

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	READING LIBRARIES: FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE AND LEISURE
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed strategic themes to guide the future direction of the Council's library service, upon which consultation with the public will take place.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Reading's library service has undergone substantial change since the Council implemented the last Library Services strategy in 2015/16. Significantly, the overall library service budget was reduced by around £600,000 or 40% of the said budget following two large sets of changes in 2017/18 and 2018/19, which

- * reduced opening hours at all sites
- * reduced staffing at all sites, supported by self service
- * did not involve the closure of any libraries
- * moved two libraries into hub buildings.

- 2.2 Additional income has been generated by Reading's libraries to reduce budget pressures through activities such as rental of space and a visa verification service. This additional income has avoided the need to make further savings since 2018.

- 2.2 Officers have reviewed the library service, informed by the data held by the service with a particular focus on maximising the benefits to Reading, and in light of the new Corporate plan, in order to produce the strategic themes.

- 2.3 The proposed key strategic priorities are as follows, and there is further background at Section 5 and Appendix 1.

- Supporting recovery from Covid-19
- Helping Children and Young People
- Improving Digital Inclusion

- Supporting improvement in Health, Wellbeing and Literacy
 - Providing access to quality cultural experiences
- 2.4 The review and proposed strategic priorities have been informed by:
- Patterns of library use across opening hours and where the busy periods are
 - Use as a percentage of population in different areas of Reading
 - How this use maps to areas of deprivation
 - Similarities and differences in profiles of the ages of those using the service
 - Where ICT users within libraries are coming from
- 2.5 The Strategy aims to ensure that the library service is forward looking, innovative and provides an excellent experience for everyone, as well as contributing as much as possible to the overall corporate priorities for Reading.
- 2.6 The proposed consultation is on the strategic themes, rather than any specific proposals. The consultation would also inform any potential changes to Central Library, as well as informing future delivery of the service.
- 2.7 This report includes Appendices as follows:
- Appendix 1 : Proposed Strategic Themes for Reading Libraries, 2022-27
- Appendix 2 : Summary background data underlying strategy
- Appendix 3 : Equality Impact Assessment relating to home service change

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 That Committee agrees to consult on the proposed strategic themes as set out in Appendix 1 in order to inform the Library Strategy and future service offer, including at any reconfigured Reading Central Library and Home Visiting Service, as set out in sections 6 and 7 of this report.
- 3.3 That Committee endorses the consultation approach and a 6 week consultation to commence during August 2021, subject to a further report to Committee in November 2021 setting out the outcome of the consultation exercise together with the a proposed Library Strategy 2022-27, informed by such consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

Service Context

- 4.1 Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act the Council is obliged to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all individuals who live, work or study within the borough. Reading Borough Council currently delivers this through a central library; 6 local branch libraries across the borough; a toy library ; a growing offer of e-resources; a mobile library and home visiting service for the elderly and those unable to leave home. The service offers a comprehensive range of services over and above the legal requirements specified in the 1964 Act.
- 4.2 The library service is open to all, but with a focus on targeting resources to improve outcomes for different groups or communities and meeting the Council's wider strategic priorities.

- 4.3 Since the initial lockdown closure in March 2020 due to Covid-19, the library service has obviously looked and felt quite different. However, since July 2020 and throughout all subsequent lockdowns, a form of physical library offer has been available to Reading's library users. From mid-May 2021 to date, all libraries have offered a limited service with reduced opening hours. Libraries were designated essential services for reasons of supporting access to digital services and for the impact access to books has on education and wellbeing and therefore a service has continued to be maintained.

Libraries have reached new audiences:

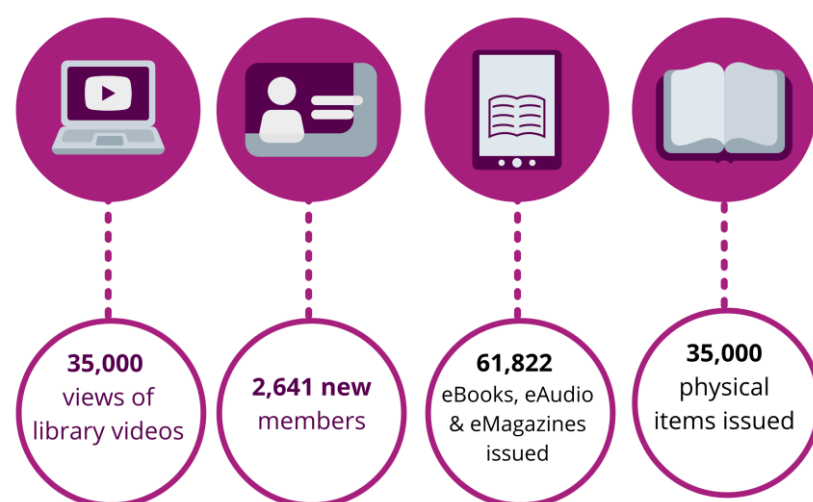
- Over 2,500 new members have joined since March 2020.
- Social media engagement went up by 1,000% in some cases, and increased from one post a day to around ten.
- Our story, rhymetime, craft and local history videos have been viewed over 35,000 times.
- These videos remain available, subject to publishers' copyright, via Reading Council YouTube/Facebook and the new streaming site, Reading Culture Live.

An expanded and improved digital experience:

- Online library resources improved and expanded.
- Issues of e-resources between April-September 2020 are three times what they were for the same period last year and have stayed at the new high level, with 61,822 items issued during 2020/21.
- The E-resources library is now the second busiest library in Reading when comparing to physical issues at library sites pre-March 2020.

Still providing a greatly valued face-to-face service:

- Face to face library services were maintained as essential services through the November 2020 and Spring 2021 lockdowns.
- 600 people per week accessing our libraries in person, borrowing 35,000 items.
- 45% of all books we loan are children's books.
- The home visiting service is supporting c.400 of the most vulnerable people in Reading and has been operating since July 2020, having been suspended during the first lockdown in March 2020.
- Around 90% of branch library use is from within the immediate library catchment - valued local services.
- Libraries remained open during autumn 2020 and spring 2021 lockdowns.



Library Service Strategy - the need:

- 4.4 As part of the first phase of substantial change in 2015/16, the library service developed the 2015/16 Strategy - the time that has now passed since the development and implementation of the 2015/16 Strategy and the subsequent changes to the Library budget mean that it is now a timely moment to review this document.
- 4.5 Whilst many of the reasons given by residents and library users previously for valuing the library service are likely to remain, a new library strategy will set out what we can achieve in the next few years.
- 4.6 In previous library service consultation exercises in 2015, 2016 and 2018, customers highlighted the importance of libraries in:
- Providing local and free access to a wide range of books.
 - Supporting educational development - including the development of literacy, language and IT skills.
 - Supporting communities and fostering social interaction - especially between young children, their guardians and older people.
 - Providing access to IT and thereby tackling digital exclusion (with 12% of respondents previously reporting that they are reliant on libraries for their access to the internet).
 - Providing a safe space for vulnerable groups.
- 4.7 It is too early to tell what the long-term impact of Covid-19 may be on the library service's offer of shared space, books, resources and equipment. However, the library service, by virtue of being rooted in local communities, is ideally placed to respond locally to the changed world following Covid-19.
- 4.8 A renewed library strategy is therefore essential in order to prioritise limited resource, to make the biggest difference to residents, to provide a driver for the service and to attempt to increase the resilience the service has, all in compliance with the Council's legal obligations as set out in the 1964 Act - see Section 11.

