

Solihull Library Strategy – 2009/12

Mission statement;

Our mission is to ‘inspire, enrich, improve, enjoy, and create a sense of place’

Introduction

The Public libraries and Museums Act 1964, requires all 151 authorities in the UK to provide a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ public library service. The terms *comprehensive* and *efficient* are not defined by the Act and have therefore been open to local interpretation. However, the act does require library authorities to provide free access to everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough to books, and information.

Although half the population in the UK use libraries and 288 million use the Internet, reading and books remains a core part of library service provision.

An analysis of key performance data highlights the following;

- Visits, issues and enquiries in libraries are declining nationally however Solihull visitor figures remain relatively stable.
- Online use of libraries is increasing
- The Central library undertakes approximately 50% of all issue and visitor figures

People generally have busier lives and are time poor therefore electronic access to information is required.

Opportunities to purchase cheaper books in supermarkets, use of the Internet to download information, music and the introduction of the e-books are challenging the traditional role of the library service.

Clearly the library service needs to redefine its role, so it is fit for the future and can meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. Libraries play a pivotal role in neighbourhoods to meet the information, leisure, learning and cultural needs of communities and individuals and play a supporting and developing role.

The *Vision* for libraries must address these trends and address the needs of local communities and reflect national and regional agendas.

The major challenge to libraries is to ensure customers know about the range of services that are on offer and widen participation.

Without a doubt the library service faces a challenging agenda to deliver a quality library service whilst providing value for money and deliver improved outcomes for local people.

The last Solihull Public libraries CIPFA customer satisfaction survey in 2006 demonstrated a high level of customer satisfaction; placing Solihull in the upper quartile compared with other Metropolitan boroughs at 93 %. The

library service already delivers a wide range of services in partnership with a number of internal and external organisations to deliver; lifelong learning, access to books, reading, information, and cultural experiences, but are we need to ensure that we are able to meet the future needs of communities.

Solihull Libraries

VISION:

Our Libraries will provide:

An equalising force in the community:

- Equal access to information and learning resources for all
- Promoting aspiration and supporting self-improvement
- Ensuring digital inclusion
- Increasing literacy, media literacy and skills for life
- Actively support diversity
- Promoting individual and community well-being and prosperity

Centres for Lifelong learning

- From under-5s to family & inter-generational learning and older people
- Resources to support both National Curriculum and adult learning
- Homework clubs, study support and online homework help
- Learning Shops offering specialist IAG and learning opportunities

Cultural hubs in the heart of local communities:

- offer a universal offer of free membership
- Local access to all levels of the written and spoken word
- Heritage activities and resources, preserving and promoting “community memory”
- Information about arts and leisure events, groups and opportunities
- Arts activities in libraries, and resources for community performing-arts

Centres of community life and development

- Attractive, vibrant and flexible spaces
- Reach the vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Local focal point for information by, for and about the local community
- Promoting informed and active citizenship
- Heritage services promoting community pride, identity and cohesion
- Social hubs where people meet and interact
- Community venues for Council, community and Third Sector activity

Optimised access

- Community-based services that don't require time, travel, expense or childcare to access

- Long opening hours including evenings and weekends
- Extending access through increasing range of virtual services available 24/7
- Joined up integrated services, co-located with other service providers

The Museums, libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has stated, that the best library service in the future will be; well integrated with other local services, meet local needs, broaden access to information and resources, be innovative, use new technology to meet needs more effectively, and to deliver information and learning.

The implementation of the *Vision* will ensure Solihull delivers the best service described. Locally the library service will play a key role in narrowing the gap of inequalities and improve the quality of life.

In order to implement the vision it is necessary to realign resources and to develop new ways of working in partnership with local communities and other organisations.

