

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER & AUDITOR GENERAL

NOVEMBER 2010

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SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1. This paper is the report of a review of the public library service provided by the Department for Education Sport and Culture (DfESC). The terms of reference for the review are set out in Appendix One.
2. In general terms, the purpose of the review is to assess the value for money represented by the public library service provided by the States, and to assess the possibility that the value for money of these services could be improved.
3. The review consisted of a series of interviews with the Chief Librarian, library staff and officials of the DfESC. In addition, the performance of the service in Jersey was compared with data relating to the performance of services provided by authorities in similar communities on the mainland.
4. The background to and the nature of the services provided in the Island are described in Section Three of this report. Comparisons between the service and other services together with discussions of the principal issues which emerge from those comparisons are set out in succeeding sections.
5. But first, in Section Two, I will set out a summary of the principal findings of the review.

SECTION TWO – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6. My findings may be summarised in the following way:
- (1) The Island's public library service meets most of the UK's national standards for public libraries and achieves a high level of user satisfaction.
 - (2) That the service has achieved this in a period when its budget has been constrained is a testament to the quality of its leadership and the commitment of its staff. In particular, the library service has been innovative in working with other organisations in the Island and has successfully embraced new technology.
 - (3) As a result of developing (and gradually implementing) its own Improvement Plan, the service has a clear roadmap for its further development so that standards can be maintained and improved and has been able to deliver good value and service to the Island.
7. The library service can expect to face a number of challenges:
- (1) Spending restraint: Assuming that the States continue to restrict spending, the library's budget will continue to be restricted. It is likely to be more difficult for the library to continue to meet national standards.
 - (2) Technology: technological changes will continue to challenge assumptions about the way in which library services should be provided.
 - (3) Accommodation: if the proposed closure of the branch library is implemented, and it is not possible to increase usable space at the Halkett Place library, achievement of certain UK national standards will become even more difficult.
 - (4) Property maintenance: the Halkett Place building was opened in 1989 and with age the expense of maintaining the building is increasing (having for many years been negligible). This will be difficult to manage within a limited budget.

SECTION THREE - BACKGROUND

Mission and aim

8. The mission of the library service in Jersey is:

“To provide an inclusive, responsive and accessible public library and information service which caters for the educational, cultural, recreational and information needs for all members of the community.”

9. The aim of the service is to provide:

- (1) Facilities tailored and responsive to the needs of the community.
- (2) Attractive, easy to access services with as few rules as possible.
- (3) A mobile library and other services for those people who cannot get to static libraries.
- (4) Help and encouragement in enjoying books and reading.
- (5) Access to a high quality stock of books and other materials, carefully selected to reflect local needs and demands, with wider access to the stock of other libraries via the UK inter-library loan system.
- (6) Help and support with learning activities, both formal and informal.
- (7) Free ICT facilities providing high speed internet and email access and other on line services.
- (8) Access to a wide range of information, including information about other public services.
- (9) Well trained and friendly staff to provide help and support.

10. The service is provided through the town library (in Halkett Place), a dual purpose branch library and a public mobile library which provide core services:

- (1) Central administration and bibliographical services.
- (2) Adult lending.

- (3) Children and young people.
- (4) Open learning centre.
- (5) Reference and information.
- (6) Local studies and statutory deposit.
- (7) Schools resources.
- (8) Services for those with special needs.

11. Each of these services is described in turn below.

Central administrative services

12. 16,104 new items were added to stock in 2008. Good discounts and services were achieved by using a principal specialist book supplier (i.e. providing books that are prepared ready for incorporation into a library). A local supplier is used for urgent and local materials. On line book selection, cataloguing and processing provide opportunities to streamline back office procedures.

Adult lending

13. About 440,000 items are loaned each year. Paperback fiction loans have increased by almost 200% since 2004. Adult non-fiction accounts for 25% of all loans. 67% of reservations are supplied within 15 days.

Children and young people

14. 1,642 young people under 18 joined the Library in 2008. 24% of all library loans are to young people under 18. Over 1,930 children aged 4 – 11 participated in the summer reading challenge 2009. Over 250 activities and events were organised in the Library. Over 1,600 children were gifted books as part of the book start and book times scheme 2008.

15. Les Quennevais Branch Library is a dual use school and public library. The school has exclusive term time use of the library until 2 pm Monday to Friday. The library is then open to the public from 2.00 pm until 5.30 pm Monday to Friday and 9.30 am to 1.00 pm

on Saturday. When operating as a public library the aims and objectives of the service reflect those of Jersey Library.

