

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

Date: **Wednesday 15 November 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

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 Service Contract, the value of the contract over the ten-year contract term is currently £41,809,437

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 June 2023.

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.

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
 - (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.
 - (3) For people to make their homes in Bromley and for business, enterprise and the third sector to prosper.
 - (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: £4.7m
 5. Source of funding: Revenue budget 2023/24
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (*current and additional*): 2.08 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Libraries Client Team
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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 11 libraries currently not under development considerations 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? Not Applicable
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 4 January-March 2023 and Quarter 1 of the next financial year from April-June 2023: however, the commentary covers a longer period until September 2023.
- 3.2 The GLL Library Service contract commenced on 1st November 2017 and has just entered the seventh year of a ten-year contract with the option of a five-year extension by mutual consent. The contract includes specific provision for scrutiny twice a year with the last report supplied to Members as an information only report in June 2023. The libraries contract requires that the performance of the contractor is reviewed by the Council on an ongoing basis to ensure value for money and that continuous high service standards are maintained.
- 3.3 The services currently 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
- 3.4 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. As highlighted in the June Committee report, recent statistics show that Bromley is currently the highest issuing authority in London.

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 January - June 2023.

KPIs

- 3.7 In the six-month period Jan – Jun 2023, 11 individual incidents of KPI failure occurred, some lasted multiple days or affected multiple services simultaneously. One related to closure of a library for one day following theft of gas pipes (leading to low temperatures in winter) from Mottingham Library; the remaining 10 incidents all related to failures of user-facing IT services within various library branches. IT services affected included provision of public PCs, public WiFi, self-service kiosks, or a combination of services.
- 3.8 The comparatively high number of IT related issues was noted by the Client Team who held discussions on the subject with GLL to fully understand why they were occurring. The majority of issues related to problems with services supplied by third parties, for example OpenReach performing works on telecoms cabinets outside of a library site which affected internet access to the local area. Some were related to the ongoing Council-funded ICT Refresh project being performed in libraries to update and replace existing IT equipment and infrastructure, which the

Client expected could cause minor interruptions during replacement and testing phases which had been factored into the service risk register.

- 3.9 One major IT incident related to newly delivered self-service kiosks failing to be installed for public use at Biggin Hill Library. On-site engineers were unable to install them on the day of delivery as furniture intended to house them was too small and there was no alternative space. The old kiosks had been removed on the same day and could not be reinstated as a temporary measure. Self-service was not available for 10 days before resolution.
- 3.10 Another major incident related to two of 43 public PCs at Central Library which were being used to test newly implemented cloud printing service Princh installed as part of the ICT refresh project. Initial tests were not successful, and the PCs were placed out of order. As this was not flagged as a fault or showed internally as inactive, the PCs remained out of order for an extended time. Although placed out of order on 3rd June, their outage had not been reviewed by GLL or reported to the Council. The Client noted the out of order PCs during a routine visit and requested GLL resolve the issues and return them to working order, which was actioned immediately, both PCs were reinstated the next day.

Mitigation and Penalties

- 3.11 The Client accepted mitigating circumstances for the theft related closure at Mottingham given that this was a force majeure incident and not a consequence of poor planning or performance. 8 of the IT incidents had mitigation accepted based on the initial information supplied by GLL. These issues related to force majeure, third party contractors or temporary 'teething' issues related to the installation of new technology and compatibility with existing technology on-site. Appendix 1 gives a full description of each KPI incident.
- 3.12 The Client requested additional information from GLL in relation to incident of the self-service kiosks at Biggin Hill being place out of order for 10 days due to the long duration of the outage without resolution. The inability to install the new kiosks due to furniture incompatibility was not anticipated, and the sub-contractors delivering/removing the new/old kiosks were not aware of the contractual requirements to maintain a self-service function in-branch. The timing of the incident coincided with multiple short project deadlines imposed on GLL by the Client by the end of March including the temporary re-location of West Wickham Library which stretched available resources. The Client concluded the matter by issuing a Monitoring Notice confirming a penalty would not be applied in this instance, but confirmed greater scrutiny would be placed on the management of the ICT Refresh project.
- 3.13 Like the Biggin Hill incident described above, the incident at Central Library related to the outage of 2 PCs at Central Library was also a direct result of implementation of new technology as part of the ICT Refresh, however this failed to be reported to the Client in a timely manner and was first discovered by a spot check visit from a visiting Council representative. The Client issued a Monitoring Notice requesting additional information about the circumstances surrounding this oversight, but ultimately was not satisfied by the mitigating circumstances provided and issued a second Monitoring Notice confirming the decision to impose a penalty of £1,465.36 on the management fee for June. Additionally, the Client set a number of rectification actions for GLL to implement to help prevent this type of issue reoccurring, including reviewing internal reporting procedures and setting expectations of reporting to Client.

