

# PLYMOUTH LIBRARIES

A Review : December 2012



## A REVIEW

This review of the library service as it is in December 2012 is intended to answer the questions “where are we now?” and “how did we get here?”.

It is *not* intended to answer the question “where are we going?”. Informed by the results of consultation, those answers will form part of the Customer Services Business Plan for 2012/13.

## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Plymouth’s public library service has a long and distinguished history.

Borough of Plymouth voters agreed to adopt the Public Libraries Act 1850 in October 1871. This gave the Council the *power* (not an obligation) to provide a library service using public funds. It also set limits on how much could be spent.

The first library opened in the former Guildhall in Whimble Street in August 1876.



It transferred to the current purpose-built premises alongside the City Museum and Art Gallery at Drake Circus in 1910.

Borough of Devonport voters adopted the Act in 1881. The former Mechanics' Institute in Duke Street became the public library and it opened in 1882. It remained in this building for over a century.



Neither the East Stonehouse Local Board nor its successor the East Stonehouse Urban District Council adopted the Act.

Both boroughs opened a number of branch libraries or “deposit stations”. These had collections of newspapers and magazines together with small collections of books which were changed every few months. They were located in houses or schools rather than dedicated buildings.

In 1914 local government reorganisation united the services of Plymouth and Devonport, with Plymouth becoming the main library.

Laira Library, still in the same building today, was the first modern branch library when it opened in 1925. It was closely followed by plans for a library for the new housing estate at North Prospect. The Depression delayed the opening of North Prospect Library until 1933.

In April 1941 the Central Library and its collections were totally destroyed during a night of fierce bombing. The most valuable items had been taken to a place of safety outside the city and have therefore survived. A “temporary” service was opened in the City Museum.

The Central Library was rebuilt on the floor-plan of the 1910 building from 1954 and reopened in 1956.



In a post-war world, where finances were always challenging, it took some years before the first of the city's purpose-built district libraries opened at St Budeaux in 1963, and a smaller branch at

Efford the year before. These were followed by conversions and new-builds across the city, and in the mid-1960s the acquisition of the former St Luke's Church as an annexe to the Central Library.

On 1st April 1974 control of Plymouth's busy, well-developed and well-resourced service transferred to Devon County Council in Exeter. Devon developed a few more libraries, including dual-use libraries in secondary schools. Devon began automation of the largest libraries in 1980.

In 1998, control of the library service moved back to Plymouth City Council. Two challenges presented themselves: the inadequacy of the budget inherited from Devon, and the inadequacy of the building stock.

Between 1998 and 2012, new replacement libraries were opened at Devonport, Efford, Ernesettle, Estover, Plympton, Plymstock, and West Park. Major extensions and refurbishments were carried out at Central and Southway. Libraries at Coombe Dean, Derriford, Ham, Lipson and Woodland Fort were closed, the Book Bindery closed, and the mobile library service was withdrawn.

In 2002, with the help of Lottery funding, public Internet-connected computers were installed in all libraries.

In 2010, to mark the start of the transformation of the library service, self-service facilities were installed in the largest seven libraries and extended in 2012 to a further two more.

## 2. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The primary legislation under which the library service is delivered is the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*, as amended. This lays down the authority's statutory obligations.

In summary, the authority must:

- Provide a "comprehensive and efficient" library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it
- Promote the service
- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area

The *Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations 1991* subsequently clarified and expanded on charges.

The Coalition Government reviewed this primary legislation in 2011 and stated:

*"The Government have no intention to remove statutory protection where this will have a negative impact on the services provided to the public. Such protections that will rightly remain include, for example, services for vulnerable children...allotments and libraries."*

The 1964 Act gave the appropriate Secretary of State the right and obligation to intervene in cases where an authority breaches its statutory duties. This happened in 2009 in the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral and the subsequent report of the Inquiry is an important document that sets out, for instance, the need for a library strategy based on an analysis and assessment of local needs. Although the 'Wirral report' does not have the force of law, it indicates the circumstances in which the Secretary of State may intervene under his/her default powers set out in section 10 of the Act.

Moves by a number of County Councils to make substantial reductions to their library services resulted in judicial reviews. The High Court ruled in November 2011 that both County Councils'

original plans were unlawful<sup>1</sup>. His Honour Judge McKenna ruled that both councils had failed to take account of their equalities duties.

It is clear from this judgment that any substantial changes to a public library service must take account of the authority's duties under the Equality Act 2010, and in particular the "protected characteristics" of age and disability.

Secondary legislation includes the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988*, the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 1996* and general and specific local government legislation.

### 3. THE NATIONAL PICTURE

Anyone wanting to get an understanding of the diversity of views about the future of public libraries in England is amply provided for.

#### 2008

National Literacy Trust: *Literacy changes live – an advocacy resource*<sup>2</sup>

National Literacy Trust: *Literacy changes lives – the role of literacy in offending behaviour*<sup>3</sup>

#### 2009

Department of Culture, Media and Sport Consultation: *Empower, Inform and Enrich*<sup>4</sup>

UNISON: *Unison response to "Empower, Inform and Enrich"*<sup>5</sup>

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries, Literacy and Information Management: *Inquiry into the Governance and Leadership of the Public Library Service in England*<sup>6</sup>

Sue Charteris: *A local Inquiry into the Public Library Service Provided by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council*<sup>7</sup>

#### 2010

Department of Culture, Media and Sport: *Modernisation of Public Libraries: A policy statement*<sup>8</sup>

UNISON: *Taking stock: the future of our public library service*<sup>9</sup>

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals: *What makes a good library service?*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.publicinterestlawyers.co.uk/news\\_details.php?id=188](http://www.publicinterestlawyers.co.uk/news_details.php?id=188)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0402/Literacy\\_Changes\\_Lives\\_Executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0402/Literacy_Changes_Lives_Executive_summary.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0422/Literacy\\_changes\\_lives\\_\\_prisons.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0422/Literacy_changes_lives__prisons.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm78/7821/7821.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18943\\_Love\\_Libraries\\_DCMS\\_response.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18943_Love_Libraries_DCMS_response.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cilip.org.uk/sitecollectiondocuments/PDFs/policyadvocacy/appgfinalreport.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/wirral\\_local\\_inquiry.doc](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/wirral_local_inquiry.doc)

<sup>8</sup> [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultation\\_responses/modernisation\\_review\\_public\\_libraries.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultation_responses/modernisation_review_public_libraries.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/17301.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/public-libraries/Documents/What\\_makes\\_a\\_good\\_library\\_service\\_CILIP\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/public-libraries/Documents/What_makes_a_good_library_service_CILIP_guidelines.pdf)

## 2011

Arts Council England: *Culture, knowledge and understanding: great museums and libraries for everyone*<sup>11</sup>

Local Government Group: *Future Libraries Programme (final report)*<sup>12</sup>

## 2012

Carnegie UK Trust: *A new chapter: public library services in the 21st century*<sup>13</sup>

Local Government Association: *Local solutions for future local library services*<sup>14</sup>

HM Government, Culture, Media and Sport Committee: *Written Evidence on library closures*<sup>15</sup>

Arts Council England: *Envisioning the library of the future*<sup>16</sup>

Department of Culture, Media and Sport: *Taking Part - Statistical Release 2011/12*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/culture\\_knowledge\\_and\\_understanding\\_final010312.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/culture_knowledge_and_understanding_final010312.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=c6349d6d-7b26-49e4-ae5-b476de21ecbb&groupId=10171](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c6349d6d-7b26-49e4-ae5-b476de21ecbb&groupId=10171)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/Publications/2012/A-New-Chapter>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=fe4e381a-17ff-4138-9499-dc7241805636&groupId=10171](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fe4e381a-17ff-4138-9499-dc7241805636&groupId=10171)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcmds/writev/library/contents.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-libraries/libraries-consultation/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/research\\_and\\_statistics/4828.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/research_and_statistics/4828.aspx)

## 4. LIBRARY BUILDINGS

Libraries are one of the few council buildings that customers *choose* to enter.

Plymouth's public library service currently has seventeen buildings which provide face-to-face contact, together with headquarters functions and book storage in the Central Library Annexe.

Libraries are organised in five tiers which reflect overall levels of use by customers, not the actual size of the building.

**TABLE I**

Tier	Libraries	Self-service?	Usage ranking		
			Transactions	PC use	Visits
1	Central	Y	1	1	1
2	Plympton	Y	2	4	3
	Plymstock	Y	3	2	2
3	Crownhill	Y	4	7	4
	Southway	Y	5	6	6
	St Budeaux	Y	7	5	5
4	Efford	Y	11	9	11
	Estover	N	12	15	13
	North Prospect	N	13	12	12
	Peverell	Y	6	10	8
	St Aubyn	Y	8	3	7
	Stoke	N	9	8	10
	West Park	Y	10	11	9
5	Eggbuckland	N	17	17	17
	Ernesettle	N	15	13	15
	Laira	N	16	14	16
	Tothill	N	14	16	14

**TABLE 2****RAG rating**

Red – unfit for purpose

Amber – fit for purpose with some level of investment

Green – already fit for purpose

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owned by PCC.</li> <li>▪ Built in 1910, rebuilt in 1954-56.</li> <li>▪ Extended to include the former St Luke's Church and other outbuildings in Tavistock Place in 1965.</li> <li>▪ Refurbished in 2010</li> <li>▪ Meeting Room created in 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 1</li> <li>▪ Challenging location, just outside the edge of the core city centre, next to the City Museum and Art Gallery (there is no physical connection due to difference in floor levels).</li> <li>▪ Library Annexe (former St Luke's Church) houses lesser-used book collections together with headquarters staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 53.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books, CDs and DVD for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Health Zone</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults, children and young people</li> <li>▪ History Room</li> <li>▪ Quiet Room with newspapers and magazines</li> <li>▪ Scott Computer Room with public computers</li> <li>▪ Sheet music</li> <li>▪ Music sets for performance</li> <li>▪ Rare book collections,</li> <li>▪ Europe Direct service</li> <li>▪ PATLib Intellectual Property service</li> <li>▪ Two meeting rooms, one with digital projector, screen, PA system, DVD player and Wii</li> <li>▪ Public toilet.</li> <li>▪ Free public wifi from 2013?</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access at rear; stepped at front</li> <li>▪ Internal lift to first floor</li> <li>▪ Limited chargeable on-street parking with two disabled bays in Tavistock Place.</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian crossings on Charles Street are a barrier.</li> <li>▪ Bus stop outside.</li> <li>▪ Buses stopping on North Hill have been significantly reduced over the past ten years</li> </ul>

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
Crownhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owned by PCC.</li> <li>Built in 1991.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 3</li> <li>Good location, just off Morshead Road and well-integrated with Crownhill Village</li> <li>Size limits potential. The garden area intended as space for further expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46.5 hours per week</li> <li>Books and DVDs for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>Public computers</li> <li>Garden</li> <li>Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level access</li> <li>Free parking for five cars with plenty of free on-street parking close by</li> <li>Good bus services</li> </ul>
Efford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leased from Sarsen Housing Association.</li> <li>Built in 2007 as part of a shared development with apartments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 4</li> <li>Good “High Street” location on the main Torridge Way</li> <li>High View School is opposite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35.5 hours per week</li> <li>Books for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>Headspace group for young people</li> <li>Public computers</li> <li>Small meeting area with TV and DVD player</li> <li>Public toilet</li> <li>Drinks facilities</li> <li>Garden</li> <li>Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level access</li> <li>On-street parking outside</li> <li>Good bus services</li> </ul>
Eggbuckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owned by, and part of, Eggbuckland Community College.</li> <li>Opened in 1978</li> <li>Dual-use - college library with public access on three afternoons a week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 5</li> <li>Challenging location, in heart of the college’s campus.</li> <li>Campus location is a deterrent to those who are apprehensive about mixing with young people or who have negative memories of their own school experience</li> <li>Very low levels of public use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 hours per week</li> <li>Books for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Activities for children and young people</li> <li>Public computers provided by college and very limited</li> <li>No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level access</li> <li>Ample parking on campus</li> <li>Limited bus service</li> <li>Surrounded by the college and residential development.</li> </ul>



Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
Ernesettle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leased from Plymouth Community Homes.</li> <li>Opened in 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 4</li> <li>Very limited space and no scope for expansion</li> <li>Good “High Street” location.</li> <li>Very disappointing levels of use.</li> <li>Transfer to Primary Care Centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18.5 hours per week</li> <li>Books for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Groups and activities for adults, children and young people</li> <li>Public computers</li> <li>No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level access</li> <li>Free on-street parking directly outside.</li> <li>Adequate bus service.</li> </ul>
Estover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owned by, and part of, Tor Bridge High</li> <li>Opened in 2011</li> <li>Dual-use - college library with public access five days a week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 4</li> <li>Good position at the front of the building within sight of Miller Way.</li> <li>Campus location is a deterrent to those who are apprehensive about mixing with young people or who have negative memories of their own school experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33.5 hours per week</li> <li>Books for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Groups and activities for adults, children and young people</li> <li>Public computers provided by college and very limited</li> <li>Exhibition space</li> <li>No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ramped access</li> <li>Ample free parking</li> <li>Good bus services</li> </ul>
Laira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leased from Devon and Cornwall Police at a peppercorn rent</li> <li>Opened in 1925</li> <li>Plymouth’s oldest branch library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 5</li> <li>Good location on Old Laira Road next to a small supermarket</li> <li>Very low levels of use.</li> <li>No scope for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16.5 hours per week</li> <li>Books for loan</li> <li>Enquiry service</li> <li>Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>A single public computer.</li> <li>No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stepped access</li> <li>Free on-street parking</li> <li>Good bus service with stop directly outside.</li> </ul>

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
North Prospect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owned by PCC</li> <li>▪ Opened in 1933</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 4</li> <li>▪ Due to be replaced in 2013 by an innovative provision in The Beacon</li> <li>▪ New library will stress the important role a library has to play in improving levels of literacy amongst children, young people and adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 29.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Self-service in new library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access</li> <li>▪ Free on-street parking</li> <li>▪ Adequate bus services.</li> </ul>
Peverell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased from Hope Baptist Church</li> <li>▪ Opened in 1991</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 3</li> <li>▪ Good location with bus stop, shops and Post Office nearby.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 39.5 hours per week, plus one hour for Rhymetime</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Rhymetime sessions in the library are extremely successful</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ramped access</li> <li>▪ Ample on-street free parking</li> <li>▪ Good bus services stopping outside</li> </ul>

