

## Appendix 1

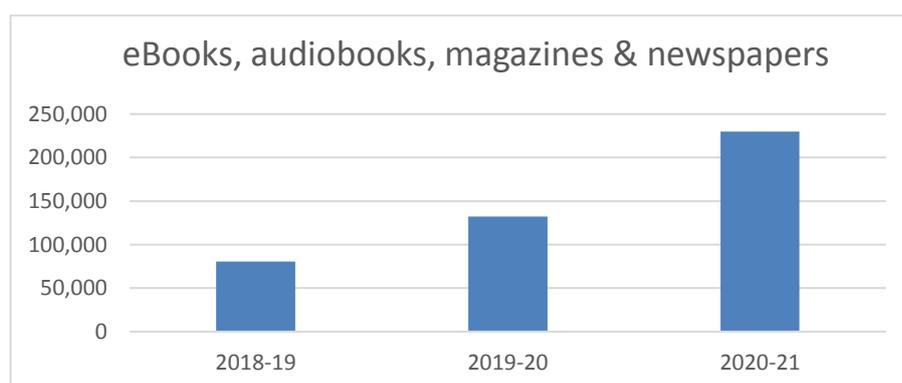
# General update on the performance of the Library and Information Service

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The Service was operating as usual until Christmas of 2019, focussing on the development of a longer term strategic approach for its future. Early in 2020, however, everything changed.

### 2. Apr 2019 – Feb 2020

- 2.1. Strategically, the Service was focussing on three aspects, the resolution of some critical building issues, the resolution of some historical IT shortcomings, and the development of its longer term strategic vision.
- 2.2. The poor state of repair of some of its buildings particularly Lewisham was negatively affecting our performance.
- 2.3. In spite of this, visits to libraries were on track to grow past the 2 million mark and issues continued to increase (see Appendix 4).
- 2.4. These achievements are more remarkable if we consider that the Service, as a member of the Board of the London Libraries Consortium, had implemented the largest migration of a Library Management System in the world! Across the year, Lewisham worked with colleagues to procure and implement the migration from the old library catalogue to a new one. This meant that in March, all 16 local authority members of the Consortium switched from the old to the new library catalogue. The achievement is significant also because it brings the opportunity borrow books from across London and to develop a shared London Library Platform. In time, the latter will introduce new functionalities and technological innovations that will make libraries more and more accessible to Londoners.
- 2.5. The Service developed its physical collections in the Hub and Community libraries and its online offer – which is continuing to be an area of growth. In the last 24 months, eLibrary issues increased from 29,667 to 86,971 (+194%). Online newspapers, comics, and magazines have been promoted, through taster sessions, social media and staff promotion to users, and show a 184% increase over the year 2018-2019.



The Lewisham eLibrary ([www.lewisham.overdrive.com](http://www.lewisham.overdrive.com)) has also been promoted and developed over the year with the stock growing to almost 60,000 titles and the number of users increasing by 52%.

The Kids & Teens (e)room, now has over 11,644 titles for children and young adults. This is a separate, safe environment for children and teens to browse the library, and one that has been specifically developed between Lewisham and OverDrive – the eBook provider (<http://lewisham.overdrive.com/library/youth>).

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Increase over 2018-19	Increase over 2019-20
PressReader (Newspaper)	3,794	5,185	12,778	53,785	88,108	590%	64%
Rbdigital (Magazines)	14,210	16,330	24,032	39,179	53,758	124%	37%
	<b>18,004</b>	<b>21,515</b>	<b>36,810</b>	<b>92,964</b>	<b>141,866</b>	<b>285%</b>	<b>53%</b>

- 2.6. Every year, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) compares Lewisham to 14 similar authorities. The last comparison shows that Lewisham has the fourth highest number of libraries for a population that matches the average in the group and the second highest number of libraries per 100,000 pop.
- 2.7. Lewisham libraries attract over seven times (1,748) as many volunteers as the average of comparator authorities (243). And Lewisham volunteers contribute almost four times as many hours (16,933) as the average in the group (4,946).
- 2.8. The number of visits per 1,000 population is a strong indicator of workload faced by the authority. In this area, Lewisham recorded the fourth highest number of visits in the comparator group and Lewisham has above average number of household readers. Still, while Lewisham has the fourth highest book stock, the number of books issued is the fourth lowest – which indicates that libraries in Lewisham are used for something other than book borrowing.



2.9. Visitors access libraries for its technology and for the services available in them. While Lewisham has the second lowest number of computers per head of population in the comparator group, Wi-Fi, PCs, Apple Macs, and loanable, Wi-Fi enabled iPads are in very high demand. This is due to the support that library staff provide in answering queries, supporting learning and digital access, and supporting online transacting, including online council services. As more council, central government and private sector services have moved online, some residents look for the human interaction to support them to access digital processes. They visit a library and ask questions, seek support and ancillary information, use Wi-Fi and computers to transact.

2.10. Lewisham continues to be consistently cheaper to run than the average, showing a Net Expenditure per 1,000 pop. (£10,267) which is 25.9% lower than the comparators' average (£13,867). Lewisham is below average on Employee costs, premises, total materials, supplies & services, etc., exceeding the average only on computing costs and transport. However these two indicators are temporarily higher only because Lewisham purchased a number of iPads that were externally funded. Lewisham has the fourth lowest cost per acquisition of the group and the third lowest cost per visitor. The trend is for all of these costs to reduce further in the 2021-2022 Actuals.