5. DRAFT LIBRARY STRATEGY 2022-27

- 5.1 The Council's aim is to ensure provision of a comprehensive, modern, affordable and efficient service for Reading which reflects local needs and makes the best use of

resources. Legally, under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, a local authority must provide a library service and this service must be 'comprehensive and efficient'.

- 5.2 We have examined the year 2019/20 in detail, looking at every recorded transaction to get a detailed picture of how the service was being used and by who. We used 2019/20 as a full year without any changes to library opening hours, other than building works, and prior to Covid-19. We did have some library closures during this year for building works but this has not materially altered patterns of use. Over one million transactions took place within the library service during the year.
- 5.3 We wanted to see how well used the library was in different areas, when we were being used, who our users were, what they were borrowing and how ICT provision was being used.
- 5.4 By examining the data and overlaying geographical and other data we have been able to highlight some areas for further focus and these form the basis of the overall strategy.
- 5.5 Our core areas of focus have been:
 - * patterns of library use across opening hours and where the busy periods are
 - * use as a percentage of population in different areas of Reading
 - * how this use maps to areas of deprivation
 - * similarities and differences in profiles of the ages of those using the service
 - * where ICT users within libraries are coming from
- 5.6 The data is presented at Appendix 2 and has informed the proposed strategic themes for the library service to focus on. Should the strategic themes be adopted, following the outcome of the consultation process, officers will bring forward a library strategy and delivery plan to show how we will deliver against the priorities.
- 5.7 Usage patterns for previous years remain very relevant, and have also been factored in, however it is the detailed data review of 2019/20 that has driven the drafting of the strategic themes.
- 5.8 Whilst usage in 2020/21 was clearly very different, we will continue to reflect on any changes in usage as services progressively return in 2021/22 and learn from other authorities who have started a fuller reopening programme earlier.

6. READING CENTRAL LIBRARY

- 6.1 Reading Central Library was built by Berkshire County Library Service as the County Library Headquarters and opened in 1985.
- 6.2 The building has never undergone full refurbishment and many parts of the building are, after 35 years, either end of life or very tired.
- 6.3 The library does not currently provide an attractive environment for customers, despite the ongoing best efforts of library staff and piecemeal changes over the years. There have been many changes made which have all taken a toll on the building, and the building is no longer a flagship central library that meets the Council's aspirations for its customers. The building is one of the busiest Council buildings in Reading, welcoming over 200,000 visitors a year (pre-Covid 19), providing services over 3 floors, with partner organisations based in the building, and generating a high level of income through rental and transactional services totalling over £300,000 per year.

- 6.4 There are issues in and around the building with antisocial behaviour which any proposed change should seek to address, as well as a need to configure and secure spaces within the building, better provision for those working and studying, better lighting, a better layout and a reconfiguration of staff space.
- 6.5 The building therefore either needs a full refurbishment and reconfiguring to make best use of space, or the library will need to relocate, as the current situation is not sustainable or desirable. Either option is likely to require a substantial capital investment, for which there is provision in the current capital budget:

Capital programme	2021/22	2022/23
Central Library	£920,000	£230,000

- 6.6 The chance to refurbish Reading Central Library or create a new central library in Reading has not happened since 1985, and as part of the consultation on the strategic themes, it is also proposed we consult residents and customers on what they would like to see in the town's flagship library, to better inform decision-making as we look how this space could be configured.
- 6.7 The consultation will not include any potential locations, these will be determined by part of an overall Council asset and estates review. Anything arising from this review would be brought forward to councillors.
- 6.8 Any changes to Central Library will be informed by and help deliver the net zero carbon plan and energy reductions required by Reading Borough Council. This will reduce ongoing costs, improve efficiency and reduce energy requirements. Works would be informed by a decarbonisation feasibility study.

7. HOME LIBRARY SERVICE

- 7.1 As part of an initial assessment of how the home visiting service has run under lockdown, is further proposed that we would consult on the vehicles used by the home visiting service.
- 7.2 The home service delivers library stock to those unable to visit a library building.
- 7.3 Due to Covid-19, the entire home service ceased between March and July 2020 and restarted in August 2020.
- 7.4 The majority of customers prior to Covid-19 were visited at their own homes by staff or volunteers in a delivery vehicle and this continues and would continue to be the case.
- 7.5 A larger vehicle, which provided 5 public stops with the ability for customers to board and choose books, as well as visits to sheltered housing complexes, has not been provided since March 2020, due to being replaced by a smaller vehicle. Those customers who previously used this element of service have been offered and provided with direct delivery to doors.
- 7.6 We would seek views on removing the larger vehicle from service and offering all services on this 'direct to home from staff and volunteer' model, which has been running successfully since August 2020.
- 7.7 All customers currently having visits from the home service would still be visited, and any library item or a selection of items could be provided to these customers.

- 7.8 Subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, if we changed entirely to this model, there would be a small £5,000 net saving in fleet costs and we would look to move to electric vehicles as part of the change.
- 7.9 Any decision if required relating to this change would come forward to committee in November.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 8.1 The Strategic themes directly contribute towards the achievement of the following Corporate Plan priorities

Healthy Environment

- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Services provided in local communities, with associated environmental benefits

Thriving Communities

- Tackling inequalities
- Dealing with effects of pandemic

Inclusive Economy

- Building on Cultural Heritage
- Creating skills, education and training opportunities

- 8.2 The corporate plan also highlights the need for Reading to be ‘Developing our library network to provide innovative local services in person and online’ - the Strategy will support this work

- 8.3 The corporate plan can be viewed here:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/council/policies-finance-and-legal-information/corporate-plan/council-corporate-plan-2021-to-2022/>

- 8.4 The Strategic themes have been informed by

Customer Experience Strategy

‘Every interaction will be a positive experience - better, faster, simpler’

Libraries are one of the busiest face to face Reading Borough Council services.

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s9963/Customer%20Experience%20Strategy.pdf>

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

‘Health and wellbeing is about the whole person - giving physical, emotional and social aspects equal attention. It is about improving the way people feel and function today and increasing their chances of longer and healthier lives’

By providing resources, activities and information, and a listening ear, libraries promote, support and help with mental and physical wellbeing, loneliness and other support.

https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2017-2020_final.pdf

Culture and Heritage Strategy

Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.

By providing spaces for artists and performers across Reading and providing inspirational culture in community venues, we can engage people in stories and storytelling in all forms.

<https://images.reading.gov.uk/2020/01/Culture-and-Heritage-Strategy.pdf>

- 8.5 In addition, any changes to buildings would be done with environmental and carbon reduction principles, in line with further notes at Section 13 below.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the consultation takes place during August and September. . The aims of the consultation would be to

- Establish the level of support for the principles that will underpin the new Library Strategy and see if it was felt we were focusing on the right areas
- Get feedback over any potential areas for Central library change to focus on
- Get feedback over the future direction of the home delivery service.

- 9.2 The consultation would utilise the Council's consultation hub, and would also use the following ways to generate feedback, some of which we would run ourselves and some with a consultation partner.

