

Cambridgeshire Libraries, Archives & Information Service

Cambridge Central Library

Library Profile 2006/07

September, 2007

Foreword

For several years Cambridgeshire's library service has been developing the information it provides about the development and performance of its libraries. In a spirit of open and pro-active provision of information about the service, for the last few years a series of library profiles and other information sources has been made available in both paper and electronic formats.

The library profile is intended to give a rounded view of how each library in the service is performing in relation to others of a similar size within the authority; it is designed to provide contextual information about the library - for example access, local age profile, issue figures; and it investigates the learning, promotional and other activities in which the library has been engaged

This library profile is a core element in a three-part plan to enable library customers and staff to be better informed about their library. A series of library information posters is displayed in every library - giving snapshot information on performance and other activities, and during the course of the last few years a programme of Library Development events has been rolled out. Using the library profile as the basis for engagement, these events enable library staff and managers to talk to local people, councillors and others about their library, its progress and its future. Findings from the events have been used to inform the service's ongoing planning processes, and progress against the actions identified is now displayed in each library.

If you would like to make any comments or enquiries about your library profile please contact

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Library Profile

CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL LIBRARY 2006/07

Note: This profile represents a snapshot of the library during the year 2006/07. The profile is updated annually. Please check our website for up-to-date information (www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library)

A Summary Of Cambridge Central Library

“Cambridge Central” is a large, busy library offering a wide range of services, both on its own account and in partnership with other agencies. It occupies an excellent, accessible position in the city centre from which it serves the local population, the wider city and, through its networked and specialist services, the county of Cambridgeshire as a whole. The Library closed in January 2007 for a major refurbishment and will reopen in Spring 2008. The new Library will occupy essentially the same site, but will be part of the 450,000 sq ft Grand Arcade shopping centre.

An Extended View Of Cambridge Central Library

1. Accommodation

The Central Library occupies a prime position in a shopping development in the middle of Cambridge. At 4,500 sq metres, it is a large library for the size of the community it serves, and it has had the capacity to accommodate partner organisations and develop Learning services in a substantial way.

The Central Library has an entrance at ground floor level in the Lion Yard shopping centre, and services on the three floors above.

The accommodation at the Central Library is committed to the following functions: the Lending Library (including the Children’s Library) the Reference and Information Service, Connexions services for young people and adults, the Learning Centre, the Cambridgeshire Collection (public area and environmentally controlled store) the Reference Library store, the Postal Tape Service, the Café, office accommodation, staff facilities.

The library closed for extensive redevelopment during January 2007 and is due to reopen in Spring 2008.

2. Opening hours

This library opens for **58.5** hours a week:

Monday	9.00-7.00
Tuesday	9.00-7.00
Wednesday	9.00-7.00
Thursday	9.00-7.00
Friday	9.00-7.00
Saturday	9.00-5.30

3. Accessibility

CAR PARK – Nearest public car park is Lion Yard, multi-storey and currently much reduced in capacity.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – Bus Station in Drummer St; Bus Stops in Emmanuel St and St Andrew's St (including all four Park and Ride stops), approx 400 yards; taxi rank approx 100 yards; Railway Station 1 mile.

PUBLIC TOILET – No, nearest 10 yards in Lion Yard, recently refurbished and with RADAR key toilet allowing disabled access.

EASE OF ACCESS – fully accessible for all, two lifts to all three floors and stairs

4. IT equipment

Number of People's Network and other computers	PN-Adult	PN-Children's	Office	Short Stay(15 mins)	Learning Centre	Library Catalogue only	Local Studies – CD ROMs	Total
	48 (6 Audio-enabled on 1 st Floor)	7	8	1	24	4	1	93

5. Activities

Cambridge Central Library Learning Centre

The Learning Centre has been based at the Central Library on the third floor of the building since Spring 2000. It has 15 computers in the main area of learning and 9 in the 'examination/one to one training' section, making a total of 24. A total of 5 scanners are incorporated into both sections for client use or for training purposes.

Funding was secured for the start of the new academic year (2006/7) to enable us to continue providing Learndirect courses for at least a further two years. We were also successful in keeping our IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance) contract to provide Information and Advice to our customers. The centre continues to thrive with an additional part time member of staff being recruited to assist with learner support and administration.

With the closure of Central, the Learning Centre relocated to Arbury Court Library Learning Centre with two full time members of staff to service the 9 computers available. To offer more learning in the city, we opened a small learning centre at Rock Road Library with 6 computers, a colour printer and scanner, supported by a full time and a part time tutor.

All of our learners continue to support our centres despite this move, although recruiting new learners at Rock Road has been a challenge. We have promoted the new service to the local area as well as the local schools. We have attended Unison days and local events with leaflets and flyers. We are slowly gathering new learners for Rock Road.

