

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Library Service Performance and the Service Offer for Children and Young People

Recommendation:

That Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on this report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the performance of the Warwickshire Library Service and an update on the library offer for children and young people, including the service's approach to increasing Library membership for children.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members requested that this report be produced as a result of a debate and motion passed at full Council on 21 March 2023. This report aims to respond to comments from members and strengthen the Library Service offer to children and young people.
- 2.2 The Service continues to reshape and realign the service offer to meet the changing needs and preferences of Warwickshire residents including physical and online services. In 2022/2023 there were 946,679 visits to our libraries and mobiles, a 59% increase from 2021/22. 85,780 people of all ages attended 5,633 library events, In addition, there were 1,313,076 physical issues and 1,025,769 e-issues of books and audio and newspapers and magazines, which was an increase in overall issues of 16% compared to 2021/22. Digital take up has increased from pre covid levels by on average 15% per year. Footfall has recovered almost to pre-covid levels.
- 2.3 Services to children and young people are seen as a key area for development within the Library Service strategy. This report highlights the progress the service has made in this area, and the close links with the Children and Families Service and the Registration Service. Section 8 provides an in depth look at the service offer for children, alongside other information on the operation and successes of the Library Service.

Premises

- 2.4 The Service has 31 libraries across the county (including 12 that are community-managed) plus mobile libraries and limited outreach services.
- 2.5 In the last few years, the County Council has also delivered newly refurbished libraries in Kenilworth, Wolston and Warwick and the library in Whitnash was successfully re-located to the Whitnash Civic Centre and Library.
- 2.6 A new Library in Nuneaton is being planned as part of a major town centre regeneration programme, Transforming Nuneaton, which is also planned to incorporate a Business Centre.
- 2.7 Some Warwickshire Libraries share premises and staff with other local services, e.g., Stockingford Nursery and Children's Centre. Staff increasingly work with partners to ensure a better customer experience for the residents of Warwickshire.

Digital and other offers

- 2.8 The digital offer in libraries continues to be enhanced and improved. The service has recently introduced You Can On-line (a tablet lending service) and Hublets, which enable library customers to read on-line resources within the library premises.
- 2.9 All County Council managed libraries also offer free public Wi-Fi and access via bookable computers to the internet, Microsoft office, scanning and printing facilities.
- 2.10 The Let's Make Offer continues to develop and expand their range of services. Let's Make Spaces enable customers to access bespoke resources such as 3-D printers, sewing machines, coding and music making packages to develop their ICT and creative skills.

Improving Engagement and Supporting Warwickshire Residents

- 2.11 The service contributes to the outcomes in the Council Plan, for example through holding events/activities throughout the year including events during school holidays such as the Summer Reading Challenge, Lego Club, Code Club, and other holiday activities. These programmes support the delivery of the Council's Child Friendly Warwickshire Strategy – happy, healthy, safe children.
- 2.12 With a view to further supporting the Council's approach to levelling up and to support the Council Plan objectives, the service has recently been successful in securing additional funding from Arts Council England to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). The work of the NPO will target Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire, providing cultural and educational activities and promoting and supporting improved educational attainment. The service has also been able to secure additional one-off funding to expand its digital offer (You Can Online) and to continue to support befriending calls, which were introduced at the beginning of the pandemic to extend support for those vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. It offers free data to Customers using the service who are currently being referred to the National Data Bank, which provides free mobile data to people in need by the charity Good things Foundation, which is like a "foodbank" for internet connectivity data. Both of these services have now been absorbed into the service offer.

- 2.13 In order to support families with the Cost of Living challenges over the last 12 months the service has provided warm bags and toiletry bags for both adults and children, targeting those most in need through our network of partners including EQuIP and WCAVA. The programme was made possible following a successful bid to the Household Support Fund. The service distributed these products across the County whilst paying particular focus on the Lower Super Output Areas prioritised in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up. In addition, Children under 16 do not pay fines on overdue items. This decision was taken because one of the main barriers to library usage in this age group was the accrual of fines. Adult fines and fees remain in place.
- 2.14 During the winter of 2022/ 2023 the service has also operated a network of “Warm hubs” providing additional activities for both adults and children. There were 984 events across the county during this period with 13,762 attendees. The Library service will continue with the Warn Hubs offer this winter.

The service is an established member of the Living Knowledge Network. The Living Knowledge Network is a UK-wide partnership of national and public libraries, created by the British Library to explore new ways for libraries across the country to work as one to improve access and engagement. The network currently includes over 20 public libraries alongside the British Library itself, the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales. The Living Knowledge Network is the only network of its kind in the UK and is centred on exchanging knowledge and developing memorable experiences for public library users including exhibitions, live event streams and poetry performances. Staff benefit from skill sharing events, international partnerships, leadership training days and mentoring schemes (a total of 12 events with around 70 participants from Warwickshire).