The library 'offers'

Technology and innovation

- Peoples network PC's
- WIFI
- Digital media and environment
- Web 2.0 technology

Books and reading

- Improve levels of literacy and help get people into work or higher education
- Provide Bibliotherapy and support healthier communities
- Help raise educational attainment through supporting learning outside of school hours
- Effective marketing to raise awareness of the *core* library offers

Staff

- Offer skills and expertise
- Facilitate and nurture effective partnership working
- Support Volunteers and offer volunteering opportunities

Lifelong learning

- Provide a gateway to learning opportunities
- Support economic development and regeneration
- Offer Skills for life
- Offer quality study facilities

Contribution to the social and economic benefits of culture and sport

- Support education and learning
- Health information that will support health improvement
- Through Homes and Housebound service extend independent living at home for the elderly
- Support community cohesion - places to meet
- Support community safety and anti- social behaviour
- Support economic development including through learning opportunities

Delivering the Vision

Book borrowing remains an essential element of the library service but it is essential that this service be delivered efficiently in local areas offering choice and range of material required by local communities

Analysis of demographic data will be used to understand the actual customer profile, which will vary, as customers are not defined to local postcodes. Customers will use a local library based on opening hours, work, choice and range of services and locality e.g. placed with other local services that meet needs

Where libraries maybe located in the future should be considered. Opportunities may arise to co-locate new libraries within a school, community centre, health centre. This may not be to replace existing libraries if evidence demonstrates that the building and range of services offered are fit for purpose. It is however critical that the role of libraries is considered at the planning stages along with housing, transport needs, schools, shops, health clinic. Libraries are the social *glue* that bring neighbourhood services and communities together.

Greater use could be made of the mobile library service and links with domiciliary care for vulnerable adults or children. A consultation exercise will be conducted across Solihull to ensure the needs of communities served are understood. In this context the use of existing buildings and services can be reviewed and any gap in provision or services be addressed. Specifically target potential customer's i.e. those who do not currently use the library service

Libraries of the future will be buildings that inspire, offering a range of services. They could be located with in one building with other local services offering improved access to health information, police surgeries, café facilities, learning, internet and digital technology, cultural events and of course the traditional library service- loan of books and other materials.

It is essential to develop a 24/7 service offering a full range of online library and information services; e- books, online learning packages, homework and study support, family learning, reference enquiry service, online catalogue, online reservation service, online computer booking

Access to Web 2.0- social networking, etc

Staff skills

Our frontline staff need to navigate through the information, learning maze and support and help customers to meet aspirations, improve quality of life and underpin skills for life to improve economic well being of communities and neighbourhoods

A modern workforce will be skilled to;

- Work in partnership
- Embrace change
- Signpost, navigate and support
- Welcome new customers
- Trusted
- Develop skills
- Celebrate achievements
- Market the service
- Compliment other services
- Add value
- Share intelligence and best practice
- Make efficient use of resources
- Empower communities
- Celebrate success

RFID (radio frequency identification device)

Self-service has been rolled out across 8 libraries. Other self service options will be explored to enable customers to deliver services that they want and need

Resources

Realign resources to deliver the future vision. Identify efficiencies and or savings that will offer an improved range and scope of library services working with new and existing partnerships

