Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 4 May 2021

Wards: All

Subject: Library & Heritage Service Annual Report 2020/21

Lead officer: Anthony Hopkins – Head of Library, Heritage & Adult Education Service

Lead member: Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah – Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Skills

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Recommendations:

1. That the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel note progress made with the Library & Heritage Service in the last financial year, review performance and discuss key projects.

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.   The Library & Heritage Service annual report sets out the key achievements that have been delivered over the last year and highlights future projects. The last year has been an unprecedented year for library services along with all council services due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report highlights the impact that this has had on service delivery and outlines the realigned priorities of the service going forward.

1.2.   Merton's Library & Heritage Service continues to be a high performing and cost efficient service. It has kept all of its libraries open and has extended the opening hours of all of them over the last 10 years.

1.3.   The main projects delivered, which have been impacted by the pandemic, include:

- Setting up all of our public libraries as Covid secure facilities to ensure the highest levels of safety for our staff and customers.

- Developing a 4-stage model of recovery that can quickly be adapted depending upon circumstances.

- Expanding our online offer so that even more people have access to high quality e-books and other information. As part of this an expanded online events and activities programme has been launched.

- Supporting the Council on wider projects including the establishment of the Community Response Hub, Shielding Service, Lateral Flow Test Centres and Operation Eagle.

- The launch of Library of Things at Morden Library. An equipment loaning system.

- The launch of the new Heritage Strategy that outlines the strategic objectives of the Council and its partner organisations to further broaden participation and understanding of our shared heritage.

- Continuing work to engage with underrepresented groups and to assist with reducing social isolation and digital exclusion.

1.4. The report details have been summarised under the objectives of 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries 2016 – 2021', the DCMS's 5-year strategy for public libraries in England. It also includes an additional section on wider community support that the service has provided in light of the pandemic.

2 DETAILS

2.1. <u>**Covid-19 Impact**</u>

2.2. Like the majority of sectors the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the way services have been delivered. Following government guidance in March 2020 all libraries were closed to the public and staff were deployed to support with the wider Council response to the pandemic.

2.3. During the time of closure the Library & Heritage Service developed a 4-stage model of recovery for services that can be adapted in response to government or local restrictions. The 4 stages in summary are:

- All libraries closed and an expanded online offer.

- A click and collect service with bookable PC's available for essential use only.

- All libraries open for browsing and PC services but with restrictions on dwell time and a limited activity programme.

- Libraries return to pre Covid-19 levels of service.

2.4. Under all 4 models the Home Visits Library Service operates to ensure that Merton's most vulnerable residents have access to high quality books and information.

2.5. The service reopened for click and collect services in July 2020 and resumed browsing services in September 2020. Since the second lockdown in November and London's move to Tier 4 public libraries in Merton have fluctuated between providing click and collect and browsing services, in line with government guidance. At the time of publishing this report all libraries in Merton are open providing the stage 3 browsing service. Opening hours have been adapted throughout the pandemic to ensure that staffing is in place to implement the increased safety measures on site.

2.6. Covid-19 safety practices on site are stringent and have been developed with Health & Safety and Public Health colleagues. They have also incorporated the best in sector expertise and knowledge. Particular areas of focus in ensuring Covid-19 safety protocols are:

- Managing risk and ensuring that libraries have both site and individual staff risk assessments in place. In particular to focus on protecting people at higher risk.

- Communicating the additional safety measures in place to customers and ensuring that they are abiding by the new rules and regulations.

- Additional cleaning and PPE, including creating quarantine zones for the return of stock.

- Managing contact between staff and customers.

- Installing additional equipment such as Perspex screens at counters to improve social distancing.

2.7. **Increased Reading and Literacy**

2.8. *Reading and literacy are two of the most fundamental skills in life. Libraries give everyone free access to books and literature regardless of age, disability, wealth or education. This access makes libraries a catalyst for improved reading and literacy skills.*

2.9. **Project Sense**

2.10. Project Sense is a £94,826 Arts Council England funded project to make Merton's children's libraries even more accessible. The funding has been used to develop a comprehensive SEND (special educational needs and / or disabilities) stock and equipment offer and to ensure all library staff and volunteers are trained in better supporting children with SEND and their carers or parents.