- Contacting library members by email
- Highlighting in Library/Council social media feeds
- Posting information directly on the library website
- Paper forms to also be made available and picked up/posted on request.
- Online/in person drop ins
- Highlighting to all relevant groups in order to obtain feedback and raise awareness
- Some targeted work in areas close to libraries with non-library members.
- Direct engagement with home library service members

- 9.3 The consultation will encompass a brief questionnaire as well as targeted exercises.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10.2 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.3 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 10.4 As we are consulting on strategic direction and possible provision of service in a refurbished/relocated library, there are currently no concrete proposals in this area requiring an equalities impact assessment. However, were this to change, it will be necessary to consider the equalities impact of any final recommendation once arrived at following consultation.
- 10.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been done for the consultation on possible changes to the home visiting service and this is included at Appendix 3. To note that any change would come back to committee for approval with a further EIA.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all persons’ in the area that want to make use of it (section 7), taking into account local needs and resources. Further, local councils must:
- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the Library Service (section 7(2)(b))
 - lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b))
 - keep adequate stocks for borrowing/reference ‘sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children’
- 11.2 It is the statutory duty of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to superintend, and promote the improvement of, the public Library Service provided by local authorities in England and secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred on them as library authorities. The Secretary of State has a statutory power to intervene when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service (section 10). He/she will only intervene after careful consideration of local authorities’ compliance with the terms of the 1964 Act. This power to intervene has been utilised on only one occasion since 1964, with a public inquiry on the Wirral in 2009.

- 11.3 In October 2014, the Secretary of State, following receipt of a complaint in regards to Sheffield Library Service, issued a 'minded to' letter in October 2014, and in March 2015 issued a final decision letter. The decision letters cited the following observations of Ouseley J in *Bailey v London Borough of Brent* [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin):

A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.

- 11.4 The letters also noted the view that:
- a wide range of approaches are open to the local authority when deciding how to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
 - the Secretary of State does not seek to proscribe how local authorities discharge their primary duty.
- 11.5 In determining whether to order an inquiry, the Secretary of State gives consideration to a number of factors, including:
- whether there is any serious doubt or uncertainty as to whether the local authority is (or may cease to be) complying with its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
 - whether the local authority appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way
 - whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the local authority's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community
 - whether the local authority appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals
 - whether the local authority has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals
 - whether the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy
 - the advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives
 - whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered
- 11.6 The Secretary of State also noted that, as confirmed by the High Court in *R (Green) v Gloucestershire City Council* [2011] EWHC 2687 (Admin):

The availability of resources is highly material to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service. The section 7 duty cannot be exempt or divorced from resource issues and cannot in law escape the reductions which have been rendered inevitable in the light of the financial crisis engulfing the country.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There is no saving or increase in expenditure directly arising from this consultation.
- 12.2 The cost of engaging an external provider to run the consultation would be picked up by existing library and culture service budgets.
- 12.3 Subject to a strategy being ultimately adopted, there may be changes to the revenue and capital budgets required, but these would be subject to future decisions by the council.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 13.2 The proposed strategic principles or any strategy arising would not directly contribute to changes in this area.
- 13.3 Any environmental or climate related issues arising as part of works to Central Library would be fully considered and would contribute to the net zero aim by 2030. Should any works progress with Central Library then further opportunities would be taken to improve the energy efficiency of the building, which currently rates C-E on an Energy Performance Certificate scale. Overall any review of library buildings will include environmental improvements, in line with ongoing work on building efficiency and carbon reduction.
- 13.4 The possible change to the home library service could mean removal of an older vehicle and the use of smaller, more efficient vehicles to visit customers. As we move to an electric fleet, this will more than offset the increased number of journeys made by the smaller vehicles.

APPENDIX ONE

DRAFT LIBRARY STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES 2022-27

The proposed principles underlying a future strategy are

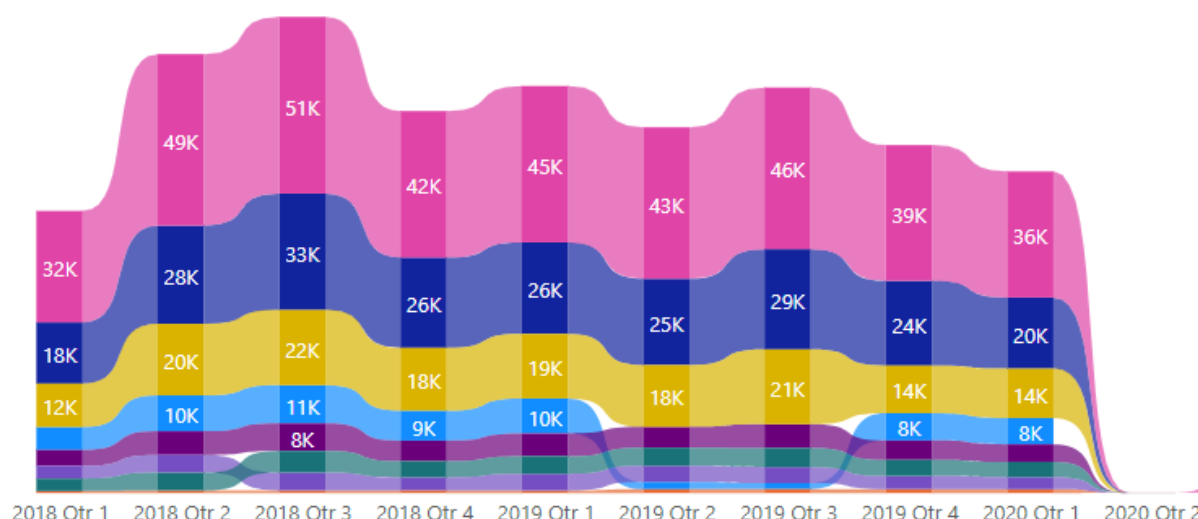
- **Supporting recovery from Covid-19**
Being a trusted, open space in local communities
Linking to wider community projects to support residents
Providing a quality service, when people need it
- **Helping Children and Young People**
Providing access to inspiring, relevant collections and spaces
Encouraging reading for pleasure
Supporting early speech and language
- **Improving Digital Inclusion**
Providing free fixed PC and wifi use in communities
Encouraging those without access to use the library
Providing an easy to use online service
- **Supporting improvement in Health, Wellbeing and Literacy**
Contributing to levelling up agendas through library usage and promotion
Helping to reduce inequality and improve mental and physical health outcomes
Encouraging reading in all forms at all ages
- **Providing access to quality cultural experiences**
Working with cultural organisations locally and regionally
Providing a platform for culture rooted in local communities
Encouraging participation in activities

APPENDIX TWO UNDERLYING DATA SUMMARY

Chart A - Breakdown of issues by year,quarter and location,2018-2020

Issues by Year, Quarter and Location

Location ● Battle ● Caversham ● Mobile ● Palmer ● Reading Central ● Southcote ● Tilehurst ● Web ● Whitley



This shows absolute numbers of loans across a time period, broken down by site. To note that Battle was closed for building works in part of 2019, and that Q1 in this chart is Jan-Mar.