### 3. Mar 2020 – Mar 2021

#### 3.1. Closures

With the first lockdown in March 2020, all Services stopped. Here is a brief timeline of closures

23 March	UK wide lockdown announced  Library members with expiry dates in the range 19 March – 29 June were given an expiry date of 30 June.  All due books automatically renewed until 30 April  Fines waived for the dates 19 March – 29 April  All hold/reservation pickup/expiry dates extended until 30 April  Agreed with service providers that all new borrowers (automatically assigned UNREG tickets) will be able to use online resources – OverDrive, RBDigital and Borrowbox  These arrangements were extended throughout the following year
6 July	Click and Collect and Lucky Dip services started at Deptford and Downham Libraries on Tuesdays and Thursdays
5 November	2 national lockdown begins Libraries closed
2 December	2 national lockdown ends Click and Collect and Lucky Dip services restart
21 December	Tier 4 restrictions come into force in London

	Libraries closed
6 January 2021	3 national lockdown begins
29 March	Stay at Home order ends
12 April	Libraries permitted to reopen Click and Collect and Lucky Dip services restart
17 May	PCs and study space available for booking in libraries Deptford, Downham and Lewisham Libraries open for browsing
21 June	All official restrictions ended
August	Library hours extended
September	Library hours extended to 6 days a week

3.2. Supporting during the pandemic

The vast majority of staff moved to support the Covid Action Team through their work on Test & trace, befriending, and shielding programmes. Up to 27 staff contributed an average of 604 hours per week to Test & Trace. 6 staff worked 22 hours per week on befriending. A smaller group on Business Support Two staff for 30 hours per week on Shielding.

3.3. By far the greatest contribution was on Test and Trace where staff contacted residents to try and stop the spread of the virus. Staff found the work challenging, rewarding, and at time heart breaking due to the very personal nature of the work.

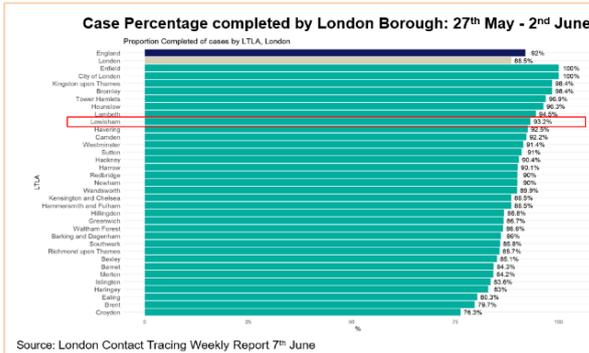
3.4. The Service's support to Test & Trace is still in place.

**Feedback from Public Health on Test & Trace**

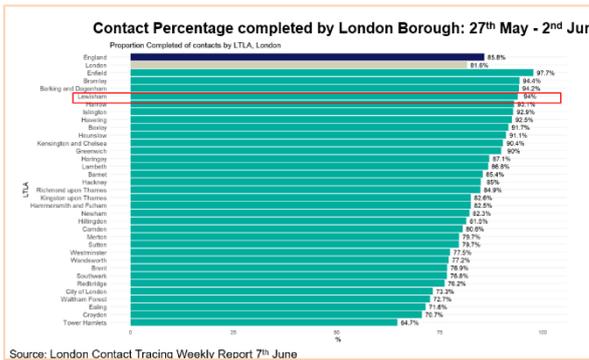
This is a service for Lewisham residents to help support anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 and to identify recent contacts. The bulk of the local contact tracing team was made up of 27 library staff. Some other council staff were also involved however, the library team has been the one constant since November 2020 until August 2021. Furthermore Libraries continue to support T&T through the secondment of 2 members of staff from September 21 for 6 months. They will lead on the day to day operation of the service and work with the new Covid response team.

In March 2021, Lewisham Council took on contact tracing of positive cases entirely as one of just six local authorities in a Local-0 pilot. Since then the Council's team has successfully contacted over 90% of people in the borough who have tested positive for COVID-19 to talk about recent close contacts who may be at risk. This outcome has been one of the best achieved across London.

## Charts 1 and 2 Lewisham case and contact tracing performance



The success of the local Test and Team service is largely down to having considerate, personable individuals who have really embraced the importance of sensitive conversations, at a time when people may feel unwell or have genuine concerns about the prospect of self-isolation.



Equally helpful that the local team consist of skilled individuals who are able to adopt new guidelines and learn ever-changing telephone scripts quickly; they are accustomed to working in a rota-based environment offering weekend as well as weekday service. Their local knowledge, experience and skill mix makes the current workforce particularly suitable for this work.

Feedback from team members:

*“It’s been very rewarding to be part of Lewisham’s contact tracing team. It allows us to be there for our local community and between us do our bit to help stop the spread.”*

*“We get to direct people to support they need, whether it’s the self-isolation payment, talking people through how to arrange home delivery of groceries or medicines, or simply providing calm, reassuring words to people who may be worried about having COVID-19.”*