of Guardian or Telegraph newspapers.

This summary of responses by library users is informative because it shows where we need to inform them about services. This consultation of users was conducted before the library hours were altered.

### Summary of Responses to Librarian Questionnaire 2006

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Number of Responses:</b>   |          |
| Ascot Heath                   | <b>4</b> |
| Birch Hill                    | <b>2</b> |
| Bracknell                     | <b>1</b> |
| Bracknell/Birch Hill/Binfield | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>8</b> |

#### 1. AT WHICH LIBRARY DO YOU WORK AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

##### **Ascot Heath**

Responses were received from the Branch Supervisor, an assistant librarian and two library assistants.

##### **Birch Hill**

Responses were received from the Branch Supervisor and a library assistant.

##### **Bracknell**

The responder replied utilising the library user questionnaire form and did not indicate the nature of his/her role.

##### **Bracknell, Birch Hill and Binfield**

A response was received from the Community Services Librarian serving the above three libraries.

#### 2. THE FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

##### **How the Library and Information Service is seen developing in the future.**

##### **Ascot Heath**

- Increasingly as a resource for local communities and the ever growing number of visitors of all nationalities to the internet, Council information and learning centre. Books of all types will remain a very essential part of libraries and particularly in providing resources such as large print and spoken word for the elderly, visually/hearing impaired etc.
- Hopefully the service will continue to work well to provide customers with the services and facilities that they enjoy – for a lot the library is a lifeline and part of daily routine i.e. our elderly customers who visit on 3+ occasions each week to read newspapers and borrow books, families who visit on Saturdays to borrow books and videos and regular internet users.
- The service will need to continue catering for the elderly population to provide reading and listening material and also to provide a non-threatening environment for children to enjoy books.

### **Birch Hill**

- Books will remain the core of the library but greater emphasis will be placed on IT, introduction of self-serviced terminals, wider out of hours use of library buildings and the introduction of coffee shops.
- Libraries could follow the 'IT Revolution' trend by leading and concentrating on this area but the balance must be maintained and earlier traditions kept up.

### **Bracknell**

- More books, magazines and staff should be provided and the amount of internet use reduced.

### **Bracknell, Birch Hill and Binfield**

- Less reliance on traditional stock and a dwindling, unfortunately, of many of the groups that currently use libraries.

## **3. PURPOSE OF VISITS TO LIBRARIES**

The scoring in this table indicates the number of librarians who have identified the following as the purpose of visits to libraries e.g. all seven responders have identified borrowing books in this regard.

|                          | <b>Ascot Heath</b> | <b>Birch Hill</b> | <b>Bracknell</b> | <b>Bracknell/<br/>Birch Hill/<br/>Binfield</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|--------------|
| Borrow books             | 4                  | 2                 | 1                | 1  | 8            |
| Consult reference books  | 3                  | 1                 |                  | 0  | 4            |
| Borrow videos/ music CDs | 3                  | Not provided      |                  | 0  | 3            |
| Borrow DVDs              | 3                  | 1                 |                  | 0  | 4            |
| Borrow playstation games | 3                  | Not provided      |                  | 0  | 3            |
| Audio cassettes & CDs    | 3                  | 1                 |                  | 0  | 4            |
| Use the internet         | 3                  | 1                 | 1                | 1  | 6            |
| Obtain information       | 3                  | 1                 |                  | 1  | 5            |
| Fax/photocopying         | 1                  | 1                 |                  | 0  | 2            |
| Read newspapers          | 1                  | 0                 |                  | 0  | 1            |

#### 4. EXISTING LIBRARY SERVICES / FACILITIES

##### Requested library service / facility which is not currently available to users?

###### Ascot Heath

- Scanning (available at other branches).

###### Birch Hill

- Loan of music CDs and videos
- Loan of computer games
- Terminals where children can play computer games (provided in some branches).

###### Bracknell

-

###### Bracknell/Birch Hill/Binfield

- Use of customer discs in library PCs.

#### 5. UNUSED LIBRARY SERVICES

##### Existing library service / facility which is not being used?

###### Ascot Heath

- All services / facilities in use at present.

###### Birch Hill

- Other than by one or two individuals who make good use of it, the teenage section is under utilised.

###### Bracknell

-

###### Bracknell/Birch Hill/Binfield

- No unused services/facilities at present.