Table 1 - Breakdown of loans per hour of opening

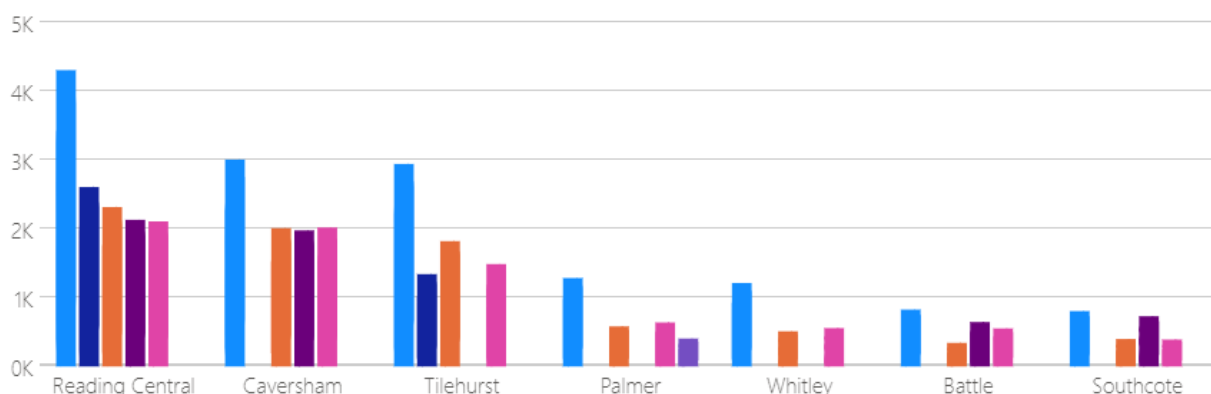
	2018/19	2019/20
Central	46.58	50.02
Caversham	39.78	41.43
Tilehurst	36.38	36.54
Battle	18.49	18.92
Palmer Park	14.21	13.52
Southcote	13.05	9.82
Whitley	13.70	12.64

This indicates that as hours reduced, usage did reduce but not as quickly at many sites, making some hours of opening busier than they were before. The data takes account of days of closure in 2018/19 for library moves at Southcote and Whitley, and any closures for building works in 2019/20

Chart B - Number of loans per number of opening hours in a day (2019/20)

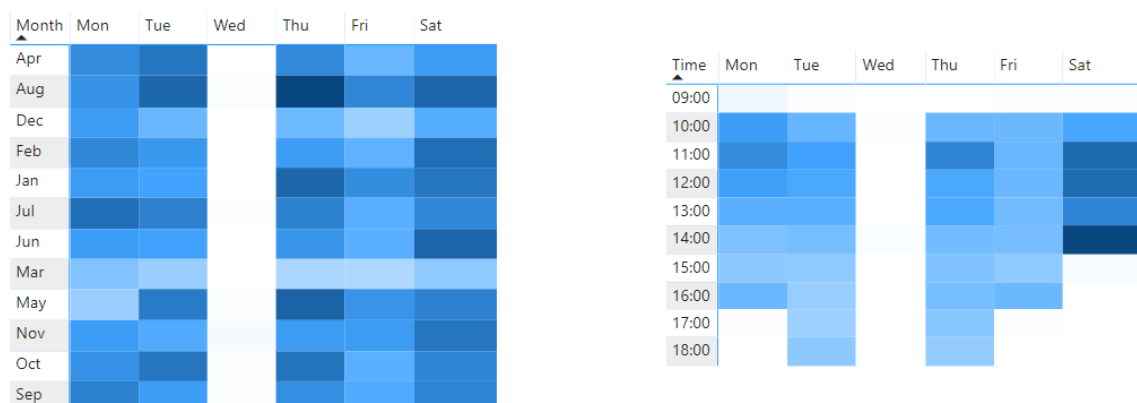
Number of Loans Per Number of Opening Hours in a Day (19/20)

Week_Day: Sat Mon Thu Fri Tue Wed



This shows the cumulative borrowing through the year split by opening hours and site, to show the busiest days. The process was to total all the loans across the year, then to check which day of the week items were loaned to get a total for (eg) Monday loans, then divide by opening hours on that day. This illustrates peak days at each site more clearly and shows the importance of Saturdays.

Chart C Central library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods



These and subsequent charts D-I are a breakdown with darker colours indicating busier periods, both by day and month, and then by hour of the day, to pick up where sites are busiest and allow comparisons. White space indicates closure.

This further shows the busiest times are generally Saturdays.

Chart D Caversham library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

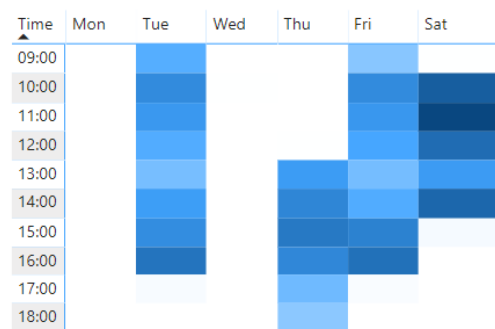
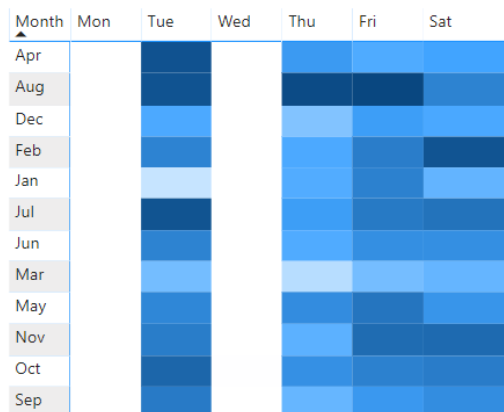


Chart E Tilehurst library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

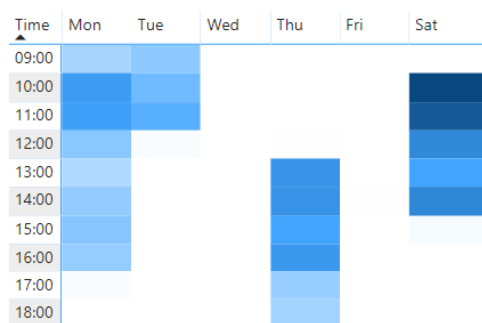
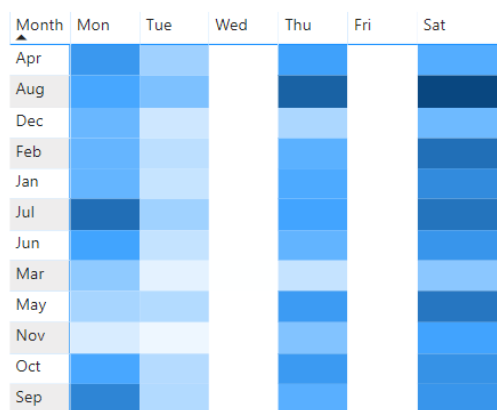


Chart F Battle library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

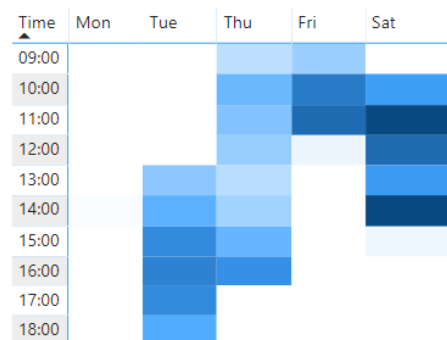
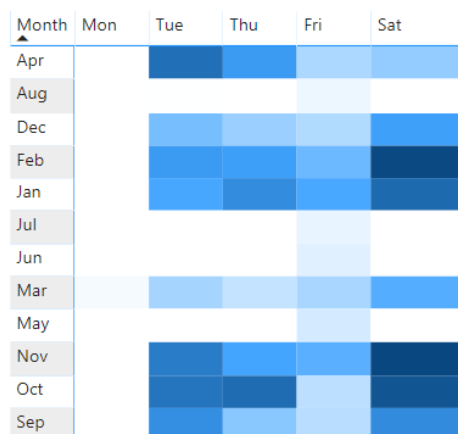


