

**Decision Maker:** **RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date:** **Thursday 15 June 2023**

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent                      Non-Executive                      Non-Key

**Title:** **PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICE - CONTRACT  
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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**Chief Officer:** Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration

**Ward:** All Wards

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1. Reason for decision/report and options

- 1.1 In line with Contract Procedure Rules 23.2-6 this information briefing provides an update to Members on the performance of Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) relating to the provision of the Library Services Contract. The value of the contract over a ten-year period is currently £41,260,703.
  - 1.2 The report details how the contract has delivered the service in line with the contract specification and includes full analysis of the key performance indicators since the last report was presented in November 2022.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Renewal, Recreation & Housing Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the performance of the Contractor since the last service performance report was presented in November 2022.

### Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The contract has been designed to ensure that the existing levels of service are protected with scope for ongoing development to improve the outcomes for vulnerable adults and children.
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### Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority (*delete as appropriate*):
    - (1) For children and young people to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.
    - (2) For adults and older people to enjoy fulfilled and successful lives in Bromley, ageing well, retaining independence and making choices.
    - (5) To manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley's residents.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Libraries
  4. Total current budget for this head: £5.17m
  5. Source of funding: Revenue budget 2023/24
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### Personnel

1. Number of staff (*current and additional*): 2.08 FTE (Client Team)
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: 1964 Public Libraries Act
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive decision.
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### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: The Libraries contract is compliant with 23.2 of the Council's Contract procedure rules.
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### Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: The Libraries works programme will address the backlog maintenance at Libraries currently not under development to improve the condition of the network of Libraries
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### Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: Working with GLL our libraries contractor we have sought to reduce, reuse, and recycle where possible, Changes include the cleaning company moving to a green regime, by selecting environmentally friendly cleaning products. Library refurbishments are sustainable including eco refit options where possible.
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### Impact on the Local Economy

1. Summary of Local Economy Implications: Libraries are proven to have an impact on the Local Economy particularly post Covid. The majority of Bromley libraries are located on or close to high streets, the presence of libraries makes people feel more positive about their local environment.
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### Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications: Libraries are proven to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and are uniquely placed to make a difference to their local communities. Bromley Libraries deliver a wide range of activities for all ages which combat loneliness and social isolation which link into the Council's Loneliness Strategy.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (*current and projected*): 31,224 registered users used their library card to borrow an item in a library branch in 2022 representing 9.5% of the Bromley population. This does not include customers who used the library solely for purposes such as studying, activities or using public PCs
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 This report provides an analysis of the performance of Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) relating to the delivery of the Library Service Contract. Performance data is included for Quarter 2 July-September 2022 and Quarter 3 October-December 2022: however, the commentary covers a longer period until April 2023.
- 3.2 The GLL Libraries contract commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 and is now in its sixth year of a ten-year contract term with the option of a further five years by mutual consent. The contract includes specific provision for scrutiny twice a year with the last report presented in November 2022. The Library Service contract requires that the performance of the contractor is reviewed by the Council on an ongoing basis to ensure both value for money and continuous high standards of service are maintained.
- 3.3 Since the last report in November 2022 GLL are now offering a full pre-COVID service in terms of opening hours, services, and activities. A key aim of this contract is for Bromley Libraries to promote enjoyment of reading and sharing of books to increase the number of items issued. Recent statistics show that Bromley is now the highest issuing authority in London
- 3.4 The services managed by GLL as defined in the contract and service specification include
- The frontline operational/virtual library service
  - Strategic management specialist and support functions
  - Bromley Historic Collections
  - Facilities management including cleaning and security

#### Service Performance

- 3.5 The Client Team measure performance of the library service contract using 26 bespoke Key performance indicators (KPIs) with financial penalties for breaches. An additional quarterly KPI reporting system is also in place. As part of the performance monitoring system, additional Monitoring notices can be issued should further investigation be required on any KPI incident.
- 3.6 Failures of service performance are managed through a points-based Performance Adjustment (PA) system which are awarded if a standard identified by a KPI is not met. KPI incidents and their mitigation are discussed at monthly contract monitoring meetings with GLL and dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The invoice for the preceding month is reviewed and agreed based on KPI performance during the previous month. See Appendix 1 for a summary of reports covering the six-month period from July-December 2023.

#### KPIs

- 3.7 There were 27 recorded KPI breaches in the reporting period between July-December 2022 which amounted to a total of 705 performance adjustment points for which the financial value would be £29,273.80 if applied. No monitoring notices were issued during this period
- 3.8 Of the 27 instances incidents (one recorded per day of closure), 15 were related to KPI 1 - Library opening hours. Of these 2 were related to staff sickness from heat exhaustion in the summer, 1 related to COVID sickness, 2 related to gas leaks, 1 due to evacuation due to a false use of a fire call point. The remaining closures were related to heating issues and internal temperatures becoming too low – 3 days closure at Southborough due to a decommissioned boiler, 2 days at St Paul's Cray due to an extended power cut to the area, 2 days at Beckenham due to heating system not working for extreme temperatures, and 2 days at Mottingham following theft of gas pipes from an external boiler.

