
To
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

3 December 2008

Subject
ICT within Culture Leisure and Libraries

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To report back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the effects of Fees and Charges and the use of ICT within Cultural Services. This report deals with the ICT element.

2 Recommendations

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the current position of the use of ICT within Cultural Services.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 As part of the consideration of the Cultural Services inspection report Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee asked for an update on the effects of the changes to fees and charges and the use of ICT within Culture Leisure and Libraries to be brought back to them around November 2008.
- 3.2 The use of ICT has been summarised below. In overall terms it shows that there have been some difficulties in progressing as quickly as expected but some of the constraints are being overcome.

3.3 PeopleLink Community Information database

Peoplelink is a database available via the internet managed by the Libraries and Information Services as part of their information role and is supported by organisations from across the city and beyond.

Community information is information to help people solve problems in their everyday lives. This may be where to go for debt counselling, what leisure opportunities are available to them, what benefits are available. Community information is varied, continually changing and useful at the point that it is needed.

PeopleLink was developed as a responsive and flexible service to meet these needs i.e., to provide a :

- user friendly information and signposting service to make links between people and appropriate local organisations/services and other information held within and outside libraries.

- system which could easily be updated/maintained and expanded.
- responsive and flexible computerised database to meet the range of needs/enquiries through keyword, area, language and access search capabilities.

PeopleLink Community Information Service has been available on www.opin.org.uk since October 2000, when it received 531 visitor sessions in October 2000. They viewed 1521 pages of information. This has increased to 277,545 visitor sessions in the period April 2007 to March 2008, an average of 760 per day. They viewed 441,275 pages of information an average of 1208 per day.

There are currently 1061 organisations on the PeopleLink database of local organisations – organisations and services in Coventry or who serve Coventry (excludes businesses).

Peoplelink/OPIN is to be relaunched on a new web platform early in 2009 which will further increase its accessibility. It will also link into the new Coventry PCT Health Hub website.

3.4 Public access computers – The People's Network

The People's Network is the public part of the roll-out of Government's National Grid for Learning which also provided access to pc's in schools and ICT training for teachers and library staff. There are 17 libraries, with 200 pc's overall ranging from 4 to 50, depending on the size of library. Current performance is 139,176 hours of pc usage which is 4.86% below the same period last year. This overall drop is due to a number of libraries having faulty pc's which are in the process of being replaced. The public access pc's are generally between 5 and 7 years old while the average lifespan of a pc is 3 years. The other reason for a decline in usage is the increase in the use of IT in other areas such as schools and the increase in laptops connecting to the internet through wifi.

New 'firewall' software to prevent the accessing of inappropriate material is currently being upgraded and new pc's will be ready for installation to commence mid-November 2008.

The plan is to phase installation by one library per week for the smaller libraries, with larger libraries, eg, Central (50 pc's) taking longer. The first two libraries to have installation completed will be Foleshill (by 21 November 2008) and Arena Park (by 12 December 2008). At this stage the timetable is to complete full installation by the end of April 2009. This will have a major impact on performance and it is anticipated that the Service will be able to achieve its annual target by the end of the year given that 10 libraries are either exceeding or meeting their target.

Currently Internet access is not available on the temporary mobile at Allesley Park but this will be resolved during 2008/09 for drop-in access.

3.5 TALIS - Libraries Management Information System

TALIS is the software package which issues all books, CD's, DVD's, Talking books and other media, calculates fines and other charges and provides the database of library holdings – the catalogue. TALIS Ltd is the national leader in providing Library Management Information Systems to both public and academic libraries and Coventry benefits from the partnership which by providing pilot testing of new products achieves significant discount on new packages and software releases. It will also provide the platform for the new web version of Peoplelink (see above). A serious fault has recently occurred on the Management Information Systems (MIS) server and as a result we could not access statistical information. This has been rectified and updates are being run to provide both current and comparative management data.

3.6 Self Service through Radio Frequency ID (RFID) within Libraries

The RFID based system will allow a much simpler self serve option and will allow for other facilities such as book sorting and stock control. Currently this is operational at Bell Green and Earlsdon with Central and Tile Hill to follow by December 2008.

3.7 Cultural Portal

Investigation of developing a cultural portal for city cultural activity and marketing continues. An initial paper for discussion by the Cultural Partnership was agreed in September. Follow up work now in progress and follow up recommendation paper to Cultural Partnership meeting is due in December 2008.

3.8 Coventry Active

Coventry Active is a data base that is available via the internet for providers to indicate what they provide and for people to search for activities. The number of hits on Coventry are on target for this year, 38,000 by quarter 2 (target of 80,000 year end). There are 278 providers on the system. E-mail (mail shoot) to all our members fairly regularly giving them information on club development evenings, coach education programmes, funding streams available, special events information and the odd newsletter.

3.9 Surveys

As part of the work undertaken for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid and the Green Space Strategy, work on events and the libraries opening hours, various surveys have been undertaken using PDAs (Hand helds) and various software such as "Survey Monkey" and "CRT" standpoint.

3.10 Handheld Technology into Parks

Introduction and Overall Aims of the project

The efficiencies to be gained by utilising mobile technology in terms of services being provided are becoming more apparent. The Parks Service intention was to develop a system for effectively recording and monitoring electronic data which utilises hand held technology.

This project aims to ensure :

- Efficient use of staff time in downloading/uploading information.
- Reduction in the need for manual processes.
- Implementation of an effective electronic recording and communication system for the Parks' Mobile Team.
- Effective monitoring of defined service quality standards within the parks.
- An effective problem and incident reporting system.
- Provision of a mechanism for user surveys to be conducted.
- The ability to conduct site quality audits in line with industry expectations and standards.
- Access to the central GIS mobile mapping system in order to tie in specific locations with quality requirements.
- The provision of efficiency savings by effectively co-ordinating and managing processes more effectively.

The hand held technology aims to improve the above. Essentially this will be achieved by introducing the following:

- **Service Level Agreements** - utilising the GIS system.

- **Site Quality Audits** – to meet auditing standards, utilising a development of existing software.
- **User Surveys** – short questionnaires to obtain feedback from customers. To be fed back into a database for analysis.
- **Mobile Technology** – hand held devices to access the above services and others whilst on the move.

Due to a number of reasons the roll out of the hand helds has been delayed. This is mainly due to various technical expertise having left the City Council.

There have also been technical difficulties, which has meant that we have been unable to progress the management functionality of the reporting facility of the various quality performance reports. The problems are gradually being resolved.

The use of this technology will also feed into the joint review of Grounds Maintenance with Culture, Leisure and Libraries, City Services and Coventry Direct.

3.11 Income Monitoring

Work on income monitoring with managers is now provided with monthly reports on the amount of income received and supplied with the profile of income for the previous year. Also the identification of the need for more robust collection of activity data has been recognised. This will then be expanded further to supply, where possible, an auto chart for a manager, eg Allesley Park, golf income chart, showing :

- year to date versus last year.
- year to date versus profiled budget (income).
- percentage budget achieved to date.
- comments regarding seasons/weather/activity to be inserted by manager.

Thereby supplying better management information.

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