

MODERNISING THE SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Forum of the fundamental review to modernise the Schools Library Service (SLS) as part of the overall Libraries for the 21st Century programme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A fundamental review of the libraries services has been undertaken to ensure that we have a modern library service that is fit for the 21st century. This review has encompassed the Schools Library Service. The review has also taken account of the level of historic subsidy of the service and looked at ways that this could be managed without increasing the costs to schools
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Schools Library Service should be changed, in line with other developments in the Libraries service, in order to make significant cost reductions whilst retaining the key advisory elements of the service.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Members are asked for comments on the proposals and for their advice on ways of progressing the discussion with all schools.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Schools Library Service (SLS) has been operating on a traded basis since 1992. Income from schools has been declining over the last few years. In addition the full costs of the service have not been recovered and there has been a significant subsidy of the service. The overall level of the budget and level of subsidy for 2007/08 is shown in the table below.

Projected Expenditure	£882,000
Projected Income	£663,000
Subsidy	£219,000

- 4.2 Alternative strategies for increasing income to recover the full costs of the service have been considered and rejected. This has included the possibility of increasing the prices to schools. It has been concluded that the most appropriate way forward is to make significant changes to the Schools Library Service in conjunction with the changes in hand to modernise library services in general under the Libraries for the 21st Century programme.

5. Proposed Service Changes

- 5.1 From April 2008, it is proposed that the long-term loan and project service for primary schools will be terminated. This will release the resources of both stock and premises currently necessitated by the warehouse operation at New Barnfield.
- 5.2 SLS will continue to select appropriate stock across all phases and will create a catalogue from which schools can choose materials. This will be held on the SLS website to which all schools have free access. A single copy of each selected title will also be kept on the SLS mobile which will continue to visit those schools wishing to view the stock before purchase. SLS will also continue to produce a free termly newsletter for schools.
- 5.3 Schools will continue to benefit from the discounts offered through the authority's membership of the Central Buying Consortium but schools will be purchasing using their delegated funding and, in future, books will remain in schools rather than being returned to SLS.
- 5.4 SLS offers schools a range of advisory services on a traded basis designed to help achieve a library that supports pupils as independent learners and imaginative readers. It is proposed these services will continue to be offered:
- Stock Audits/Gaps lists: to ensure that resources support the curriculum and encourage reading for pleasure.
 - Staff meetings: to update staff on new resources to support their classroom teaching.
 - Information Literacy sessions: To assess pupils' current skills and develop a progressive approach to independent learning across all year groups.

- Pre-inspection: Support to address issues raised by the Inspection process.
- Self-evaluation Sessions: to support key staff in working through the DfES self-evaluation framework.
- Book Talks: To enthuse pupils to become life-long readers.
- Author/Illustrator events
- Using ICT: Support for developing ICT provision in the library.
- Automation: Assessing the needs of the library in preparation for the automation process.
- Layout and furniture: Advice on planning and developing new library layouts.
- Recruitment and selection support for secondary schools appointing school librarians.

6 Impact for Schools

6.1 In 2006/07 233 primary/special/nursery schools had a contract that included loans. The cost to an average sized school (240 pupils) was £2123 per annum that entitled them to:

- 3 hours of advisory time.
- 210 long term loans.
- 1 project and one fiction pack per class per term.
- 2 mobile library visits.

6.2 Under this proposal schools will be offered:

- 3 hours of advisory time.
- 1 mobile library visit to select items for purchase.

6.3 The mobile library holds a changing exhibition collection of 5000+ books which have been pre-selected by SLS staff to include the best books available to support the curriculum and reading for enjoyment. Schools will also be able to order any children's book not available on the mobile. Books will be offered at a discount off the cover price. All books will be supplied fully serviced and shelf ready. Catalogue records will also be supplied. The cost to schools (irrespective of size) will be approx. £1100, excluding the cost of the books chosen.

7. Financial Impact

7.1 A decision to cease the loan and project service with effect from April 2008 will enable the service to make immediate savings by not filling some currently vacant positions. The impact on the service is expected to be manageable over the remainder of the year. This will give rise to annual savings of some £50,000.

7.2 The full year effect of the cessation of the loan and project service from April 2008 is planned to be £170,000. This would bring expenditure into line with the current estimated income of the service. It is anticipated that £70,000 of this saving will be achieved in 2008-09 and the remaining £100,000 in 2009/-0 as some location moves will be required to obtain the full savings.

- 7.3 CSF has budgeted to meet the projected subsidy until the proposed changes are implemented.
- 7.4 The major assumption in arriving at these figures is that schools will buy into the new Purchase Model in 2008-09. If this does not happen there is a risk that the overall viability of the Schools Library Service will be affected.