2.11. There is a dedicated resource library (Learn, Play, Grow Resource Library) with specialist communication technology, specially adapted toys and switches and story bag books, which can be borrowed free of charge and are used for library activity sessions. Family learning courses including wellbeing, next steps back into education and employment and self-care and personal development have taken place for parents and carers of children with SEND needs.

2.12. Whilst the pandemic has had an effect on the project, officers remain in close contact with partner organisations and support groups. All of the events over the last year have been delivered online and there is a desire from participants for face-to-face activities to restart once it is safe to do so.

2.13. **Schools and Libraries Membership Scheme**

2.14. Merton has a unique schools and libraries membership scheme that all school age children aged 5 - 14 are signed up to. The scheme is an invaluable way of promoting reading for pleasure amongst children and the improved life chances it brings.

2.15. The schools and libraries membership scheme has been extended to all SEND schools in the borough as part of Project Sense.

2.16. During the pandemic the service has kept in close contact with schools and is providing a book loaning service that prioritises children with limited or no access to books in their household. All school children have also been set

up with access to the Library Service's free online resources, which includes access to approximately 100,000 e-books along with a range of online study materials such as Britannica Online.

2.17. **Reading Promotions and Campaigns**

2.18. The Library & Heritage Service continues to develop its promotions and campaigns to tie in with initiatives such as World Book Day, National Poetry Day and Black History Month.

2.19. In January 2021 the services Health & Wellbeing month delivered 14 events involving 299 participants. All events since the start of the pandemic have been delivered online and an online library of events is being built up. Plans are in place to start delivering physical events and activities when it is safe to do so.

2.20. **Home Visits Library Service**

2.21. The Home Visits Library Service has continued to operate throughout the pandemic by delivering in a socially distanced manner and with volunteers keeping in touch with customers who are often vulnerable and with limited outside contact. The service has connected in with the Community Response Hub and is part of the wider community offer for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) residents.

2.22. **<u>Cultural and Creative Enrichment</u>**

2.23. *Cultural and creative opportunities enrich lives. They are important in developing local quality of life, sense of place and individual wellbeing. Libraries are well placed to extend cultural engagement because of their use by all social groups and their role as inclusive cultural hubs within communities.*

2.24. **Merton Arts Space**

2.25. Merton has two established Arts Spaces in Wimbledon and Mitcham libraries. These spaces enhance the cultural offer through libraries and have flexible lighting, sound and stage facilities to enable professional productions in community settings. A wide range of cultural events across different artistic disciplines has been delivered.

2.26. Since the pandemic the spaces haven't offered any physical events but the spaces are being used to support with additional study space for students and are being used as production suites to host a wide range of high quality online events. A music recording studio has also been installed in the Wimbledon space and is scheduled to open later this year.

2.27. **Merton Memories**

2.28. The Merton Memories web resource continues to develop and there are now over 18,000 unique images of the borough available for residents to review. The community is continually encouraged to help identify photos and add comments and information relating to the images.

2.29. Carved in Stone, Merton's digital archive dedicated to World War One, is also hosted via this website. This provides online access to over 700 profiles of local combatants and war workers, in addition to information about life on the Home Front and 2000 historic documents.

2.30. The heritage online offer has significantly expanded this year, resulting in a 30% increase in usage. A range of online activities and events have been developed from heritage trails and craft activities, to local history talks, quizzes and displays. A resource library has also been built so that schools, care homes and other settings can use the materials to provide classes or events. Special history pages have formed an integral part of the Council's commemoration of Windrush Day, the anniversaries of VE/VJ Day and Holocaust Memorial Day.

2.31. **Heritage Discovery Day**

2.32. Merton's annual Heritage Discovery Day celebrates the rich heritage of the borough and last year's event in the Heritage & Local Studies Centre was supported by 30 local heritage organisations and community groups. This year's event was delivered largely online with some small exhibitions available in the Heritage Centre. The event attracted over 150 visitors to heritage sites across the borough and over 1000 visitors to the Discovery Day web resources.

2.33. **Merton Heritage Strategy 2021 - 2025**

2.34. Cabinet approved Merton's refreshed Heritage Strategy on 18 January 2021. The strategy is focussed around four objectives:

- Raise Merton's profile by increasing public access to the borough's unique and diverse cultural heritage;

- Safeguard the borough's varied heritage sites and resources;

- Making Merton's heritage provision more inclusive and working collaboratively to widen public engagement and participation;

- Increasing funding and investment in Merton's heritage through partnership work, external funding and sponsorship.

