

**REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND  
INFORMATION****SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2012****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members on the Summer Reading Challenge 2012 reading initiative.

**Information and Advice**

2. The Summer Reading Challenge is the UK's biggest national reading initiative which is aimed at children aged 4 – 11 years old.
3. The Challenge is an annual event and involves 97% of UK local authorities and is led by public libraries. It is co-ordinated nationally by voluntary sector partner The Reading Agency. The Challenge is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year.
4. Children are invited to read six books of their choice during the summer. They join at their local library and a themed membership pack gets them started. There are stickers and rewards to collect along the way with a medal and certificate if they read six books. The Challenge is designed for children of all reading abilities. They can read any books they like – fact books, stories, joke books, picture books – it is up to them.
5. Each year the Summer Reading Challenge has a different theme. The 2012 theme was Story Lab - a celebration of story and the imagination.
6. The combination of fun, freedom and creativity impacts significantly on children's reading levels, range, motivation and confidence. Taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge helps prevent the 'summer reading dip' in achievement when children without reading opportunities at home over the long summer break from school traditionally lose ground in their reading.
7. In order to keep children motivated library staff and volunteers are on hand to advise and there are linked activities to encourage families into libraries during the summer. There is also an interactive Summer Reading Challenge website full of activities to keep children engaged and motivated to keep reading.
8. Libraries work closely with schools and each year library staff promote the Challenge to schools in the summer term. Invitations are provided for children to take home to encourage families to take part.

9. The Challenge was run in all Nottinghamshire libraries between 14 July – 9 September 2012 with the exception of West Bridgford where a mobile library service operated due to space restrictions in the temporary accommodation.
10. Key achievements include:
- 8,896 children took part in this year's Challenge comparable with last year's number of participants (8,950)
  - 4,973 children completed the challenge by reading six books (56%) a considerable increase on last year's number of completers (49%) and exceeding the national standard of 50%
  - the highest number of children taking part were in the 4 – 7 years age group (50%); the second biggest age group was 8 – 11 year olds (43%).
  - boys accounted for 42% of children signing up for the challenge and 41% of children completing
  - 217 children joined as library members in order to take part
  - 33,622 books were read as part of the Challenge
  - 128 activities for children were held in libraries throughout the six week holiday
  - 2,548 children attended activities
  - 100 volunteers helped in 19 libraries, giving 1,365 volunteer hours.
11. Evaluation was overwhelmingly positive. Parents and carers thought that the incentives were motivational; children loved the stickers, wristbands and medals. It encouraged children and families to borrow more books and reminded children and families to use the library more. It has also encouraged children to read a wider range of books and motivated children who already enjoyed reading to read more. Comments received from parents include:

*"A fabulous challenge to keep my children reading over the summer. Last year my 5 year old learnt to read through the challenge. This year he has flourished and read harder books. My 7 year old is now more of a bookworm!!" (Children aged 5 & 7)*

*"Fantastic service and idea. My two children lack confidence reading and it has really encouraged and motivated them to have a go – especially my daughter who is dyslexic. Many thanks to all the staff". (Children aged 5 & 7)*

*"My children loved taking part in Story Lab. They were very keen to read the books that they borrowed and were excited about talking to the library staff about them. It really made them want to read over the summer – it was fab! Thank you" (Children aged 4 & 6)*

*"Our family had stopped using the library, but now the children have renewed enthusiasm for it and understand how to use all the self-service machines independently. Great initiative! I think they will be regular library users now" (Children aged 8 & 10)*

Comments received from children include:

*"I thought it was a great challenge! It has also encouraged me to read more in the summer holidays. I've took part a couple of times before and enjoyed it so much I tried it again!" (Child aged 11)*

*“The best stage was gold because you get some really nice smelly stickers but the best was the gold medal” (Child aged 7)*

*“It was really fun. It is the third time I’ve done it and I shall be doing it again. I love reading and I’ve read books I wouldn’t normally read. I think libraries are a really good idea and I think everyone should enjoy reading” (Child aged 8)*

*“The best bit was reading the books” (Child aged 7)*

12. Using The Reading Agency’s Summer Reading Challenge enables the library service to deliver a high quality, well developed reading product which is evaluated on a national scale. The scheme benefits from economies of scale as it involves the majority of UK local authorities which makes it a cost effective means of delivering a reading scheme in libraries.
13. The Challenge is now a prioritised programme within the Universal Reading Offer strategy developed with the Society of Chief Librarians which Nottinghamshire has signed up to.

### **Other Options Considered**

14. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

15. The report is for noting only.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Implications for Service Users**

17. The Summer Reading Challenge is a reading scheme that is available to all children of the target age via Nottinghamshire’s public library network. Customer satisfaction with the scheme is excellent.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the report be noted.

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**Constitutional Comments**

18. As this report is for noting only no Constitutional Comments are required.

**Financial Comments (NDR 24/10/12)**

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**Background Papers**

Summer Reading Challenge 2009 Impact Research Report, UKLA, December 2009

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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