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Plympton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owned by PCC</li> <li>▪ Opened in 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 2</li> <li>▪ Good location with ample free parking, just outside the edge of the main Ridgeway shopping area.</li> <li>▪ No café due to voluntary provision at adjacent Harewood House.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 52.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books and DVDs for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Health information</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults, and children</li> <li>▪ Headspace group for young people from early 2013</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Meeting room/exhibition space with digital projector, screen, PA system, DVD player and Xbox</li> <li>▪ TV</li> <li>▪ Public toilets.</li> <li>▪ Drinks machine</li> <li>▪ Free public wifi from 2013?</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access</li> <li>▪ Plenty of free parking in the nearby car park and on-street</li> <li>▪ Good bus services</li> </ul>

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
Plymstock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased from Signpost Housing Association.</li> <li>▪ Opened in 2009</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 2</li> <li>▪ Well-used by the people Plymstock and significantly further afield in the South Hams.</li> <li>▪ The internal layout of the building changed in early 2013 to reflect lessons learned in the new Plympton Library.</li> <li>▪ The café is a major attraction to visitors.</li> <li>▪ Just outside the edge of the main Broadway shopping area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 52.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books, CDs and DVDs for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Health information</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Large meeting room/exhibition space with digital projector, screen, PA system and DVD player</li> <li>▪ TV</li> <li>▪ Quiet Room</li> <li>▪ Public toilet</li> <li>▪ “Café Library”</li> <li>▪ Free public wifi from 2013?</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access.</li> <li>▪ The library has its own small car park with designated disabled spaces and a disabled entrance</li> <li>▪ Good bus services stop outside</li> </ul>
Southway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased from Marcus King &amp; Co who run the entire Southway shopping centre.</li> <li>▪ Opened in 1970</li> <li>▪ Enlarged by a further one third in 2005.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 3</li> <li>▪ On the first floor of the shopping centre with access from Southway Drive, but not the interior of the shopping centre.</li> <li>▪ Unimpressive from outside, but interior is attractive.</li> <li>▪ The library draws from the immediate area as well as Glenholt, Woolwell, Belliver and Roborough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 49.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ TV</li> <li>▪ Public toilet</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ramped access</li> <li>▪ Customers have access to the car park at the shopping centre, on-street parking</li> <li>▪ Good bus services</li> </ul>

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
St Aubyn (Devonport)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased for 150 years from the Diocese of Exeter for a peppercorn rent</li> <li>▪ Opened in 2010 in the fully-restored St Aubyn Church in Devonport</li> <li>▪ The conversion has won three major awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 4</li> <li>▪ Size and style are a challenge to future development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 41.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books and DVDs for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Headspace group for young people</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Routes Café run by a local social enterprise</li> <li>▪ Public toilets</li> <li>▪ Museum displays in the galleries</li> <li>▪ Worship space for the church, and</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> <li>▪ Free public wifi from 2013?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access</li> <li>▪ Parking is difficult in the immediate area and may act as a deterrent to use, particularly from potential customers in Morice Town and Stoke</li> <li>▪ Buses stop close by</li> </ul>
St Budeaux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owned by PCC</li> <li>▪ Opened in 1963</li> <li>▪ Meeting Room created and ceiling lowered c. 1985</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 3</li> <li>▪ Excellent location on the edge of the main St Budeaux shopping area, next door to the Co-op.</li> <li>▪ Since the 1990s plans for replacing the library as part of a commercial development have been proposed and met with failure to such an extent that the library now looks extremely shabby and uninviting.</li> <li>▪ The highest priority for major refurbishment or replacement to become full community hub.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 49.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Meeting Room</li> <li>▪ The space available within the building, or on the site, provides the potential for a much-needed radical redevelopment</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ramped access</li> <li>▪ Car park and ample on-street parking</li> <li>▪ Bus stop right outside</li> </ul>

Library	Tenure and date	Size and location	Opening hours and facilities	Access
Stoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased from Whitton Laing</li> <li>▪ Opened in the mid-1960s to serve Stoke and Morice Town.</li> <li>▪ A former house, its ownership has been complex. The upper floors of the building have now been converted into apartments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 4</li> <li>▪ Unusual location in Albert Road away from Stoke Village but surrounded by residential development.</li> <li>▪ Close to St Aubyn – competition?</li> <li>▪ Internally the library reflects its domestic origins, giving it a homely, domestic and welcoming atmosphere.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 29.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Meeting room</li> <li>▪ Potential for further development</li> <li>▪ No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access.</li> <li>▪ Ample on-street parking</li> <li>▪ Good bus service</li> </ul>
Tothill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owned by PCC, the library is part of the Tothill Community Centre (built in 1945)</li> <li>▪ Opened in 1964</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 5</li> <li>▪ An early example of integration with a community centre which has not fulfilled its potential. The host building now looks shabby.</li> <li>▪ A single room with tiny library desk and one public computer.</li> <li>▪ Very low levels of use</li> <li>▪ No scope for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 21 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Single public computer</li> <li>▪ No self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access.</li> <li>▪ There is ample on-street car parking</li> <li>▪ Bus services are limited</li> </ul>
West Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leased from King Sturge</li> <li>▪ Opened in 2004</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tier 4</li> <li>▪ An excellent location between the Children’s Centre and three takeaways on the main Crownhill Road.</li> <li>▪ “Collection point” exists at the Whitleigh Campus library so that customers can reserve online and have books delivered to them for collection there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 33.5 hours per week</li> <li>▪ Books for loan</li> <li>▪ Enquiry service</li> <li>▪ Groups and activities for adults and children</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Small meeting area</li> <li>▪ Drinks facilities</li> <li>▪ Public toilet</li> <li>▪ Self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level access</li> <li>▪ A small car park behind the library</li> <li>▪ Ample parking on-street</li> <li>▪ Bus services are adequate</li> </ul>

## 5. SERVICES

### 5.1 Four Key Objectives

The library service has four key objectives which are directly linked to city and corporate priorities.

Shared priority		Library service objective
Deliver growth	Develop Plymouth as a thriving growth centre by creating the conditions for investment in quality homes, jobs and infrastructure	Develop a literate population and workforce for the benefit of both the economy and culture
Raise aspirations	Promote Plymouth and encourage people to aim higher and take pride in the city	Develop an informed population which values learning
Reduce inequality	Reduce the inequality gap, particularly in health, between communities	Reduce the inequality gap, particularly in health, between communities
Provide value for communities	Work together to maximise resources to benefit customers and make internal efficiencies	Work with partners to maximise resources to benefit customers and make internal efficiencies

### 5.2 Eight Key Actions

Working in partnership and using the most effective channels for communication, we will:

1. Promote and increase literacy
2. Give children and young people access to books and reading
3. Provide and promote access to reliable, unbiased and high quality information
4. Support and promote informal learning
5. Help to create and support opportunities for people to contribute to economic growth
6. Support communities and vulnerable people within them
7. Support and promote the arts and culture
8. Deliver outstanding, innovative and trendsetting online and social media services

#### 5.2.1 Key Action 1 - Literacy

Without a literate population, Plymouth cannot have the vibrant culture it desires to make it a city where people want to work, live and thrive.

Without a literate workforce, Plymouth cannot attract, fill and keep jobs.

The library service directly contributes to the literacy of Plymouth's citizens: by lending books, supporting those learning to read, promoting reading for leisure, for work, for cultural development, to create and maintain healthy minds and bodies, and to improve the quality of life for everyone from birth to old age.

In 2008, the National Literacy Trust summarised the benefits of literacy:<sup>18</sup>

<b>Profile of a literate city</b>
<p><b>More likely to vote</b></p> <p>Highly literate individuals are more likely to vote and have an interest in politics, therefore participating in the democratic process and holding an interest in the governance of the city and the nation.</p>
<p><b>Smoke and drink less, better mental health</b></p> <p>High literacy levels are associated with lower drinking and smoking, as well as higher levels of good mental health. This takes pressure off the health service and public funds, and contributes to a healthier city and nation.</p>
<p><b>Better skilled and more flexible workforce</b></p> <p>A literate workforce is advantageous to both employees and employers. Good literacy skills provide an opportunity for flexibility in the workforce across all sectors, as data collected by the CBI show.</p>

<b>Profile of a person with poor literacy</b>	<b>Profile of a person with improved literacy</b>
<p><b>More likely to live in a non-working household</b></p> <p>22% of men and 30% of women with literacy below entry level 2 live in nonworking households.</p>	<p><b>Becomes less likely to be on state benefits</b></p> <p>Men who improve their literacy rates see their likelihood of being on state benefits reduced from 19% to 6%.</p>
<p><b>Less likely to have children</b></p> <p>Individuals with low levels of literacy are more likely to lead solitary lives without any children.</p>	<p><b>Becomes more likely to own their own home</b></p> <p>A modest rise in literacy level sees the likelihood of a man owning their own house rise from 40% to 78%.</p>
<p><b>More likely to live in overcrowded housing</b></p> <p>Individuals with low literacy levels are more likely to live in overcrowded housing with reduced access to technology.</p>	<p><b>Becomes more likely to use a PC at work</b></p> <p>Increased literacy rates improve the chances of using a PC at work from 48% to 65%.</p>
<p><b>Less likely to vote</b></p> <p>Men and women with the poorest literacy or numeracy skills were the least likely to have voted in the 1987 and 1997 general elections.</p>	<p><b>Becomes more involved in democratic processes</b></p> <p>16% of men who improved their literacy between the ages of 21 and 34 had contact with government, compared to 0% of those whose literacy remained poor.</p>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0402/Literacy\\_Changes\\_Lives\\_Executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0402/Literacy_Changes_Lives_Executive_summary.pdf)



Profile of a literate family	Profile of a literate community
<p><b>Less likely to experience divorce</b></p> <p>A literate family is less likely to experience divorce, as divorce rates amongst those with high literacy are low, and significantly lower than those with poor literacy.</p>	<p><b>Far more likely to participate in community</b></p> <p>Individuals with good literacy are far more likely to be involved in community participation. Among those with level 2 literacy 21% of men and 29% of women actively participate in community activities.</p>
<p><b>More likely to live in a working household</b></p> <p>Families with high literacy levels are far more likely to live in working households, with only 2% of families with good literacy living in workless households.</p>	<p><b>More likely to trust people in community</b></p> <p>Scottish data shows that individuals with good literacy are significantly more likely to trust people in their community, with only 2% of men and 1% of women saying they didn't trust people at all.</p>
<p><b>More likely to own their own home</b></p> <p>Families with high literacy are more likely to own their own houses and not live in overcrowded conditions.</p>	<p><b>Perceives community to be safer</b></p> <p>Literate residents also consider their communities to be much safer, than those with low literacy. Only 1% of men and women with high literacy levels reported never leaving their houses.</p>

## Lending books

In the eyes of many people, particularly those who are not regular users of libraries, public libraries simply exist to lend books.

Nationally, library loans – a performance indicator with data extending back over a century – are falling and continue to fall. In 1995/6 libraries in Plymouth made 2,113,461 loans; by 2011/12 that had fallen to 1,034,515 loans.

Any member of the library service may borrow books free of charge. Membership is available to anyone with a permanent address; in this, the service exceeds the requirements of the 1964 Act. Different categories of membership exist which cater for different ages and different needs and these categories give different entitlements.

Members can borrow books for three weeks and must then either return them or renew the loan free-of-charge. If books are kept beyond the date they are due and the loan is not renewed, members become liable to overdue charges.

These charges are added to a member's account when the books are returned. Members can then pay the whole amount, or pay in instalments. They are unable to borrow further books, or use public computers, if they owe more than a certain amount.

Members who keep books overdue receive two reminders by email or post. Members with loans still outstanding are unable to use any library until they return the items.

The Requests Service satisfies four of the *Five Laws of Library Science* developed by great Indian librarian S. R. Ranganathan in 1931:

- Books are for use
- Every reader his [or her] book
- Every book its reader
- Save the time of the reader

On behalf of Plymouth customers, the service locates and borrows books from libraries outside the city. It also lends Plymouth's books to libraries across the world, generating income from the

loans. In line with Ranganathan's Fourth Law, the service satisfies 67% of requests within seven days and 90% within thirty days.

Self-service has enabled a substantial transformation of the physical space of libraries and role of staff working in them. Traditional "battleship" counters have given way to staff "pods", while staff are able to floorwalk and engage with customers as equals, not adversaries. Self-service has empowered customers to take control of their loans, and provided privacy for customers who want it.

### **5.2.2 Key Action 2 – Children and young people**

No child is too young to appreciate books and reading, and these lay the foundations of literacy.

A team of specialists works with community library staff to achieve service-wide objectives for those aged from birth to nineteen.

The library service works closely with Bookstart to distribute free books and other learning materials to all young children. Bookstart recognises the educational, cultural, social and emotional benefits that an early introduction to books can achieve. The programme aims to inspire a love of books from as early an age as possible, encouraging parents and carers to share books with children.

In Plymouth, Bookstart is co-ordinated by libraries who work in partnership with Booktrust, health visitors and Early Years services in the city.

Pre-school children and their parents and carers have high-quality collections of books to borrow, with regular Rhymetime and Storytime sessions in every library. These encourage the "library habit" which, like riding a bike, is never forgotten once learned.

When learning to read, children are supported by their local library through a range of easy reading material. The aim is not to teach the children how to read, but to develop a love of reading.

Every summer the service joins in with the national Summer Reading Challenge. Pioneered by Plymouth in the 1950s as the "Children's Summer Game" this has been proved to maintain levels of achievement during the long summer holiday which would otherwise be lost.

Children with a particular interest in books and reading can join Chatterbooks reading groups for children aged between 8 and 12. The groups are accredited by the Plymouth Children's University<sup>19</sup>.

Young people in Efford, Devonport and (from early 2013) Plympton take part in weekly Headspace groups. These sessions, delivered in partnership with Youth Services, play a vital part in encouraging reading and library use at an age where it faces competition from other opportunities.

### **5.2.3 Key Action 3 - Information**

Access to reliable, unbiased and high quality information is essential to an active and engaged citizenship.

Historically, this access was achieved through reference libraries and reference collections of books. Nowadays, with some notable exceptions, it is more likely to be through online sources and services.

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<sup>19</sup> [public.merlin.swgfl.org.uk/establishments/879/PlymouthChildrensUniversity](http://public.merlin.swgfl.org.uk/establishments/879/PlymouthChildrensUniversity)

The library service answers some XXXX [to follow from Chris Hunnings] questions a year within libraries. In addition, it answers a further XXXX [to follow from Chris Hunnings] questions received by email, phone or via the international online “Ask a Librarian” service.

History – local and family – is a major growth area for the library service. A greater understanding of their city’s or neighbourhood’s heritage helps people to take a greater pride in the city. The service works closely with colleagues in the City Museum and Record Office to achieve integrated provision.

In 2010, books on all types of history from the Central Library’s former reference collections were combined with the local, naval and family history collections in a new History Room. This room provides the focus for all historical activity.

The Central Library’s Quiet Room houses the more general reference collection and provides a popular haven of peace within a busy city.