2.35. The Strategy summarises the achievements of the previous Heritage Strategy and outlines the objectives and key priorities of the Council and its partners over the next 5 years.

2.36. The Strategy seeks to address funding challenges and increase public engagement by encouraging collaborative work, the sharing of expertise and use of digital technology. It has been devised with heritage stakeholders and in consultation with the voluntary and business sectors. A public consultation was also undertaken to gather wider views.

2.37. Underpinning the Heritage Strategy 2021 – 2025 will be a work plan, drawn up in collaboration with heritage providers and community organisations, to monitor key projects highlighted in the strategy.

2.38. **Improved digital access and literacy**

2.39. *Public libraries provide a trusted network of accessible locations with free WiFi, computers, and other technology. As the world becomes more digital, access to technology and the ability to operate confidently and safely are ever more important.*

2.40. *Trained library staff, supported by volunteers, help local people use online services covering areas like benefits, business, health and wellbeing. They*

also provide the training and support individuals need to become independent users of digital services.

2.41. **Assisted Digital Support**

2.42. The Library & Heritage Service focusses its support on those most in need who potentially have limited access or knowledge of the Internet and other IT applications. In order to support residents, it provides a broad range of one to one and group IT support.

2.43. As part of the development of its assisted digital offer staff and volunteers have been trained in supporting customers with Universal Credit and other government services. Libraries play an important role in supporting customers with online Council services and other government services. They are also set up as information points for Citizens Advice Bureau services.

2.44. **Connecting Merton - IT Equipment Loan Scheme**

2.45. The Library Service has been working with voluntary sector partners to provide an equipment loaning scheme for vulnerable and/or isolated residents who do not have access to IT equipment in the home. The scheme not only provides good quality IT equipment such as laptops and tablets but advice, guidance and training on how to get the equipment set up and how to get online in a safe way. Library staff and volunteers support residents by providing training either in person or via the telephone. Participants are also linked into a range of free IT learning courses provided by Merton Adult Learning and other providers.

2.46. The scheme launched in pilot format on 15 February 2021 and officially launched on 8 March 2021.

2.47. **Library Services Platform (LSP)**

2.48. Libraries replaced their core ICT infrastructure with a new system provided by Sirsi Dynix in 2019. Working collaboratively with the renamed The Libraries Consortium (TLC), a consortium consisting of 19 London boroughs and a growing number of out of London authorities, a new platform has been procured that provides customers with improved web services including better personalisation of customer interests. The new solution also provides features such as a customer app and better integration with online services such as the borough's e-books and online reference resources.

2.49. Over the course of the contract the platform will be further developed to include additional features for customers including the enhancement of events and activities promotion along with new customisation and personalisation options. The new customer platform is expected to go live in May 2021.

2.50. A new customer mobile phone app will also enable customers to issue, renew and return items in a contactless way through their smart phone along with many other interactive features.

2.51. **Self-Service Technology**

2.52. Self-service technology continues to be an important element of the libraries delivery model and accounted for 98% of customer transactions in 2019/20.

2.53. Self-service technology has recently been replaced and includes new features such as the latest cashless payment options, contactless issuing and returning of stock and increased reliability.

2.54. The new provider is also in the process of installing new self-service technology that will enable access to libraries in a staffless environment from April 2022. This project will deliver agreed MTFS savings and ensure that the current opening hours offer remains in place.

2.55. **<u>Healthier and Happier Lives</u>**

2.56. *Councils have a responsibility for their communities' social wellbeing and for public health. They increasingly focus on preventative work, helping people manage their own health to reduce both the burden on the NHS and health inequalities. By extending joint working and sharing resources with health providers, public libraries will become increasingly important partners, leading to users having healthier and happier lives.*

2.57. **Prevention services**

2.58. Libraries play an important and visible role as the 'High Street presence' of the Council and play a vital role in supporting and signposting residents towards obtaining appropriate information and accessing Council services.

2.59. Collaboration has been strengthened with partners to provide better support to assist people in living healthier and happier lives. This has included the introduction of new standards of service to make our buildings more dementia and autism friendly whilst enhancing the information offer.

2.60. The prevention offer through libraries is a key part of Community & Housing transformation plans and work is being undertaken to look at how services provided by Adult Social Care and Housing colleagues can be better supported through the library network and building on the assisted digital support work already in place. As part of the wider Recovery & Reset project of the Council further work will be undertaken to ascertain how wider Council services can be even better supported via the library network.