Chart G Palmer Park library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

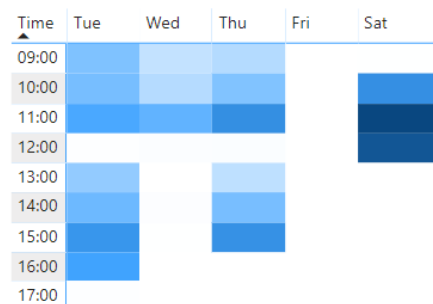
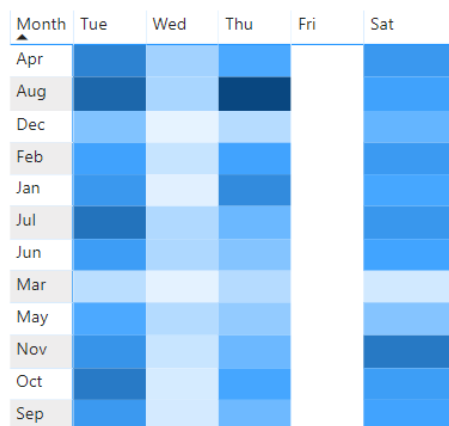


Chart H Southcote library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

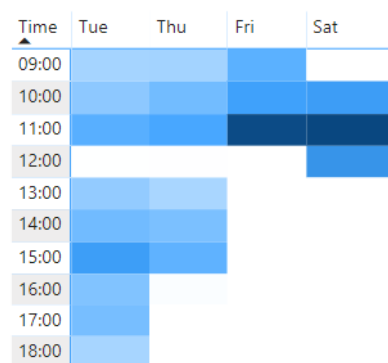
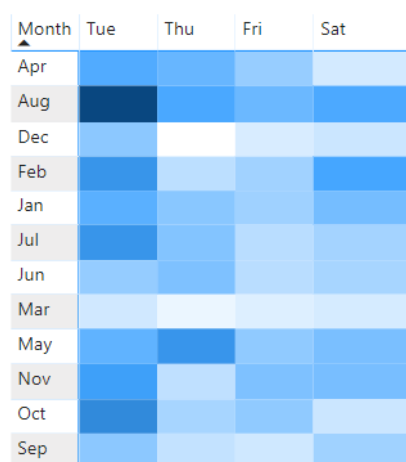


Chart I Central library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

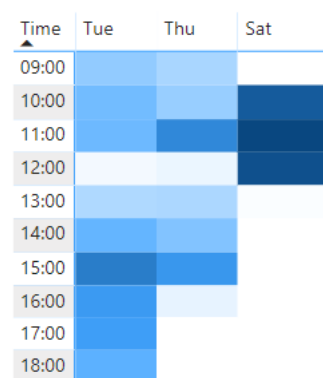
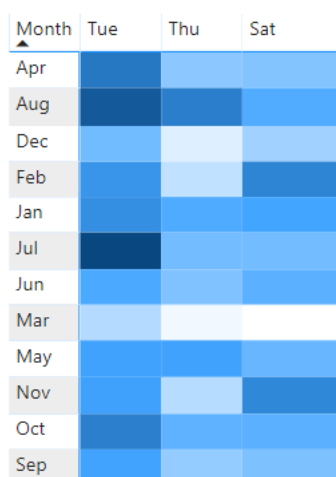
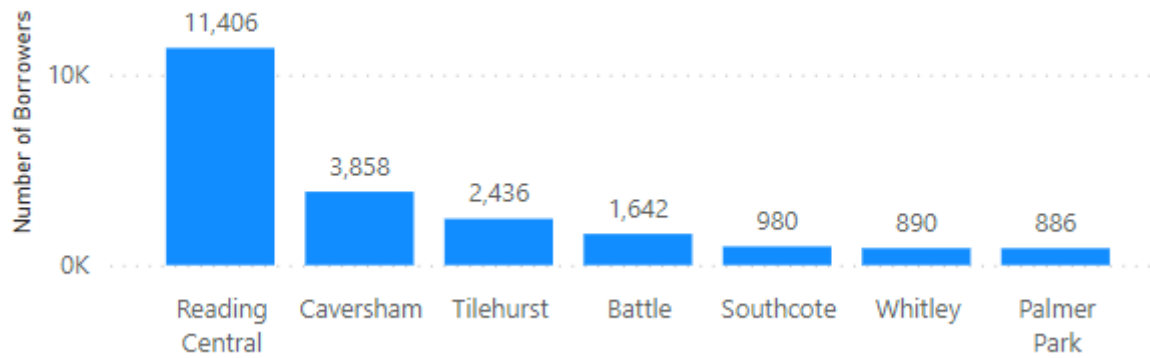


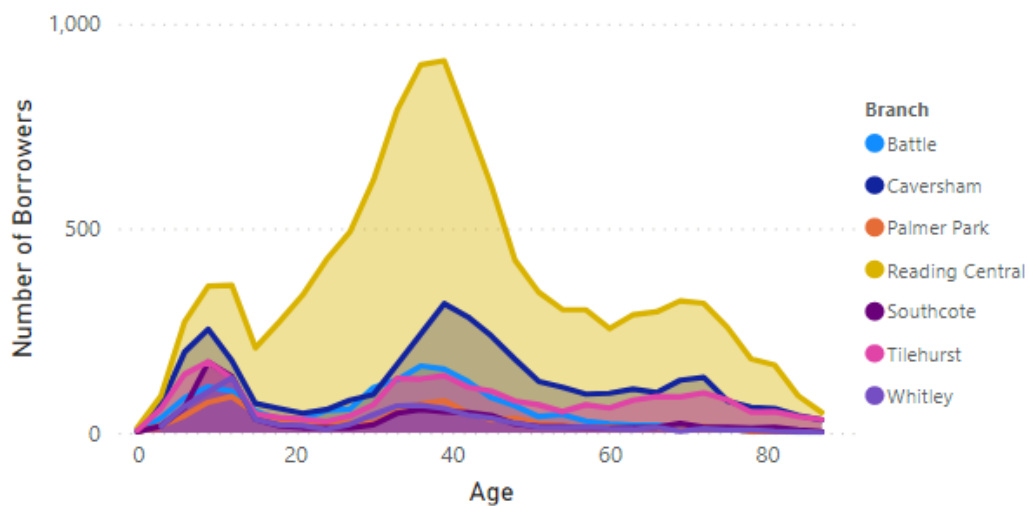
Chart J - Number of unique borrowers by branch (all) 19/20

Number of Borrowers by Branch



This chart is a count of unique cards used at each site over the course of a year. Cards can be used at more than one site.

Chart K - number of unique borrowers by age at each library including Reading



This chart shows an age breakdown for each site of those using the library for borrowing across the year. The chart below is the same information with Central library removed to allow easier comparison. It can be seen that whilst there is a broadly similar pattern of peaks with children and 35-45 year-old adults, the extent to which there is a third peak of older adults using varies.