16. In 2008 over 6,000 items were borrowed by Les Quennevais pupils and over 50,000 by other users of the Branch Library. 472 children attended events and activities in the library. 168 year 7 students each attended two library induction classes. Library staff dealt with 20,000 information enquiries. 80% of reserved books were supplied within 15 days. 1,112 internet sessions were booked at the branch library.

Mobile library service

17. The mobile library carries a stock of 2,000 books and audio books. Over 11,000 books are issued each year. Class visits to the Mobile Library are encouraged at appropriate locations. In 2008 63 children joined the summer reading challenge on the Mobile Library.

Open Learning Centre

18. 14 computers provide free access to the internet and a wide range of learning packages, 4,000 learning sessions were booked in 2008. 34,000 free computer hours were available each year.

Reference and information

19. About 29,000 information enquiries are received and dealt with each year. More than 100 periodicals and magazines are received regularly. Over 14,000 hours are available in private study rooms per year. Free WIFI is available and there are 109,000 entries on the unique JEP computer index (October 2009).

Local studies and legal deposit

20. Almost 70% of the reference enquiries are for local information and resources. Many visitors to local studies stay for over an hour to pursue their research. The local studies room is open with specialist staff available two morning per week. Legal deposit legislation came into operation on 1 June 2008.

Special Resources Department

21. 30 out of 33 primary schools used the school resources topic collection service in 2008. 1,573 topical requests were received and supplied in 2008. 28,377 items were issued to primary schools in 2008.

Service for those with special needs

22. 20,000 large print books were loaned in 2008. 21,000 audio books were loaned per year. Over 2,500 books were delivered to house bound readers. 25 exchanges of stock were made at nursing homes and day care centres. Materials are provided in community languages (Portuguese and Polish).

Expenditure

23. The following table shows the library service's expenditure for the period 2004 to 2008.

<i>£'000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>
Employees	1,055	1,038	1,109	1,138	1,148
Premises	52	59	75	71	116
Supplies and services	288	269	248	298	275
Transport	12	12	12	12	12
Establishment	29	22	28	24	26
Total expenditure	1,436	1,400	1,472	1,543	1,577
Income	41	43	38	60	57
Total net expenditure	1,395	1,357	1,434	1,483	1,520
<i>% of net expenditure</i>					
<i>Employees</i>	<i>76.0</i>	<i>76.5</i>	<i>77.3</i>	<i>76.7</i>	<i>76.0</i>
<i>Premises</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>5.2</i>	<i>4.8</i>	<i>7.6</i>
<i>Supplies and services</i>	<i>20.6</i>	<i>19.8</i>	<i>17.3</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>18.0</i>

24. Expenditure on supplies and services has not increased during this period. The stock management policy has ensured that value for money is achieved in allocation of the book funds. An increased number of paperbacks and good discounts from specialist library suppliers have permitted maintenance of the range and quality of materials without an increase in expenditure on book purchase although the precise amount of expenditure on book purchases fluctuates each year depending on publication dates and delivery of consignments at the end of each year.
25. Economies in other parts of the budget and the reallocation of funds have permitted some minor improvements to the premises in 2006 to 2009.
26. Employee costs were maintained at 76% of total net expenditure. Efficiency savings have been achieved by combining/reducing the number of service counters in the principal library in Halkett Place. A 24 hour book drop box and a self service machine have been used to reduce queues at busy times.
27. In 2008, the income of the Library was derived in the following ways:

	<u>£</u>	<u>%</u>
Fines/replacement costs	21632	54
Open Learning	6907	17
Photocopying	5018	12
Sale of old stock	2216	6
Reservations	1742	4
Other	2713	7
Total	<u><u>40228</u></u>	

28. The power to approve fines for overdue items and for the hire of other materials is exercisable within the Public Library (Jersey) Regulations 2007 and the Public Library Code of Practice. The level of charges is reviewed annually by the library's management team. Charges are reviewed annually and small increases were approved in 2008/2009. Existing charging policies and marketing factors have to be considered in relation to increasing

charges. Most aspects of the service are provided free or at low cost in order to support social inclusion and encourage wide use of the service.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Policy/purpose</u>
Overdue charges on all items	Adult items 6p per day Maximum £3 per item Young readers: 2p per day Maximum £1 per item	Deterrent
Charges for reservation of specific requests	76p per in stock item for adults 5p per in stock item for young readers	To generate a modest income and regulate requests
Reservation fees for inter-library loans	£5 per item	Covers charge for items other authorities
Open learning centre	£1 for non-members Tuition: £3.50 per hour	Partial cost recovery
Photocopying and microfilm printing	Black and white A4: 10p A3: 20p Microfilm prints: 50p	Partial cost recovery
Sale of old books	Various from 30p	Withdrawn stock is sold to minimise administration and to generate income