Action plan 2009-10- more details provided in the current Divisional plan

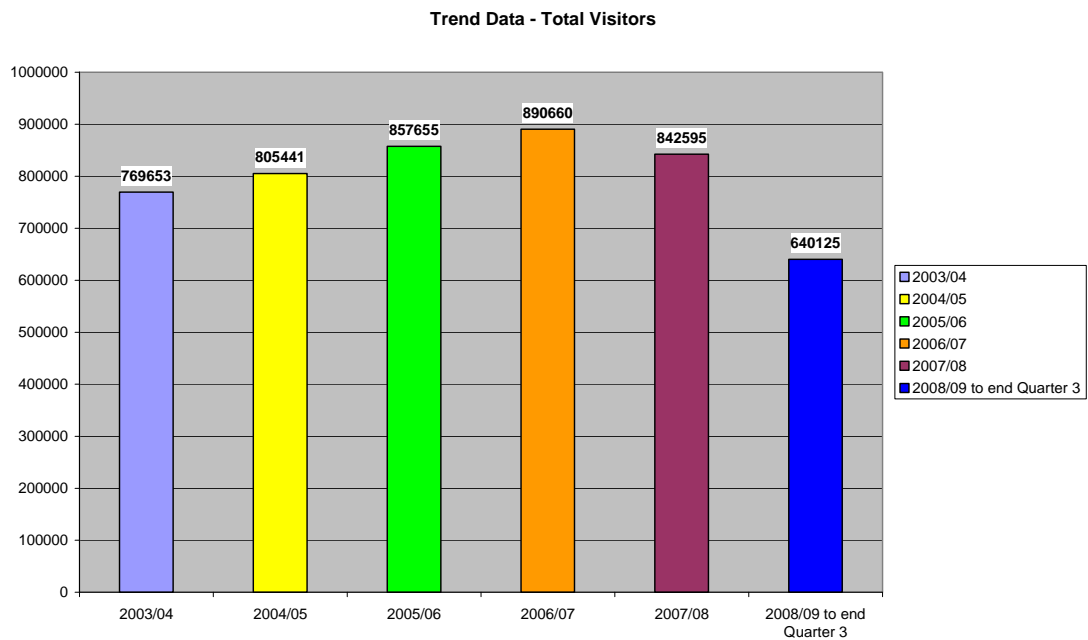
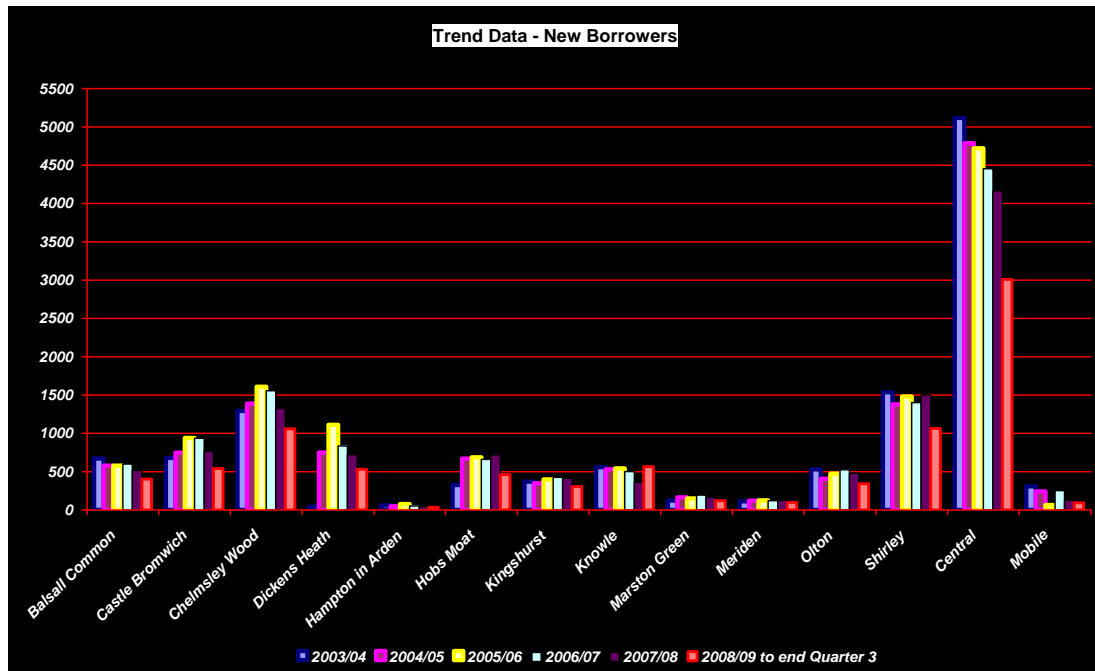
- Implementation of self -service options through use of new technology
- New charges for guest use/ visitors for PN PC's, children's activities, family history courses
- Extension of income generation programme-develop premium services e.g. family history courses, quality learning/meeting rooms
- Explore extending opening hours in community libraries from Sep 2009
- Explore potential to pilot Sunday opening at a flagship library
- Opening of new CW library – November 2009
- Engage with third sector- extend volunteering opportunities