- 3.9 The remaining 12 incidents related to IT failures. Most notably 8 penalties were recorded at Central in October due to multiple system failures traced back to a power surge in the building. Across 4 days both WiFi and public PCs were unavailable and required extensive co-operation from external suppliers and their engineers. Of the remaining 3 penalties, 3 were PC outages caused by work performed by BT outside library premises, and 1 related to a technical issue related to logging on to public PCs.

#### Mitigation

- 3.10 Following investigation and review of all incident reports, the Client accepted the mitigation for all closures and late openings as they were all attributed to Force Majeure. All cases of building closures were both unavoidable and the correct course of action to protect the health and safety of staff and users. Several were related to heating issues within the library buildings for which maintenance liability sits with LBB as set out in the contract, exacerbated by extreme weather conditions in summer and winter. As highlighted throughout this report approval is being sought from Members to progress the libraries works programme to take forward the library building repair programme avoiding unexpected closures. There are currently 100 unresolved tasks relating to building issues at libraries awaiting resolution by the LBB property team
- 3.11 Additionally, mitigation was accepted relating to all IT issues as these were also proven to be outside the direct control of the service provider. The multiple issues at Central Library were as the result of a power surge and were immediately reported by GLL who worked jointly with Sky and VCG on a resolution.

#### Benefits and Quality

- 3.12 The commissioning of the Library Service was carried out initially with the goal of maintaining and improving the delivery of this statutory service whilst achieving lower revenue costs (namely through business rates exemption and economy of scale savings) which the contract delivers. Throughout the contract term to date, GLL has demonstrated that it is in the main successfully managing the service while keeping the Councils costs down. Taking this approach has enabled Bromley Council to retain a high-quality library service which continues to develop and improve, avoiding more extreme service reductions that other authorities have taken.
- 3.13 GLL remains the UKs largest provider of Library Services which has ongoing benefits for Bromley including their quick response to the COVID pandemic creating Library Without Walls (GLL) a high-quality online offer GLL were able to quickly plan and deliver activities for the Queens Platinum Jubilee on behalf of the Council. As mentioned above GLL are eligible for economy of scale savings which include stock purchasing due to the size of their organisation.
- 3.14 Every year Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) request data from each public library service in the UK provide a suite of annual data, such as performance and finance, for comparison with similar local authorities. For the 2021-22 period, Bromley Libraries issued the most books out of any reporting London Borough (central and outer boroughs). Nationally, Bromley's libraries achieved the 7th most visits per 1,000 population and Bromley Central Library was recorded as the 9th busiest.
- 3.15 Another key benefit is the knowledge and expertise that the GLL Management team bring to the Bromley Libraries Partnership. There have been some internal changes to the GLL staffing structure due to the departure of Diana Edmonds as National Director of Libraries though she remains at GLL as a project consultant. Rebecca Gediking moves from her role as Head of Bromley Libraries to an interim national role as Head of Libraries covering all GLL library partnerships and will continue to work with Bromley libraries on a strategic level. Sally Adcock previously Bromley Libraries Sector Manager has been appointed as interim Head of Bromley Libraries. The Client Team will work closely with Rebecca and Sally to develop the partnership.

## Monitoring and Quality Control

- 3.16 The Libraries Client Team continues to demonstrate that it can successfully manage, monitor, and oversee ongoing development of the contract on an ongoing basis. The focus for both the Contractor and the Client Team is to fully restore service usage levels to pre-Covid levels and to further develop the service which requires a collaborative approach. All contract milestones relating to service planning have been fully met during this monitoring period. This includes both monthly contract review meetings and milestone review at six and twelve months. These are a hybrid of face to face and online meetings as appropriate.
- 3.17 The Client Team undertakes additional internal monitoring processes to keep the contract on track highlighting any operational issues as they happen. Headlines relating to the development and performance of the Library Service are provided in weekly divisional updates to the Director of Housing, Planning & Regeneration. A highlight report summarising workstreams related to both the performance and development of Bromley Libraries are sent fortnightly to the Portfolio Holder for the Renewal, Regeneration & Housing.
- 3.18 The Client Team carries out unannounced spot checks on all libraries to ensure that the required standards of the contract are being met. Aspects of the service which are checked include the cleanliness and appearance of the library, quality of stock, staffing levels and ICT equipment which includes public PCs and self-service kiosks. Findings and observations are documented, and issues identified are cross checked against GLL incident reports to ensure that they have been accurately reported to the Council. Any findings which require further explanation are raised at the monthly contract review meetings.

## Operational Risk

- 3.19 The main operational risk to the contract is identified as force majeure which relate to issues beyond the control of the Contractor. The enforced closures of all libraries during lockdown periods are examples of this. Both GLL and the Council continue to monitor and update their risk registers and strategic planning documents to include the impact of potential new force majeure incidents to protect service levels from disruption.
- 3.20 The contract risk register includes the operational risk attached to the condition of library buildings which has resulted in unplanned closures as set out in the KPI log. A Landlord/Tenant split was agreed under the contract terms. GLL is fully compliant with their responsibilities, however there is an extensive backlog of maintenance issues which have led to unplanned temporary closure of libraries as set out in paragraph 3.11. Approval is being sought to commence the Libraries Works Programme to address the works identified by the Council as part of the operational property review (OPR). This will improve the condition of library buildings and will mitigate against the risk of sudden closures.