Benefits and Quality

- 3.14 The commissioning of the Library Service was initially carried out with the goal of maintaining and improving the delivery of this statutory service whilst achieving lower revenue costs which the contract has delivered throughout the contract term to date. GLL has demonstrated that it is in the main successfully managing the service while keeping the Councils operating costs down.

(namely through business rates exemption and economies of scale savings). This approach has enabled Bromley Council to retain a high-quality service which continues to develop and improve, avoiding more extreme service reductions that other authorities have taken

- 3.15 GLL remains the UK's largest provider of Library services which has ongoing benefits for Bromley including their quick response to the COVID pandemic creating an online offer-Library Without Walls. GLL were also able to deliver the refurbishment project at St Pauls Cray Library quickly due to the size of their organisation and resources and expertise available to them.
- 3.16 Every year the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) request a suite of annual data such as performance and finance from each public library service in the UK for comparison with similar local authorities. For the period 2021-22 Bromley Libraries issued the highest number of books out of any reporting London Borough. Nationally Bromley libraries achieved the 7th most visits per 1,000 population with Bromley Central Library recorded as 9th busiest library in the UK. The 2022-23 CIPFA return has also now been submitted, the updated rankings will be provided in the next contract performance report.

Monitoring and Quality Control

- 3.17 The Libraries Client Team continues to fully demonstrate that it can successfully manage, monitor performance and oversee ongoing development of the contract on an ongoing basis. The focus for both the Contractor and the Client Team since the pandemic has been to fully restore service usage to pre-Covid levels and to further develop the service which requires a collaborative approach. All contract milestones have been met during this monitoring period including monthly contract meetings and milestone reviews at six and twelve months.
- 3.18 The Client Team undertakes additional internal monitoring processes to keep the contract on track addressing 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 the latest workstreams on the performance and development of Bromley libraries are sent fortnightly to the Portfolio Holder for the Renewal, Regeneration & Housing Policy, Development & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.19 The Client Team undertakes unannounced spot checks on libraries to ensure that the required standards are being met. Aspects of the service which are checked include cleanliness and appearance of the libraries, quality of stock, staffing levels and ICT equipment including public PCs and self-service kiosks. Findings and observations are documented, issues identified are cross checked against GLL incident reports to ensure they have been accurately reported to the Council. It was during a spot check visit that the issues at Central Library-para 3.13 was noted as unresolved.

Operational Risk

- 3.20 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 and the recent ICT outages 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 including those relating to projects to protect service levels from disruption.
- 3.21 The contract risk register includes the operational risk attached to the condition of library buildings which has resulted in some unplanned closures as set out in the KPI log. A Landlord/Tenant split was agreed under the contact terms. GLL is fully compliant with their responsibilities but the extensive backlog of maintenance issues for which the Council is responsible has led to previous unplanned closures of Libraries. Approval was given on 6th September 2023 to proceed with the

libraries works programme identified by the operational property review (OPR) which will improve the condition of library buildings and mitigate the risk of sudden closures.

- 3.22 A recent Unite ballot of Union Members of the workforce of Bromley Libraries recommended industrial action on several issues relating to GLL terms and conditions. This involves 31 staff of a workforce of 168. It has not yet been confirmed what form the industrial action will take. GLL will provide additional staff to keep libraries open and mitigate the impact on Library service users.