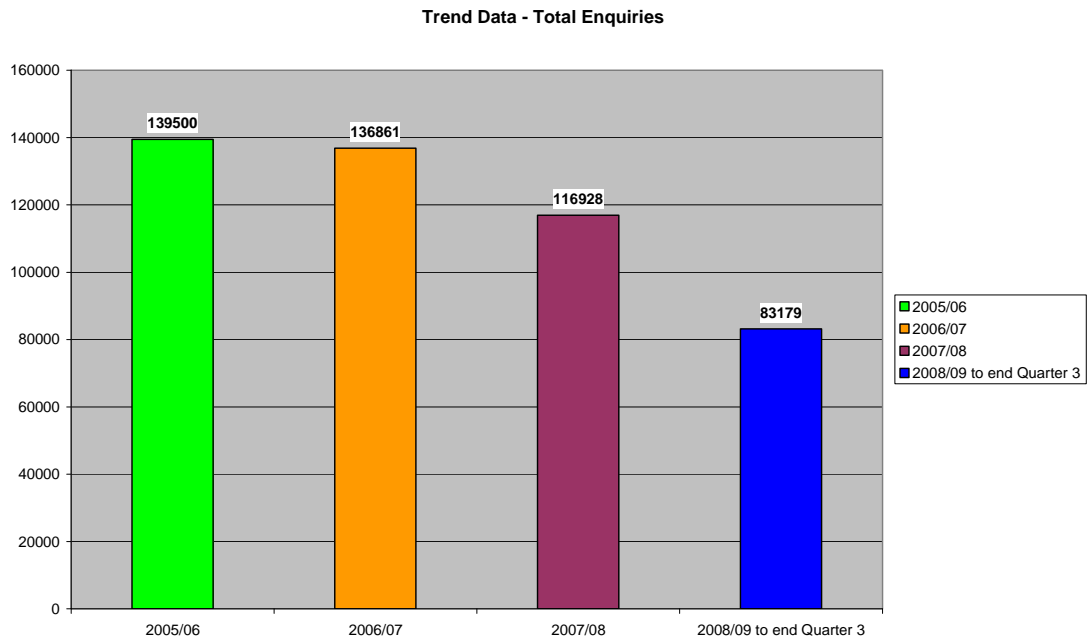
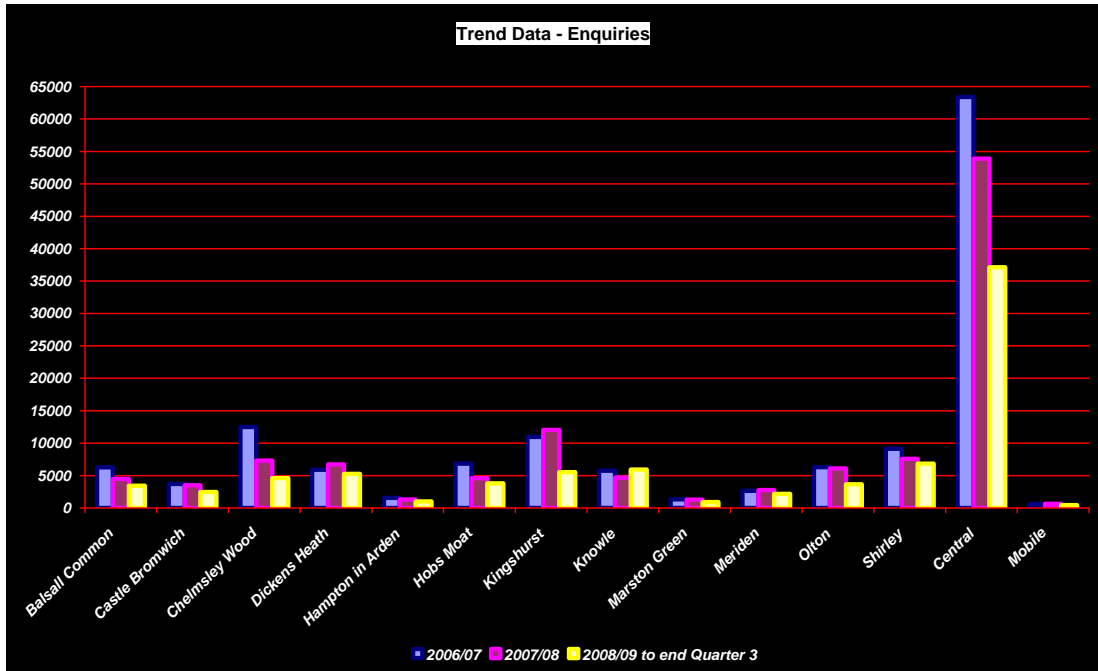
- Explore opportunities for Shared services with neighbouring authorities
- New library space within new Smithswood community primary – September 2009 and explore other co-location possibilities
- Showcase best practice- regionally and nationally through the Society of Chief librarians -West Midlands and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council- WM
- Consultation with non- users – September 2009
- Engage with neighbourhood managers to identify local community demographics and needs

