

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage & Libraries	24/11/2014
Subject: Barbican and Community Libraries Customer Survey	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Information
Summary	
<p>In February 2014, two in-depth surveys of the stock and services offered to adults and children by Barbican and Community Libraries were carried out. Responses were received from 1588 adults and 228 children. Questions about staff, stock and services had optional comments fields and all customers were asked to give general comments and suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>97% of customers said that overall, they were satisfied with the libraries, with each library individually rated at this level. This is a clear endorsement of the work plans currently in place.</p> <p>Responses and comments to both surveys have been analysed by professional staff, a programme of work has been put into place to address concerns and feedback has been given to library customers.</p> <p>Customers at Barbican Library expressed a desire for longer opening hours. Staff will try to address this early next year when the Library's first generation self-service machines have been replaced by high specification machines capable of processing issues, returns renewals and taking cash, note and chip & PIN payments.</p> <p>Customers at Shoe Lane Library also expressed a wish for opening later in the evening and better signposting from the street. We are currently looking at a number of future options for Shoe Lane Library, one of which is a major change to opening hours. Better signposting will be addressed when decisions regarding the future of the library have been made.</p> <p>The lack of external signposting at Artizan Street Library was a major theme but has now been addressed.</p> <p>Compliments regarding staff and the service accounted for 45% of all the general comments and suggestions received.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The City's library service has always regularly surveyed customer opinion in order to inform service change. In past years, this has been done via the CIPFA administered Public Library Users Survey (PLUS). However, concerns about the PLUS survey costs and the relevance of some of the questions has

led many library services to look for alternatives and currently, only 50% of libraries in the England and Wales are still using PLUS.

2. A team of professional library staff and the Head of Barbican & Community Libraries was established in 2013 to build two relevant surveys, one for adult library members and one for children aged 13 years and under. The PLUS questionnaire was used as a base as some of the questions are still highly relevant. The team then looked at what was missing from this survey and tailored questionnaires were created using Survey Monkey software.
3. It was decided early in the process that we would direct as many people as possible to taking the surveys online and so posters with QR codes were produced to link customers directly to the Survey Monkey website. However, it was decided that making the surveys digital only would exclude a large number of customers and so paper versions were printed.
4. Good use was made of volunteers. At Barbican Library, the adult paper survey was handed out to customers by the Library's volunteer group, The Friends of Barbican Library. In the past, agency staff were employed to do this. They also greatly aided staff with inputting all the data from the paper surveys into Survey Monkey which automatically processed the results. In this way, we calculated that the Friends saved the libraries more than £3,000 in staff costs and survey administration fees.
5. Questions covered library stock and services, what they did in the library that day and how using the City's lending libraries impacted on other areas of their lives. Equalities and demographic data was also collected and participants were asked to give an overall satisfaction score.

Current Position

Adult Survey results

6. 45% of respondents were Barbican Library customers, 38% used Shoe Lane Library and 17% used Artizan Street Library and Community Centre. At Barbican and Shoe Lane Libraries, the majority of people responding were male (64% and 52% respectively). More women than men responded at Artizan St (54%). City workers accounted for the majority of responses at all libraries. This is consistent with membership statistics.
7. A number of comments regarding fines and charges were received, i.e. "this should be free", "make this cheaper" etc. Our fines and charges were revised in April this year following considerable research covering all the London boroughs and we are confident that they are average in comparison with other London libraries. The lending libraries have a current income target of £235,000 and so reducing fines and charges is not a realistic option. However, in future, more emphasis will be placed on telling customers how library income is used.
8. Respondents were asked their opinion about library opening hours, external signposting, the attractiveness of the library inside and the standard of customer care received. The following table shows the percentage of respondents scoring the answers "Very Good" Or "Good".

	Opening hours	External signposting	Attractiveness of the library inside	Standard of customer care received.
Barbican	86%	68%	87%	96%
Shoe Lane	81%	64%	86%	96%
Artizan Street	91%	56%	87%	94%

9. The majority of comments received were in favour of longer opening hours at Barbican Library with opening on Friday afternoon being the most popular suggestion. We are currently installing new self-service machines in Barbican Library and when they are in place and being used (we have a promotion plan in place), we can reconsider opening on Friday afternoons with a skeleton staff.
10. Signposting to the library within the Barbican Centre is poor and this is being progressed with the Centre. Signposting in the Shoe Lane area is not as bad but the entrance to the library is not eye-catching. We are considering ways to improve this. Street signposting at Artizan Street was installed following the survey and customer complaints about not being able to find the library have fallen.
11. Staff knowledge, skills and approachability were tested and all three libraries scored very highly.