Chart L - unique number of borrowers by age at each library excluding Reading

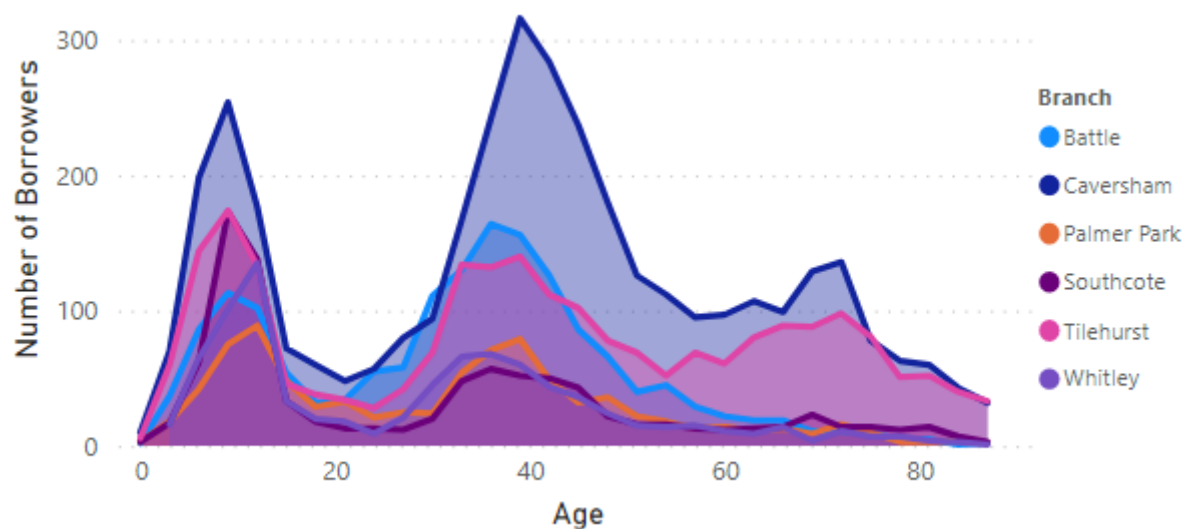
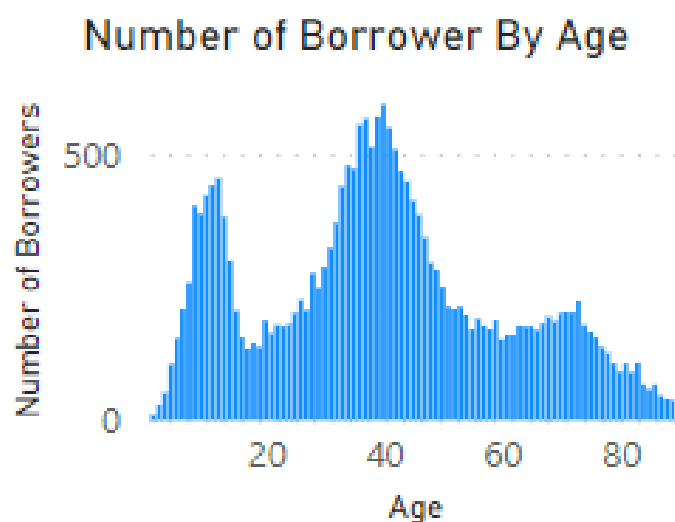
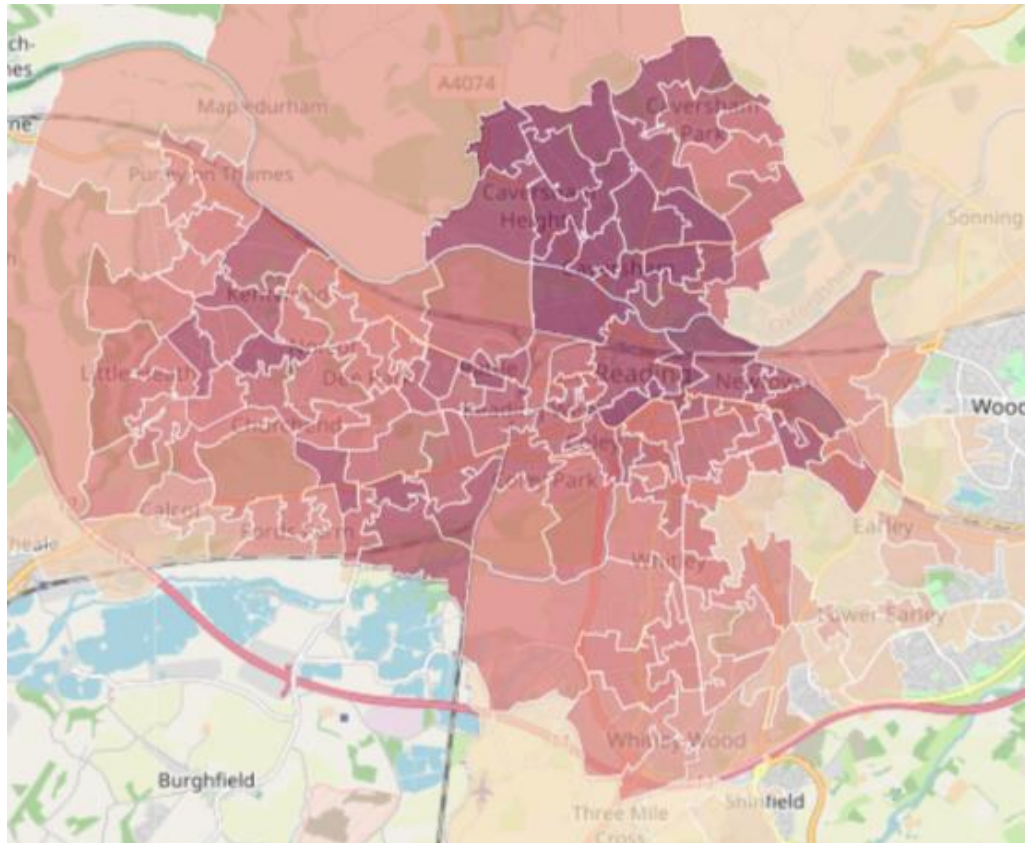