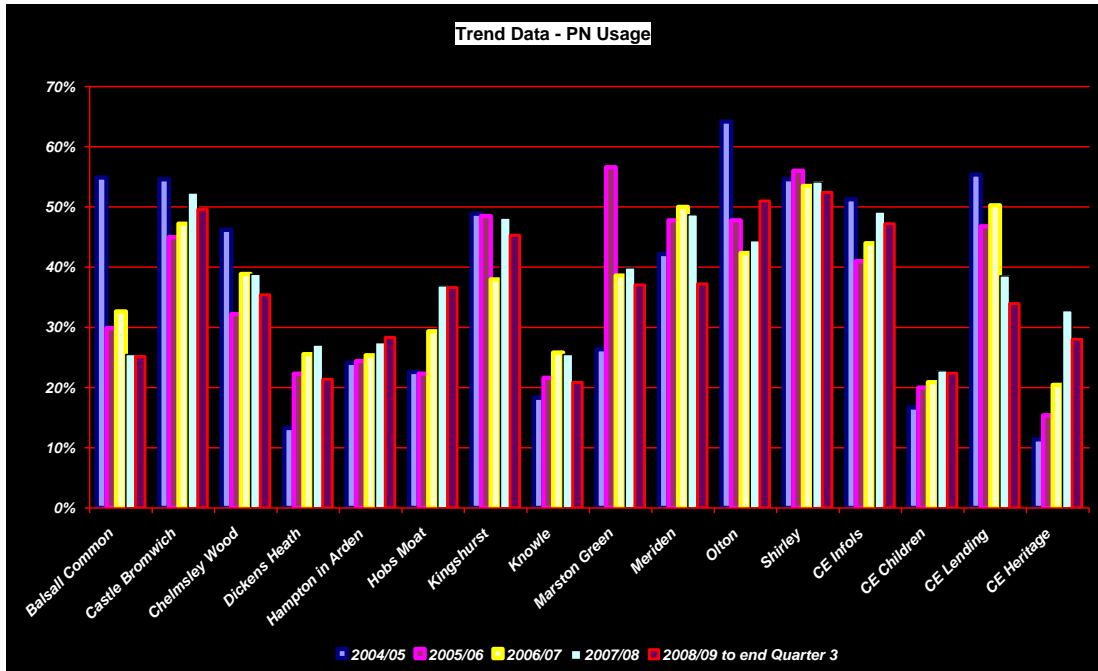
Key performance data

- 13 libraries
- 1 mobile
- 1 housebound van
- Website delivering web based 24/7 online services

