

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

7 July 2015

Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities

REPORT ON THE REMOTE eBook LENDING PILOTS

1. Purpose of report:

To inform the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities of the Report on the Remote eBook Lending Pilots and Derbyshire Libraries role as one of the pilot authorities.

2. Information and analysis:

- 2.1 In April 2013 William Sieghart published 'An independent review of e-lending in public libraries in England' for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The review examined the tensions between the book publishing industry and the growth in eLending services by English public libraries. In order to test the impact of eLending on library users, library services and the commercial sector the report recommended creating a pilot which would test different business models and users behaviours into eBook lending and buying. Four library authorities were chosen as pilot authorities; Derbyshire, Newcastle, Peterborough and Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 2.2 The pilot ran from March 2014 for 12 months and each authority was given access to 893 adult fiction eBooks, these titles were not available to any of other English public libraries. The selected authorities were required to submit performance data on eLending, library visits and issues throughout the year and library users were consulted at the end of the pilot.
- 2.3 The key findings from the overall report found that:
 - eLending did attract new users to the library service
 - 74% of users surveyed thought that eLending was a "great new development"
 - Users most enjoyed the ability to browse and borrow books remotely
 - Remote e-lending users were more affluent and older than the average library user but less likely to visit the library

- Remote e-lending users reported purchasing nearly twice as many e-books as other library users, but 20% fewer new print titles
- 45% of remote e-lending users reported that their purchasing of new printed books had decreased (compared to 27% of other library users)
- Going forward, around half of users commented that if more titles are made available for e-lending, they would buy fewer titles

Concerns still remain in the publishing and bookselling industries about eLending and the possible impact on book buying by users.

- 2.4 The findings broadly mirror anecdotal and statistical evidence collected by Derbyshire libraries, but analysis of Derbyshire's eBook users demonstrates that although there is a peak of users aged between 65-70, there is another peak of users in the early teens age range, which is a contrast to the pilot findings.
- 2.5 Derbyshire had the highest number of new users joining the eBook service and the highest number of clicks on the "buy" button than the other 3 authorities. One of the concerns of the pilot authorities was the impact of the removal of the 893 eBook pilot titles. However, as the authority with the most established eBook service, the pilot collection only constituted 9% of the entire catalogue, and therefore the impact will be mitigated by the size of the remaining collection. This is different to the other authorities where the pilot books accounted for over a third of their entire eBooks catalogues.
- 2.6 Since the pilot four key publishers are now allowing libraries to purchase some or all of their eBook titles for eLending. However, there are still some publishers who have yet to make a full commitment to eLending for public libraries, which means that some key titles and authors will still not be available as eBooks for library users. The pilot was also unable to address the issue of the compatibility of Amazon Kindle with the library eBook service. However, the pilot results did indicate that the popularity of the Kindle eReader may be declining which may diminish the impact this has upon readers using eLending services. Derbyshire Libraries will continue to develop its eLending services as new titles are released and will promote access to all electronic resources with an ongoing programme of public workshops.

3. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: the prevention of crime and disorder, equality, environmental, health, human resources and property considerations.

4. Background papers:

Cabinet Member Portfolio 08/04/2013 Item 8 Independent Review of e-lending in Public Libraries in England

5. Key Decision:

No

6. Call-In:

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

7. Officer's recommendations:

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities notes the report.

**David Lowe
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Health and Communities**