SERVICE PROFILE/DATA ANALYSIS

Issues and Visits

- 3.23 Overall monthly issues of items of all types show continuous increases, both compared to pre-COVID levels and against the previous year, during the Jan – Jun 2023 period. In this period the library service issued 837,650 including books & audiobooks, eBooks & eAudiobooks via the Libby app, and eMagazines/eNewspapers through the Newsreader app. This represents a 17.4% increase against the same period in 2019 (pre-COVID), and an 11.2% against 2022.
- 3.24 This continues an upward trend in the volume of items lent to library user since the start of the pandemic while also exceeding pre-pandemic levels, which is despite interruptions to the service from the redevelopment of West Wickham Library from April 2023, and redesign works at St Paul's Cray Library the same month. While issues at these libraries decreased during their temporary relocations, the overall service still performed better against the previous year. This achievement echoes what was noted in the previous report to committee where Bromley Libraries achieved the highest number of books issued by any London authority as reported in the 2021-22 CIPFA Public Library Statistics.
- 3.25 Visits to libraries remains lower than 2019 levels, achieving between 80-84% of equivalent monthly visits to 2019 in the period Jan – Jun 2023. Decreased visits pre-COVID is a trend seen nationally in libraries and reflects high street usage trends across other sectors as well. Notably Bromley Libraries saw quicker recovery of visits early in the pandemic against other authorities. 2023 visits for this period are 23.8% higher than in 2022 which shows continued recovery over time as user confidence returns. This improvement is seen again despite the temporary relocations of 2 libraries.

Digital issues

- 3.26 Since the service expanded its digital offer (Library Without Walls) at the advent of the pandemic, issues of digital items continue to show steady growth over time in step with overall item issues. Comparing Jan - Jun 2023 vs 2022, issues of physical items (books, audiobooks, etc) from libraries increased 10.4%, whereas issues of digital items (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers, etc) increased by 16.4%. This shows quicker uptake of usage of the library's service's digital resources by users as this comparatively new offer becomes known to residents. Digital items represented 17.0% of all items issued during this six-month period, placing the Library Without Walls as the second most issuing 'branch' in the borough.
- 3.27 In-branch, public PCs are made available to anyone with a library card, plus free Wi-Fi for everyone. During temporary relocations of two libraries, internet access to users was supplemented with Hublets (public tablets). In this six-month period public PCs were saw a total of 38,800 hours of usage across 44,400 sessions, plus 765 Hublet sessions. Additionally self-service kiosks are available in each library to allow users to take out and return books on their own. 71% of all issues in-branch were made using self-service technology. Additional ways to access self-service are currently being implemented as part of the ICT Refresh.

Activities & Events

- 3.28 The libraries events programme offers activities and reading groups for both children and adult age groups. Between Jan-Jun 2023 the library service ran over 1,350 activities, 120 reading group sessions, and 260 class visits for children. For adults over 350 activities and 180 reading group sessions were run. An additional 175 family events were run. In total over 43,000 attendees were recorded across all event types. More recently the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge was run in the school summer holidays, employing a sports and games theme, which attracted 5220 young participants, with 2661 completing the challenge.
- 3.29 Examples of the regular children's activities programme include 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. Penge and Mottingham libraries continue to run regular sessions on the Exergame Obie projectors installed following successful Council funding bids via London Sport, continuing libraries' commitment to supporting sport in non-traditional spaces.
- 3.30 In 2023 GLL partnered with the Council multiple times for bespoke events. Bromley Central Library hosted the first of 3 Night time Enterprise Zone (NTEZ) events this year (Library Lates) 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. In April, Bromley Historic Collections hosted a hands-on Toys from the Past handling activity at the Coronation of King Charles III as well as a king-themed puppet show on the day. Penge Library hosted a 'Design Your Crystal Palace' workshop as part of The London Festival of Architecture in June, and Central temporarily hosted the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History exhibition. More recently St Paul's Cray Library and Community Support Centre hosted a relaunch event of the refurbished building and collocation of services in August.
- 3.31 Libraries also mark holidays and other notable days in the calendar with themed activities. These include Chinese New Year, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Book Day, Easter, SPINE Festival, Empathy Day. Further collaborations with non-Council partners include Barclays (hosting the Premier League Trophy and Women's Super League Trophy for one day); Central hosting The World of Peter Rabbit Storytime Trail visited by over 2,100 people between Dec 2022 and Jan 2023; Monstro Theatre puppet shows. Bromley Libraries also regularly hosts author events with recent collaborators including Mo O'Hara, Paul Westmoreland, Tia Fisher, Peter Bently, and Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho.