## **SERVICE PROFILE/DATA ANALYSIS**

### Issues and Visits

- 3.21 Overall monthly issues of items of all types show continuous increases, both compared to pre-COVID levels and against the previous year. Between July-December 2022, Bromley Libraries issued 842,014 items including books & audiobooks, eBooks & eAudiobooks via the Libby app, and eMagazines/eNewspapers through the Newsreader app. This is an increase of 15.9% against the equivalent period in 2019, and 10.3% against 2022. Issues of physical items from branches represented 83.5% of all issues in this period recorded and saw a 3.7% increase against 2019 despite the shift of customer trends towards digital items following the pandemic
- 3.22 Visits to libraries are continuing to recover to pre-COVID levels. Between July-December 2022 visits reached an average of 77.3% of 2019 levels, totalling 521,335 across all branches in this

six-month period. An upwards recovery trend has been observed continuously over time since the last COVID-related closure in Mar 2021. Bromley Libraries saw an early lead compared to the national average of recovering visitor numbers early in the pandemic.

- 3.23 Preliminary data from the latest quarter Jan-Mar 2023 show a similar trend to the above – Issues are 17.2% higher than in 2019 and 14.1% higher than in 2022 for the equivalent period. Visits recovery has reached 81.6% for the quarter passing 80% for the first time since March 2020. 2022 CIPFA Statistics published show Bromley to be the highest issuing library service in London having now overtaken Wandsworth which is also operated by GLL.

#### Digital issues

- 3.24 Prior to the pandemic, regularly monitored statistics included visits and item issues per branch, usage of public PCs and the home library service. The shift to a more extensive online offer during lockdown added a new suite of measurable performance issues including Facebook page views, videos and posts. Bromley libraries have now returned to full business as usual monitoring once again focuses on the offline offer
- 3.25 The temporary shift of focus onto the digital aspects of the library, including improved provision and awareness of eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eNewspapers and Magazines, witness a notable expansion in usage during-and-after the pandemic. The share of total issues across the service from the digital library saw an increase from 6.2% to 16.1% between 2019 and 2022 (Jul-Dec). In this six-month period 2022, the digital 'Library Without Walls' issued 265,000 items making it the second most issuing 'library' in Bromley, under Bromley Central.
- 3.26 In-branch, public PCs are made available to anyone with a library card, plus free Wi-Fi for everyone. In this six-month period public PCs were saw a total of 31,900 hours of usage across 39,400 sessions. Additionally self-service kiosks are available in each library to allow users to take out and return books on their own. 75.5% of all issues in-branch were made using self-service technology.

#### Activities & Events

- 3.27 The libraries events programme offers activities and reading groups for both children and adult age groups. The children's programme ran over 1,900 events with 26,000 attendees between July and December, including a significant surge in August in line with the annual Summer Reading Challenge. The regular children's programme includes activities such as Baby Rhyme Time, Story Time, Lego Club, and Craft Club. One-off events are also held including class visits, author events, puppet shows, and holiday-themed events. The regular adult programme includes Coffee Morning, Social Saturdays, Craft sessions and Tea and Topics. Around 50 Teenage and Adult reading groups meet in branches with 300 total participants monthly.
- 3.28 The Summer Reading Challenge, themed 'Gadgeteers' in 2022, was hosted over the summer holidays and included a plethora of bespoke activities for children including craft activities (making a windmill, design an marble maze, bookmark and card making, cake decorating, shadow telescopes), author events (Peter Bentley, Alex Dalose-Koya), art-based events (Painting in the Garden, Summer Art Club, creative colouring) and building- or gadget-based fun (How to be a spy, code breaking, build a Lego robot). Nearly 4,200 children participated in 2022, with 1,800 completing the reading challenge.
- 3.29 As part of the libraries' commitment to support sport in non-traditional spaces, Exergame Obie projectors have been installed at Mottingham and Penge libraries, due to successful funding bids from London Sport. Between the installation of the projector at Penge Library in mid-February and the end of March 2023, GLL achieved the target of 24 sessions and exceeded the target by attracting 125 unique participants. As part of the Council's cultural events programme,

three launch sessions of the equipment were run with sports author Eve Ainsworth, which was attended by 67 children from local schools. The equipment will remain in place at Penge Library and be used as part of the regular programme of activities

- 3.30 Other visiting authors include Lemn Sissay, Marie-Claire Amuah, Venessa Taylor, Chitra Soundar, Sandra Agard, Jenny Dalton, and Alom Shaha. National events observed by the activities programme included National Coding Week (from 19th Sep), Black History Month (October), Libraries Week (from 3rd Oct) and National Poetry Day (6th October). Central Library hosted The World of Peter Rabbit Storytime Trail in the 5th floor large hall space in December and January which was visited by a total of 2,190 people which included story boards, shared stories and themed crafts.