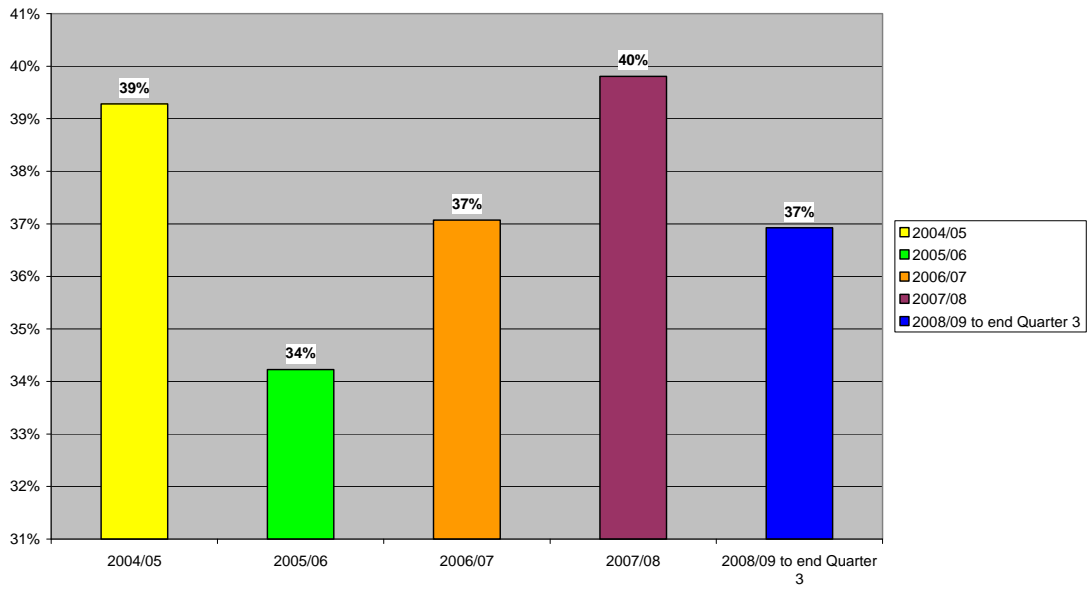
Trend Data

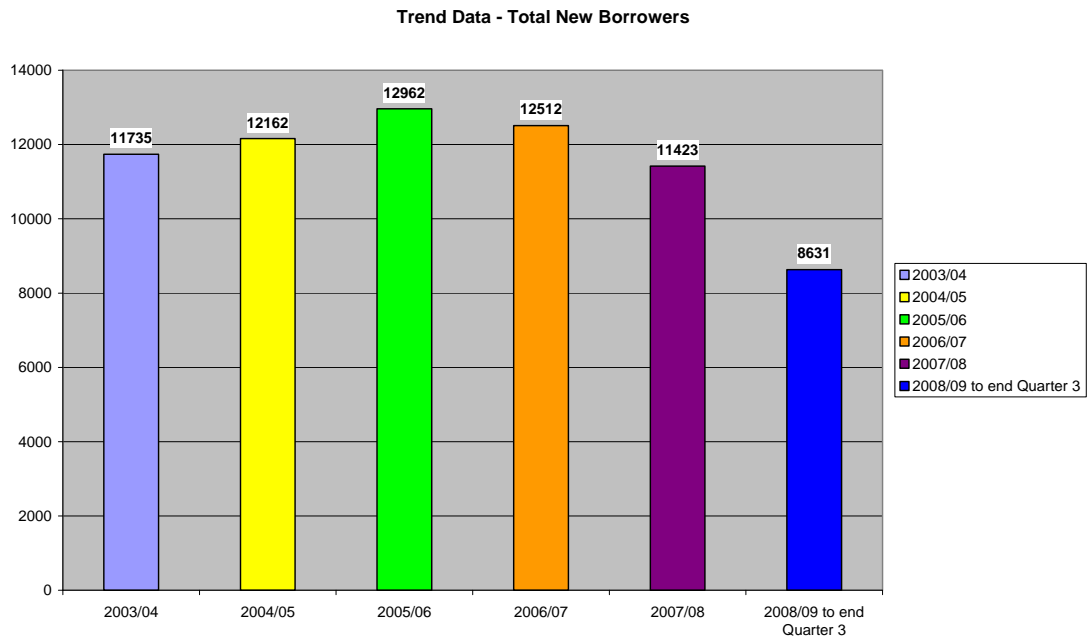
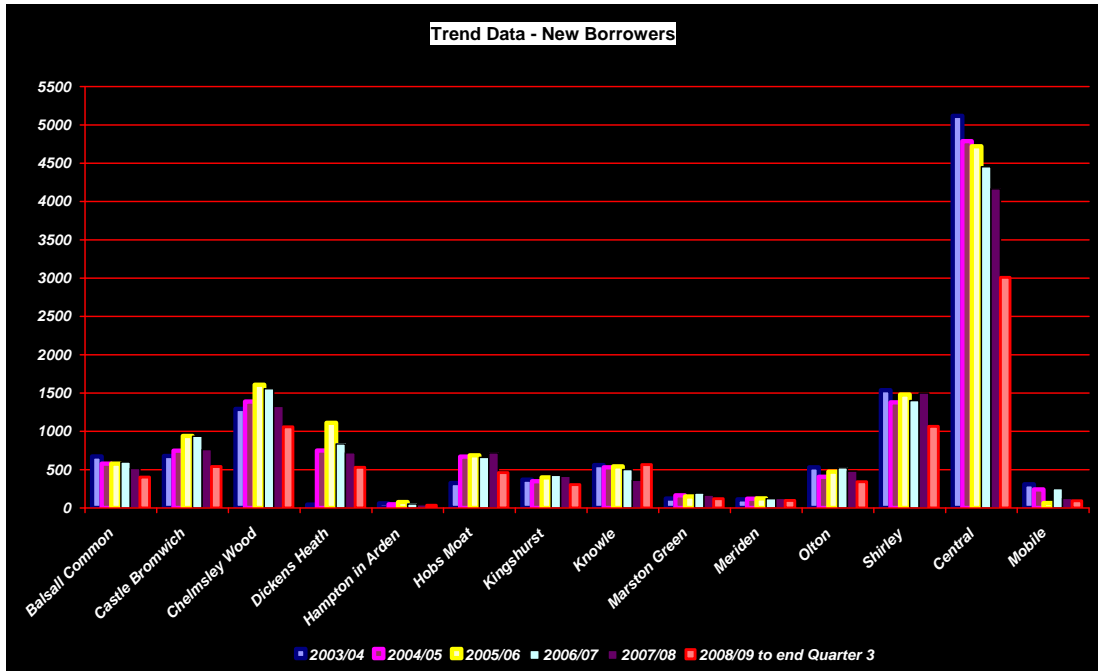