2.61. **Health Offer**

2.62. The service works collaboratively with Public Health, social care, other health providers and Adult Learning colleagues to promote a range of initiatives to link in messages around good personal health. This includes supporting initiatives to raise awareness of health matters such as healthy eating, sexual health, diabetes and smoking cessation. A year round approach to promoting healthier lifestyles through libraries is in place and links in with national and local initiatives.

2.63. **Tuned In**

2.64. The impact of loneliness is a major public issue. It is known to have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing causing depression and increasing the risk of premature death. Merton's public health team estimate that there are over 8,000 lonely people who live in the borough.

2.65. Tuned In launched in 2019 and is a project which aims to combat some of the issues of loneliness in the borough with funding from the Winter Pressures Fund. Tuned In works with acclaimed musician, performer, writer

and London Libraries Ambassador Jah Wobble (aka John Wardle), who facilitates musical jam sessions every Monday at Merton Arts Space, Wimbledon library. The sessions share and develop musical skills and build knowledge, as well as helping individuals build social connections and friendship groups. They create an environment for people from all walks of life to come together and enjoy mutual support.

2.66.   The project targets men, particularly those in the age group 50+, where loneliness is at its highest. However, the project is open and accessible to all. The sessions work on a drop in basis and regularly see 30+ individuals attend. The project works in partnership with a number of local health and wellbeing groups.

2.67.   Since the start of the pandemic Tuned In sessions have moved online and have been delivered through music production classes. Participants have enhanced their digital skills and recorded a number of songs ready for a commercial music release that is expected in summer 2021. The album will be released via Cherry Red Records.

2.68.   The Monday evening sessions will start in person again when it is safe to do so and the now well established online sessions will also continue. Development of participant's skills will continue when they can safely use the newly installed music recording studio at the space.

2.69.   To date over 170 people have participated in Tuned In sessions. Participants are tracked through their participation and asked a range of questions on their health and wellbeing. Of participants surveyed in the last evaluation round the following outcomes were reported:

- 96% of respondents reporting that Tuned In sessions had improved their health and wellbeing.

- 35% of participants have increased their participation in sports, fitness or recreational (leisure) clubs or activities.

- 52% of participants are more aware of health services in the borough since attending Tuned In sessions.

- 83% have developed new friendships and / or relationships by attending Tuned In sessions.

- 61% have developed more satisfying friendships and relationships since attending Tuned In.

- 70% of participants feel more part of their local community since attending Tuned In sessions.

- 74% of participants now feel they have a greater network of people to ask for help.

2.70.   **Stronger, More Resilient Communities**

2.71.   *Libraries are open to everyone. Their staff understand their community's needs and are trusted to provide reliable guidance and support on a wide range of issues when people need help. So they're vital to help public service's reach out into communities.*

2.72.	**Volunteering**
2.73.	Merton's volunteering numbers are some of the highest of any UK library authority with 545 volunteers contributing 27,437 hours in 2019/20. Since the pandemic volunteering numbers have reduced due to some volunteers being unable to attend libraries due to their own health or personal safety concerns. Some services that volunteers support with have also either been stopped or reduced during the pandemic due to restrictions around what can safely take place in libraries.
2.74.	All volunteers continue to be kept in touch with and the vast majority have indicated that they are keen to start volunteering again when it is safe to do so. An increasing number of volunteer roles are also now being set up to provide support remotely such as supporting with marketing initiatives, telephone IT support and supporting with improving online content. Volunteers also play a key role in delivering online events and activities and some libraries have been set up as production suites to deliver online events to a high standard.
2.75.	**Widening the community offer**
2.76.	The library service provides a wide range of activities and events working in partnership with organisations from the community, business and health sectors. It also organises events to coincide with national initiatives such as LGBTQ Month, Black History Month, World Book Day and Dementia Awareness Week and supports borough events such as Wimbledon Bookfest and Merton Arts Trail. Work has also been intensified to work with supporting families with home schooling and to engage with clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) groups.
2.77.	**Library of Things**
2.78.	With funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Morden Library has recently launched the Library of Things. The Library of Things is an equipment loaning scheme that loans residents popular items that they may not have the space or money to purchase for their homes. Examples of items loaned include garden equipment such as hedge trimmers along with things such as projectors, carpet cleaning machines, electric sanders and other home DIT equipment. All of the items loaned are good quality items donated by companies like Karcher and Bosch.
2.79.	Evidence from the scheme shows a range of benefits. It enables residents to feel better connected with their community and reduces spend and waste on equipment with users more likely to repair or recycle items.
2.80.	**Greater Prosperity**
2.81.	*The prosperity of an area is crucial for residents' wellbeing and quality of life. We want everyone to have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from this. Libraries support business to start up and grow by providing information and working with local economic development organisations to signpost businesses to sources of support and advice.*
2.82.	**Employability and skills support**

2.83. Libraries provide a range of employability support services working with training providers. Examples include CV writing workshops, job clubs and other skills training.