Chart M - overall number of borrowers in service by age



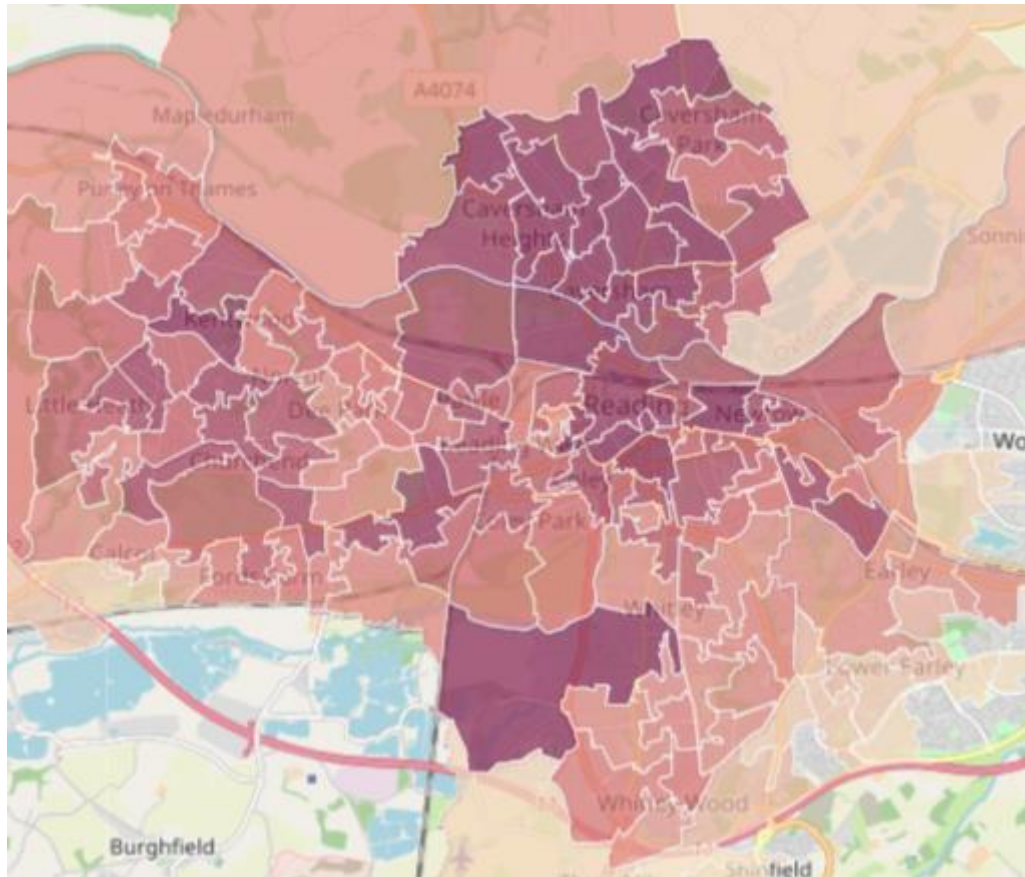
This is a breakdown for the whole service showing the number of people using the service in each year of age. This peak around 40 is matched with ICT use.

Map Z **Reading Borough by local area - dark colours indicate a higher percentage of borrowers per population in that area**



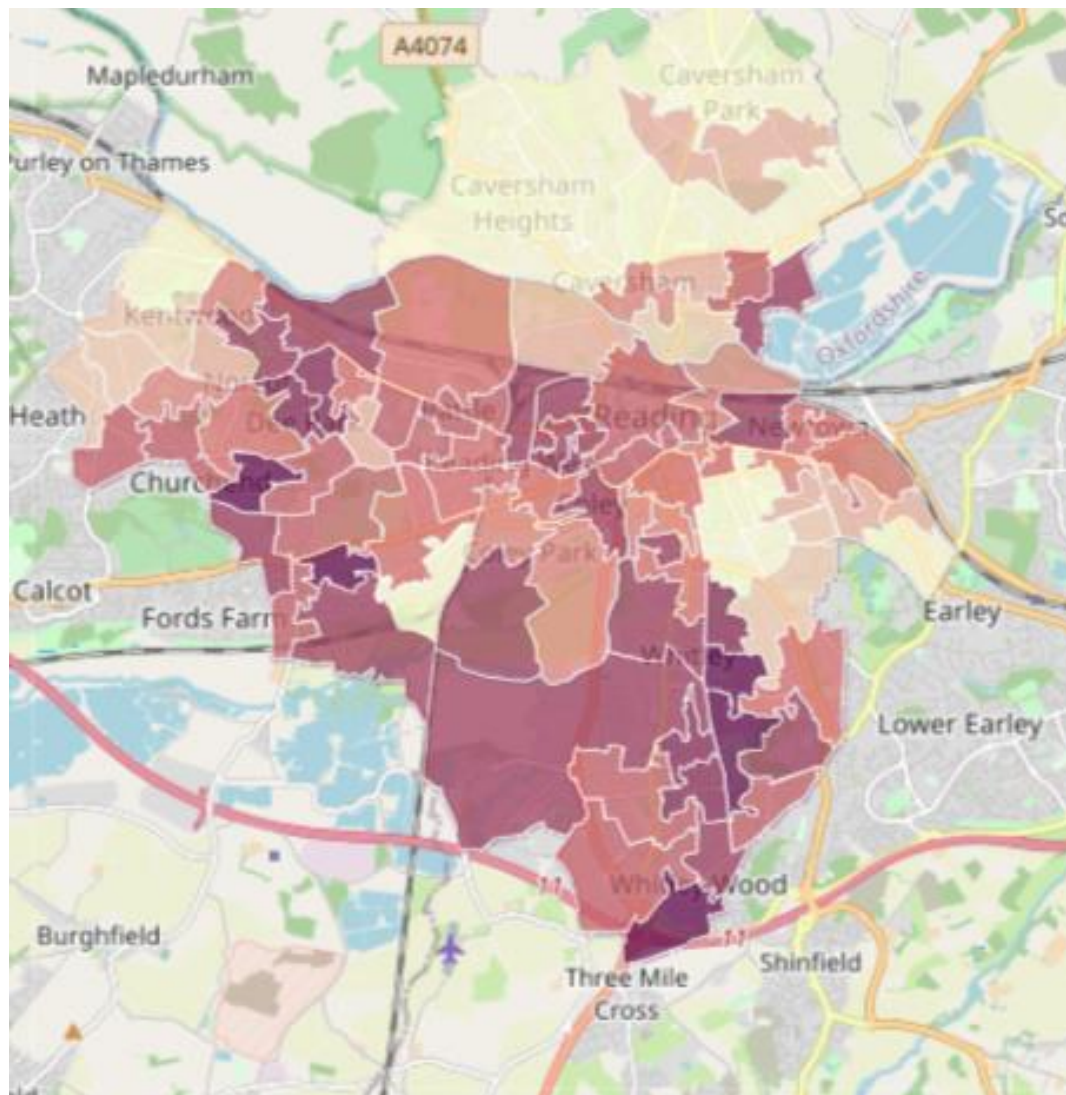
This map takes each Local Super Output Area (LSOA) small part of Reading and compares number of active users of the library with the population of that area. Darker areas indicate a greater number of active library users in that area as a proportion of the population. This map shows heavier use in Caversham and less use in South Reading, for example

Map Y **Reading Borough by local area - dark colours indicate a higher absolute number of transactions assigned to borrowers living in that area**



This map takes each Local Super Output Area (LSOA) small part of Reading and shows absolute numbers of users in each area, rather than relative to population. Darker areas indicate a greater number of active library users in that area. This map shows heavier use in Caversham and some other pockets in South, East and West.

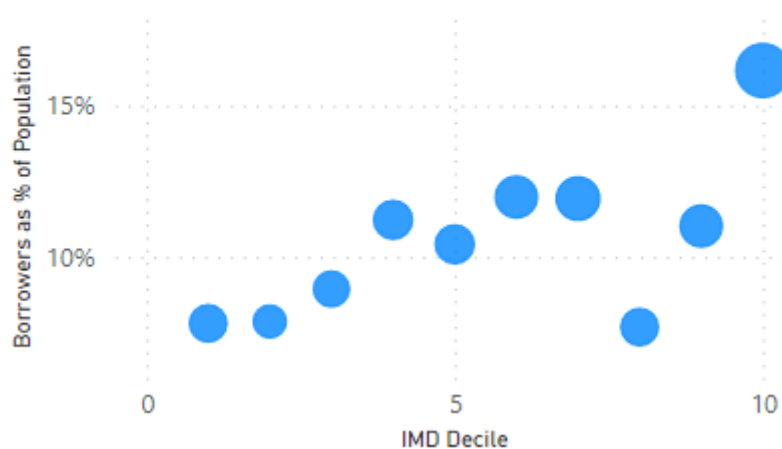
Map X **Areas of Reading based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation - darker colours mean higher levels of deprivation**



This map shows areas of Reading with darker areas indicating higher levels of deprivation.