Buildings and mobile library

Town library

29. The specially designed central/town library in Halkett Place was opened in 1989. It was designed with expansion and service planning for 15 years and has now served the Island for 20 years. Some of the original equipment and facilities are showing wear and it is important to maintain the quality and style of this flagship public facility in the town centre. Some improvements have been achieved in the last five years by the reallocation and pooling of funds. In particular:

- (1) The carpet on the ground floor has been replaced.
 - (2) The light fittings have been upgraded in the public areas.
 - (3) The public and staff toilet facilities have been renewed.
 - (4) Library counters have been rearranged and combined to make best use of the least wall section.
 - (5) One section of rolling stack has been purchased to increase storage for the local studies section.
30. However, since the reorganisation of responsibility for maintenance within the States, it has been the responsibility of the department to find money to finance additional works within the library. The current minor works allocation for repair and maintenance of £2,000 per annum is insufficient to maintain the premises in accordance with the agreed obligations with Jersey Property Holdings. Overall the library buildings have reached their maximum capacity. There are some significant space and suitability issues in both the town and branch premises.
31. At certain times in the academic year the town centre library is now unable to satisfy the demand for student study spaces although the number of spaces has been increased in recent years. There are limited opportunities for joint and partnership working on life-long learning and other community initiatives/events due to lack of space and meeting rooms.

Les Quennevais branch library

32. As already explained, the branch library is a dual use school and public library. The library was re-opened in 1996 after a two year period of closure in a new purpose built library next to Les Quennevais Secondary School.
33. The maintenance of the building is a responsibility within the school budget funded together with furniture and equipment for the school library.
34. There are outline proposals for refurbishment of parts of Les Quennevais School commencing in 2014. The impact of these changes is not known.

Public mobile library

35. A new mobile library vehicle was purchased in March 2000 and is owned and maintained on a ten year annual lease by Transport and Technical Services. It is hoped that the vehicle will remain serviceable for a further three years but there is a risk of increasing difficulty in sourcing parts.

Employees

36. As at June 2009 the library service had a staff of 31.26 full time employees including one part time secretary, a caretaker and a mobile library driver/assistant and the opportunity for two trainee librarians to be appointed. The following table shows the staff structure:

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number of people</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Chief Librarian	13	1	1
Principal librarian	11	2	2
Senior librarian	10	5	4.48
Principal library assistant	7	6	4.95
Senior library assistant	6	2	1.54
Secretary/admin officer	6	1	0.54
Information assistant	5	5	4.7
Library assistant	4/5	9	7.61
Caretaker	4	1	1
Driver assistant/mobile library	4	1	1
<i>Vacant posts</i>			
<i>Library assistant</i>	4/5	1	0.54
<i>Trainee</i>	6/8	2	2
		<u>36</u>	<u>31.36</u>

SECTION FOUR – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Introduction

37. In this section of the report, I will set out comparisons of the library service's performance with public standards for library service in the United Kingdom and with performance achieved in a number of authorities on the mainland and elsewhere.

Public standards

38. Since 2003, the library service has collected statistics in the standard format of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) national statistics for public libraries. The following table sets out a number of key performance indicators.

No.	Standard	Standard figure	Standard met or exceeded	Jersey figure 2009	Comment
	ENABLING ACCESS				
1	Proportion of households within a specified distance of a static library. Lowest target in UK for sparse county service is 72% within 2 miles	72%	Not met	69%	When supplemented by 31 mobile service points – the target can be regarded as being achieved.
	ADEQUATE OPENING HOURS				
2	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1000 population for all libraries	128	Not met	50.4	To meet the standard would require a doubling of total opening hours – which is not possible with just two sites (one of which is a dual use branch library).
	ENABLING ELECTRONIC ACCESS				
3	Percentage of static service points providing access to electronic information resources connected to the internet	100%	Met	100%	
4	Total number of workstations with access to the intranet and the library catalogue available to users per 10,000 head of population	6 per 10,000 (i.e. 55 for Jersey)	Not met	22	Space constraints prevent major increase in the number of available workstations. However free WIFI access on first floor of the main library supplements the fixed workstations (a