Bromley Historic Collections

- 3.32 The Museum Collection is now managed by GLL in partnership with The Earth Museum who are leading on development of Bromley Historic Collections and have appointed a new curator. The Earth Museum have developed and supported trials of new engagement projects including a local history exhibition QR trail in March 2023. Winter and Summer festival workshops have been trialled in two branch libraries and include the Rebel community-based workshops which aim to connect with the re-opening of the David Bowie bandstand.
- 3.33 Following a successful funding bid of £5,000 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 continue to seek to progress future funding bids which will develop and improve services.

Activities & Exhibitions-Bromley Historic Collections

- 3.34 Bromley Historic Collections have been involved in several community events this year with an opportunity to promote the service and engage Bromley residents in the collection. BHC took part in the Library Lates event in April 2023 described in paragraphs 3.30 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. 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. Bromley Historic Collection also provided intergenerational activities using toys from the past to engage visitors at the Coronation screening in May 2023. Archive tours were again fully booked for the Open House festival in September 2023.
- 3.35 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. 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.
- 3.36 The Battle of Britain Lace Panel, presented to the Borough in the 1940s, has been accessioned to Bromley Historic Collections. The new installation of the panel was 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. An event, introduced by the Mayor of Bromley, was held on 15 September 2023, Battle of Britain Day, to celebrate the installation of the Battle of Britain lace panel in Bromley Central library and featured as part of the Open House festival. Bromley Historic Collections curated an exhibition to complement the talk on textile conservation and the Senior Archivist gave an insight to the work of Bromley Historic Collections.

PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE

- 3.37 The Libraries Contract was designed to encourage the Service Provide to think innovatively and continually look for ways to develop and improve performance paragraphs 3.23 - 3.36 provide examples of strong performance and growth of the service during the monitoring periods. Plans for ongoing improvements in performance relating to the development including supporting the Council's current priorities are detailed below in paragraphs 3.38 - 3.45

Added value: supporting Council priorities

- 3.38 As Libraries are a statutory service, there is scope for the Council to gain added value from the network of fourteen libraries operated by GLL by increasing and extending the range of services on offer including maximising economic development opportunities and supporting the Council's Loneliness strategy. There are 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. A current example of this is the co-location of the Community outreach service to St Paul's Cray and Mottingham Libraries see below in paragraphs 3.39 - 3.40.

Co-location of Community Outreach Services

- 3.39 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, 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 from April 2023 and to transfer the management of the service to GLL.
- 3.40 St Paul's Cray Library & Community Support Centre re-opened to the public on 8th August following extensive refurbishment operating as a co-located facility in a modern re-imagined space. The programme of work addressed the recommendations of the condition surveys provided as part of the Operational Property Review (OPR). Improvements include a disabled toilet, private meeting space and a re-modelled children's library. The works required to improve Mottingham Library are on pause until the trial period is completed and a decision has been made on whether to permanently move the Community Support Centre to the library or to an alternative location. The preferred option for MCLS is on the Mottingham Estate and Castlecombe Youth Centre is currently being scoped out. The Outreach service from the library is being monitored to ensure reach to vulnerable residents.

Reducing loneliness & isolation

- 3.41 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.
- 3.42 Another service which combats loneliness is the Home Library Service which is available to those living at home or in a care setting who are unable to visit a library in person. 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.
- 3.43 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.
- 3.44 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 continue with attendance averaging at 50-100 people. GLL also offer private spaces for people who need to sit job interviews or contact family ('Room to Zoom' campaign).