2.84. The use of library services is integral for a number of community based courses and in a more informal way through sessions such as one to one IT support and other activities delivered by partners and volunteers.

2.85. Wimbledon Library hosts 'Wimbletech', an organisation that provides space, advice and support for start-up companies and co-workers and is part of Merton's Inward Investment Strategy. It currently has almost 200 resident members with a community digital platform recently launched.

2.86. The role of supporting residents back to work and reskilling has been further emphasised throughout the pandemic. Merton's library service continues to provide free access to public PC's and Wi-Fi and these have played a crucial role in supporting residents apply for jobs and make claims and enquiries to government for further support.

2.87. **Helping Everyone Achieve Their Full Potential**

2.88. *Libraries raise people's aspirations and promote lifelong learning, supplementing formal education provided through schools, colleges and adult education. This is increasingly important given the accelerated pace of change in the workplace and the world more generally, meaning that skills and knowledge need more frequent updating.*

2.89. **Online Services**

2.90. With the introduction of the new LSP online services have been enhanced and customers have improved access to resources such as e-books and online reference resources. The e-book offer has also significantly expanded due to collaboration work with other boroughs. Residents have access to over 100,000 e-book titles and around 400 e-magazines are published monthly. Provision has been significantly increased through the pandemic and more people are accessing these services than ever before.

2.91. Since the start of the pandemic e-book usage has increased by 40% and online membership has increased by 73%

2.92. **Adult Learning Services**

2.93. A range of services are provided in libraries to encourage lifelong learning and the service works closely with schools, colleges and adult learning providers to complement the borough offer.

2.94. Following the commissioning of adult learning services libraries are increasingly being used as venues for training. This includes a high proportion of courses in priority areas such as courses for people with learning disabilities and community based employability and language courses. Housing providers use libraries for their community training programmes too. The library setting provides an excellent environment for people to develop their skills and utilise the free resources available to them.

3 PERFORMANCE

3.1. The full year 2019/20 KPI (Key Performance Indicators) are summarised below. It should be noted that performance was impacted by the pandemic in comparison to the previous year's figures:

Service Plan #	Description of performance measure	2018/19	2019/20	Target
SP08	No. of people accessing the library service by borrowing an item or using a People's Network terminal at least once in the previous 12 months	71,648	65,791	56,500
SP09	Number of visitors accessing the library service online	234,486	255,417	220,000
SP279	Monthly transactions – Staff and Self-Service	98%	94%	97%
SP280	Active volunteering numbers in libraries	276	304	230
SP287	Income generation	£374,024	£420,951	£317,167
SP480	Visitor Numbers	1,124,613	1,115,562	1,200,000

3.2. Performance has improved across half of the indicators. The indicators that have been most adversely affected are the ones that required physical visits to libraries.

3.3. The 2020/21 end of year figures are currently being collated. Initial evidence is pointing towards a decline in performance against most performance indicators due to the impact of the pandemic.

3.4. Whilst it is difficult to project the long term position the 2020/21 figures estimate a 60% reduction in income, an 80% reduction in physical visits and a decline in usage numbers and volunteers. Whilst these are concerning the service has reported significant increases in its online services, with a 40% increase in e-book borrowing and a 73% increase in online membership. The service has also received strong feedback from customers that they intend to more regularly use libraries once it is safer to do so.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. **Merton Library Customer Survey**

4.2. The Library & Heritage Service Customer Survey was undertaken in October 2019. The responses showed high levels of customer satisfaction. The survey was conducted in two parts with a survey constructed for users of the library aged 16 and over and a separate survey for children and young people aged under 16.

4.3. The library customer survey for users over the age of 16 reported the following headline figures:

- 95% of respondents rated the service overall as very good or good, an increase of 2% compared to the last survey, with 100% of respondents satisfied.

