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**SUMMER READING CHALLENGE**

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**Purpose of report**

1. This report enables Members to evaluate plans for the Summer Reading Challenge in Cardiff in summer 2015, and to evaluate the performance of the 2014 Summer Reading Challenge.

**Background**

2. The Summer Reading Challenge is a reading promotion for children aged four to 11 that takes place across the UK. It is run annually by The Reading Agency (an independent charity, whose aim is to inspire more people to read more, encourage them to share their enjoyment of reading and celebrate the difference that reading makes to all our lives) through the public library network.
3. Children's reading can 'dip' during the long school summer holidays and the aim of the summer reading challenge is to address this. The target is to get children to read six or more books from the library during the summer holidays. It is free to join and every child who completes the Challenge receives a certificate. Children can read whatever they like - fact books, joke books, picture books, audio books – the requirement is that they are borrowed from the library.

**Summer Reading Challenge 2014**

4. The results below relate to the Summer Reading Challenge 2014 across Wales;
  - Overall participation in Wales was down 0.3% (national average up 2.2%)

- 42,091 children registered to take part at their local library (14% of the 4 to 12 year old child population in Wales). Of these children 44% were boys.
- 25338 children (60%) completed the Challenge by reading six books (national average 58%).
- A further 2,317 under 4-year-olds took part in the Challenge, using the specially produced Early Years material.
- At least 4,418 children joined the library as new members during the Challenge this summer
- Based on the data supplied by 17 out of the 22 participating authorities, we estimate that there were 835,182 children's library issues in Wales over the summer.
- 16 visually impaired children took part using VI resources supplied by RNIB.
- Over 27 young people aged 12 to 24 supported the Challenge through volunteering.

## **Previous Scrutiny**

5. The Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee has considered Library provision in Cardiff at a number of meetings in the 2014/15 work programme. During these meetings members have stressed:

- the closure of a local library would be more than just a loss of access to books. There will be an impact on the local economy, where shops and cafes benefit from the passing trade of those who are visiting the library. Similarly local schools, who direct their pupils to the library for access to the internet or printers, or schedule visits to the library to encourage young people to read, will no longer be able to do so, and could impact on young people reaching their full potential and literacy targets.
- Libraries are far more to local communities than a place to borrow books – they provide a social meeting point for communities, a place for young people to study, to access the internet.

- It seemed unusual to us that some of the most popular libraries in the City are the ones this Council was proposing to cease supporting.

## **Way Forward**

6. Councillor Peter Bradbury (Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise) has been invited and may wish to give a statement. Sarah McGill, Director Communities, Housing and Customer Services), Isabelle Bignall (Assistant Director of Communities and Customer Service) and John Agnew (Corporate Customer Services Manager) will be in attendance and will provide an overview of the 2014 Summer Reading Challenge and targets for 2015.

## **Legal Implications**

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this

report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/ Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

9. The Committee is recommended to give consideration to the information attached to this report and received at this meeting and to submit any recommendations, observations or comments to the Cabinet.

**Marie Rosenthal**  
**County Clerk and Monitoring Officer**  
**8 May 2015**