Information Management

- 3.45 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 and LBB now have a shared interface through which LBB colleagues can consult information about archive procedures or contact the archives for storage. BHC also continues to support those holding historic records across the Borough e.g. the parish records audit.

PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS IN VALUE FOR MONEY

- 3.46 The contract encourages ongoing improvements in value for money which is achieved by introducing new services and modernising library buildings. St Pauls Cray Library has now been refurbished and fully re-modelled to accommodate both the library service and the Community Support Service outreach (paragraphs 3.39-3.40). Other examples include Start Up Bromley spaces (paragraphs 3.56-3.60). GLL continue to develop this service demonstrating further value for money on the initial investment from ARG funding.
- 3.47 The current ten-year service contract with GLL comes to an end on 31st October 2027. The repair works undertaken to the library buildings will strengthen the Council's position when the contract is re-tendered or re-negotiated with GLL through the option to extend for an additional five years. The aim is for the library buildings to move to Full Repairing and insuring leases which this repair programme will enable. While this alone is unlikely to lead to significant savings, it will reduce risk for the Council (see paragraph 3.21) with the repair works leading to savings in relation to energy bills and reactive patch maintenance.

Stock Purchasing

- 3.48 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. 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 over the last six months.
- 3.49 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. 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 varied during the pandemic when more online resources were purchased. The stock plan for this financial year was 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 the recently refurbished St Paul's Cray library. The impact of the OPR refurbishment on libraries will also have an impact on stock spend and planning.

Building Improvements

- 3.50 Modern Library buildings offer so much more than books alone. They are unique 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.
- 3.51 As described in paragraph 3.40 the refurbished St Paul's Cray Library re-opened on 8th August with a Community Launch event. Trend analysis of statistics for the first month show that provisionally visits and issues at the new building are higher compared to visits to the library before co-location. Footfall has been boosted by the mid-month launch event and wider range of services available due to the co-location offering an extended service to the communities including help with benefits, managing unemployment, housing queries and job-seeking.

- 3.52 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 overall. The new extended library will include a café, fully accessible toilets, hireable community events space, outdoor space, and a classroom for children's events. Whilst the work is underway, a temporary library has been provided in nearby Coney Hall at 77 Addington Road. Feedback from residents has been positive.
- 3.53 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.
- 3.54 The Libraries Works programme consultancy contract has been out for Tender and is currently in the standstill period. The programme which will be project managed by the Council's Regeneration Team will address the library work stream resulting from the findings of the Council's Operational Property review (OPR). The next library to be repaired is Southborough and this will be followed by Beckenham. Further information can be found in report HPR2023/050.
- 3.55 Bromley Central Library is subject to separate consideration and further information can be found in report HPR2023/056.

Start Up Bromley

- 3.56 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 490 members. The scheme offers business centres with sound-proofed office and meeting spaces in Bromley Central, Orpington and Biggin Hill libraries which are also available for hire.
- 3.57 Start Up Bromley hosted its second business week in March 2023 which was 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.
- 3.58 Start Up Bromley has taken part in a range of events to support entrepreneurs and the wider community in the Borough such as taking part in street markets when Bromley Council received funding from the Mayor of London's High Streets for All Challenge to deliver a project for young people at Bromley High Street. In April 2023, Start Up Bromley showcased nine new and upcoming local businesses in a mini-market at the first of the BR1 Lates events held at Bromley Central Library as part of NTEZ. With over 3,000 people coming through the library over the course of the evening, businesses were able to interact with a much-wider, new client base. Following this success, in July Start Up Bromley took part in the second of the Bromley's NTEZ events, a sport and wellbeing festival in Bromley town centre. In September 2023, Start Up Bromley hosted an End of Summer Market in the Orpington Market Square, in collaboration with Orpington 1st and the Walnuts Centre. In October, Start Up Bromley participated in the third of Bromley's NTEZ events, a Winter Lights Spectacular, providing an opportunity to showcase to a wider client base.
- 3.59 Start Up Bromley partners with the British Library Business & IP Centre (BIPC) to increase the support and resources provided to businesses and entrepreneurs in Bromley. In July 2023,

representatives from Start Up Bromley, Greenwich and Wandsworth, attended a celebration reception at the House of Lords for the launch of the Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0 report, which reviews the impact of BIPC (Business and Intellectual Property Centre) services across the UK over the past three years. These BIPC services form part of the British Library's National Network, which received over £13 million from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in 2020, which enabled the network to spread to over 100 locations, bringing on board new centres and energising existing BIPC's to deliver even more support.