### Bromley Historic Collections

- 3.31 The Museum Collection provided by GLL through Bromley Historic Collections (BHC) received full accreditation from Arts Council England. Following this in order to strengthen and develop the service, The Earth Museum who have delivered a number of projects for Bromley Historic Collections began a new partnership with BHC in November 2022 to lead on the development of BHC, provide ongoing support and to recruit a including appointing a new curator
- 3.32 A successful funding bid of £5,000 was received from The National Archives Testbed Funding Award for equipment and training in the process of 3D imaging, and hosting online, interactive versions of our exhibitions. BHC partnered with staff from Goldsmith's University to deliver the project. BHC will seek to progress future funding bids which develop and improve services.
- 3.33 Bromley Historic Collections is continuing to work with the Council's information management team to ensure the retention and storage of Council records and historic documents in line with recommendations made as part of the accreditation from The National Archives. BHC also continues to support those holding historic records across the Borough e.g. the parish records audit. In July 2022, the senior archivist completed an appraisal of historic documents at Camden Place, now Chislehurst Golf Club, before some elements of the collection were scheduled for transfer to the Wallace Collection.

### Activities & Exhibitions-Bromley Historic Collections

- 3.34 Loan boxes continue to be a key part of BHC's outreach work. The Museum of London visited and provided advice and guidance on developing the loan box collection for schools which now include Titanic history information. The first of BHC's 'Museum on Tour' sessions took place in July 2022 at Chislehurst Library entitled, A Victorian Summer (using the Seaside loan box). At the end of March 2023, the temporary exhibition space displayed school loan boxes on Greeks, Tudors, and the Titanic and formed part of the BHC's participation in the Library Late event in April 2023.
- 3.35 Bromley Historic Collections took part in the Library Lates event in April 2023 which was part of the Mayor of London's programme to create Night-time Enterprise Zones supporting local high streets and the late-night economy in London. Tours of the BHC archives at Library Lates were fully booked. The museum team introduced QR codes and digital technology to provide more information about the exhibits in the collection and direct visitors around the displays in Bromley Central library. The Battle of Britain Lace was also on display in the local studies area. A few days later, at the High Street Fest, BHC engaged visitors with guessing games using artefacts and interactive bookmarks with QR codes which linked to information about Bromley.
- 3.36 There have been two exhibitions in the temporary exhibition area to commemorate recent Royal events, 'Royals throughout History' and 'Remembering the Queen' after the funeral of Queen

Elizabeth II in 2022. Bromley Historic Collection provided intergenerational activities using toys from the past to engage visitors at the Coronation screening in May 2023.

- 3.37 In November 2022, the Battle of Britain Lace Panel was accessioned to Bromley Historic Collection and the team been supporting LBB during the restoration, framing and installation of the lace panel which was presented to the Borough in the 1940s. The installation was fully completed in May 2023 and the lace panel is available to view in Bromley Central Library during normal library opening hours. BHC have provided information on the panel for visitors and will be including it in their education work with schools.

## **PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE**

- 3.38 The libraries contract was designed to encourage the Service Provider to think innovatively and continually look for ways to develop and improve performance. Paragraphs 3.22-3.38 provide examples of the strong performance and growth of the service during the monitoring period. Plans for ongoing improvements in performance relating to the development are detailed below in paragraphs 3.39-3.46

### Added value: supporting Council priorities

- 3.39 As libraries are a statutory service, there is scope for the Council to gain added value from the fourteen libraries operated by GLL by increasing and extending the range of services on offer. This includes co-location opportunities in library buildings providing space for other local authority and community partners and potentially generating income or reducing expenditure. There is further scope for libraries to be used on closed times/ times by other services. Two examples of this are Barclays bank hiring space in libraries to support residents needing access to banking (para 3.48) and the co-location of the Community outreach service to St Pauls Cray and Mottingham Libraries.

### Economic Development

- 3.40 Library Lates was the first event in Bromley's Night-time Enterprise Zone (NTEZ) programme. Funding was received through a successful NTEZ bid by the Councils Economic Development Team to deliver three events, to improve footfall to the high street and bring more life to the town centre in the evenings. Working in partnership with the Council GLL delivered a successful event Library Lates on Thursday 27th April which ran from 6pm-10pm extending the library opening hours that day. The event was the first of its kind to take place in Bromley Libraries and was attended by 3,000 people. Highlights included Kate Lawler a local author, presenter and radio host who read from her latest book, before taking to the DJ booth for the silent disco. Some of the many activities available on the night included cocktail making masterclasses, Lego for adults, a market of local entrepreneurs, musical performances and heritage walks

### Co-location of Community Outreach Services

- 3.41 Due to ongoing building issues at Cotmandene Community Resource Centre (CCRC) and Mottingham Community Resource Centre (MCLS) along with the expiry of the lease at MCLS which we were unable to renew, the Council has been exploring options for the long-term delivery of the Community Outreach Service. A decision was made at Executive in February 2023 to permanently co-locate CCRC to St Pauls Cray Library and to temporarily relocate MCLS to Mottingham Library. The preferred location for MCLS outreach is on the Mottingham Estate. The Outreach service provided from the library will be monitored to ensure reach to vulnerable residents, Council Officers continue to seek an alternative location on the Estate.

- 3.42 St Pauls Cray Library is currently being refurbished and re-modelled in order to accommodate both the Library Service and the outreach service currently provided at CCRC. These works are in line with the OPR condition survey. Improved facilities will include a disabled toilet and private meeting space and a re-modelled children's library. It is anticipated that the new located service will open in early July. The works required to Mottingham Library are on pause until the trial period is completed and a decision is taken on whether to permanently move to the resource centre to the library or not.
- 3.43 The co-location will extend the current opening hours to accommodate both part time services. The Council has requested that GLL change the opening times at St Pauls Cray Library to close on Monday and open on Friday instead. Contract procedures have been followed and the required notice period will be given to customers of the change in hours. An Equality impact assessment on the change to opening hours did not identify any negative impacts. The Library Service will be open on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The Community Outreach Service will operate on Monday and Wednesday when the library is closed, operating alongside the library service on Tuesday and Thursday. Consideration is being given to extending the Community Outreach Service to Saturdays to benefit the service users.

#### Reducing loneliness & isolation

- 3.44 The importance of activities to all age groups remains a priority for the library service with the aim of combatting social isolation and supporting the Council's loneliness strategy. GLL are a key partner in Bromley's Tackling Loneliness Action Group attending meetings with Bromley's Loneliness Team and other stakeholders. Library staff continue to make phone calls to members taking part in the Reading Friends scheme which aims to reduce loneliness in the community through reading and social connection
- 3.45 The Contractor is developing partnerships with key voluntary groups such as Community Links. Libraries also offer a 'place to be' whether it is reading a book or newspaper or doing a jigsaw puzzle. Warm drinks are offered during the winter months, ensuring that Bromley residents were supported in a safe space
- 3.46 A Library offer for refugees has been developed by GLL across its partnerships. This supports all refugees with books in their languages for all ages, and simplified library membership that doesn't require a fixed address (e.g. can be a hotel). Ukrainian Coffee Mornings for refugees and sponsors launched in July 2022 with 200 people attending the first session attendance at subsequent sessions has averaged at 50-100 people. GLL also offer private spaces for people who need to sit job interviews or contact family ('Room to Zoom' campaign)

#### Coronation Celebrations

- 3.47 GLL have previously worked on the Council's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and displayed books of condolences following the announcement of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. GLL took part in the Council's Coronation Celebrations leading on the children's poster competition. The overall winner received a certificate which was presented by the Mayor of Bromley at the Council's Coronation screening in the Queens Gardens. The winning entries were displayed on the electronic signage in the town centres. Library staff took part in the Coronation screening event, libraries also delivered their own activities and events on Coronation Day. Highlights included a puppet show and a talk for adults on Coronations from the past.

### **PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS IN VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 3.48 The contract encourages ongoing improvements in value for money which is achieved by introducing new services and modernising library buildings. St Pauls Cray Library is currently being refurbished and fully re-modelled in order to accommodate both the library service and the outreach service currently provided at Cotmandene Community Resource Centre see paragraphs 3.40-3.42. Other examples include Start Up Bromley spaces (see paragraphs 3.59-3.62.) GLL continue to develop this service demonstrating further value for money on the initial investment from ARG funding. Areas for future development of Start Up Bromley include the creation of a forum for all entrepreneurs in the Borough to further encourage networking
- 3.49 To improve services for customers, the contract allows for an ICT refresh in Year 6 of the contract which commenced November 2022. Bromley Council invested £515k into the ICT Refresh for which GLL acted as the project manager with collaboration with the Client. The project saw the purchase of a complete refresh of new public PCs and self-service kiosks, public tablets (Hublets) at 4 new libraries, Chromebooks to support Lego STEM learning activities, spare staff equipment, and renewing existing software. In addition, a new cloud printing service, updates to the Library App to allow self-service within library premises and upgraded fibre internet lines will be introduced to users later in the year pending staff training, marketing, and external infrastructure works.
- 3.50 In October 2022 Barclays Bank began providing weekly banking services from Biggin Hill Library following the closure of its Biggin Hill branch. This was extended to Petts Wood Library with Barclays staff holding weekly sessions on Thursdays. This service is a lifeline for residents requiring financial advice who may be unable to travel out of the local area, additionally provision of this banking advice service will attract new customers to libraries. Due to this growing partnership with Bromley libraries Barclays are keen to work with local communities. As the sponsor of the Premier League, they worked with Petts Wood Library staff on a promotional event in April 23 to celebrate the Premier League displaying the trophy in the library. Classes from local schools were invited to see the trophy and share sport related stories

#### Stock purchasing

- 3.51 In compliance with KPI 22 relating to stock purchasing, the ring-fenced stock fund budget remains at £450k per annum while other authorities are reducing their stock budgets, this is reflected in the popularity of stock Bromley libraries resulting in our top ranking in the CIPFA statistics for issues. The stock fund is maximised by the economies of scale savings GLL apply when purchasing stock for their five public library partnerships and prison libraries. The full amount was fully committed by the Councils year end. GLL is compliant in providing regular stock purchasing reports which give a breakdown of the stock purchasing fund demonstrating that it has only been used for the purpose intended. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the current stock spend up to Council's year end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 3.52 A stock plan setting out the allocation of stock spend for each financial year is submitted annually for GLL for approval from the Client Team with the 2023/24 stock plan recently accepted. The stock fund is allocated across a variety of physical stock categories ranging from Fiction and nonfiction for Children and adults to large print and reference items. Digital categories include the eBook, eAudio and eMagazine and newspapers. Allocations have varied during the pandemic when more online resources were purchased. The stock plan for this financial year has been based on post COVID trends. The allocation for the development fund category has been increased this year and will provide increased new stock for the new West Wickham Library and refurbished St Paul's Cray library.

#### Building Improvements

- 3.53 Modern Library buildings provide more than books alone. They are social spaces bringing people together. This was demonstrated by their physical absence during COVID 19 as despite accessing books and activities online, customers were keen for their Library buildings to reopen to access study space, IT provision, workspace and activities and events. As highlighted throughout the report the library estate needs repair and investment. New and refurbished libraries provide purpose-built enhanced provision to meet post COVID needs of customers
- 3.54 Work to redevelop West Wickham Library is now underway on the current site as part of the Library and Housing scheme. It is anticipated that the project to redevelop the library will take approximately 18-24 months. The new extended library will include a café, fully accessible toilets, hireable community events space, outdoor space, and a classroom for children's events.
- 3.55 A temporary library service has been provided for residents at an art deco building in nearby Coney Hall at 77 Addington Road which has generated a great deal of interest. A High Street location was preferred but no suitable location could be secured due to the financial viability of the short-term lease the project required. The temporary library is well served by bus routes and residents have been signposted towards other nearby libraries and the Home Library Service as alternatives. Although the temporary library is smaller holding less stock it can accommodate some events and activities. Feedback from residents to date has been favourable.
- 3.56 When other libraries in the borough were refurbished or moved to a high street location their issues and visits increased. West Wickham Library is already situated in a prominent location adjacent to the high street and served by several bus routes. It is anticipated that the delivery of an extended range of services and increased stock will have a positive impact on usage and membership of West Wickham which is currently the fifth busiest library in the Borough.
- 3.57 The Libraries Works programme will address the library work stream resulting from the findings of the Councils Operational Property review (OPR). In the OPR there is a budget of 10.77m (plus £246k share from the external consultancy costs) to repair 11 of the 14 library buildings: Beckenham, Burnt Ash, Chislehurst, Hayes, Mottingham, Orpington, Penge, Petts Wood, Shortlands, Southborough and St Paul's Cray. Three library sites not included are Biggin Hill as the building is on a full repairing and insuring lease with My time who operate the leisure centre: Bromley Central Library which is subject to separate consideration and works on West Wickham Library has already commenced.

#### Start Up Bromley

- 3.58 Start Up Bromley is a free membership programme managed by GLL offering specialist facilities and support in town centre spaces for entrepreneurs and new business owners. The first year of the programme was funded by the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). Members can attend workshops and networking events supported by an active business community across the Borough. To date the Start Up Bromley programme has attracted more than 420 members, including 43 new members in Jan-Mar 2023. The scheme offers business centres with sound-proofed office and meeting spaces in Bromley Central, Orpington and Biggin Hill libraries. In July 2022 Start Up Bromley extended the reach of its business rooms offering professional work and meeting space for hire to the wider Bromley community.
- 3.59 In November 2022 Start Up Bromley partnered with the British Library Business & IP Centre (BIPC) to further the support and resources provided to businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in Bromley. This growing National Network consists of 23 BIPC Regional library services and 90 BIPC Locals across the UK. Start Up Bromley was also allocated £80,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation. This will enable the 1:1 bespoke support to businesses (including mentorship, expert advice in areas such as marketing, and business support services such as web design), which was ceased after the initial funded year to resume. This will provide additional support from a Business Advisor over 2 years from April 2023 until March 2025.

3.60 In September 2022 Start Up Bromley worked with Orpington 1st & Lollipop Events allowing Members to showcase their food businesses at the Flavours of Orpington Food Festival. In March 2023 Start Up Bromley hosted its second business week, a mixture of webinars, expert-led workshops, training sessions, business mentoring opportunities and a business pitch competition. These took place in libraries in Greenwich, Wandsworth and Bromley reflecting a creative and wide-reaching commitment to support business communities in south London and surrounding areas. Further opportunities for Start Up Bromley members to showcase their businesses to the local community including the Christmas Market in December 2022 .16 local businesses took part in the event with over 300 people attending the event.

## USER/STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

### Complaints

3.61 The total number of complaints received about the library service in the six-month period from July-December 2022 was 22 an increase on the 5 received in the previous six-month period. All were received by GLL with none directly received by the Client Team. All complaints received a written response from GLL, and were discussed with the Client Team at the monthly contract monitoring meetings

3.62 Members have previously requested complaints to be provided in a format showing the top complaint themes as detailed below

Complaint Type	Number of Complaints	Libraries
<b>Received by GLL</b>		
Lack of toilet facilities	7 Complaints	7 x Central
Slow public computers	3 Complaints	2 x Mottingham 1 x Central
Car park inaccessible due to filming	2 Complaints	2 x Beckenham
Difficulty using public PC	2 Complaints	1 x Beckenham 1 x Central
Unable to book onto activity session	2 Complaints	2 x Central
Cancelled activities following the passing of the Queen	1 Complaints	1 x Central
Heating on too high	1 Complaints	1 x Chislehurst
Lift out of order	1 Complaints	1 x Central
Other users being disruptive	1 Complaints	1 x Central
Study room replaced with business lounge	1 Complaints	1 x Central
Website difficult to navigate	1 Complaints	1 x Central
<b>Received by LBB</b>		
<i>None</i>		

3.63 GLL responded to each complaint, including providing information on future bookable activities, or providing help and advice on using public PCs. The public toilets at Central are currently out of order, requiring significant foundational plumbing work by Council contractors to repair. In the case of the study room being replaced with a business lounge, this is in relation to the Start Up Bromley programme which offers a space for users of the business support service. The lounge was opened in June 2021. GLL contacted and provided apologies in the remaining cases where a resolution was not possible or required.

### Customer Satisfaction

3.64 15 compliments for the library service were also received by GLL praising staff. This included thanking them for running activities such as the Social Saturday at Chislehurst and an author

event at Beckenham, as well as providing assistance using printing facilities, and for going above-and-beyond in answering a Local Studies query.

3.65 The annual User Satisfaction Survey was run online by GLL between October and December 2022 which attracted 185 responses. The Net Promotor Score - how much people would recommend using Bromley Libraries between -100 to +100 - measured 77, and the average rating of 'overall experience' was 4.73 out of 5. A suggested area for improvement was the development of provision of adult activities, which GLL intend to further develop. The range of activities for adults is set out in paragraphs 3.27 Analysis of user data has shown that the browsing habits and activity attendance in older adults have not returned to the pre COVID levels. It is hoped that an extended range of activities for adults may encourage library visits from new customers and those who have not returned after the pandemic. Next year the survey will be run over a longer period of time and be integrated with GLL's other library partnerships.

#### **4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

4.1 Public libraries are uniquely placed to make a difference to their local communities bringing people together for social interaction by offering free opportunities to the community to learn new skills and make friends. GLL prioritises the needs of vulnerable adults and children and is committed to developing services for them and to continuing to look at funding opportunities to creatively develop and expand their offer. Bromley Libraries have demonstrated that libraries do not just provide books but also offer services that provide support during unemployment, mental health issues and a respite from loneliness and isolation. Bromley's Community Resource centres are based in St Paul's Cray and Mottingham libraries offering an extended service to those communities including help with benefits, housing queries and job-seeking

4.2 Support for dementia sufferers and their carers is a priority for the library service. Using funding from Bromley's cultural grant programme, GLL purchased a 'Magic Table'. The table which projects light is used in activities across libraries including coffee mornings providing support for dementia sufferers. Three groups have been established so far at Beckenham, Chislehurst, and St Paul's Cray. The 'Magic Table' is also being used to support library partnerships with Mencap at St Paul's Cray and Mottingham. Staff have received Dementia Friends training including using the 'Magic Table' as part of the Happiness programme provided by Social Ability which is an initiative helping to change the lives of people living with physical and cognitive challenges using interactive light technology

4.3 In February 2023, GLL launched a scheme to provide free SIM cards to residents on low incomes and those who are struggling with the cost of living. This is the result of a successful application to the Good Things Foundation and aims to prevent digital exclusion and isolation. The scheme offers a way for everyone to take part in basic online activities such as contacting loved ones, accessing job interviews, paying bills, and finding information. Anyone over the age of 18 and in receipt of benefits can apply directly to a library in Bromley.

4.4 GLL continue to be a social care partner and advocate of work with children looked after in Bromley. Lemn Sissay OBE was resident poet in Bromley libraries from May-October 2022 as part of the Borough's 'Inspire Bromley' cultural events. A key part of Lemn's residency was a targeted programme with looked after children and care leavers. Lemn worked with a group of young people to teach them the art of poetry and performance skills through a series of workshops. Following the workshops, the group went on to perform with Lemn at the YPoet Festival in July 2022. Lemn Sissay returned to Bromley in October 2022 to perform for in the Glades for local schools to celebrate National Poetry Day, and also gave a private performance for children looked after at Our House in the Civic Centre.

4.5 The Home Library Service is offered to those living at home and unable to visit a library and also to care home residents. A new marketing campaign was launched in Autumn 2022 to

promote 'Books and More to Your Door'. Home Library Champions were appointed in all libraries and leaflets sent out to doctor's surgeries to promote the service. Bromley Well's Dementia Choir attended an event at Central library to celebrate one volunteer's 30th anniversary volunteering with RVS who deliver books at home to Bromley residents.

## **5. TRANSFORMATION/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Following pre-decision scrutiny, the Executive Committee approved the commissioning of the Library Service on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019. This approach is consistent with the Council's stated ambitions around vibrant town centres, supporting independence, children and young people and an excellent Council under its vision for Building a Better Bromley.
- 5.2 The Council's corporate operating principles include the commitment that services will be provided by whoever offers customers and council taxpayers excellent value for money.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The annual cost of the library services contract is met from the Library Service controllable revenue budget. For the year to 31 March 2024 this is £5.175m.
- 6.2 To improve services for customers, the contract allows for an ICT refresh in Year 6 of the contract which commenced November 2022. Bromley Council invested £515k into the ICT Refresh for which GLL acted as the project manager with collaboration with the Client.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This Committee is requested to review and comment on the information contained within this report as to the recent performance of the library service contract provided by GLL. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 created a statutory duty for local authorities "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons."
- 7.2 The Council's Constitution, at Part 4 – Rules of Procedure, provides the terms of reference for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee as it relates to renewal, recreation, and housing. Under these terms of reference, this Committee is responsible for receiving reports and making recommendations on performance monitoring of services falling within the remit of this portfolio which includes libraries, leisure, and culture, including theatres.
- 7.3 Contract Procedure Rule 23.2 provides that for all Contracts with a value higher than £500,000, or which are High Risk, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder, the responsible Officers having submitted for consideration a formal Gateway Review, covering, as appropriate, the matters identified in the Council's standard Gateway Review Template for consideration as part of Contract Monitoring/Management requirements

## **8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 In line with 23.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for all contracts with a value higher than £500k.

## **9. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Paragraphs 3.52-3.56 of the report set out the Building Improvements that are currently underway. This includes works to extend and refurbish West Wickham Library and the co-location of St Paul's Cray Library and the Cotmandene Community Resource Centres. Paragraph 3.47 sets out the detail of the libraries works programme to address the backlog maintenance works

## **10. CARBON REDUCTION/SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 GLL aim to "reduce, always reuse, and recycle. The 2020 refurbishment of the Central Library gave GLL the opportunity to work towards an eco-refit top ensure that the library was as sustainable as possible which will be replicated in forthcoming building projects. Other changes including the cleaning company adopting a 'green regime' by swapping to environmentally friendly cleaning products. When refreshing IT provision all hardware is either reused or recycled has provided information to Bromley Council on libraries that would benefit from LED lighting programmes.

## **11. IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

- 11.1 The recent Library Lates event attracted 3,000 people to the Central Library on Thursday 27th April. The average number of visitors to the library on a Thursday is circa 70. This event attracted a number of people to the town centre, with footfall in the High Street increased by 12.8%. There was increased spend through the Start Up Bromley programme and Churchill Theatre and the event raised awareness about existing library services and provided a great showcase for how the library could be used for a different purpose outside of its normal opening hours.
- 11.2 The success of the Start Up Bromley programme has been recognised with a further £80k of funding allocated from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to fund a Start Up Bromley Business Advisor for a 2-year period. A business support programme has also been funded as part of the UKSPF with libraries as an option as central delivery space. This programme will provide support to both existing and start-up businesses in the borough.
- 11.3 A Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) bid proposal has been developed to connect sites in the borough that currently do not have access to full fibre. One element of the proposal is to connect all 14 of the public libraries in the borough to the new dark fibre deployment. This will directly maximise the availability and benefit of full fibre capable broadband services to the users of the library, both residents and businesses. In addition to the direct benefits of maximising connectivity to the 14 public library sites for the public sector, the indirect benefit (of significant economic value) is that it will stimulate more commercial investment in the areas around those sites to deliver more gigabit capable connectivity. With the spread of the libraries geographically across the borough, this increases the reach for that investment, to address the breadth of the partial not-spots across the borough.

## **12. IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- 12.1 Libraries are proven to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and are uniquely placed to make a difference to their local communities. Post pandemic, GLL is maximising all available opportunities to support wellbeing. As demonstrated throughout this report, libraries deliver a wide range of activities for all ages which combat loneliness and social isolation. These link into the Council's Loneliness Strategy and are of considerable benefit to residents

### 13. CUSTOMER IMPACT

13.1 The 2021 Census identified that 333,000 people live in the London Borough of Bromley. There are currently 31,224 registered users who have used their library card to borrow an item in a library in 2022 representing 9.5% of the population of Bromley. This does not include customers who used the library solely for purposes such as studying, activities or using public PCs

<b>Non-Applicable Headings:</b>	[List any of headings 4 to 15 that do not apply.] 7-Personnel implications 15-Ward Councilors Views
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	DRR17/034 and DRR17/035 -Contract award for the Provision of Library Services-Parts 1 and 2 Reports to Executive Committee &Scrutiny Committee on 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2017