	Staff knowledge	Staff skills	Staff approachability
Barbican	97%	97%	97%
Shoe Lane	99%	99%	96%
Artizan Street	96%	97%	92%

12. We will continue with our current staff training and development programme.
13. We asked customers how satisfied they were with the choice and physical condition of fiction and non-fiction books.

	Fiction		Non-fiction	
	Choice	Condition	Choice	Condition
Barbican	74%	75%	82%	85%
Shoe Lane	83%	85%	79%	83%
Artizan Street	75%	86%	64%	73%

14. All Librarians have a programme of stock maintenance to complete including replacing shabby stock and plugging stock gaps. Space considerations at Artizan Street Library affect the range of stock from which customers can choose. A programme of stock swaps with Shoe Lane Library is now in place in order to refresh the stock regularly.

15. We asked customers to give their opinion on the DVD and CD collections in all libraries. Nearly 50% of customers told us they did not borrow DVDs or CDs.

	DVDs		CDs	
	Choice	Condition	Choice	Condition
Barbican	93%	82%	93%	93%
Shoe Lane	96%	95%	91%	96%
Artizan Street	91%	93%	87%	84%

16. Satisfaction among users of the collections is generally high and again, a programme of stock swaps with Shoe Lane Library is now in place at Artizan Street Library.
17. We asked customers to give their opinion on the Talking Book collections in all libraries. Nearly 75% of customers told us they did not borrow Talking Books. Of those that do, satisfaction with the choice available and the physical condition of stock is high and we shall continue to buy and maintain stock as normal.

	Talking Books	
	Choice	Condition
Barbican	90%	89%
Shoe Lane	95%	94%
Artizan Street	90%	95%

18. We asked customers to give their opinion on the City's eBook and eAudio offering. 92% of customers told us they did not borrow eBooks for a number of different reasons. Exactly the same percentage of respondents told us they did not borrow eAudio books.

	eBooks	eAudio
I'm not interested	42%	60%
I didn't know I could borrow them	21%	17%
I don't own a compatible eReader	45%	27%
I don't like the selection available	2%	2%

19. There were two main themes to the comments received from customers: either they have no intention of ever using eBooks/eAudio or that these are services they definitely intend to use in the future.
20. Since this survey, we have been heavily marketing the eBook and eAudio services. Instruction sheets for all compatible eReaders/tablets have been produced along with YouTube films giving instructions on how to get started. Additionally, several open sessions in libraries have been held for members of the public to show them how easy it is to download materials. Additionally, a

session for City of London staff was held in The Gild. Library staff have also been fully trained so that they can promote these services confidently.

21. Customers were asked how using the libraries had helped them with other aspects of their lives. They were given a number of options to consider and could choose more than one. 1206 people responded to this question.

Leisure	63%
Study/learning	55%
Health & Wellbeing	33%
Skills for life	15%
Your job	13%
Meeting people	13%
Family and relationships	12%
Developing IT skills	10%
Personal finance/consumer matters	8%
Your retirement	8%
Job seeking	7%
Improving your English	6%
Welfare/benefits	1%

22. The information collected here is particularly helpful for future strategic planning and working with partners, for example, the City's Health and Wellbeing Board and partners in Adult Social Care who now part-fund areas of health stock.

Children's Survey results

23. Most of the survey responses came from Barbican Library (73%). 23% came from Shoe Lane and 6% from Artizan Street Library.
24. Staff at Artizan Street Library struggled to get sufficient responses from children/parents and so unfortunately, their results cannot be considered as accurate due to the very low number of respondents. Since the survey took place, children's work at Artizan Street has grown considerably with regular Stay and Play sessions now taking place. Read to Succeed, the Barbican and Community Libraries literacy support scheme and the Summer Reading Challenge is also successfully operating from Artizan Street Library and the numbers of children using the library is growing steadily.
25. Overall, 54% of respondents were girls and 46% boys.
26. 59% were aged under five (83% of Shoe Lane's respondents were under 5), 31% were 5 – 10 years old and 9% were aged 11 – 14 years old.
27. 100% of all respondents thought the library they used was "Good" or "Very Good".