Whereas in the past major reference resources were only available in the Central Library, all libraries now provide access to them online. Taking advantage of nationally-negotiated contracts, the library service subscribes to premium-rate titles such as

- Encyclopedia Britannica
- Oxford English Dictionary
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
- Oxford foreign language dictionaries
- an extensive range of Oxford specialist dictionaries
- a digitised and searchable version of The Times from 1785 to 1985
- millions of pages of national and regional newspapers from the nineteenth century
- major national and regional daily newspapers (including the Herald and Western Morning News) from the past twenty years, updated every day.

Family history resources available in all libraries include Ancestry (UK censuses from 1841 to 1911 and much more) and FindMyPast (local parish records). Many of these resources are accessible from home using a library membership card.

The Health Information Project commissioned by Adult Social Care in 2012 complements and builds on existing information provision.

#### **5.2.4 Key Action 4 - Learning**

In particular, *informal* learning which is not undertaken with a particular qualification in mind, within a formal setting, or requiring formal enrolment. Along with promoting literacy, this “self-help” ethos has been an integral part of the public library service since the first Public Libraries Act in 1850.

Informal learning sessions have been a feature of library life in Plymouth since the Central Library opened in 1910. That building included a lecture theatre and the rebuilt Central Library replaced that. Saturday afternoon lectures were a popular and important part of the education of many people at a time when formal education ended at the age of fourteen.

This role has continued to the present day. The library service organises several key learning events during the year including Local Studies Day and Family History Day. In 2013 it will be a lead partner in the Plymouth History Festival.

The People's Network service of free Internet-connected computers with Microsoft Office software supports informal learning in every library. Access is free of charge and every customer has a daily allowance of two hours.

### **5.2.5 Key Action 5 - Economic Growth**

Libraries help to create and sustain a vibrant economy - the contribution that is probably least recognised.

The contribution includes:

- Improving levels of adult literacy (all libraries)
- Inward investment (Plympton, Plymstock, Devonport, Efford, Central)
- Higher resident and visitor spend (Plymstock, Central)
- Diversification of the workforce (all libraries)
- A drive for new business, retail and leisure developments (Plympton, Plymstock, Central, Efford)
- A change in the image or reputation of a place/people (Devonport, North Prospect)
- Increased social cohesion (all libraries)
- A change in residents' perceptions of the place they live (Devonport, North Prospect, Efford)
- Increased social capital (all libraries)
- Improved health and wellbeing (all libraries)
- Re-use of redundant buildings and brownfield sites (Devonport, Plymstock, Plympton, Efford)
- Development of mixed-use spaces (Devonport, Plymstock, Efford)
- Increased public use of space (Devonport, Plymstock, Plympton)
- Free access to the Internet for jobseekers (all libraries)
- Helping people to use computers (all libraries)
- Promoting and supporting informal and formal learning (all libraries)
- Helping people to find jobs (all libraries)
- Work clubs (Devonport, Efford)
- Relevant printed and online resources (all libraries, online)

As well as containing the collection of general reference books, the Central Library hosts two specialist services directly contributing to economic development.

The Europe Direct Information Centre receives €25,000 a year funding from the European Commission. It is charged with raising awareness of EC priorities including the economy, economic migration, skills and citizens' rights. The funding enables the library service to run its own events and take part in other which are targeted at businesses and jobseekers. Funding will come to an end in March 2013.

The Innovation Service provides specialist information about intellectual property, patents, designs, copyright and trademarks. Plymouth is a member of Europe-wide PatLib and is able to tap into the expertise of both the British Library's Business and Innovation Centre and those available

elsewhere in Europe. The service works closely with Plymouth University to offer One Stop Ideas Shops, shortlisted in 2012 from over 250 for the Vice-Principal's Award for Enterprise.

### **5.2.6 Key Action 6 - Reducing the inequality gap**

Public libraries are unique in communities in providing somewhere that is warm, free and non-judgmental. For well over a century they have represented an opportunity for those people most at risk of social exclusion to engage in civil society at its most welcoming and open.

There is now considerable evidence that libraries provide an essential level of support to vulnerable people.

Library staff deliver informal, but vital, interventions to lonely people in their communities who are at risk of mild to moderate mental health issues. For many elderly and younger people the library staff become "friends" who are trusted with personal information and problems. Simply sharing a problem or worry with someone who is neutral, skilled and knowledgeable can often be the first essential stage in preventing it escalating.

This essential "social care" role of libraries is being increasingly understood, not least in Plymouth.

The library services in Plymouth, Cornwall, Devon and Torbay were the first in England to work with Primary Care Trusts to deliver a Books-on-Prescription Scheme. Pioneered in Cardiff, the scheme allows GPs and other health professionals to prescribe books from a list of high quality self-help manuals selected by experienced mental health practitioners. The Books on Prescription Scheme is a very effective way of helping people with common mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, phobias and eating disorders. Books work well either on their own or used in conjunction with other forms of treatment.

There is good clinical evidence to show that books can be just as effective as other forms of therapy – and with the advantage of having no side effects.

The Scheme has been extended nationally in Wales, and Plymouth is a partner in an England-wide project to develop a single list of recommended titles.

Recognition of the library service's success in preventing the escalation of mild mental health issues was fundamental to the commissioning by Adult Social Care of the Health Information Project in 2012. This two-year £200,000 project (the largest commissioned of any library service in the UK) includes a dedicated health information librarian, free meeting facilities for groups in libraries, printed and information resources, a calendar of targeted events, close working with Public Health, and training for library staff.

The Reader Organisation, a charity dedicated to using reading to improve mental health, now runs three *Get Into Reading* groups at Central, Plymstock and West Park. Each is led by a trained project manager, meeting each week to read books and poems. The groups concentrate not on literacy, but the health benefits of reading aloud, slowly, taking time over each text, allowing thoughts, connections and understanding to emerge. Themes can include relationships, loss, loneliness, current affairs, family, the nature of love, and bringing something good out of negative and painful experiences. Members can choose to join in, or not, and at times the reading will stop to allow some talk about parts of the text, discussing what it might mean, or reflect on similar experiences of their own. The effects are subtle, and profound. For some readers, this prompts new aspirations, and the searching out of further learning and support that will help rebuild their lives. For others, their reading group is a lifeline, helping to keep them on a more even keel. For all, it is a regular lift each week.

### **5.2.7 Key Action 7 - Arts and Culture**

Least known locally, but valued across the UK, is Plymouth's outstanding collection of music available to amateur orchestras, choirs and other performing groups. This collection is of national importance and loans to libraries across the UK generate income which finances the service.

The exceptional quality of Plymouth's Music Library Service was recognised in 2012 with an Excellence Award for Libraries from the International Association of Music Libraries.

In 2011/12 the service supported:

- Plymouth - 67 concerts
- Devon & Torbay - 220 concerts
- South West Region - 392 concerts
- Rest of the UK - 230 concerts

The total number of individuals involved in these concerts was 32,300. Most of these were amateurs, giving their time freely to support this essential cultural activity in their local communities.

Audience figures for these events were around 40,000, giving a total engagement of nearly 75,000 people across the UK.

The Central Library and Plymstock offer collections of music CDs which are available in all other libraries through the Request Service. CD hire is an income-generating service which will be discontinued when income no longer exceeds expenditure. Lent for one week, they are subject to hire charges. Loans have been in steady decline due to downloading (both legal and illegal) and the three month "holdback" period negotiated nationally with distributors many year ago. Expenditure is being slowly reduced year-on-year so that it is always less than income.

The Central Library, Plympton and Plymstock offer collections of DVDs and Blu-Ray discs which are available in all other libraries through the Request Service. DVD hire is an income-generating service which will be discontinued when income no longer exceeds expenditure. Lent for one week, they are subject to a scale of hire charges. Loans continue to be reasonable and income outweighs expenditure.

Plymouth is a member of the ReadSouthWest consortium of local authorities across the south-west region. It brings together librarians with a knowledge of how public libraries can promote and illuminate literature, reading, and stories to adults, the critical importance of which is brought into ever more sharper focus when the advantages in life for people who read for pleasure are fully understood. Readers Groups (Book Clubs) meet regularly in most libraries and several authors (both adults' and children's) visit libraries each year. In 2012, Plymouth's original Reading Passport project was promoted regionally as the South West Reading Passport.

### **5.2.8 Key Action 8 - Online and Social Media**

The cyberLibrary<sup>20</sup> is a PCC website which directs users towards reliable, unbiased and high quality information that has been quality-assessed by librarians across south-west England. A Plymouth initiative, it is now heavily-used in the. It is regarded by other English regions with envy.

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<sup>20</sup> [www.cyberlibrary.org.uk](http://www.cyberlibrary.org.uk)

Premium-rate subscription information resources have been covered above, but the service is active online in other ways.

Plymouth was the first library service in the UK to use the Flickr online photography site to promote its work<sup>21</sup> and make local history images<sup>22</sup> more widely accessible.

A Lottery-funded project in 2002 produced an online resource focussing on Plymouth's theatrical heritage, complementing the Central Library's extensive printed collections of playbills. These resources have now moved to Flickr.

The library service is active on Facebook<sup>23</sup>, using it to promote services, information and events and – crucially – to engage with customers and supporters from across the world.

Twitter<sup>24</sup> has become another important tool to gain wider awareness of services and events, and to interact with customers.

The Viewpoint service<sup>25</sup>, comprising online catalogue, renewals, membership, reservations and reviews is well-used by members.

### **5.3 Marketing and engagement**

Unlike most services provided by Plymouth City Council, the library service is one where success is measured in *increasing* numbers. While many services concentrate on reducing use to reduce costs, an increase in the use of the library service actually reduces unit costs.

Since 1998 marketing has been haphazard and ineffective. Marketing strategies have come and gone. Branding has been developed and then dropped. Librarians have been expected to develop marketing skills with minimal support. There has been no use of marketing professionals.

As a result, use of the core book lending service has continued to decline, unable to compete with much more effectively, and expensively, marketed alternatives.

Engagement with communities has been patchy. Most community librarians have links with groups and organisations in their communities, including schools. Engagement with groups at risk of social exclusion – housebound, disabled, travellers, ethnic minorities – is good. But engagement generally, along with marketing, needs further investment.

### **5.4 Customer Service**

Without customers, there would be little point in having a library service. Customers are at the centre of everything the library service does.

An unobtrusive testing exercise carried out in 2004 in partnership with Cornwall Libraries gave these disappointing results:

- With information questions, just over half (58%) of the questions were answered correctly
- Almost two-thirds of the staff were felt to be “Adequately” friendly or better

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<sup>21</sup> [www.flickr.com/photos/plymouthlibraries](http://www.flickr.com/photos/plymouthlibraries)

<sup>22</sup> [www.flickr.com/photos/plymouthhistory](http://www.flickr.com/photos/plymouthhistory)

<sup>23</sup> [www.facebook.com/plymouthlibraries](http://www.facebook.com/plymouthlibraries)

<sup>24</sup> [twitter.com/plymlibraries](http://twitter.com/plymlibraries)

<sup>25</sup> [www.webopac.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.webopac.plymouth.gov.uk)

- More than a third were felt to be “Inadequately” friendly or worse
- Almost a quarter of staff were rated as “Poor” or “Unacceptable” for friendliness
- Three-quarters of the staff were felt to have knowledge which was “Inadequate” or worse

This led to prioritisation of customer services training for all frontline staff.

In 2010 the library service was awarded a national Customer Service Excellence Award, repeated in 2011 with the statement: “The assessor had no hesitation in recommending that PCC library Service are accredited to the Customer Service Excellence Standard”

Also in 2010, all staff in those libraries moving to self-service took part in specially-developed external training intended to explain and support them in their new roles.

In 2012 colleagues from Customer Services carried out a telephone-based unobtrusive testing exercise. This demonstrated a marked improvement from 2004.

- 88% of staff greeted the customer
- 72% of staff advised that the customer would have to wait a moment
- 75% of the staff were rated as “efficient”
- 84% of staff were rated as “polite”

## **5.5 Schools Library Service**

- A subscription-based, fully-traded service, dependent on buy-back from schools to remain viable.
- This year has seen it become more closely integrated with the public library service. This integration will continue in 2013 to bring further efficiencies.
- Eighty per cent of the 92 schools in Plymouth subscribe to the Schools Library Service. Of these:
  - 84% of primary schools subscribe
  - 71% of special schools subscribe
  - 69% of secondary schools subscribe
- Forty-seven schools buy into the Standard package and 27 schools buy into the Light package
- Forty-eight schools reach the end of a subscription period March 2013
- Reduced subscription for three-year primary school Standard package subscribers
- Increased borrowing and advisory time entitlement for all subscribers
- The current PSLS Centre at Manadon is not fit for purpose

## **6. STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

### **6.1 Employed staff**

Staffing a service delivered over seventeen libraries comes at a cost - £2,315,484, or 67% of the service’s budget in 2011/12. The library service employs 127 people in 154 separate posts amounting to 79.35 full-time equivalent staff.



In October 2012 the budget which provided cover for sickness, leave and meetings was very substantially reduced to deliver mid-year savings. This has led to a much-needed radical overhaul of all staffing arrangements which will be reflected in the restructure due in 2013.

The vast majority of front-line staff are in part-time posts. Part-time posts were created to provide flexibility of cover – it was anticipated that part-time staff would want to work additional hours in cases of sickness or leave.

The reality is that part-time posts attract people who want part-time jobs. The number of part-time posts created problems of continuity, consistency and restricted the ability to train staff or get them together in meetings. Increasingly, therefore, there has been a move to consolidate posts and appoint a member of staff to more than one post.

From 1974 onwards, staff were appointed to specific libraries with little or no flexibility to work in other libraries. A team of “casual” staff was employed on an uncontracted basis to provide frontline cover. Since 1998, and especially since 2011, the service has substantially reduced the dependence on “casual” (now Per Temps) staff. This was accompanied by new role profiles in the corporate Job Evaluation process which enabled staff to work in any library in the city.

### **6.1.1 Professional staff**

“Professional” staff have a qualification in library and information studies. It will either be a first degree in that subject, or a first degree in another subject followed by a postgraduate qualification. This equips the individual with a broad and detailed understanding of all elements of library and information work including marketing, collection development, classification and cataloguing, use of online resources, and web design.

Once equipped with the qualification, “chartered status” of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) is then achieved through demonstrating practical experience.

The library service reports to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (Cipfa) each year on the number of professional and “non-professional” posts it has.

A library service can operate with a very low level of professional staffing, but service development will be extremely limited due to the lack of capacity.

Plymouth’s current role profiles call for a professional qualification for all posts graded H and above, and a professional qualification or substantial experience at those graded F. This is being reviewed as part of the 2013 restructure.

### **6.1.2 Other staff**

The main frontline service is almost invariably delivered by staff who have practical on-the-job training together with some specialist training in areas such as information resources and working with children and young people.

Because the majority of these posts and staff are part-time, achieving an acceptable level of training can be challenging. The results of unobtrusive testing over the past ten years have always given poor results.

Minimum requirements for Library Customer Services Assistants (Grade C) need to be a good basic education to at least GCSE standards for literacy and numeracy, an extrovert personality, customer care skills, curiosity, empathy and good ICT skills.

## **6.2 Volunteers**

The service has a long history of working in partnership with the WRVS (formerly the Women's Royal Voluntary Service) to deliver books to housebound customers. The service contributes towards the salary of a paid co-ordinator and pays travel expenses of all volunteers.

Every year the role of the WRVS volunteers is celebrated at a Volunteers' Day.

Volunteers have also contributed to special projects. The Lottery-funded *Barbican Archive* project in 2005 used volunteers to scan and document a large collection of images of Plymouth Barbican. The annual Summer Reading Challenge for children relies on volunteers, where available, to listen to the young people talking about the books they have read.

Many frontline staff give their own time to prepare activities, particularly craft activities, for children.

From discussions with the Plymouth Guild of Voluntary Service, it is clear that there is considerable scope for using volunteers in other areas of the library service.

## **7. COLLECTIONS**

Plymouth's library physical and electronic collections are extensive and their management is the subject of a separate document – the *Collection Development Policy*. This is a substantial document which is currently being revised.

## **8. ICT SYSTEMS**

### **8.1 Corporate systems**

The service uses all council-wide systems such as Outlook, ManagerOnline, Civica, MS Dynamics, Flare and GGP. Roughly 80% of staff have their own email addresses but in an environment which is largely not office-based, access to a PC is sometimes an issue. Generic email addresses are used for each library and these ensure that all staff are kept up-to-date.

### **8.2 Library systems**

Library lending routines were first automated in the early 1980s using simple offline data capture devices based on barcodes. Data was processed in Exeter and sent back in printed form for further action. Alongside this, the catalogue was transferred to online storage and made available to customers on microfilm. At this early stage only the six largest libraries in the city were automated.

Technological developments in the 1990s together with independence from Devon in 1998 meant that Plymouth was able to implement its own online system, Galaxy, in 2000. At the same time, a web-based catalogue with renewal and reservation facilities was made available to customers. In 2002 the system was extended to all libraries in the city.

The Galaxy system, now OpenGalaxy, remains at the core of all library lending activities. As well as holding the database of customers, items, titles and loans, it provides a fully-integrated procurement (or "acquisitions") system which in late 2012 will allow online ordering from book suppliers. Web-based services have been extended to include wishlists, recommended booklists, reviews, book jackets and contents, more sophisticated searching, renewals and interlibrary loans. The OpenGalaxy system currently runs on a PCC Unix server and is the subject of a Service Level Agreement with corporate ICT.

As part of the former Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)-funded *Future Libraries Programme* a firm of consultants was commissioned to look at savings that might accrue from a joint library system across Cornwall Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. The final report came to the conclusion that the time was not right for such a venture as each service was responding differently to their financial challenges. There was an unacceptable risk that Plymouth's costs might rise in order to achieve savings in the larger counties.

The "People's Network" service was completed in 2002 with the help of Lottery-funding. This made public access, Internet-connected, computers available in every library. It was felt at the time, and is now obvious, that more and more information would become available online and libraries were obvious access points for the public. PC replacement is integrated with the main corporate replacement programme. The Netloan system, specialist software for managing public computers, is used to control booking, access and printing with an emphasis on self-service.

Self-service for borrowing items had been a dream of librarians since the late 1940s. Employing staff to manage the cumbersome and complex manual systems was expensive. They would be much better employed helping customers.

Self-service finally became a reality in the early twenty-first century through the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). This uses a small chip and antenna (as in biometric passports) to hold information about the item. Kiosks enable customers to borrow, renew and return their own items as well as check their account and other loans. Self-service was installed in the largest seven libraries in 2010 and extended to two further libraries in 2012.

## **9. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

Since 1998 and even before, the library service has understood the benefits of partnership working, and working collaboratively.

A far from comprehensive list of partners and collaborators will give some idea of its range:

British Library – the UK's and England's national library, amongst many other things it arranges loans of books between libraries in the UK and abroad and coordinates the work of PATLib (the network of libraries specialising in Intellectual Property – copyright, trademarks, designs and patents) of which Plymouth is a member.

Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) – acts as a coordinating body for national initiatives since as the Universal Reading Offer, Universal Digital Offer and the Universal Health Offer.

South West Regional Library System (SWRLS) – the charity which organises, promotes and enables lending of books between public library services, academic and special libraries in south-west England and the rest of the UK; this includes the *Plymouth/SWRLS Music Scheme* which exists to lend performing sets of music for choirs and orchestras within the south-west and nationally.

Devon and Torbay Libraries – for twenty-six years (1974 – 1998) members of the same organisation, close links have been maintained which benefit all parties; in particular the legal Joint Arrangement for Plymouth to lend performing sets of music to both authorities for an annual fee.

Plymouth City Council – productive partnerships have been formed amongst others with Economic Development, the City Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth Archives, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Youth Services and Planning Services. For more than eighty years the service has worked with the Lord Mayor's Parlour to produce a book of press cuttings and photographs following the Lord Mayor's year in office.

Eggbuckland College and Tor Bridge High – essential partners for the provision of library services at Eggbuckland and Estover.

Sentinel Healthcare – partnership with Adult Social Care in the delivery of the Health Information Project from 2012.

Jobcentre Plus – a challenging partnership in 2011 supporting jobseekers aged fifty and over to find employment.

European Commission (EC) – Plymouth’s Europe Direct Information Centre is delivered using funding from the EC. As well as providing information about Europe, its role and laws, funding enables the library service to run innovative events and programs.

University of Plymouth – partners in two high profile projects; the annual Local Studies Day is supported financially by Peninsular Arts, while the One Stop Ideas Shops (supporting inventors and entrepreneurs) are run with essential input from PATLib Plymouth. The OSIS service has been shortlisted for a Vice-Principal’s Award for Enterprise in 2012.

NHS – partners in the main Health Information Project in Plymouth, and also nationally through the SCL Universal Health Offer project.

Old Plymouth Society – key partners in the annual Local Studies Day which in 2013 will be the launch event for the Plymouth History Festival.

Devon Family History Society – key partners in the annual Family History Day which in 2013 will be a major event in the Plymouth History Festival

## **10. BUDGET**

### **10.1 Capital**

While administered by Devon County Council the library service had no access to capital funding. The few new libraries which were opened were externally-funded and fitted out using revenue funding.

Since 1998, again, the library service has had no success with capital funding. Supplementary Credit Approval was available to pay for transitional costs including the original Galaxy system. Lottery funding paid for the entirety of People’s Network service. The self-service facilities have been financed through Unsupported Borrowing.

The achievements of the service in terms of new buildings and despite lack of capital funding are remarkable.

## 10.2 Revenue

The library service budget for 2012/13 is now £3.03m. The following table shows Plymouth revenue expenditure in relation to comparator authorities for the year 2010/11, the most recent for which data is available. It should be noted that at this time of substantial and rapid change these figures become outdated very quickly.

**TABLE 3**

Authority*	Popula- tion	No of libraries	Expenditure on premises per 1,000 population	Expenditure on staff per 1,000 population	Expenditure on materials per 1,000 population	Total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population
Brighton and Hove	258,800	16	£1,511	£10,834	£2,498	£19,883
Bristol	441,300	28	£1,761	£10,157	£1,590	£18,454
Darlington	100,800	3	£1,455	£8,462	£1,450	£12,016
Medway	256,700	19	£2,507	£10,281	£989	£17,245
NE Lincolnshire	157,300	11	£261	£9,884	£2,202	£22,579
Nottingham	306,700	18	£2,357	£10,140	£2,016	£17,178
<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>258,700</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>£1,685</b>	<b>£10,418</b>	<b>£1,001</b>	<b>£16,862</b>
Redcar & Cleveland	137,400	15	£1,703	£8,830	£1,601	£25,719
Southampton	239,700	12	£1,383	£8,453	£1,677	£15,676
Stoke-on-Trent	240,100	12	£1,703	£8,652	£1,294	£14,768

\*Plymouth's usual comparators Blackpool, Derby and Kingston-upon-Hull did not submit returns.

Expenditure on premises per 1,000 population – only Brighton and Hove, Darlington, NE Lincolnshire and Southampton spend less than Plymouth.

Expenditure on staff per 1,000 population – the Plymouth figure reflects (a) 27% on-costs and (b) the impact of Job Evaluation.

Expenditure on materials per 1,000 population – only Medway spends less than Plymouth.

Total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population – only Darlington, Southampton and Stoke-on-Trent spend less than Plymouth.

### 10.3 Income and charges

Plymouth is not an affluent city and library charges reflect that fact. The aim is to generate income while keeping services affordable.

**TABLE 4**

Authority*	Overdue charges and reservation fees per 1,000 population	Hire of CDs and DVDs per 1,000 population	Provision of services to other authorities per 1,000 population	Lettings per 1,000 population	Misc receipts from the public per 1,000 population	Total revenue income per 1,000 population
Brighton and Hove	£275	£502	£0	£277	£672	£7,668
Bristol	£236	£332	£0	£46	£190	£828
Darlington	£735					£735
Medway	£184	£337	£0	£32	£718	£1,271
NE Lincolnshire	£120	£123	£208	£46	£0	£627
Nottingham	£125	£152	£0	£44	£190	£943
<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>£212</b>	<b>£258</b>	<b>£173</b>	<b>£60</b>	<b>£207</b>	<b>£1,584</b>
Redcar & Cleveland	£192	£46	£0	£78	£568	£1,104
Southampton	£186	£304	£6	£42	£449	£990
Stoke-on-Trent	£116	£137	£0	£27	£144	£957

\*Plymouth's usual comparators Blackpool, Derby and Kingston-upon-Hull did not submit returns.

Plymouth achieves the highest level of total revenue income apart from Brighton and Hove. The Brighton and Hove figure reflects the PFI arrangement for their Jubilee Library.

The Library Charges (England and Wales) Regulations 1991 requires a full list of charges to be displayed in every library.

Sections below on Services give more information on specific charges.

### 10.4 Impact of savings

The Council's Delivery Plan for savings identifies the following for the library service

Year	Annual saving	Cumulative saving
2011/12	£370,000	£370,000
2012/13	£110,000	£480,000
2013/14	£140,000	£620,000

Savings in 2011/12 were achieved through a reduction in opening hours, together with a restructure which affected all levels of staff. The restructure followed the installation of self-service facilities, but was not the reason for adopting self-service.

Savings in 2012/13 are being achieved by the deletion of posts identified as non-essential at the time they became vacant. Again, these are at all levels. Other budgets are being reduced.

Additional mid-year savings were achieved through virtual elimination of the budget for staff cover and a £75,000 reduction in the budget for stock resources.

Proposed savings in 2013/14 are based on a further staffing restructure intended to remove anomalies which still exist in the service.

## 10.5 Budget analysis – 2012/13

Taking the 2011/12 budget, it is prudent to analyse income and expenditure in more detail both at a service-wide level and at a library level.

### 10.5.1 Service-wide analysis – 2012/13

*This data was compiled before the October 2012 reductions in the cover and stock resources budgets*

**TABLE 5**

Expenditure	Amount	Percentage	Comments
Staff	£2,315,484	66.9%	Basic, superannuation, NI, overtime, additional hours, training, medical expenses, insurance, CRB checks, travel and subsistence, uniforms, laundry, etc.
Buildings	£496,948	14.4%	Partly held by Corporate Landlord, includes rent, NNDR, utilities, security, cleaning, insurance, courier service, grounds maintenance, refuse, insurance, etc
Transport	£6,435	0.2%	Library courier vans used to transport books and furniture between libraries daily
Equipment and its maintenance	£96,852	2.8%	Purchase of equipment, maintenance of equipment, furniture, stationery, photocopiers, postage, computer consumables, etc
Stock Resources	£423,535	12.2%	Books, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, magazines, and software related to these
Financial	£123,391	3.6%	Subscriptions, special events, contribution to insurance, capital financing, £77,340 for unsupported borrowing for self-service
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,462,645</b>		

Income	Amount	Percentage	Comments
Overdue charges and reservations	£55,720	20.7%	
DVD and CD hire	£46,615	17.3%	CD income is in slow decline
Printing and photocopying	£22,275	8.3%	Printing from public computers, public photocopying
Sale of items	£18,530	6.9%	Books, DVDs, CDs, beverages, lost items
Services to internal and external customers	£104,879	38.9%	Europe Direct grant, contribution for services at Eggbuckland and Estover, Joint Arrangement for music services to Devon and Torbay
Charges to residential homes	£4,435	1.6%	Delivery charge
Other income	£17,250	6.4%	
<b>INCOME TOTAL</b>	<b>£269,704</b>		

### 10.5.2 Library analysis – 2012/13

*This data was compiled before the October 2012 reductions in the cover and stock resources budget*

**TABLE 6**

Library	Budget	Comments
Central	£452,413	Basic staff costs, superannuation, NI, overtime, additional hours, training, medical expenses, insurance, CRB checks, travel and subsistence, uniforms, laundry, rent, NNDR, utilities, security, cleaning, insurance, courier service, grounds maintenance, refuse, insurance, income, contribution to insurance, capital financing, subscriptions, special events
Crownhill	£76,176	
Efford	£67,420	
Eggbuckland	£6,730	
Ernesettle	£36,044	
Estover	£29,102	
Home Library Service	£91,260	
Laira	£17,804	
North Prospect	£17,804	
Peverell	£87,321	
Plympton	£168,052	
Plymstock	£178,951	
St Aubyn	£86,819	
St Budeaux	£105,106	



<b>Library</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Southway	£107,982	
Stoke	£45,668	
Tothill	£24,872	
West Park	£94,238	
Headquarters	£ 958,689	Staff costs for management, service teams, support teams, support for volunteers, purchase of equipment, maintenance of equipment, furniture, stationery, photocopiers, postage, printing, publicity, marketing, computer consumables, etc
Resources Fund	£423,535	Books, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, magazines, and software related to these
Library Developments	£137,021	Includes £77,340 for unsupported borrowing to finance self-service
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,164,076</b>	

### 10.3 Costs per loan, PC hour used, and visit - 2012/13 budgets against 2011/12 indicators

This data was compiled before the October 2012 reductions in the cover and stock resources budget

**TABLE 7**

Library	Staff cost	Building cost	Income	Net cost	Cost per loan	Cost per PC hours used/10	Cost per visit	Comments
Central	£430,333	£84,770	£ 62,690	£452,413	£2.44	£0.65	£1.36	Cleaning costs £45,524, incl HQ functions
Crownhill	£70,082	£13,910	£7,816	£76,176	£1.07	£1.20	£1.03	
Efford	£55,206	£13,046	£-832	£67,420	£2.67	£1.88	£3.20	
Eggbuckland	£19,274	£23	£12,567	£6,730	£1.49	N/A	£2.59	£12,085 from Dedicated Schools Grant
Ernesettle	£20,851	£15,726	£533	£36,044	£4.19	£4.00	£4.42	Rent is £10,000
Estover	£38,264	£8,804	£17,966	£29,102	£1.69	N/A	£2.29	£17,665 from Dedicated Schools Grant
Laira	£13,862	£4,152	£210	£17,804	£2.98	£6.16	£4.60	
North Prospect	£31,202	£7,355	£733	£37,824	£1.96	£1.75	£2.48	
Peverell	£67,317	£24,030	£4,026	£87,321	£1.56	£2.40	£2.47	Rent costs £12,240
Plympton	£138,952	£46,394	£17,180	£168,166	£1.21		£1.14	Library closed during January 2011
Plymstock	£145,917	£65,974	£32,940	£178,951	£1.07	£1.49	£0.60	£7,000 rent from Café Library
St Aubyn	£64,234	£23,677	£1,092	£86,819	£2.65	£0.85	£2.67	
St Budeaux	£88,096	£23,591	£6,581	£105,106	£1.82	£1.24	£2.23	
Southway	£88,683	£24,720	£5,421	£107,982	£1.65	£1.37	£1.51	Rent costs £8,750
Stoke	£37,276	£10,576	£2,184	£45,668	£1.43	£1.43	£1.83	
Tothill	£20,298	£4,944	£376	£24,866	£2.14	£7.25	£2.90	Rent costs £2,900
West Park	£46,083	£51,145	£2,990	£94,238	£3.13	£3.34	£3.10	Includes repayment of loan to convert building

## II. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The library service collects an extensive range of performance indicators. Until 2012, it had not been good at using them to inform service development.

### II.1 Quantitative - Loans

The following table show the loans of adult and children's books in 2011/2 as a percentage of loans in 1995/6. Some libraries, for example Ernesettle, show a decline in loans to both groups. Some libraries, most notably Stoke, show a much more marked decline in loans of adult's books.

**TABLE 8**

<b>Library</b>	<b>Children's books</b>	<b>Adult's books</b>
Central	48.2%	33.0%
Crownhill	50.6%	29.7%
Devonport/St Aubyn	186.9%	154.4%
Efford	44.8%	45.3%
Eggbuckland <sup>26</sup>	64.3%	54.1%
Ernesettle	30.1%	30.8%
Estover <sup>27</sup>	192.8%	84.5%
Laira <sup>28</sup>	78.3%	25.2%
North Prospect	68.4%	37.5%
Peverell	66.1%	33.9%
Plympton	76.9%	41.8%
Plymstock	97.8%	51.4%
St Budeaux	59.0%	27.9%
Southway	86.5%	44.5%
Stoke	108.3%	44.2%
Tothill	48.3%	33.9%
Woodland Fort/West Park	158.0%	72.5%
<b>Average change</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>

<sup>26</sup> Comparison with 2000/1. Accurate figures not available before that date.

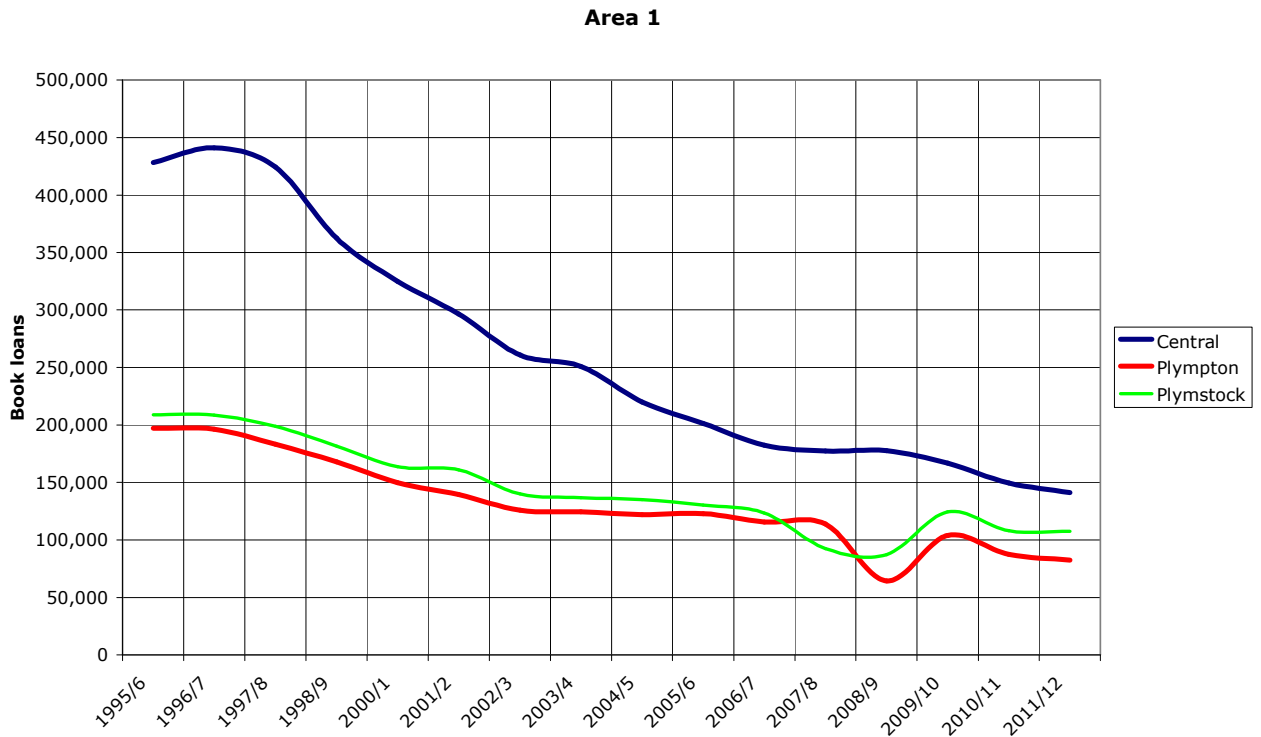
<sup>27</sup> Comparison with 2000/1. Accurate figures not available before that date.

<sup>28</sup> Comparison with 2001/2. While Lipson Library was open, Laira only had only books for very young children.

## 11.2 Trend analysis of loans

For the purposes of loan trend analysis and collection development, libraries have been placed into one of four “areas”. These are not geographical areas, neither are they related to tiers, but group together libraries with similar levels of loans. These inconsistencies will be removed as part of the 2013 restructure.

### 11.2.1 Trend analysis of loans of adult’s books

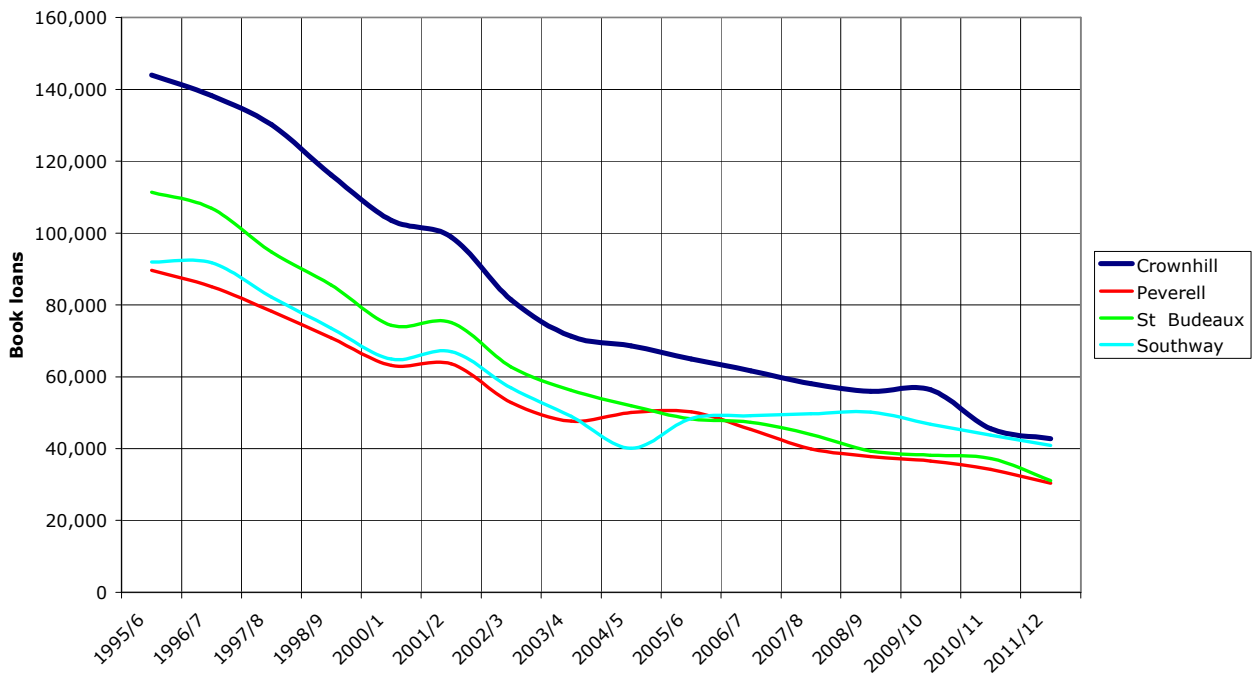


The sharp decline in the loan of adult’s books at the Central Library is clearly shown in this graph. From being more than double that of Plympton and Plymstock in 1995/6, it is now almost on a par with them. The reasons for this decline are complex and covered in more detail in ??????

The dips at Plympton and Plymstock indicate the fire at the former and the move to temporary premises for the latter.

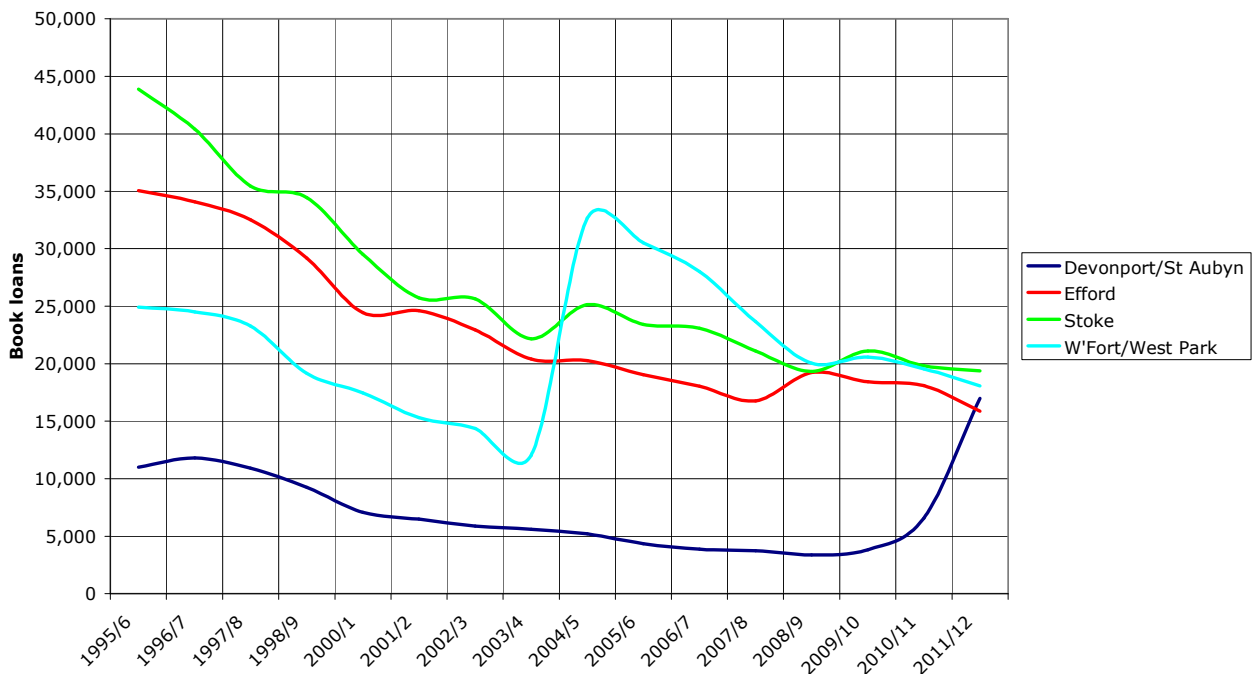
## Trend analysis of loans of adult's books (continued)

Area 2



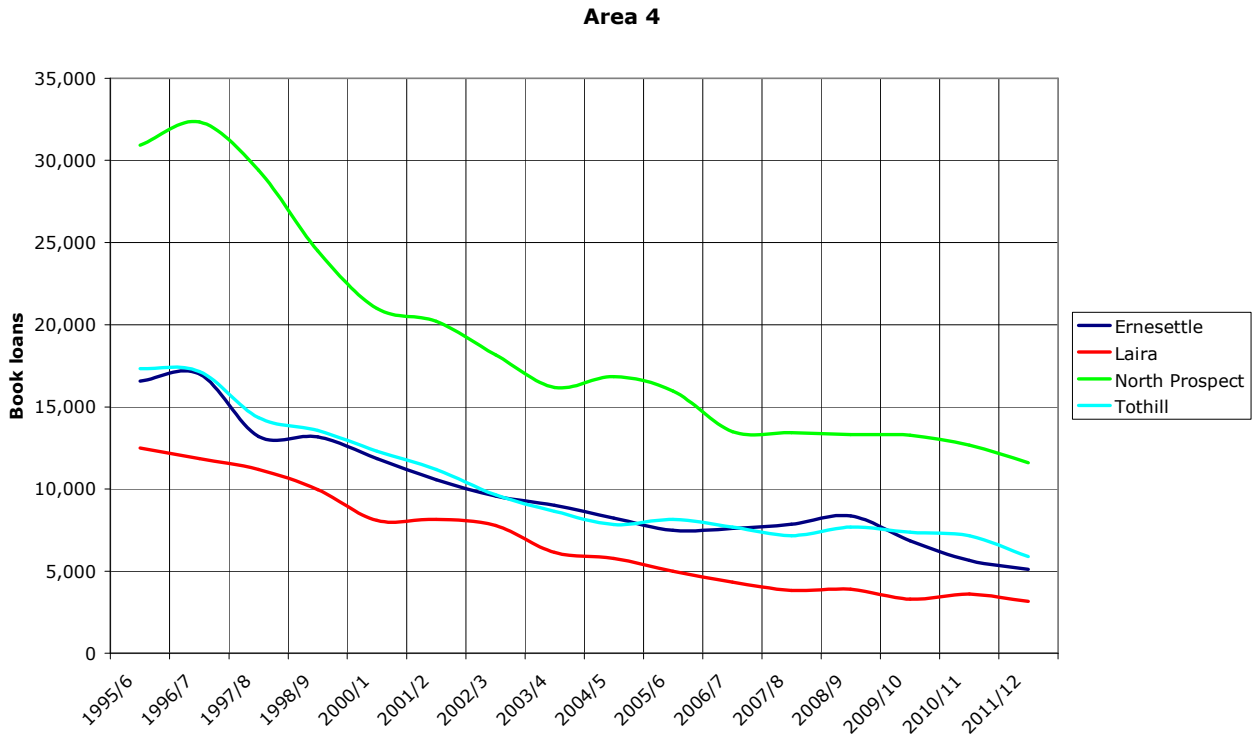
The dip and then rise for Southway was due to refurbishment

