

**REPORT TO:** COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 8 NOVEMBER 2004

**REPORT ON:** REVIEW OF REFERENCE SERVICE PROVISION IN CENTRAL LIBRARY

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

**REPORT NO:** 736-2004

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Head of Communities seeks the Council's approval to implement changes to the delivery of reference and information services in Central Library highlighted in the review, which will be fully responsive to the needs of the community.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 approves the contents of this report; and
- 2.2 supports implementation of the changes to the Reference Services of the Central Library as detailed in section 6.3.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from these proposals.

## **4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposal will assist in providing equality of access to information across the city.

## **5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The provision of electronic information will reduce the volume of books required to be purchased.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The Central Library provides an extensive range of reference and information services, which are consistently well used, with 799,890 visitors generating 113,538 enquiries during 2003/4.

The introduction of public access computers and the increase in the availability of information through the Internet has influenced the way in which reference services are delivered. Face to face enquiry work is still in demand, and library staff are having to extend their skills to utilise the different formats of sources available.

- 6.2 Surveys undertaken during the past twelve months have confirmed that traditional methods of information delivery need to be reviewed. In response, the Central Library is taking positive action to ensure that new demands are met alongside traditional services. The review highlights the need to continue to develop the following areas:

- provision of paper-based information with the emphasis on publications which individuals are unlikely to purchase due to cost.
- development of digitisation projects, involving the transfer of images of fragile or valuable material onto web pages accessible through the Internet, thus providing world-wide access.

- promotion of the reference, study and information services by means of outreach activities to schools, businesses, other Council departments, local groups and organisations.

6.3 In addition to the continued development of existing practices, the review emphasises the need to ensure that customers have access to the information they require by the most appropriate method available, with the assistance of expert staff. In response to this review, the following actions are proposed:

- review of stock locations within departments to ensure that all subject areas are allocated to the most appropriate collections.
- re-naming of departments to reflect these changes and new signage to ensure that visitors have improved access to services.
- provision of material for lending which has previously been available for reference purposes only, including textbooks and study guides.
- provision of fiction collections in reference departments to 'blur the edges' between traditional services and promote leisure reading.
- maximise resource provision across the City through the purchase of electronic resources, which are then made available through the public access computers.
- highlight of special collections and services such as Health Information, the Pensioners' Enquiry Service and Careers Information.

6.4 The action points outlined in the review will be promoted to other Council Departments and staff to raise general awareness of the comprehensive range of material available in all formats.

6.5 These actions will be regularly evaluated by means of questionnaires and satisfaction surveys, this will inform the process of continuous improvement in the delivery of Reference Services.

## **7 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives (Finance) and (Support Services).

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None

**Signed: Stewart Murdoch**  
**Head of Communities**

**Date: 27 October 2004**