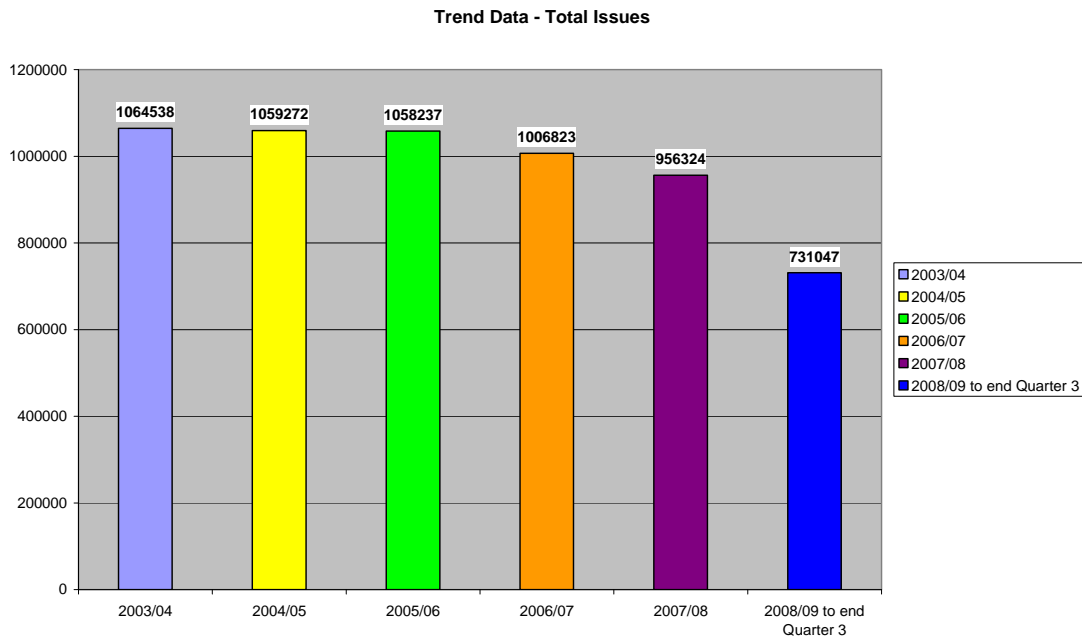
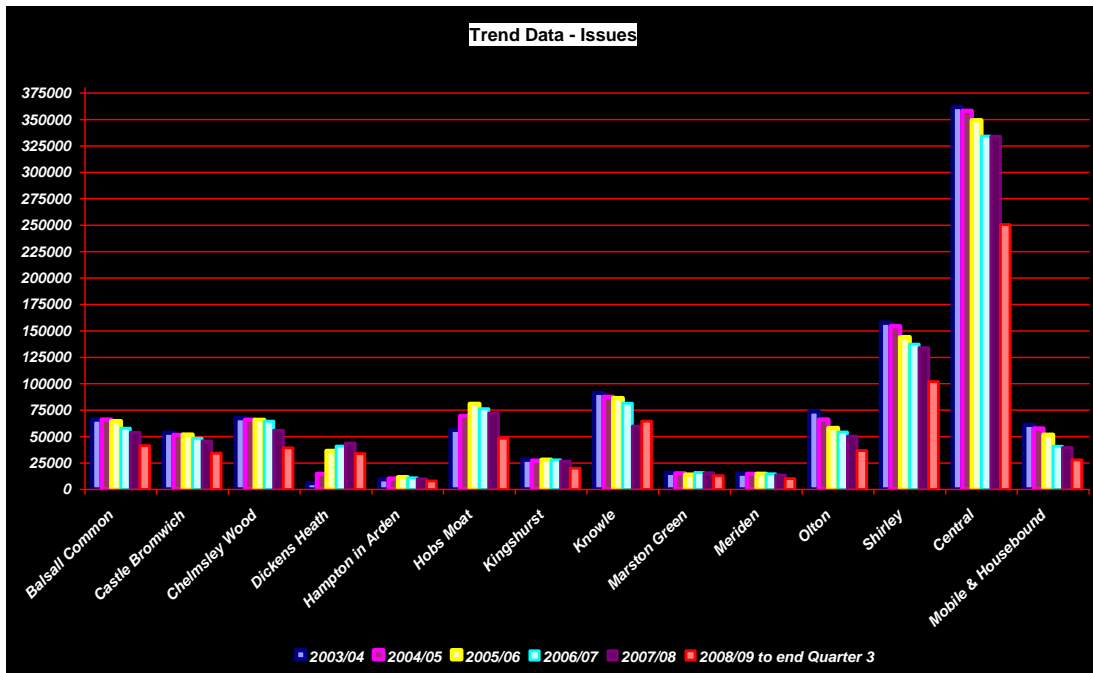