No.	Standard	Standard figure	Standard met or exceeded	Jersey figure 2009	Comment
					further 30-35 can be accommodated). Many users prefer this service as they can use their own equipment.
RESERVATION SERVICE					
5(i)	Percentage of requests for books met within 7 days	50%	Met	60%	
5(ii)	Percentage of requests for books met within 15 days	70%	Met	78%	
5(iii)	Percentage of requests for books met within 30 days	85%	Met	93%	
ENCOURAGING THE USE OF LIBRARIES					
6	Number of visits per 1000 head of population	6300	Not met	5047	
ENSURING USER SATISFACTION					
7	Percentage of adult (16 and over) who view their library service as good or very good (CIPFA survey)	94%	Met	96%	This was the result of the 2007 survey. The standard was also exceeded in the 2005 survey.
8	Percentage of library users under 16 who view their library service as good (CIPFA survey)	87%	Met	87%	Survey conducted in 2008. The standards was also met in previous survey – but with a higher result (2005).
PROVIDING CHOICE IN BOOKS AND MATERIALS					
9	Annual items added through purchase per 1000 head of population	216 (i.e. in Jersey 19,613)	Not met	163	14,378 items were added to stock in 2008. Space constraints limit activity.
10	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available for loan	6.7 years	Not met	9.5	This is calculated by dividing the total stock (140,034) by the items added to stock in a year (14,378 in 2008).

Benchmarks

39. The library service regularly compares its performance with published statistics for similar services in mainland and other authorities. The table below shows the results of this comparison. The average is taken from a collection of authorities including: Southend, Cheshire, Westminster, Manchester, Darlington, Rutland, Slough, Torbay, Isle of Wight, and Guernsey. These authorities were chosen as they display a range of characteristics as

they include city centre areas (with populations living in higher density areas) as well as counties (with more dispersed populations in rural areas), authorities which perform well by comparison with the CIPFA indicators and some which perform less well.

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Guernsey</i>	<i>Jersey</i>	<i>Comment on Jersey's position</i>
Population	213,773	61,800	90,800	
Net expenditure	£4,331,399	£1,043,000	£1,520,342	
Net expenditure per head of population	£19.66	£16.88	£16.74	Below average expenditure by comparison with the average. However, this must be affected by the low number of service points: i.e. the condensed geographical area makes it easier to service the population.
Employee expenditure per 1000 head of population	£12,996	£11,720	£12,638	In view of the lower than average number of employees per 1000 head of population, the fact that employee expenditure is closer to the average cost of staff presumably reflects levels of remuneration in the Island.
Number of employees for 1000 head of population	0.49	0.36	0.34	The lower than average number of employees for 1000 head of population is consistent with the lower than average number of service points.
Number of service points	12	1	3	Low number of service points: but geographical area is condensed and mobile service compensates.
Population per service point	23,349	61,800	30,267	
Net expenditure per 1000 head of population on books and other materials	£2,245	£2,229	£2,251	
Number of items borrowed per 1000 head of population	6,729	4,405	4,721	Below average number of loans per 100 head of population.
Cost per item borrowed	3.27	3.83	3.55	

Number of visits per 1000 head of population	5,990	3,465	4,916	
Cost per visit	3.39	4.87	3.41	
Number of visits per fte	12,735	9,518	14,508	Above average number of visits per employee: suggests that staff are efficiently utilised.

User satisfaction

40. Since 2004, the library service has subscribed to the mainland's public library user surveys which were carried out in 2004 and 2007. The key results from the 2004 and 2007 surveys were as follows:

<i>How do you rate this library?</i>	<i>2004: %</i>	<i>2007: %</i>	<i>Above/below average</i>	<i>UK</i>
Success in finding information		62	Above	
Staff assistance in finding information	94	99	Above	
Staff helpfulness	96	98	Above	
Information and enquiry services	93	96	Above	
Choice of books	85	86	Above	
Provision of seating and tables	77	84	Above	
Hours of opening	72	83	Below	
Computers	86	75	Same	
Overall	96	97	Above	

41. Questions concerning the library were included in the Jersey Annual Social Survey in 2006. The results indicated that over 50% of the community owns a library card, over a quarter of adults use the library service on a monthly basis, and around 53% had used the library at least once in the previous year.

SECTION FIVE – OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

42. In this section of the report, I will set out my observations on the basis of the information that I gathered in the course of the review.

