

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Report from Commission on School Libraries
Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Date: 11th November 2010
Cabinet Member: Councillor Peter Brookshaw
CMT Member: Director of Community Services
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Ref: School Library Commission
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Executive Summary:

Despite a series of national initiatives to raise literacy standards and improve attitudes to reading there has been growing public concern about school libraries and Schools Library Services in the past eighteen months

The School Library Commission highlights the important role the school library has in developing individual learners and supporting them to achieve their full potential, to become life-long learners and active citizens.

It promotes the Schools Library Service as a central support service for quality school library provision and suggests that:

- “School library services could be a highly efficient way of ensuring that clusters of schools maximise their value for money”
- “Schools library services could be a cost effective way of ensuring that all schools, but particularly primary schools, have access to the expertise and resources they may not have on site or may not be able to afford in the future.”
- “Due to strategic neglect and funding arrangements many services are on the brink of disappearing.”

The Commission believes that if the service does disappear another agency would have to be invented which would support schools in raising the standard of their school libraries.

This review focuses on Plymouth schools library service. (PSLS) It demonstrates the success of PSLS in retaining a strong customer base (82% of Plymouth schools) against a national average of 65% pupils benefiting from the provision of a SLS in the financial year 2005-2006 (last national survey).

This report recommends developmental work to ensure the sustainability of PSLS with reference to the School Library Commission report, and in response to a recent independent review of PSLS recently undertaken by senior colleagues from Berkshire Education Library Service and Dorset Schools Library service.

Sign off: Comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert initials of Finance and Legal reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):