3.60 Start Up Bromley was awarded UKSPF Supporting Local Business (SLB) funding of £80k over 2 years from April 2023. This was in order to resume the assistance provided by a Business Advisor for 1:1 support to businesses and entrepreneurs. Progress continues to be made on the project, which includes the following outputs & outcomes achieved so far:

- Over 64 enterprises receiving non-financial assistance
- Over 47 entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready
- 2 jobs created
- 2 new enterprises created
- 18 enterprises adopting new or improved products & services

USER/STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Complaints

3.61 The total number of complaints received about the library service in the six-month period from January – June 2023 was 17, 5 fewer than in the previous six-month period. One complaint was received by a Councillor and escalated via the Libraries Client Team; the remaining 16 were received and answered by GLL. All complaints received a written response from LBB or GLL and noted at monthly Client/GLL meetings.

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

<u>Complaint Type</u>	<u>Number of Complaints</u>	<u>Libraries</u>
Received by GLL		
Lack of public toilets	3 Complaints	3 x Central
Lift out of order	2 Complaints	2 x Central
Noise levels from other users	2 Complaints	2 x Central
Website info out of date	1 Complaint	1 x Bromley Historic Collections
Hearing loops not in branch	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Not enough stock of this type	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Disabled/pushchair access	1 Complaint	1 x Biggin Hill
Public PC vulnerability	1 Complaint	1 x Orpington
Specific newspaper not on digital services	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Age restriction on Play Zone activities	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Issue using online item renewal system	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Old periodicals not on public display	1 Complaint	1 x Central
Received by LBB		
Low number of Play Zone sessions per week	1 Complaint	1 x Central

3.63 GLL responded to each complaint sent to them – Toilets at Central and disabled/pushchair access improvements were noted as not possible due to building limitations; lift repairs noted as

escalated to Bromley Facilities Management. Easily rectifiable complaints such as updating website info, installing hearing loops, digital newspaper access and the identified PC vulnerability were actioned/ fixed quickly by GLL. Individual stock queries were discussed with users who were invited to suggest new books in one case.

- 3.64 The storybook-themed Play Zone at Central Library attracted complaints via GLL and LBB with the main criticism being the lack of activities or times available to use it during the week given its large footprint. GLL have since expanded the offer to 4 staff-guided Learning Through Play sessions for different age groups utilising the Play Zone and are continuing to consider other options to extend use of the facility.

Customer Satisfaction

- 3.65 During the same six-month period 13 compliments were also received. 12 of these praised the team of staff at an individual library branch (notably for the Literary Quiz activity at Orpington and Tea and Topics event at Shortlands. Additionally, the NTEZ Library Lates event received praise. Further neutral comments suggested changes to age ranges and timing of some activities.
- 3.66 The 2023 Library Annual User Survey for all GLL library partnerships, including Bromley, is presently ongoing until 31st December 2023. This year all GLL partnerships will be sharing the same set of questions and so will be more directly comparable compared to previous years. Additionally, the duration of the survey will be longer – about 3 months – to collect more responses. The previous year's survey results showed the average rating of 'overall experience' was 4.73 out of 5 in Bromley. The weakest surveyed area appeared to be the provision of adult activities which GLL have focussed on addressing in 2023.