Chart N

Borrowers as % of Population and Loans_Per_Population
by IMD Decile



By looking in each area's placing by decile of deprivation, and then looking at the numbers of borrowers as a proportion of population, it is clear from this chart (and the following one for health, that people are more likely to be borrowers in less deprived areas.

Chart O

Borrowers as % of Population and by Health Deprivation and Disability Decile (10 - least deprived)

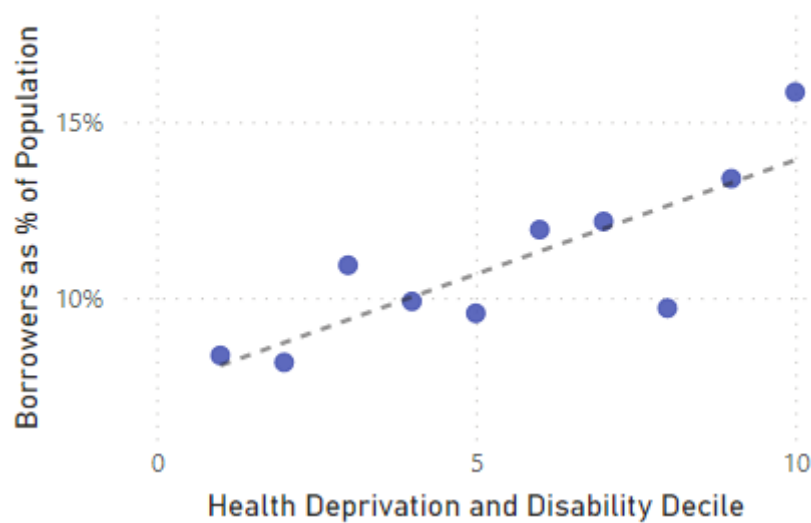
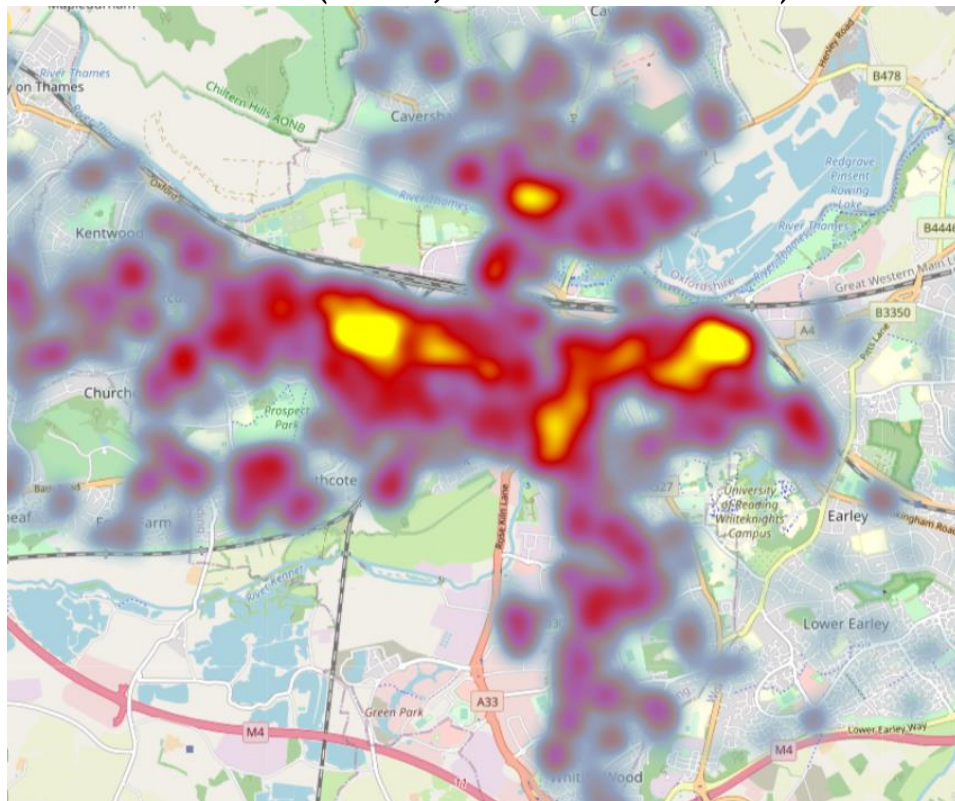


Chart P - Internet Use (all sites, fixed terminals and wifi) - where borrowers come from



Whilst Reading Central has a far higher number of terminals and space to use wifi, the area where users of ICT in libraries come from is very heavily centred around a zone from Palmer Park to Norcot.

APPENDIX THREE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR POSSIBLE CHANGE TO HOME SERVICE

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

For advice on this document please contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email Claire.Muir@reading.gov.uk.

Please contact the Project Management Office at pmo@reading.gov.uk for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Directorate: DEGNS

Service: Library Home Service

Name: Simon Smith

Job Title: Library Services Manager

Date of assessment 12 May 2021

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
0.1	Initial	SS	12/5/21	

Scope your proposal

- What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Examine removal of 'large mobile' vehicle from home library service provision - this would

a) remove 5 public stops made by the 'large mobile'

The alternative provided would be direct delivery of items to customers at home, by staff or volunteers using small vehicles.

- **Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

Customers will get service delivered directly to door.

- **What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

Removal of a space that is currently provided to a cohort of users, however space inside the vehicle is very limited - the change would mean that customers unable to leave home other than to get onto the vehicle would still be served in a way that the majority of service users currently are.

- **Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Customers

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

- Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.

Yes

- Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.

No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel. Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable. This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[Consultation manager form - Reading Borough Council Dash](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Library customers	Consultation - all contacted and talked through	Summer 2021

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

- Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes
-

The proposal would remove the ability to browse stock on board a vehicle that takes a selection of library stock around the Borough and replace it with providing a smaller selection of books direct to the user.

If a user is unable to visit a physical library, this proposal would remove this element of direct choice.

By working with the customer, and knowing the customer, a tailored selection of stock could be provided for the customer to select from.

The customer can request any item or collection of items from the overall library stock.

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on age
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes
-

The proposal would remove the ability to browse stock on board a vehicle that takes a selection of library stock around the Borough and replace it with providing a smaller selection of books direct to the user.

If a user is unable to visit a physical library, this proposal would remove this element of direct choice.

By working with the customer, and knowing the customer, a tailored selection of stock could be provided for the customer to select from.

The customer can request any item or collection of items from the overall library stock.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you **MUST** assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

(Delete numbers below which don't apply)

1. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale

There would be a consultation on this change to inform decision making, where any customers affected would be consulted and have the alternative set out for them. This consultation is due for Summer 2021 and would inform final decision making. No customer would miss out on a service as a result of this change. The proposed alternative has had to be running since Covid-19 started as the previous model of service could not be provided.

We are not currently able to reintroduce the service under current restrictions

- How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?
-

Ongoing contact and feedback from customers.

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer