

# Plan for Libraries 2017 to 2020

## Interim report February 2018





## Summary

The Plan for Libraries was agreed in July 2017 and has heralded the biggest change to the service in over 15 years. The 3 year plan (from 2017-20) will ensure the Library Service participates strategically in the future plans for Britain's Ocean City.

This interim report aims to show the progress made so far in the implementation of the three year plan for libraries. The report focuses on the advancements made in the last 6 months - the tangible transformation which ensures we have the structure and resources in place to enable us to achieve in the future.

Since July last year, we have consolidated the library estate with the closure of 5 buildings and the refurbishment of 3 others. We've implemented a pop-up library service, delivered the most successful Summer Reading Challenge yet, and invested in our team who throughout this time of change remain as positive as ever.

With these practical preparations almost complete the service will enter the next financial year in a fit state enabling us to advance and improve services and evaluate and report on performance.

Following feedback during the statutory consultation and recommendations from the Scrutiny panel, the Library Service is committed to reporting on performance and outcomes, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative measures.

We are redefining the historical way that the service has reported on performance and new systems are in place which will enable us provide robust and transparent quantitative statistics on how many people make use of the service.

Our KPIs have been clearly defined and events and activities are planned and delivered with these targets in mind:

- Maintaining physical book issues
- Increasing library visitors
- Increasing outreach activity
- Increasing eBook downloads
- Increasing digital magazine downloads
- Increasing participation in the Summer Reading Challenge

However, we know that libraries are more than headline statistics and the impact we have on our users is often life changing. It's vital for us to measure this impact so the Council, stakeholders and partner organisations can view the library service as key players in delivering services for the people of Plymouth.

**We would welcome feedback on what you would like to see in future reports with the next one scheduled for October 2018.**



## Contents

Since the Plan for Libraries was agreed on the 3 July 2017, the library service has:

1. Invested in library buildings
2. Enhanced and increased the in-library offer
3. Extended opening hours
4. Increased our outreach offer by implementing a more structured approach focussing on areas where libraries were closing or where there was no current provision
5. Communicated with users of closed libraries to ensure they were able to continue to access services
6. Launched a new Library Management System including a new 24/7 website with Library App launching in February 2018
7. Reviewed and planned investment in eBooks and downloadable magazines
8. Invested in staff development and realigned responsibilities to ensure the structure is better placed to deliver the in-library and outreach offer
9. Taken a more targeted approach to marketing and promotion including ensuring our branding is consistent across all library assets (van, external signage, refresh of internal signage)
10. Continued providing an assisted digital service for the digitally excluded including those applying for Universal Credit
11. Delivered Arts Council Funded project – Lunch at the Library and increased participation in the Summer Reading Challenge
12. Re-evaluated our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable us to monitor and evaluate our performance
13. Looked at new ways of working, including opening the Central Library on Christmas Day as a way to combat loneliness and social isolation.

## I. Investment in Library buildings



New meeting spaces have been installed at Devonport and Southway libraries, with Crownhill refurbishment due for completion mid-February.

All meeting rooms have AV equipment.

Library interiors and stock have been refreshed and the shelf guiding and internal signage updated to match the library brand.

Each of our Tier one libraries has a minimum of 12 PCs as per our agreed in-library offer.

Throughout the year we will be assessing the layout and look of all our libraries and scheduling work to improve and change the interiors to reflect our library brand.

We are making good progress in exploring the redevelopment of St Budeaux Library.

## 2. In-Library offer

As per the Plan for Libraries, we are delivering on the Society of Chief Librarian's national offers.

The following activities and services are now available in all Tier 1 libraries based on the needs of communities.

Tier 2 libraries will work with communities to deliver on these same activities and services.

### Digital

Code Clubs and Hello World, coding and digital making  
Basic IT help  
Gadget help

### Health and wellbeing

Memory Cafes supporting those living with dementia  
Book on Prescription  
Feel Better with a Book (shared reading group)  
Craft and friendship groups

### Information

Work Clubs (Supporting people to get into employment)  
PatLib (providing information and advice on Intellectual Property to individuals and small businesses)  
Google Digital Garage

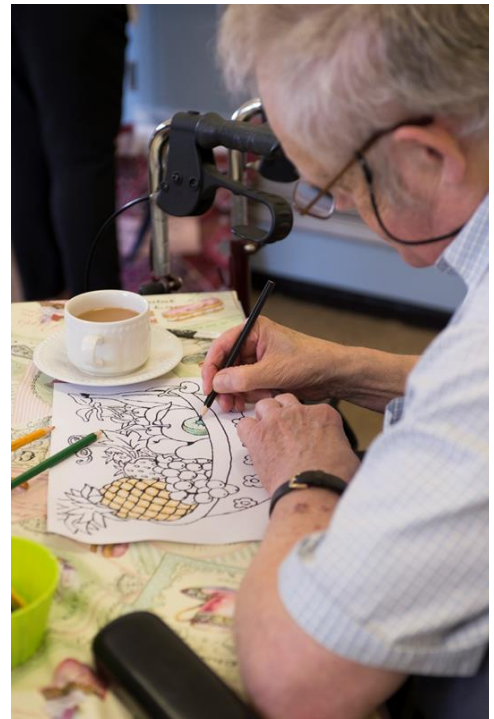
### Reading and Literacy

Good selection of book stock  
Reading groups for adults and children  
Share a Story (supporting families to read together)  
Writing groups

### Learning

Lego Clubs  
Supporting national initiatives including Fun Palaces, BBC's Get Creative weekend and Fun Palaces

Since the Plan for Libraries was published, a new offer – **Culture** has been added. We are aligning Local and Family History and our music service to this offer.



### 3. Extended opening hours



New extended opening hours for Tier 1 libraries started from January 2018

Libraries across the city are open for 572 hours per week.



## 4. Increased outreach offer

Plymouth libraries have always had an outreach offer, visiting schools, children's centres and other locations. We regularly attend major city centre events including Armed Forces Day, Devon Business Show and others.

In the Plan for Libraries we committed to a more structured outreach offer which started from 18 September 2017.



Our Pop-up libraries are available for 25 hours per week – five hours at five different locations across the city every week.

Staff have worked hard to promote this new offer. Promotional postcards and posters were printed advertising the pop-up library and distributed throughout each area.

A pop-up library is not the same as visiting a library building. We should not make comparisons between the pop-up service and those libraries that closed as hours and the user experience vastly

We know that many users of closed libraries have chosen to use an alternative library rather than the pop-up service (see next section).

The click and collect service is proving popular with 159 items collected at our pop-up libraries.

|   | <b>Eggbuckland</b>   | <b>Tothill</b>                             | <b>Whitleigh</b> | <b>Ernesettle</b>    | <b>Stoke</b>                                |
|---|----------------------|--|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Average visits (during 5 hour session)  | 14                   | 22   | 17               | 13                   | 22  |
| Average issues (during 5 hours session) | 14                   | 33   | 10               | 11                   | 20  |
| Additional Information                  | New weekly rhymetime | New weekly rhymetime and after school club | Weekly Lego Club | Regular class visits | Regular class visits and councillor surgery |

We initially committed to 26 weeks at our chosen venues.

We are now reviewing and exploring the offer and venues to ensure we meet the needs of communities and to maximise our opportunity for engagement.

Visits to a pop-up library cannot be added to the visitor figures we report annually to CIPFA as library visits to non-library buildings aren't counted, but for us it's about successful engagement with new audiences.

## 5. Communication with users

In the Plan for Libraries we made the commitment that all activities and services run at closed libraries would be replaced at alternative locations, online or through outreach.

We were keen to measure and minimise the impact on library users and although the consultation process was robust, we wanted to continue the conversation with affected users about how they would access our service when the libraries closed.

In the run up to the library closures, we spoke to every visitor and encouraged them to give us their views; over 150 people completed a short survey. 67% said they were likely to use another library. 55% said they were likely to visit a Pop-up Library.

By using this information we were able to identify Devonport Library as a suitable alternative to Stoke; so we added an additional rhymetime there which attracts an average of ten families per week.

Book issue figures at Devonport Library have increased on average by 100 per week compared to the same time last year.

For those libraries that had a meeting space, we spoke individually with the groups and facilitated access to alternative spaces. This included the Stoke ward councillors, yoga group, writing and reader's groups.



## 6. Online offer



We have just introduced a new Library Management System providing us with the ability to offer a seamless joining process whether in a library building or at outreach location.

Alongside this we have launched a new 24/7 library website allowing users to find, renew and reserve items. The customer experience and our ability to use it for promotion is much improved (see screenshots below). A Library App will be introduced within the next couple of months making it easier for users to access services on the go.

The screenshot shows a dated website layout. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with links like 'Home', 'Search the Catalogue', 'Keyword Search', 'Author Search', 'Title Search', 'ISBN Search', 'Advanced Search', 'Your Membership', 'Your Loans', 'Your Reservations', 'Your Account', 'Your Personal Details', 'Your Loans History', 'Your Wishlist', and 'Your Saved Searches'. The main content area features a 'Welcome to your 24 Hour Library' message, a 'Quick Search' box, and a 'Top Titles' section listing books like 'Acts of the assassins' and 'All the light we cannot see'. A 'SELECTED ITEMS' box at the top right indicates 'You have 0 items selected'.

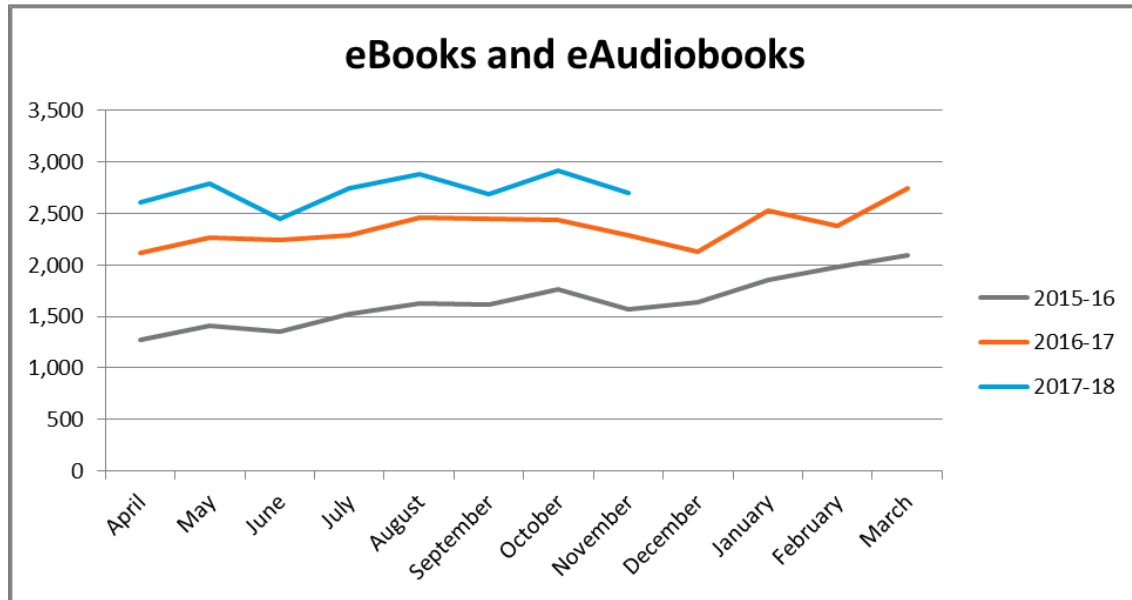
Before

The screenshot shows the updated website interface. It features a modern green header with the Plymouth Libraries logo and the text 'Plymouth Libraries Online'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Plymouth Libraries', 'Join The Library', 'Online Resources', and 'Library News'. The main content area includes a search bar with the text 'Search for books, films, music...', a featured banner for 'Love your Library Day - 14 February' with a child holding a yellow balloon, and a 'Tweets' section. On the right side, there is an 'Account' section with a 'Sign in' form and a 'Forgot your PIN?' link.

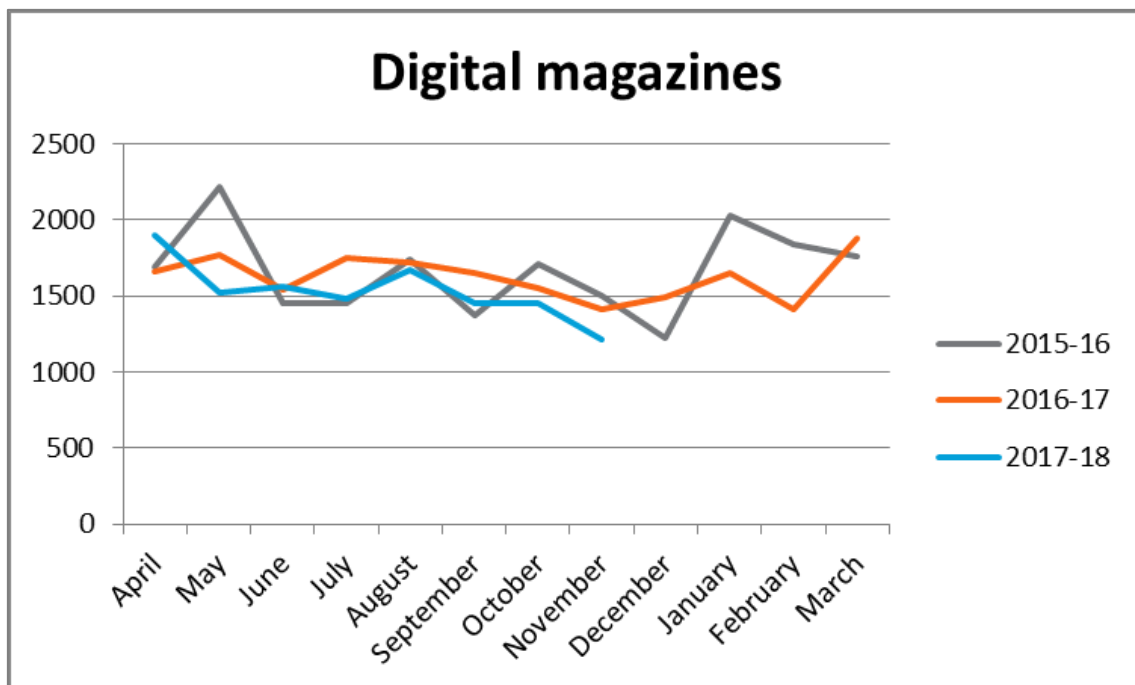
After

## 7. eBooks and digital magazines

Our eBook issues continue to rise. We will be increasing the spend on these by one third in the new financial year.



Issues of our digital magazines are fluctuating, so the spend will be maintained on these, but we will review the titles on offer and take a more targeted approach to promotion.



## 8. Staff development and realignment of responsibilities

The Plan for Libraries committed us to reducing staffing from 81.6 FTE to 74.6FTE and we have achieved this saving.

Staff responsibilities have been realigned with our customers at the heart of what we do.

Consultation feedback suggested that our users like consistency and a familiar face and this has shaped our structure. Each of our libraries now has a dedicated team of staff supported by a Development Officer and a Development Manager. We are building relationships with communities in order to deliver the services they want.

All library staff are empowered to work in different ways both in our library buildings and out in the community. Every activity is based around:

- attracting new audiences
- increasing visits to library buildings
- increasing engagement in the community

In order for staff to be fully equipped to deliver on the offers laid out in the Plan for Libraries we have implemented a training programme especially around health and wellbeing to ensure they are equipped to deliver on the Council's wellbeing strategy.



Recent training has included:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Visitor engagement
- Coding and digital making for STEM activities with children
- Under 5s offer including rhymetimes and autism friendly libraries
- Dementia Friends

Staff are about to embark on training linked to wellbeing which will include 'How can we help' sessions delivered by the Citizens Advice Bureau and 'Making Every Contact Count'. These sessions and others will ensure libraries can play a key role in the Wellbeing Hubs initiative city wide.

## 9. Marketing and promotion

A communications and marketing plan has been produced for 2017-2020.

We are introducing a consistent brand across all library assets, including vans and library buildings (internal and external) and this will be carried through to online and printed materials.



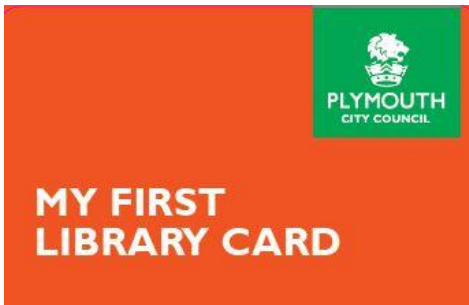
Signage proposals for Estover Library



We already send a monthly email to over 50,000 library members.

A Welcome to your Library email is now sent to new members each month, highlighting all the benefits of having a library card.

We are currently working with colleagues in Registration to give every baby born in Plymouth a library card, ensuring they have the best start in life.



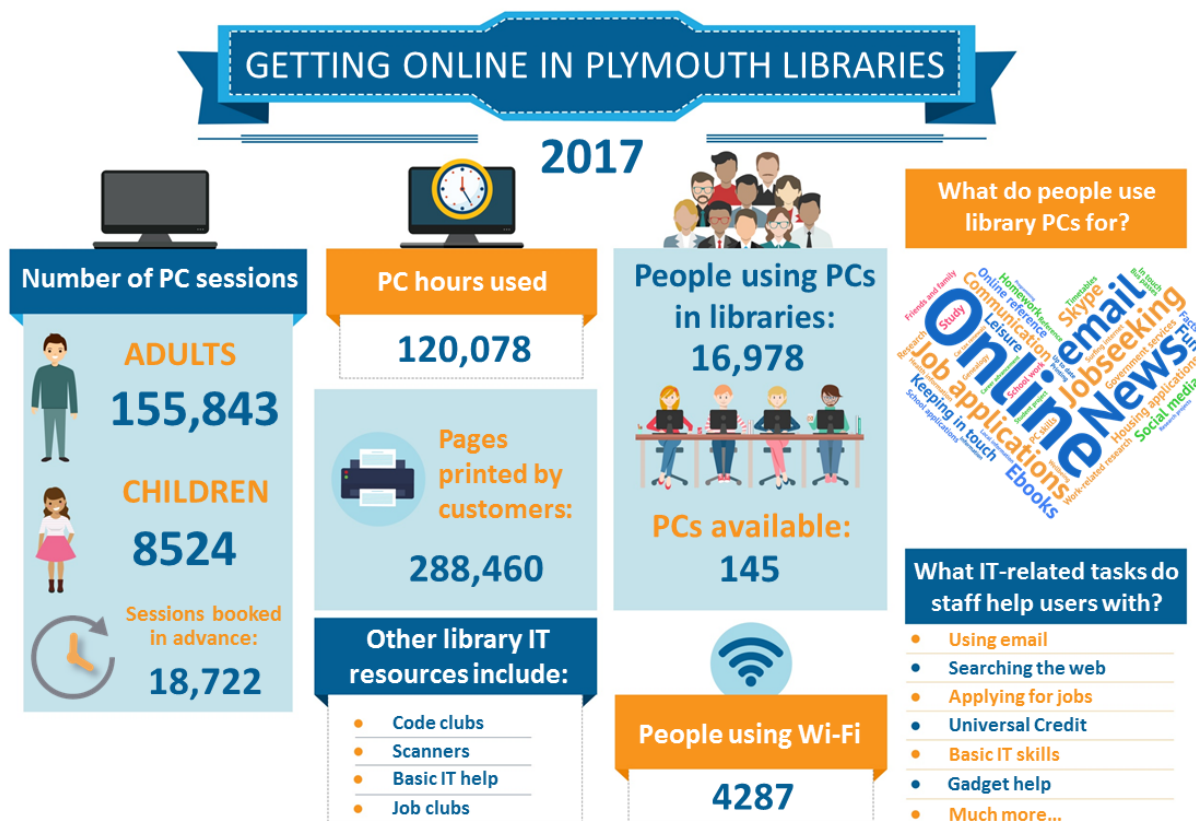
We are working with a local agency to design a new offer for children from 5 to 11. This will build on the success of the Summer Reading Challenge where every year we see a spike in visits and issues during the summer. We want to make sure that a regular visit to the library is firmly on the agenda for every child in Plymouth.



## 10. Assisted Digital

Libraries continue to support the digitally excluded through basic IT sessions, gadget drop-ins and work clubs.

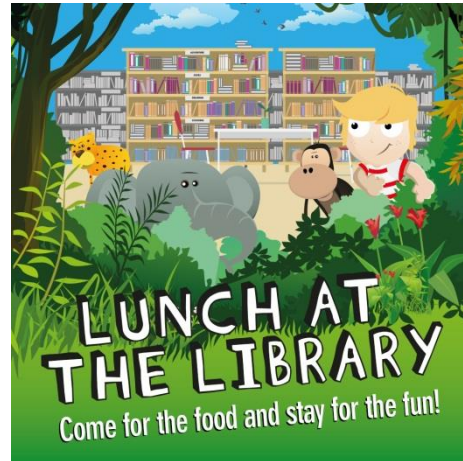
In addition, libraries are playing a key role in the roll out of Universal Credit, providing assisted digital support for those who need it. In just 3 months we have supported over 80 people with their applications – these are people who have no support anywhere else.



## 11. Lunch at the Library/Summer Reading Challenge

During the summer of 2017, we delivered our Arts Council funded project, Lunch at the Library. We received funding from the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Fund to work with CATERed providing free lunches and activities for children during the summer holidays

- **3** library locations
- **5000** visitors
- **3000** free lunches
- **1500** free books given away



A more detailed Lunch at the Library evaluation report is available [online](#).

Alongside Lunch at the Library we had our most successful Summer Reading Challenge; over 4000 children took part, an increase of 9% on the year before.



## **12. Key Performance Indicators**

We have re-evaluated our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable us to monitor and evaluate our performance. We now report monthly on the following:

- Maintain book issues
- Increase new members
- Increase library visitors
- Increase outreach activity
- Increase eBook downloads
- Increase digital magazine download
- Increase participation in the Summer Reading Challenge

We have met our annual targets and are confident in meeting the targets that are reported cumulatively on a monthly basis.

You can view the current scorecard on the next page.

During the statutory consultation there was a lot of interest in how library visits are recorded. There is currently no cost effective method available to us to capture this data.

CIPFA regulations state that a sample week or weeks can be used and for the last 5 years we have done and visitor count twice a year during May and November. We are now implementing a visitor count quarterly to increase the accuracy of the data.