- 96% of respondents said they would recommend the service to someone else.

- 93% of customers rate library opening hours as very good or good and 100% of respondents are satisfied with the current opening hours offer.

- 99% of respondents regarded libraries as a safe space.

- Book borrowing remains the most popular service with 63% of respondents saying they had borrowed a book in the last year.

- 94% of respondents rated the overall customer service experience as very good or good with 100% satisfied with their experience.

- The biggest improvement area in terms of results was in the difference that libraries have made to people's lives with 75% of respondents saying using the library had made a difference to their lives; an increase of 5% compared to the last survey, with:
  - o 53% of respondents saying the library had improved their confidence, a 15% increase since the previous survey;
  - o 34% said it had helped them get better at reading, an increase of 9% since the last survey;
  - o 30% saying it had improved their social life, an increase of 12% since the last survey;
  - o 19% said they had improved their relationships as a result of using libraries, an increase of 7% since the last survey;
  - o 14% said that using libraries had improved their health, a 4% increase since the previous survey.

4.4. The library customer survey for children and young people under the age of 16 reported the following headline results:

- 100% of respondents were satisfied with their library experience with 97% of respondents rating the library as very good/good, a 4% increase on the previous survey.

- 100% of respondents were satisfied with the overall customer service they experienced with 97% rating it as very good/good, a 4% increase since the previous survey.

- 95% respondents rated the inside of the library as very good/good, up from 91% since the last survey.

- 100% of respondents considered Merton's libraries to be a safe place with 95% of respondents rating the safety of the library as very good/good, an increase of 4% from the previous survey.

- 83% of respondents rated the choice of books as very good/good, a 6% increase in satisfaction since the last survey.

- 100% of respondents were satisfied with staff helpfulness with 96% rating it as very good/good, a 2% increase from the previous survey.

- 88% of all respondents said that the library had helped them in some way, a 20% increase since the previous survey.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. The Library & Heritage Service Plan 2021/22 outlines key projects to be delivered and was presented at the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 19 January 2021.

5.2. Key projects highlighted for 2021/22 are:

- Covid-19 Recovery Work. As detailed earlier in the report a significant portion of time will be put into recovering services, where there is demand, to pre-pandemic levels whilst also continuing to enhance digital services.

- Delivering a programme of events and initiatives to improve resident's health and wellbeing that builds on a number of the initiatives mentioned earlier in this report.

- Increasing community participation in heritage services and further raising awareness of Merton's rich heritage.

- Work to assist with improving residents economic and employment prospects by delivering collaborative projects such as enhancing the adult learning offer through libraries, hosting job clubs and other employment support and enhancing the digital offer through schemes such as loaning IT equipment to vulnerable residents.

- Further enhancement of the library digital offer including the launch of the new library services platform.

- Enhancing the offer to children and young people to support them with their personal development.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The Library & Heritage Service has 7 libraries and a Heritage & Local Studies Centre based on the second floor of Morden Library. All libraries have either seen significant redevelopment works or new libraries have been built since 2005 apart from West Barnes Library.

6.2. There has been a pause in redevelopment proposals for West Barnes Library whilst Cross Rail 2 development options were considered by Network Rail. Officers are currently undertaking renewed work to move forward with the redevelopment proposals for West Barnes Library, which has been further impacted by the pandemic.

6.3. The controllable net current budget for the Library & Heritage Service, without NNDR and depreciation, is £1,603,280 as at January 2021. A savings proposal in the MTFS has been proposed to deliver £60,000 of savings in 2022/23 through the reduction of the current security guard contract and an increase in income generation.

7   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1.   The Council is required under section 7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service, addressing the 'needs of adults and children'. Local authorities have a statutory duty to make provision for a library service but may decide on how this is to be done.

7.2.   Certain aspects of the service must be provided for free including free lending of books, free access to information and free library membership.

8   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1.   Libraries hold a unique place within the community as a public space that is open to all. Where customers cannot make it to libraries a Home Visits Library Service provides books and other materials to people's homes.

8.2.   Residents from BAME backgrounds make the most effective use of libraries with high proportions in particular of Asian and Black British people.

9   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1.   None identified for the purpose of this report.

10   RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1.   No specific issues identified in this report. A risk register is maintained for projects detailed in the Library & Heritage Service Plan.

11   APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- None included for the purpose of this report.