Area 3

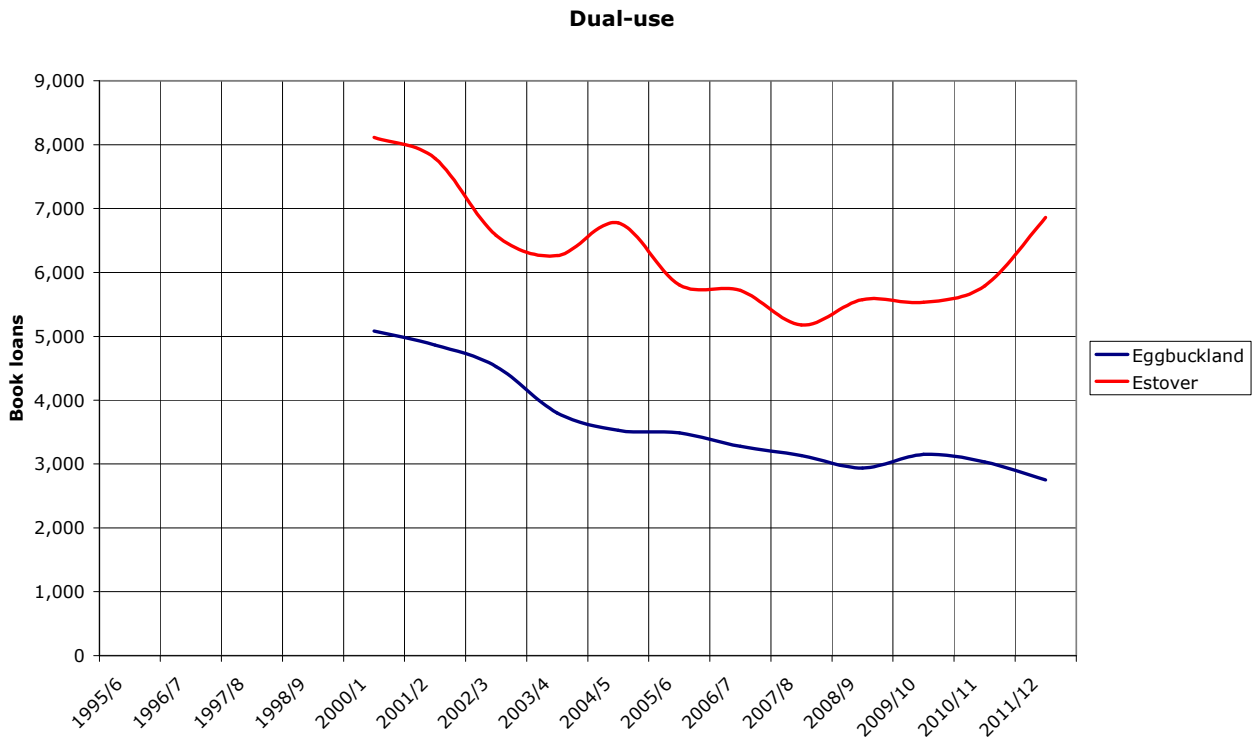


The move from Woodland Fort to West Park is very obvious, as is the opening of the new St Aubyn Library.

## Trend analysis of loans of adult's books (continued)

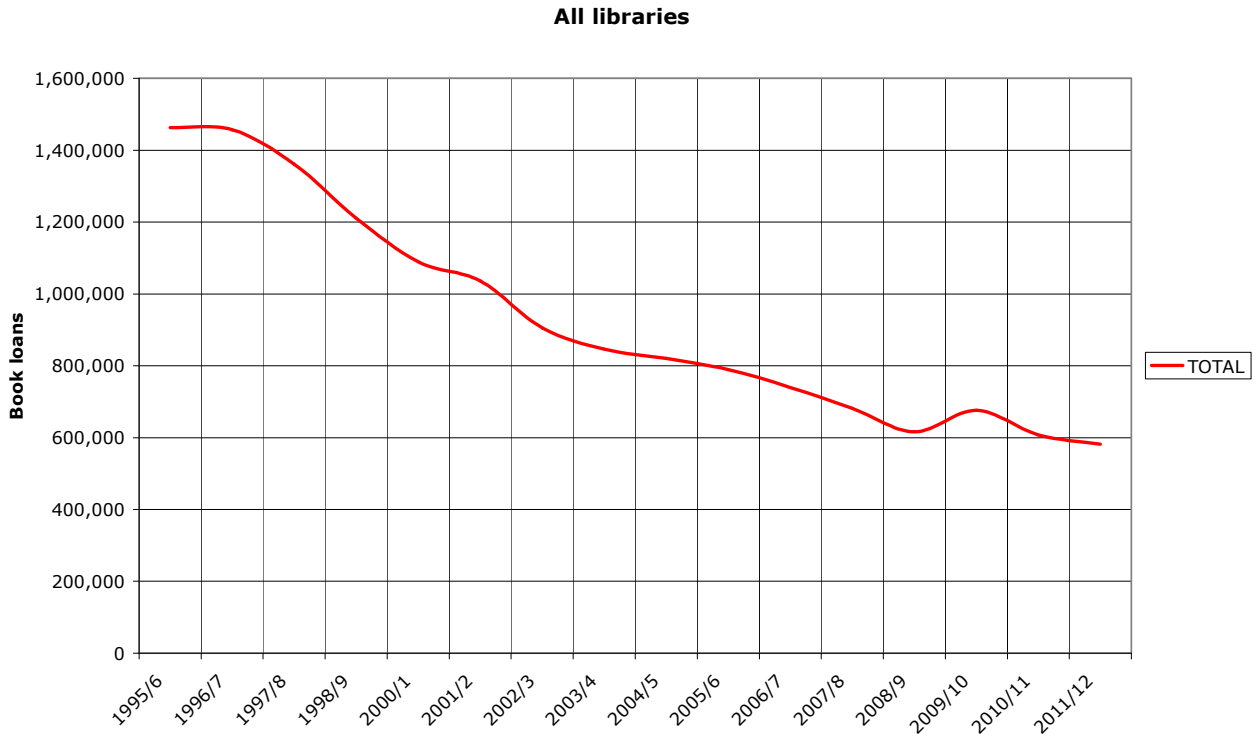


A slight rise at Ernesettle when the library moved to its current location.



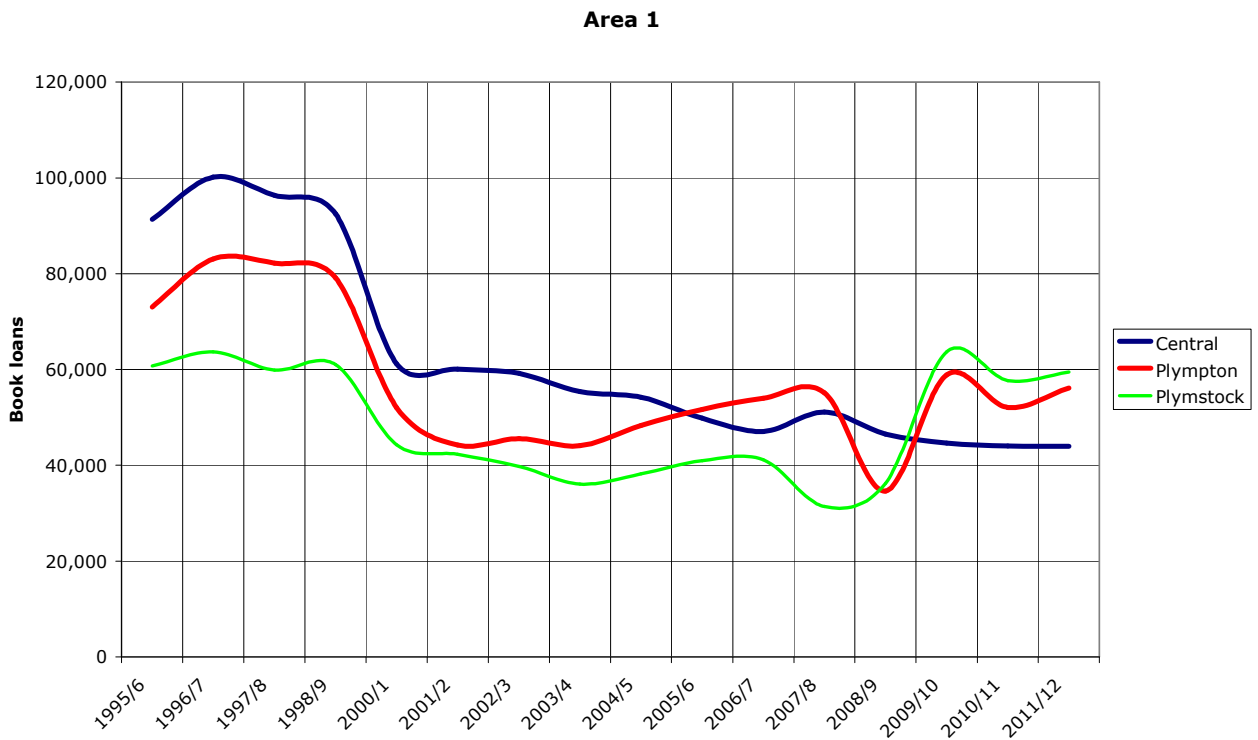
Estover's loans show the move into the new library.

## Trend analysis of loans of adult's books (continued)



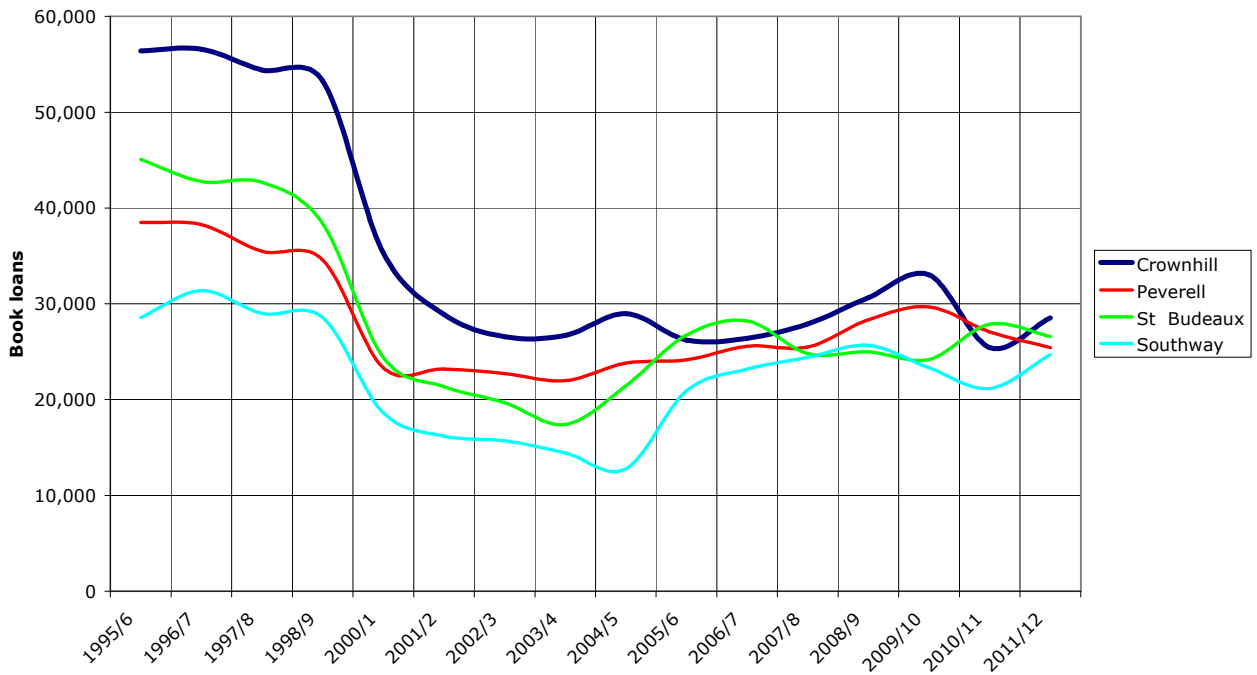
The peak in 2009/10 is due to the opening of the new Plymstock Library.

### 11.2.2 Trend analysis of loans of children's books

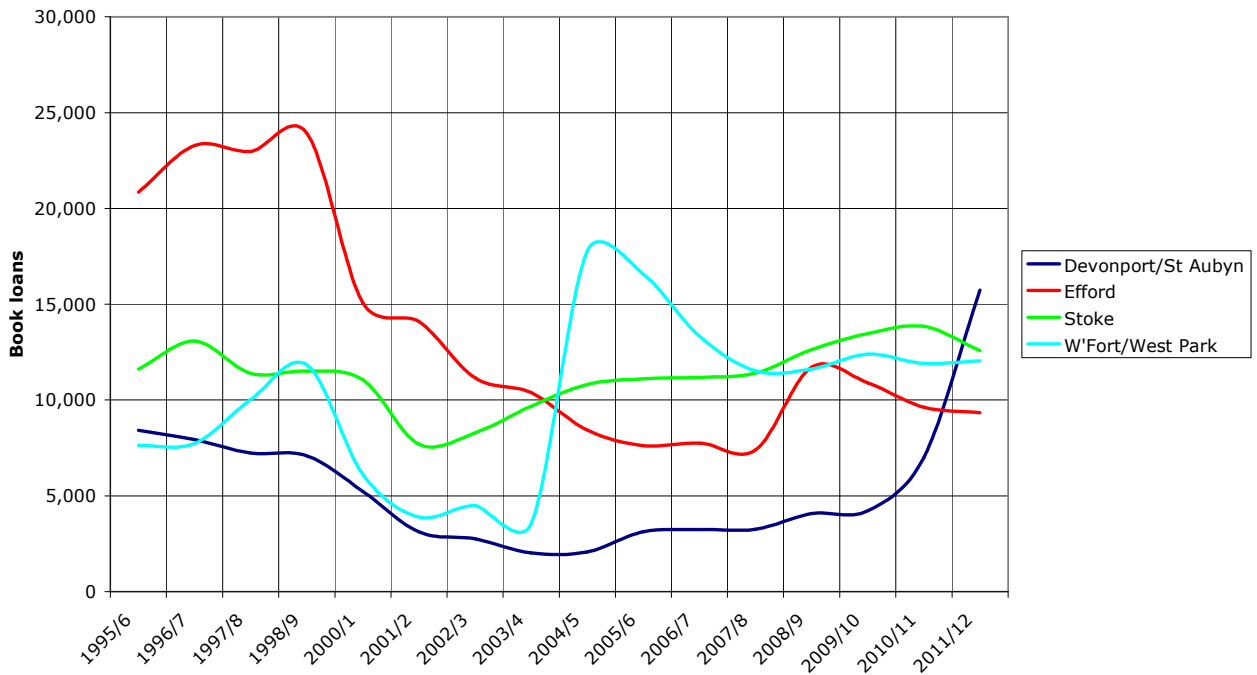


## Trend analysis of loans of children's books (continued)

Area 2



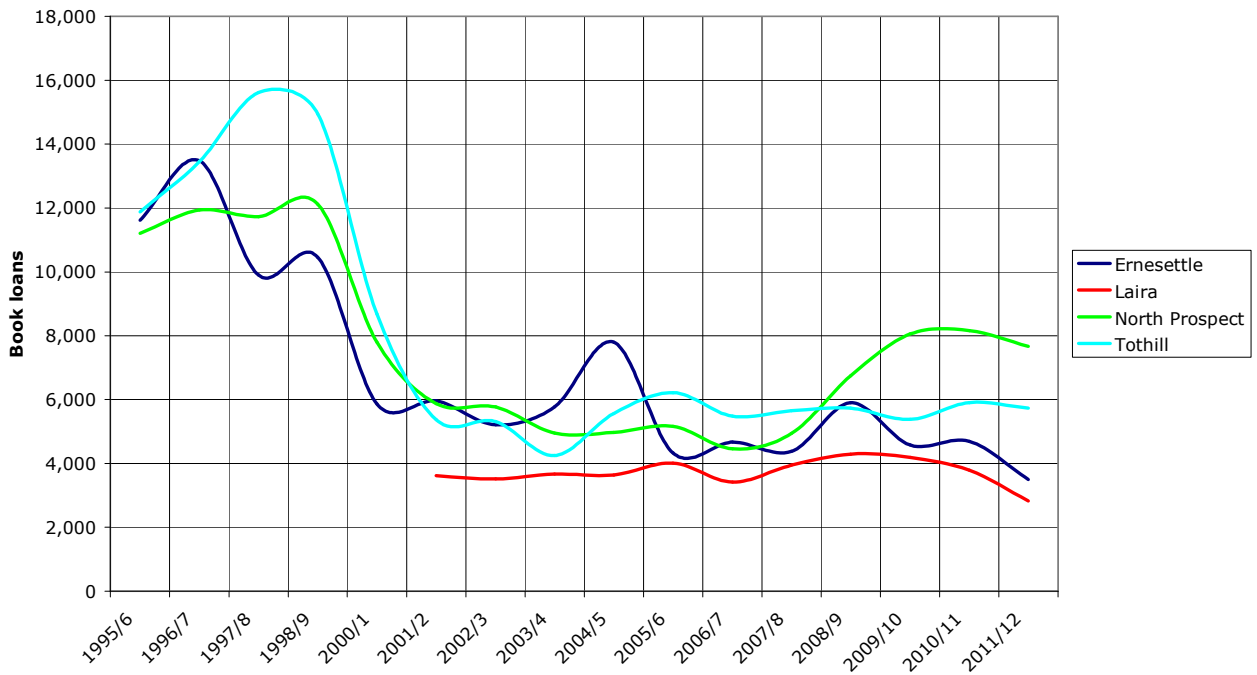
Area 3



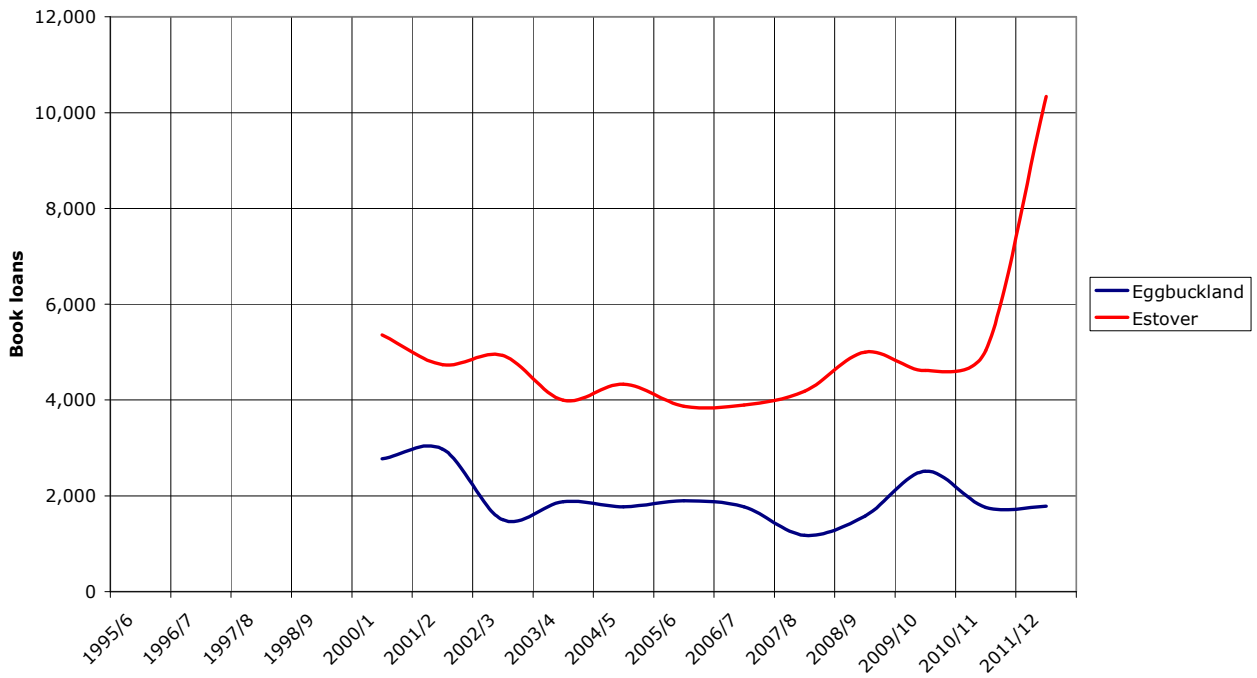


## Trend analysis of loans of children's books (continued)

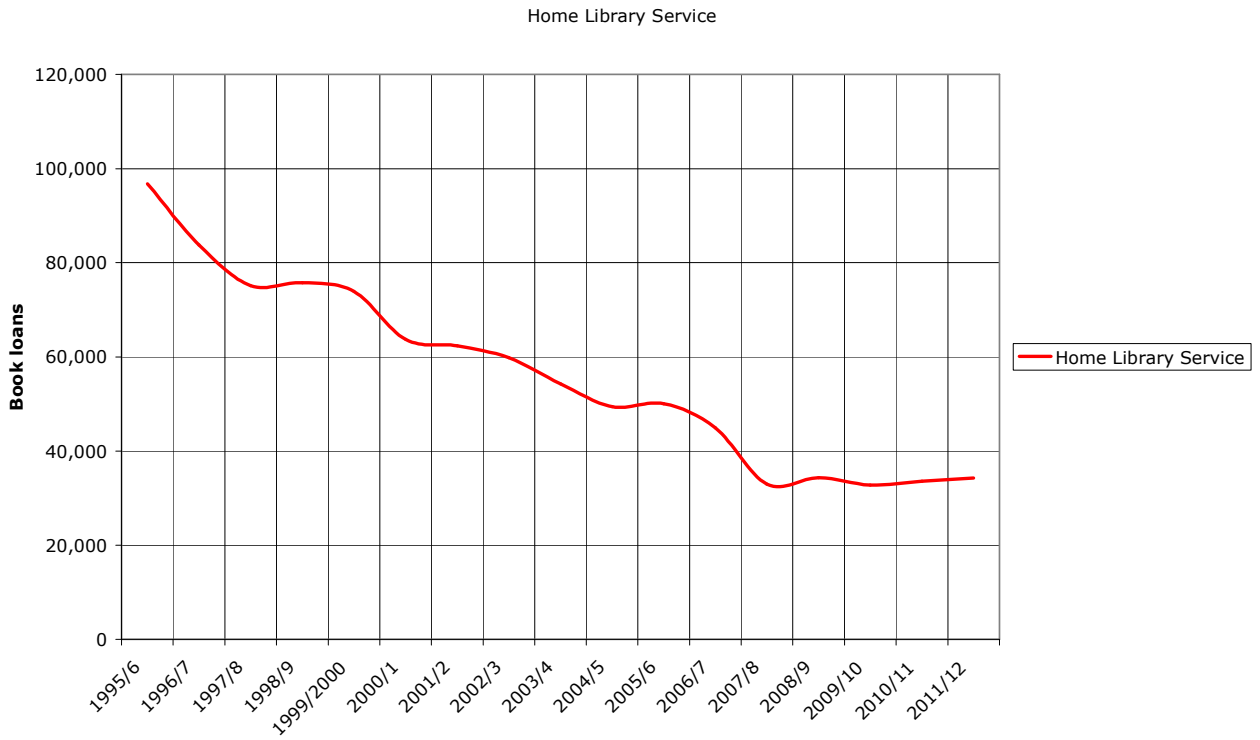
### Area 4



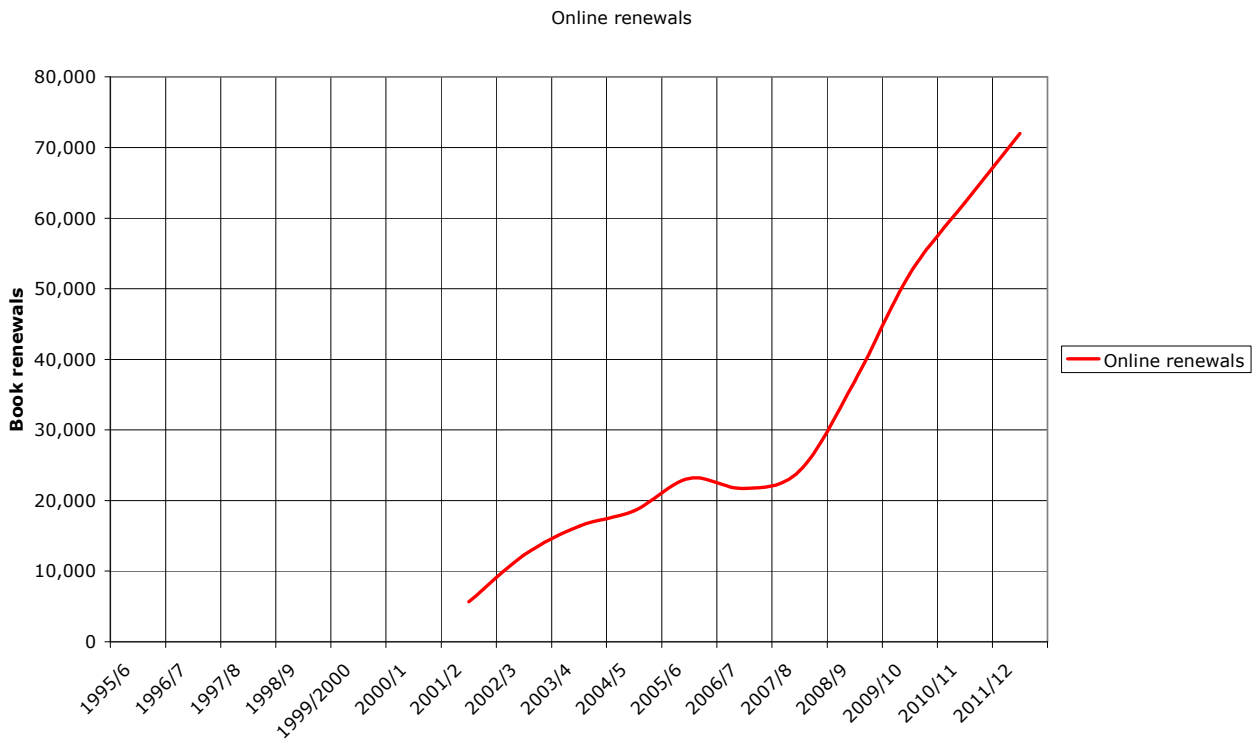
### Dual-use



### 11.2.3 Trend analysis of loans through Home Library Service



### 11.2.4 Trend analysis of online renewals – channel shift



### 11.3 Quantitative – Visits

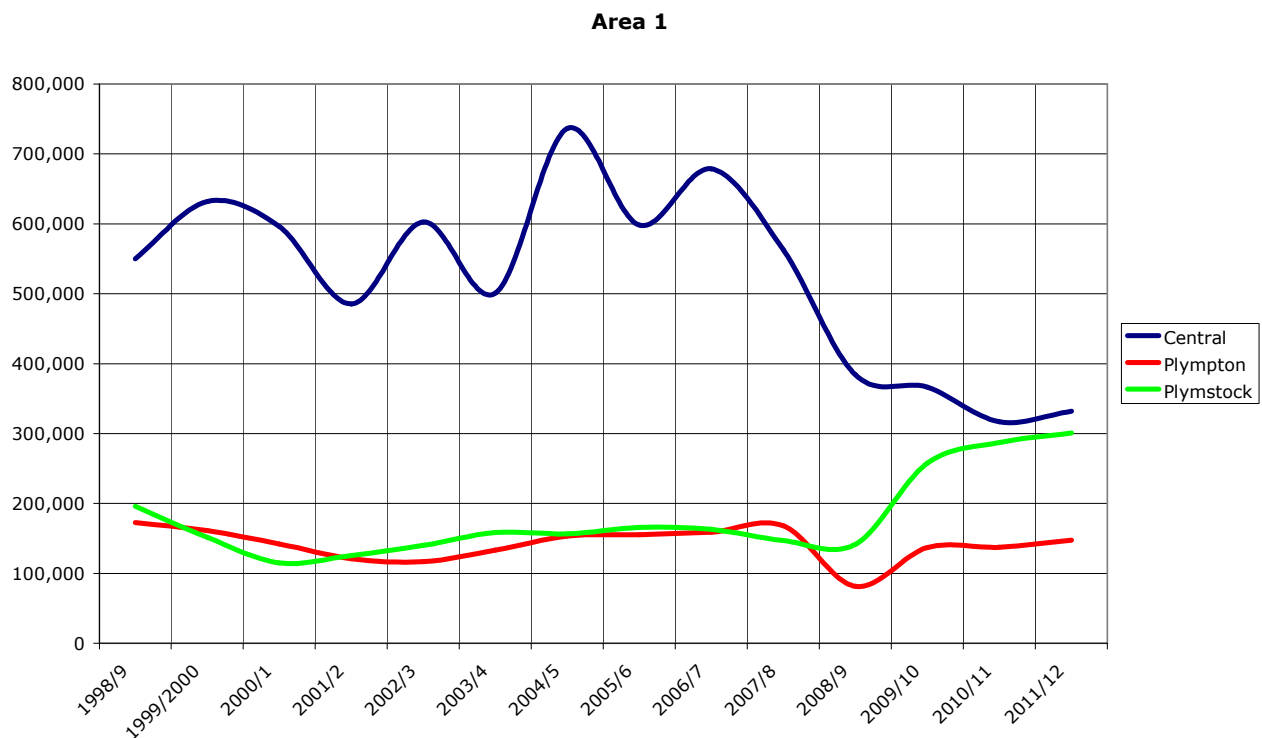
Library visits are notoriously difficult to measure accurately.