Arbury Court however, after a slow start, is now gathering pace and attracting a large number of skills for life learners who are achieving their National Tests in Literacy & Numeracy.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COLLECTION

During the year, in addition to our individual users, the Collection was visited by two groups of students from Anglia Ruskin University who were shown how to use the variety of materials available; a group of travellers working with the Ormiston Trust researching the history of travellers in the county; and members of the Wimblington History Society who enjoyed an after-hours tour and research session.

Members of the Local Studies Team were involved in organising and delivering the Children's Archaeology Day in the Central Library.

Exhibitions promoting the Cambridgeshire Collection included "America in Cambridge 1941-1946" which was also displayed at the American Cemetery, Madingley, and one showing volumes held in the Arthur Rackham collection. A display was also taken to Haslingfield for the Local History Council's A.G.M.

Talks on the work of the Collection were given to a variety of groups in Bourn, Cambridge, Ely, Haddenham, March, and Prickwillow.

Members of the Local Studies Team were also involved in planning and providing information for the forthcoming 800th anniversary of the Mayoralty in Cambridge, in 2007.

Throughout the year the work of the Collection was acknowledged in more than 50 publications.

Friends groups

At the AGM in November 2006, the decision was taken to suspend the Friends Group during the closure of the Central Library with a view to reforming it when the new Library reopened. Members were informed accordingly.

During the course of the year, the Friends helped to fund a Gladiator at the Children's Archaeology Day in July.

Reading groups

The Library supports 8 thriving reading Groups

Exhibitions/displays

Cambridge Central Library has a large Exhibition Area on the First Floor which is available for public use for a fee. This is extremely popular and gets booked up a long time in advance. In addition, the Library also plays host to exhibitions about major County and District Council initiatives, including those that outline future plans.

Although it is expected that this area of activity will grow in the new Library, concrete plans for a designated area are not yet available.

In July the Library held the *VI Form Schools' Art Show exhibition*, with works by young people from Cambridge Schools. The theme this year was Portraiture and the Human Figure and the event was organised in partnership with NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies)

Streetscape Consultation (alterations to some City Centre facilities) exhibition ran from 26th June –19th July with several staffed consultation sessions.

Images of Ageing –photographic exhibition, part of Cambridge Celebrates Age, in partnership with Age Concern, Cope, Cambridge City Council and the local Primary Care Trust, from 21st August –2nd September

Exhibition on conserving water resources, mounted by Cambridge Water, September

Exhibition by the National Childbirth Trust 11-30th September

Special promotions

The Library hosted the Grand Arcade model and exhibition, in partnership with Grosvenor, at various dates throughout the year.

Connexions held a Job Shop on September 27th
Read, Surf, Learn was launched in the Library on 9th October.

Library Development Open Day was held on 30th October

The Library was very proud to host Andrew Motion, the Poet Laureate, on November 30th. Andrew gave a workshop for local teachers on how to write poetry.

Card Aid was in the Library from 5th October until 23rd December

As the Library was preparing for closure, management took the decision not to undertake major events in the Library after October 2006. However, this area of activity is expected to be extremely important in the new Library.

Children's activities

Every Saturday, Story Time and Baby Rhyme Time are held in the Library. There are also regular visits to the Library by local schools arranged by the Children's Team.

Cambridge *Wordfest*. Once again, the Library hosted the events day for children on April 22nd as part of the Cambridge *Wordfest*. Ian Beck and Knife and Packer enthralled younger children, while Sue Limb entertained a teenage audience.

Children's Archaeology Day, July 15th: On the Archaeology Day, children and parents had the opportunity to try out various exciting activities such as making Celtic pots, processing finds, mosaic making, meeting a Romano-British family and a Roman Centurion and eating authentic Iron Age food. The special guest was Carezza Lewis from the television programme Time Team

During the Summer Holidays, Cambridge Central Library took part in the Reading Mission and this year saw a 50 % increase in participation, with 138 children registering and 79 completing six books.

In December, the Children's team organised craft events every Saturday before Christmas. This was a kind of "farewell" before the Library closed for refurbishment.

The Children's Reading Group continues to meet in the library on the 2nd Wednesday of the month during term time between 4 and 5 p.m.

Partnerships

The Central Library's major relationship is with Connexions, which occupies a significant space in the building and offers its information service in partnership with the library's enquiry staff.

There are also partnership arrangements with "Nextstep", the Community Legal Service and Cambridgeshire Catering Services.

The Library continued to take part in "Enquire": 24/7 live online chat with a librarian. This is a national libraries collaboration sponsored by MLA.

The Central Library was part of the pilot scheme along with leisure services to introduce a new Citizens' Smartcard.

Surgeries

The library hosts surgeries and consultations on a regular basis, provided by voluntary and statutory organisations, and agencies of national and local government.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau operated a fortnightly surgery for part of the year as part of the Income Maximisation Project (to encourage the take up of state benefits). This ceased when funding ran out.