User satisfaction

43. It seems evident from the results of user surveys organised by the library and from comparisons with other authorities that the library’s service is appreciated by a substantial proportion of its users. This suggests that the library’s management have been effective in forecasting demands and seeking to meet them.

44. Quite apart from the meeting the needs of individual users, the library has been successful in forming relationships with other organisations in the Island such as:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Involvement</i>
Family Nursing	Bookstart scheme
HMP La Moye	Provides the Talis system for the Learning and Skills Centre, book purchase at discount prices and an inter-library loans service
Jersey Arts Trust	Joint working on arts and cultural projects
Jersey Family History Forum	Joint promotion
Jersey Dyslexia Association	Co-operation on stock selection
Jersey Heritage Trust	Shared responsibility with Jersey Archive for ‘Thatwasjersey’ local history website
Jersey Institute of Law	Advice on creating the law library and provides the Talis system
Open University	Space for Open Days
Société Jersiaise	Co-operation with Lord Coutanche library on local history and photographic archive
The Bridge	Jelly Clubs

Management effectiveness: cost management

45. It is striking that the library service’s management have consistently gathered statistics about the library’s performance on the basis used by authorities in the United Kingdom and has thus been able on a regular basis to compare performance with equivalent authorities.

46. Whilst expenditure has been constrained within the States' spending limits and increased at a rate lower than general inflation in the Island, the library service has met a large number of the United Kingdom's national standards and has maintained good levels of public satisfaction. It is worth noting that, in spite of the restraint on spending, the expenditure on staff has not increased as a proportion of total spending (i.e. spending has been carefully managed) and the limited budget has been flexed so that scope has been found to carry out some minor works to maintain the premises.

Management leadership

47. The achievement of high levels of user satisfaction, and meeting most UK national standards for libraries at a time of financial pressure are testaments to the high quality of the leadership of the library service. It has been innovative in working with other organisations within the Island, and has taken advantage of new technology. Moreover, the Library Improvement Plan has provided a clear roadmap for future development. The result of excellent leadership of a committed team has been the delivery of good value from a limited budget.

Future challenges

48. Having said this, the library service faces a number of challenges.

Spending restraint

49. It seems clear that the States will attempt to continue to restrain public spending. It also seems clear that the funds available to the library service will be restricted. This may lead to further limitation of the service that can be offered (e.g. by, for example, closure of the branch library) and will place further pressure on the service's ability to meet national standards. This will in turn place further demands upon the library's management to maintain and improve service whilst controlling spending.

Technology

50. The library service has taken advantage of the opportunities created by ICT: partly through increasing efficiency in administration, partly through taking advantage of central services available to libraries on the mainland and partly through the delivery of new

services for users (e.g. on-line reference services such as the Oxford Reference Suite and WIFI services in the town library).

51. However there will be new challenges such as the growing use of e-books which in due course will challenge traditional assumptions about the way in which library services should be provided.

Accommodation

52. The town library serves a useful function in providing a place where people can study. Whilst it may be possible to find solutions within the existing building, they will require funds beyond the scope of the existing budget. This may become a more significant problem if the proposal to close the branch library is implemented and the replacement of the mobile library were seriously questioned.

Building maintenance

53. The town library in Halkett Place opened in 1989 and for many years, required little maintenance. That period is now over and it must be expected that maintenance expenditure will increase if the building is to be maintained in a reasonable condition. This cost will fall on the library's budget which is unlikely to be adequate. As the figures quoted in this report show, in recent years, exceptional maintenance expenditure has been met by reducing other elements of the budget. If maintenance expenditure were to become more significant the quality of the services provided would be at risk and might be affected adversely.

APPENDIX ONE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

App1-1 This review is commissioned in accordance with the powers of the Comptroller & Auditor General as set out in the Public Finance Jersey Law 2005 to take place in the light of:

- (1) the importance accorded by the States to achieving the highest possible value by the expenditure of resources; and
- (2) the importance for the Island of providing library services of the highest practicable quality.

App1-2 The purpose of the review is to examine:

- (1) the nature of the library services provided by the States;
- (2) the resources devoted to the provision of those services;
- (3) the extent to which the States' library service provide services that meet the expectations and requirements of the Island's population;
- (4) the adequacy of the library service's management in terms of testing the population's requirements, and ensuring that the services provided meet expectations;
- (5) the adequacy of the library service's management in taking advantage of cost management techniques developed by cognate services on the mainland; and
- (6) opportunities for further development of the library's services, their efficiency and their cost-effectiveness.