## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Report from Commission on School Libraries

**Committee:** Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny

Panel

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> 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:

## **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.

Cou Red	porate Plan 2010-2013 as amended by the four new priorities for the City and incil: ucing inequalities ://www.plymouth.gov.uk/corporateplan.htm
•	lications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: uding finance, human, IT and land
	a traded service costs for developmental work is contained within the annual School ary Service operating budget which is wholly funded from school buyback.
	relocation of the Centre is subject to approval for inclusion within the Council's capital gramme.
serv	Schools Library Service is entirely dependent on schools continuing to subscribe to the rice, in the event of a significant reduction in subscription, the Service in its current form Id cease to be financially viable and would thus close with potential redundancies.
Mar	er Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk nagement, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.
Rec	ommendations & Reasons for recommended action:
Tha	t Members:-
1.	recognise the importance of the School Library Service in supporting the educational needs of children in the city;
2.	approve the proposed developments to enhance the service to schools, in particular:
	<ul> <li>Partnership working with Devon Schools Library Service and Cornwall Education Library Service;</li> <li>The development of Regional provision to Schools;</li> <li>Joint working with Museum and Archive service to create multi-media resource packages for schools.</li> </ul>
Alte	rnative options considered and reasons for recommended action:
	kground papers: S Peer Review Interim Report

**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):

Fin	Leg	HR	KB	Corp		IT	Strat			
				Prop			Proc			
Originating SMT Member: Carole Burgoyne										