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 which has been demonstrated within this report. The Contactor is committed to developing services for them and to continuing to look at funding opportunities to expand their offer. Bromley Libraries provide more than books also offering face-to-face activities to connect library users and reduce social isolation. There are reading groups for all ages e.g. children, teens and adults. Bounce and Rhyme and Storytime sessions at all Bromley libraries are invaluable for new parents wanting to make friends with a shared experience and connect with their children.
- 4.2 Bromley libraries continues its commitment to inspire physical activity in non-traditional spaces. Following the successful installation of an interactive fitness console in Mottingham library last year, additional funding was received from London Sport's Together Fund which has funded another console in Penge library and installed in February 2023. The technology aims to improve health outcomes and tackle higher than average levels of obesity in the community in a fun and engaging way. It is also used by other community groups that work with senior citizens to support a more active lifestyle and the prevention of illnesses such as dementia.
- 4.3 Support for dementia sufferers and their carers is a priority for the library service. GLL continue to use the 'Magic Table' (projects light onto a surface) in activities across libraries including coffee mornings providing support for dementia sufferers and their carers in 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.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 In September 2023, Bromley libraries joined the Libraries Connected 'Ready to learn' campaign which highlights the crucial role libraries play in helping young children prepare for school. Libraries promote social skills, a curiosity about learning, and a wide-range of age-appropriate books and resources. The campaign was promoted by a series of posts on Bromley Libraries social media as parents were preparing for their children to start school. Library staff continue to encourage younger children to join the libraries before they start school, through activities such as Baby Bounce and Rhyme and Storytime and by taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge.

5. TRANSFORMATION/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Following pre-decision scrutiny, the Executive Committee approved the commissioning of the Library Service on 19th 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 This report requests members to note the performance of GLL which our Libraries contractor for the London Borough of Bromley.
- 6.2 The annual cost of the library services contract is met from the Library Service controllable revenue budget and for the year to 31 March 2024 this is £4.691m.
- 6.3 There are no direct financial implications from this report, however poor performance by any of our contractors of public services has a reputational impact to the council which can lead to cost implications in the future.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This Committee is requested to note and comment on the information contained within this annual/performance monitoring report as to the contract performance of Greenwich Leisure Ltd regarding the provision of the Library Service Contract which commenced on 1 November 2017 and has entered the seventh year of a ten year Contract with the option of a five year extension by mutual consent and lasts till 31st October 2027. These services are provided due to the statutory requirements highlighted in this report.
- 7.2 The Council has a duty of care to have regard to the general health and wellbeing of residents and Libraries are proven to have positive impacts on the wellbeing of the Local Community. This Local Authority duty is also reflected under the 'Public Libraries Act 1964'. The general principles are also reflected in 'Making Bromley Even Better Priorities' as outlined in the Report.

- 7.3 The Council also has both an implied and a specific power under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 7.4 This Report asks the Members of the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee to note the performance of the service provider since the last service performance report was presented.
- 7.5 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 the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Portfolio. Under these, of reference, this Committee is responsible for receiving reports and making recommendations on performance monitoring of services falling within the remit of this portfolio.
- 7.6 Contract Procedure Rule 23.2 provides that for all Contracts with a value higher than £500,000, or which are High Risk, an annual/performance 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 Contract Procedure Rule 23.2 requires an annual performance report to the Portfolio Holder for all contracts with a whole life value of £500k or higher. This report meets that requirement.

9. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Paragraphs 3.51 - 3.53 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 3.54-3.55 set 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 to 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 Libraries have a positive impact on the local economy, particularly with many libraries being located in close proximity to High Streets. The presence of libraries makes people feel more positive about their local environment and provides many services that attract people to High Streets within 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 There are currently 31,224 registered users of Bromley libraries who have used their library card to borrow an item in a library branch in 2022 which represents 9.5% of the Bromley population. This does not include customers for a reason other than book borrowing which includes studying, attending activities or for study or using Wi-Fi or public PCs. In the period of January-June 2023 there were 43,000 attendees across all event types which includes attendees participating in multiple events.

Non-Applicable Headings:	Personnel Implications Ward Councillors 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 th July 2017 HPR 2023/050-Library Works Progress and Crofton Roman Villa- Reports to Scrutiny Committee on 6 th September 2023 and Exectutive on September 20 th . HPR2023/056-Relocation of Central Library. Reports to Scrutiny Committee on 17 th October and Executive on 18 th October 2023