The Community police force continued to hold a monthly surgery supplemented by a Police Community Post Box. The Library is also a partner for Open Out, the anti hate crime initiative.

In July, the Library service introduced a new Library Management System. Based on Windows it has increased the efficiency of the service and the On-Line catalogue, I-Bistro, is much more flexible and user-friendly.

Library Users And The Local Community

1. Active/regular users

- Number of borrowers registered at this library: 80461
- Number of borrowers with one or more items on loan: 4953
- Number of “active” borrowers at this library (those who have borrowed within last 12 months): 32309

2. Membership – new members during 2006/07

Average new members per month	552
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A

3. Visits

	Visits		
	2005/06	2006/07	%+/-
This Library	586125	413881	-29%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

	Visits per open hour		
	2005/06	2006/07	%+/-
This Library	193	163	-16%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

4. Long term trend in visits

	% change over 5 years
This Library	-43%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A

5. Customer age profile

This table shows the age breakdown of library customers who participated in recent in-library surveys.

Age Group	Library Customers (from PLUS surveys)
	% of Library Customers
0-4	17.1%
5-9	9.9%
10-14	4.5%
15-19	4.2%
20-24	7.6%
25-34	13.2%
35-44	10.9%
45-54	10.9%
55-64	8.9%
65-74	8.7%
75 or over	4.0%

6. Library Users Feedback

This Information is compiled from the Adult PLUS Survey, taken in September 2006

What do you think Of:

	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Opening Hours	43.0%	44.4%	10.9%	1.7%	0.0%
Staff Helpfulness	57.7%	33.2%	8.2%	0.9%	0.0%
Choice of Books	22.0%	46.6%	24.0%	5.6%	1.8%
Condition of Books	17.6%	54.9%	23.1%	3.7%	0.6%
This Library Overall	34.5%	51.4%	12.5%	1.6%	0.0%

Stock And Issue Figures

1. Stock holding

2006/07	At this library	Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire
Adult books	62630	N/A
Junior books	13508	N/A
Reference books	82935	N/A
Total:	159073	N/A

2. No. of books borrowed

	Books borrowed		
	2005/6	2006/07	% +/-
This Library	439406	352552	-25%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

3. Books Borrowed per Hour Open

	Books borrowed per hour open		
	2005/06	2006/07	% +/-
This Library	144	139	-3%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

4. Junior books Borrowed As a Percentage Of Total

	Junior books borrowed as a % of total		
	2005/06	2006/07	% +/-
This Library	25	26	-1%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

5. Long term trend in book issues

	% change over 5 years
This Library	-19
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A

Enquiries

	2005/06	2006/07	%+/-
This Library	52988	42302	-20%
Average for this level of library in Cambridgeshire	N/A	N/A	

Note: These enquiries are in-person queries received across the library counter. They do not include telephone enquiries, which are directed to Cambridgeshire County Council's central Contact Centre.

Library Supervisors' Comments'

The facilities offered by Cambridge Central Library are greatly appreciated by its customers, as formal and informal feedback confirm. In particular its specialist services are valued, and incorporating these unique aspects of provision in the new Central Library will assume a high priority in the planning and design process.

Customer Services Manager / Area Managers' Comments

The location and size of the Central Library place it in a very favourable position to serve the needs of its community. Over the last year, both issues and visitors are slightly down, but this is almost certainly due to the upheaval in the town centre caused by the redevelopment of the Grand Arcade and the reduction in city centre parking due to the reduction in area of the Lion Yard Car Park. However, the increased response to the summer Reading Mission and the consistent popularity of computer usage are both encouraging developments.

The Library closed on January 27th and is due to reopen in Spring 2008. The new Library will have state of the art equipment and will reflect the needs of the 21st century customer.

During the period of closure, every attempt has been made to offer as professional an alternative service as possible. Opening hours have been extended in 4 of the City Branches and Bar Hill Library and staff from Cambridge Central deployed to make this possible. The specialist services offered by the Central Library, such as the Learning Centre, the Cambridgeshire Collection and the Professional Enquiry Service continue to be available. Learning Centre services have been increased at Rock Road and Arbury Court Libraries, with Milton Road Library providing a temporary home for the Cambridgeshire Collection. Periodicals can be viewed at Rock Road library and the Information team are operating the enquiry service from Library HQ at the Roger Ascham site. Milton Road Library is now open on

Sundays between 12 and 4; this brings the total of opening hours at this branch to 63.

This has been a turbulent year for the Central Library. The introduction of a new operational computer system and customer interface, the pilot scheme for the Smartcard and the prospect of the closure and introduction of the devolved service, have all spelt upheaval for both staff and customers. However, the prospect of the new Central Library is hugely exciting and should provide a wonderful facility for all the citizens of Cambridge.