Before 2002/3 the service carried out a sample count during one week in October. From 2003/4 until 2012/13 the service used a combination of automated and manual systems with unreliable results.

Manual sampling in October 2012 finally gave an accurate figure and a citywide forecast for 2012/13 of 923,800.

Of all quantitative measures of library use, the number of visits most closely reflects actual use. It includes, most significantly, what can broadly be called “community use”. For example, people looking for somewhere to chat to friends, or looking for somewhere peaceful to sit, to attend an event, come to a Rhymetime, have an enquiry, come in to use a photocopier, to read a newspaper, to look for a book and go out with nothing, who return books but don’t borrow.

#### 11.3.1 Trend analysis of visits



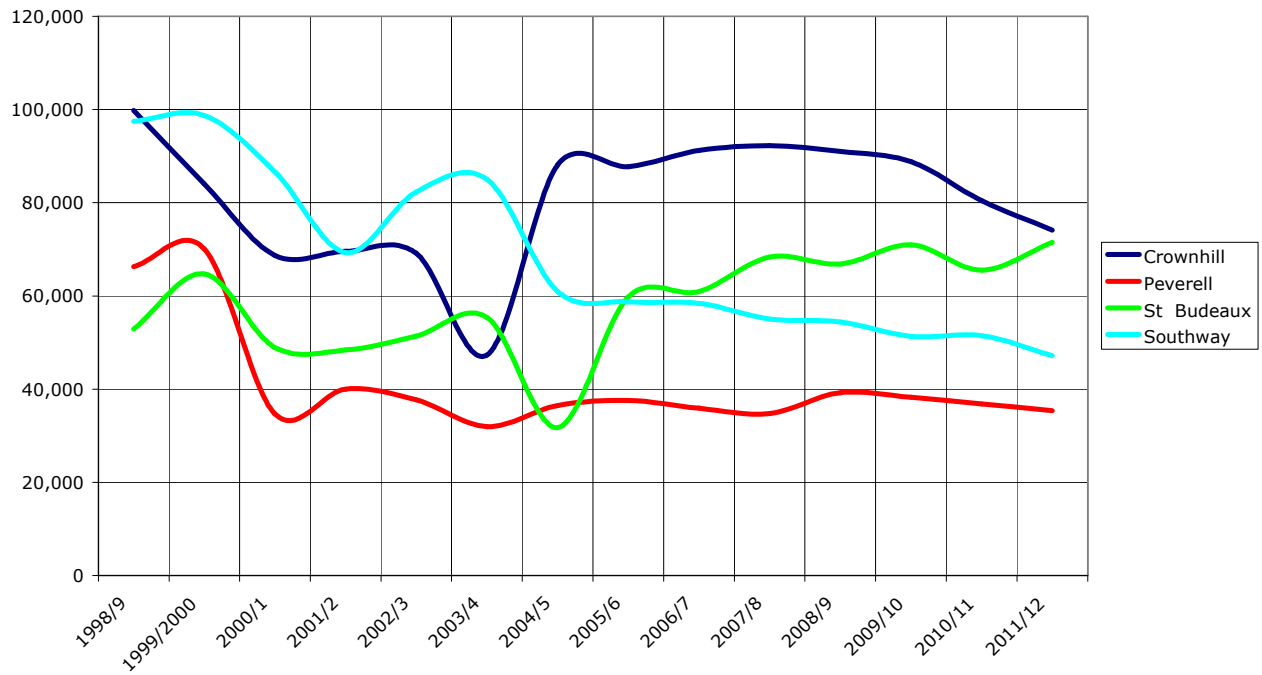
**Central:** Increase in 2002 when public computer service opened, rising to a peak in 2005. Demolition in 2005 of the Drake Circus roundabout underpasses starts the decline. Drake Circus Shopping Centre opened in October 2006 together with the street-level traffic light controlled crossing continues decline. Reduction in the number of buses stopping outside the library over the same period contributes further.

**Plympton:** Fire in 2008 reflected by a sharp reduction in visits when there was no service.

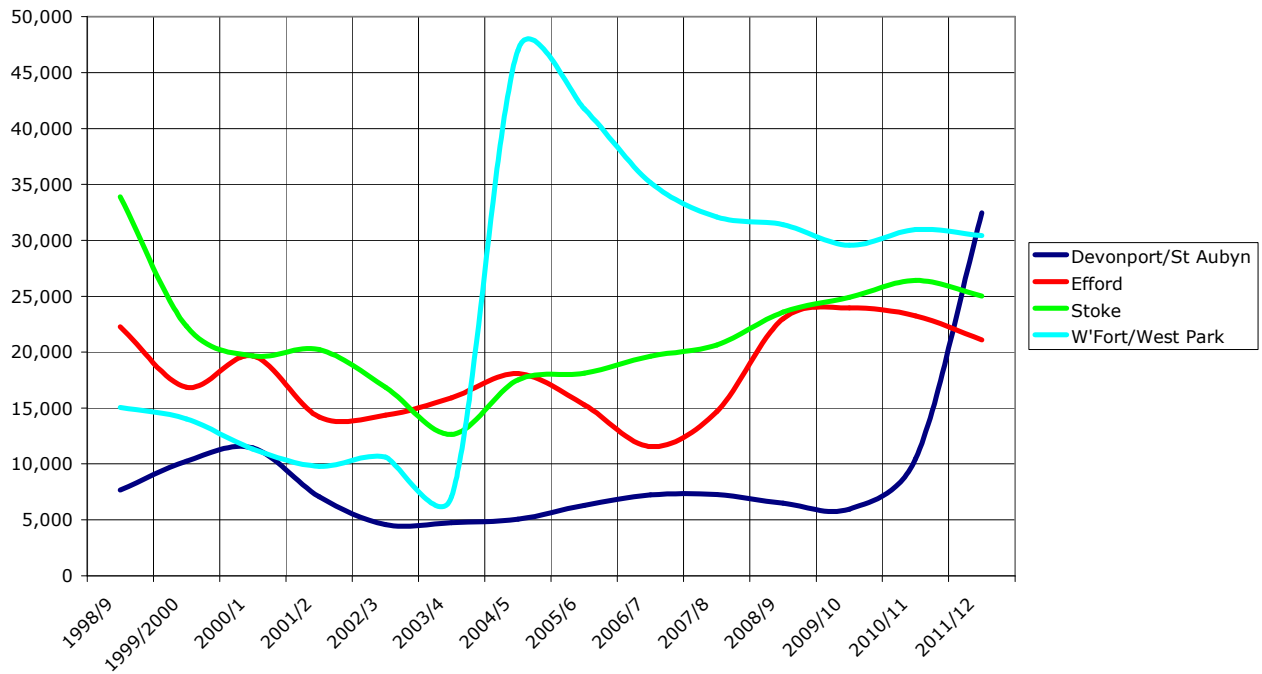
**Plymstock:** Small drop for relocation to temporary library followed by increase when the new library opened in 2009. The increase is now known more modest than that shown in the graph because of inaccurate automated counting.

## Trend analysis of visits (continued)

Area 2

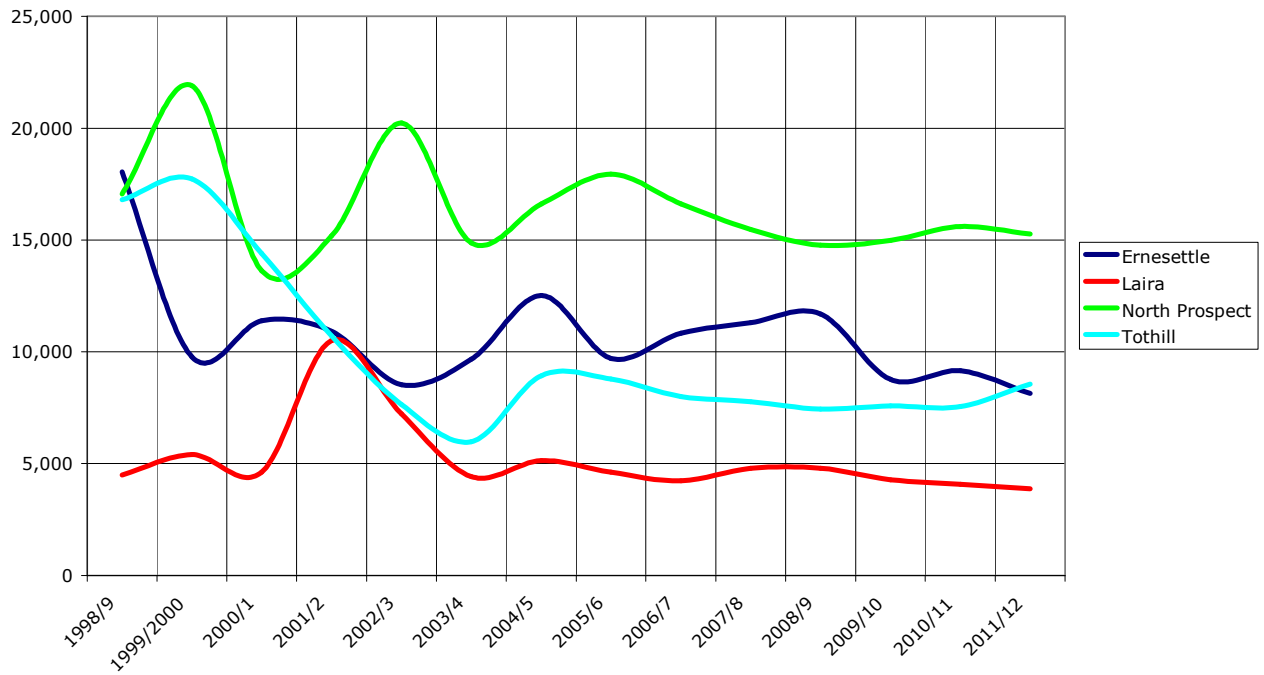


Area 3

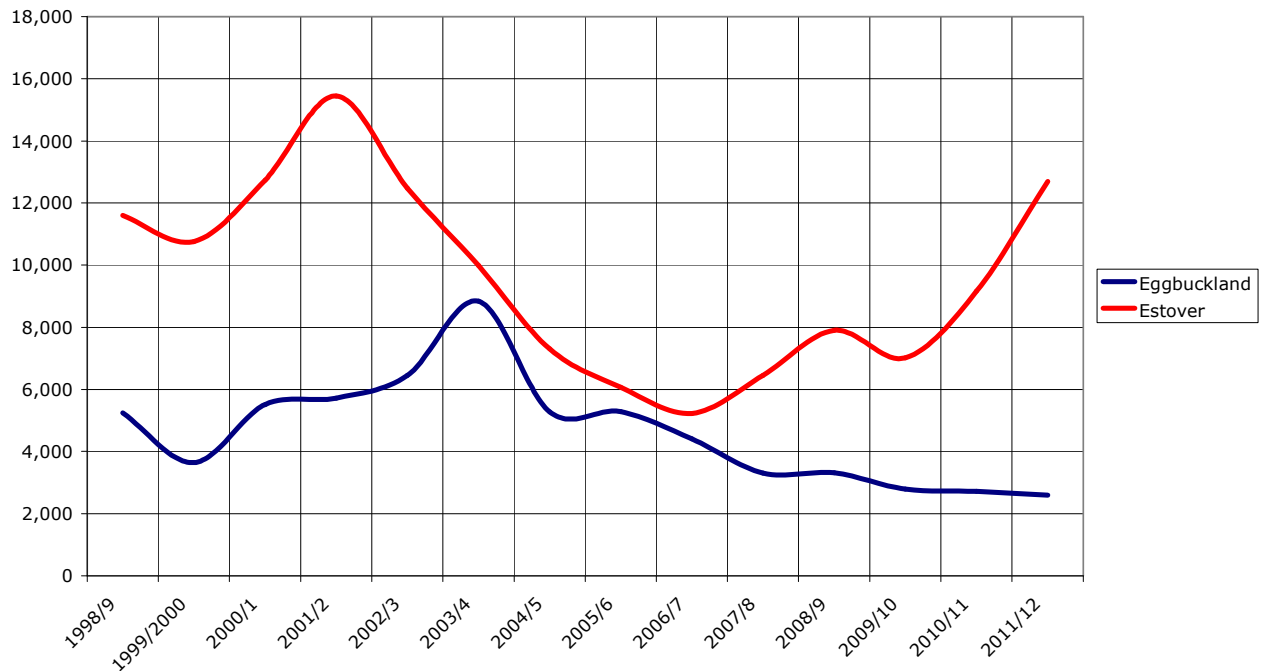


## Trend analysis of visits (continued)

Area 4



Dual-use



#### **11.4 Quantitative – membership**

Anyone can walk into any of Plymouth's seventeen public libraries without membership.

They can use a photocopier, read a book, look at old photos of Plymouth, attend a talk, take part in a readers group, have a cup of coffee – all popular activities which anyone can do without membership. Library membership figures, therefore, only tell part of the whole story of library usage.

Membership is needed to borrow an item, to use a library computer or to use any of the premium online resources.

Library membership is open to anyone who lives locally for more than six weeks.

On 4th December 2012, the library service had just fewer than 125,000 registered members. Of those, nearly three-quarters had used their membership within the previous three years, and over a third had also registered to use library computers.

One in two residents of Plymouth has library membership – a proportion of the market which large supermarkets can only dream of achieving.

Those who want to see libraries as in decline will see a cup that is half-empty.

Those with a passion to see Plymouth become a vibrant waterfront city of the world will see it as a cup which is very much half-full.