Peoples Network Usage Stats (% of total capacity)







Libraries Partner Agencies

LEARNDIRECT

RNIB

RNID (Birmingham Institute for the deaf)

SUSTAIN

Councillors Surgeries

Society of Chief Librarians

Association of Senior & Children's & Education Librarians (ASCEL)

Warwickshire Archive Service

Solihull College

North Solihull Regeneration Partnership

Children's Centres

Book Start

Museums Libraries & archives

OCLC Pica (inter library lending association)

English Heritage

The Reading Agency

Share the Vision (RNIB)

Learning and Skills Council

Age Concern

Care Trust

Sure Start

Local Safeguarding Board

TALIS

Education and Children's Service SMBC

Early Years Partnership

Family Learning Network

Information Advice and Guidance Partnership

John Lewis

The Knowle Society

Knowle Local History Group

Central Library user Group

Connexions

UK Online

Touchwood Shopping Centre

CILLA (supply community languages)

Department of Culture, Languages, Media & Sport

NIACE

Birmingham & Solihull Learning & Skills Council

Key Policies and Strategies for the Division

MLA Framework For The Future
LLUK National Occupational Standards
CILIP Qualifications Framework
Learning Revolution White Paper report
Digital Inclusion Strategy – DRAFT
Passion for Excellence
DCMC Modernisation for Review of LS
Every Child Matters: Change for Children
Solihull Library Strategy 2009/12 in consultation phase (WIKI)
MLA Learning for change: Workforce Development Strategy
Book Start Strategy
Solihull Adult and Community Learning Strategy
Informal Learning Strategy – to be drafted by libraries during 2009 and will be informed by the learning Revolution white paper (Dius 2009)
Literacy and Reading Strategy – draft to be produced by libraries in partnership with Solihull Council; during 2009 – legacy from National Year of Reading
DFES Green paper – Youth Matters
DCMS Agencies West Midlands Action Plan 2009/2010
Every Child Matters: Aiming High for Young People; 10 year strategy for Positive Activities
Every Child Matters: Children and Young Peoples Plan 2005
MLA Action Plan 2008
Digital Britain: Interim Report January 2009