28. Children were asked to say why they came to the library. They could choose to select more than one reason.

	Barbican	Shoe Lane
Borrow books or other items	77%	58%
Have Fun	68%	85%
Look around (browse)	50%	27%
Read	62%	50%
Attend an event	54%	73%
Meet friends	42%	54%
Do homework	15%	10%
Use the computers	11%	8%
Wait for my family/friends	6%	13%

29. Answers reflected the age profile of library users with the Shoe Lane under 5s choosing “Have fun” and “attend an event” as their most popular reasons for coming to the library. It is encouraging to note that children in both libraries like coming to the library and “having fun” was scored highly in both places.
30. Children scored library staff as being very friendly and helpful in all libraries (100% for both categories at Shoe Lane).
31. We asked the children to tell us why they borrow books and allowed them to select more than one answer. Again, the large numbers of under-fives using the children’s library at Shoe Lane library meant that answers were different for both libraries.

	Barbican	Shoe Lane
I like reading	75%	59%
I want to get better at reading	44%	24%
So somebody else can read them to me	54%	65%
I am in a reading group	10%	0%
For homework	12%	13%
I want to find something out	33%	24%
So I don’t have to buy books	39%	39%
I don’t borrow books	2%	13%

32. The answers we received from children/parents consolidate our knowledge about library use and inform stock purchasing decisions for both libraries.
33. 100% of Library users thought that overall, the choice of books in both libraries was very good or good.

34. We asked the children about the library computers. In the case of both libraries, children thought the computers were good but most said they did not use them. The most common reasons given for non-use were because they had a computer at home or because they are too young. There is no specific provision for children at Artizan Street or Shoe Lane Libraries but children can use the public computers with supervision. We shall continue to offer a small facility for children at Barbican Children's Library but these responses give us no reason to increase provision.
35. We asked the children about their school homework and the homework help available in the libraries. Again, due to the Shoe Lane age profile, this question was most relevant to Barbican Library customers. Of those who have homework, having somewhere quiet to sit and study was highly valued, closely followed by "There are books to help me". 100% of those who ask for homework help in the library thought it was very good or good.
36. We asked children about other reasons for visiting the libraries and the most popular answer given was to take part in an Under Fives event. This was followed by taking part in holiday activities and reading activities. Saturday events and activities are popular at Barbican Library. This is an endorsement for the Libraries' events programme which will continue to develop.
37. Finally, more than 99% of children/parents thought that the Libraries were friendly and safe places. More than 95% of respondent thought they were easy to get to, bright and cheerful and places with items and activities of interest. More than 92% thought the opening hours were good. We are currently looking to see if we can improve opening hours for customers.

Proposals

38. Overall, responses received for both surveys endorse the services offered by the lending libraries. Requests for certain types of stock are being considered within the confines of the existing stock budgets. Promotional activity, for example to advertise the eBook service, has been funded from existing budgets. For services to children and families, this budget includes a grant from the Family and Young People's team within the Department of Community and Children's Services to carry out a range of Children's Centre services in libraries.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

39. Improvement work is relevant to the following of the City's Key priorities:
 - KPP2: Maintaining the quality of our public services whilst reducing our expenditure and improving our efficiency.
 - KPP4: Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities.
 - KPP5: Increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation.
40. It is also relevant to the Strategic Aims of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries:

- To refocus our services with more community engagement and partnership with others.
 - To transform the sense of the City as a destination.
 - Continue to use technology to improve customer service and increase efficiency.
 - To further develop the City's contribution to the life of London as a whole.
41. The Key Improvement Objectives and performance indicators for Barbican and Community Libraries are:
- CHL7 Consolidate and extend partnership working to improve the range and quality of services offered by Barbican & Community Libraries. KPI Minimum of 20 partnership projects/services delivered by 31 March 2015.
 - CHL8 To build on our e-strategy for books and e-commerce. KPI 6000 e-loans/downloads by 31 March 2015.

Implications

42. There are no financial, legal, property or HR implications of note and risk is low.

Conclusion

43. A regular survey of customer opinion is essential to the continued relevance of Barbican and Community Libraries. Current workplans are endorsed by these surveys. Improvement suggestions have been considered and wherever possible, implemented within the confines of existing budgets.

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