# Transformation and Change Directorate Performance Report ~ 2017/18

Interim Joint Strategic Director Transformation and Change – Andrew Hardingham & Dawn Aunger

## Customer Services Development Department - Faye Batchelor-Hambleton

|          | Ref   | Indicator Definition (monthly)                            | 2015/16<br>Actual | 2016/17<br>Actual | Back series |        |         |         |         | Previous Actuals |         |         | Current<br>Period |
|----------|---|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|-------------------|
|          |   |   |                   |                   | Apr-17      | May-17 | Jun-17  | Jul-17  | Aug-17  | -3               | -2      | -1      |                   |
|          |   |   |                   |                   | Apr-17      | May-17 | Jun-17  | Jul-17  | Aug-17  | Sep-17           | Oct-17  | Nov-17  |                   |
| Customer | KPI 1.2   | Maintain the number of book issues (cumulative)           | 538,685           | 583,931           | 45,119      | 90,445 | 134,893 | 190,753 | 257,093 | 304,756          | 345,954 | 381,566 | 412,739           |
|          | KPI 1.3   | Increase new membership (cumulative)                      | 9,872             | 11,755            | 729         | 1,505  | 2,230   | 3,588   | 4,973   | 5,917            | 6,751   | 7,379   | 7,825             |
|          | KPI 1.4   | Volume of outreach activities - Hours (cumulative)        |                   |                   | 21          | 91     | 157     | 230     | 254     | 331              | 523     | 664     | 737               |
|          | KPI 1.5   | Volume of outreach activities - Events (cumulative)       |                   |                   | 19          | 67     | 108     | 173     | 181     | 203              | 275     | 316     | 335               |
|          | KPI 1.6   | Volume of outreach activities - Engaged with (cumulative) |                   |                   | 223         | 1,527  | 5,126   | 18,571  | 19,632  | 22,474           | 33,740  | 34,693  | 35,020            |
|          | KPI 1.7   | Increase E-book issues (cumulative)                       | 19,689            | 28,307            | 2,608       | 5,399  | 7,845   | 10,590  | 13,468  | 16,153           | 19,068  | 21,766  | 24,535            |
|          | KPI 1.8   | Increase Digital Magazine issues (cumulative)             | 19,956            | 19,498            | 1,898       | 3,418  | 4,982   | 6,465   | 8,141   | 9,594            | 11,050  | 12,269  | 13,626            |
|          | Ref   | Indicator Definition (Annual)                             | 2015/16<br>Actual | 2016/17<br>Actual | N/A         | N/A    | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     | 2013/14          | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17           |
|          | KPI 1.13  | Overall visits to library buildings                       | 731,748           | 740,125           | N/A         | N/A    | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A              | 757,600 | 731,748 | 740,125           |
| KPI 1.14 | Increase Summer Reading Challenge sign up               | 3,701   | 4,231             | N/A               | N/A         | N/A    | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A              | 3,701   | 4,623   |                   |
| KPI 1.15 | Increase number of summer reading challenge completions | 2,361   | 2,784             | N/A               | N/A         | N/A    | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A              | 2,361   | 3,032   |                   |
| KPI 1.16 | Increase % of Summer reading challenge completions      | 63.3%   | 65.8%             | N/A               | N/A         | N/A    | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A              | 63.9%   | 65.6%   |                   |

### **13. New ways of working**

We are continually looking for new ways of working

Within the council and with key stakeholders we are working hard to promote an ethos of 'Libraries First'.

Our aspiration is to be considered as partners in all strategic plans for the city where community engagement and excellent service delivery is required.

Already we are:

- involved as key partners in the new Wellbeing Hub initiative
- working with DWP to support the roll out of Universal Credit
- partnering with Plymouth Community Homes for their digital inclusion strategy
- participating in Mayflower 400 initiatives for children up to key stage 4

This year, thanks to the kindness of staff who volunteered, the Central Library opened for the afternoon on Christmas Day. We offered a safe and welcoming place for anyone who may have been on their own and wanted company. The initiative was well received locally with great interest on social media and with the local press. Nationally we were recognised by peers in the library and information sector.

This month on Valentine's Day we're hoping that the people of Plymouth will show some love for the library service and take part in our 'Love Your Library Day' on 14 February 2018. Staff will be out and about across the city promoting the service including a pop-up library at Ballard House. We're planning a whole host of activities in our libraries too.