- 2.15 The Local Services management portfolio includes Libraries and Information Services, Heritage and Culture and Registration Services. Local Services continue to work closely with the Community Partnerships team to enhance opportunities to work collaboratively. More detail regarding the role of Libraries as Community Hubs is included in Section 7 below.

Summary

- 2.16 The Service is continuing to find new ways of engaging with children and families and with the wider cohort of Warwickshire residents. The increased footfall since Covid is encouraging alongside the continued growth in digital engagement. The trends across areas of service are set out in more detail in Section 3 alongside performance data in Section 5.
- 2.17 The service of course continues to consider how to provide the most effective and efficient service. As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, savings of £103,019 have been identified alongside the vacancy factor built into service budgets
- 2.18 The Service has a national reputation for innovation and getting things done and is frequently visited by other authorities keen to learn from Warwickshire’s approach.

3. Trends

- 3.1 Libraries are a universal service which encompasses a cradle to grave service. One of the challenges the service faces is supporting the wide variety of differing requirements of residents (see Appendix 3). The Library Service aims to cater for all of our residents' different needs. Digitisation is a key part of the developing service offer for those who need it, but this is in line with the Council's digital by choice approach, and is not being rolled out at the expense of face-to-face options for those who prefer them.
- 3.2 There is continuing evolution and change in how members of the public use libraries and what they value libraries for.
- 3.3 Libraries are more than just a building as the services that are provided, are both face to face and 'virtual'. The use of online library services has continued to rise, and existing work to increase the e-offer usage accelerated significantly due to the pandemic.
- 3.4 The Library Service continues to exploit digital technology to explore revised ways of delivering services and to continue to develop its online service offer, alongside the core offer in the library buildings.
- 3.5 Whilst it is difficult to assess library trends due to the impact of the pandemic on library opening hours, the data suggests that Warwickshire Libraries is bucking the national trend with book lending on the increase – 2022/2023 physical issues were up nearly 20% on the previous year. Visits are going up (59% increase) and libraries have put on more events with increased attendance – 85,780 attendees, comparisons for pre-covid years are difficult as the service offer has changed over the past three years. We will use data this year as the baseline.
- 3.6 Popular online services provided by libraries include the following:
- Customers accessed the library app and website for searching, renewing and requesting 514,733 items using the library catalogue.
 - Online access to some of the world's most trusted reference collections including newspaper and journal archives (Times Digital Archive).
 - The ability to listen online to classical music (Naxos).
 - Free access to Ancestry.com in libraries (for researching family history) and Find my Past.
 - Library news and information about events and activities.
 - The Working Lives project which showcases audio reminiscences of the working memories of members of the public in Nuneaton and Bedworth. The George Eliot collection of letters provides online access to a facsimile and transcript of the County's unique collection of historical artefacts.

4. The Library Service Network

- 4.1 The County Council continues to run 18 static libraries as part of a three-tier network:
- Library Hub - in three main centres of population offering the widest range of services and longest opening hours.

- Library Local - in 15 locations with opening hours, which aim to meet local needs.
- Library Direct - online library open 24/7, plus mobile, outreach and housebound reader services.

4.2 Warwickshire Libraries provides services to support some of the Council's key target age groups. The infographic in Appendix 3 demonstrates user needs and what the library service delivers to these key audiences.

5. Library Performance

5.1 In 2022/2023 County Council-run libraries: (see Appendix 1 for all data)

- Received **946,679** visits (around 2,743 per day). Visits continue to rise steadily. - 59% increase on 2021/2022 visits.
- Lent out **1,313,076** books, Spoken Word CDs (around 3,806 per day).
- Handled **133,005** enquiries (around 385 per day).
- Provided **91,295** public computer sessions (around 264 per day).
- Received **85,780** attendees at library events (around 248 per day).

5.2 Appendix 2 sets out the individual library profiles, providing a two-page summary for each library that shows the annual performance of the library and what services and events are available as part of the current service offer. Comparison figures for pre-covid years is not like for like as changes to service delivery and offer has changed over the last few years.

5.3 Digital Services delivered in the Library Service include:

- Use of Virtual Library, please see 5.3 below.
- Use of public computer related events and activities e.g., ICT support to enable people get on-line and use devices effectively.
- Use of public computer network.
- Provision of free Wi-Fi.
- Access to Let's Make spaces – digital equipment and resources, please see below.
- You Can On-line – digital device lending scheme.
- Hublets – eReading devices which can be used within a library setting.

5.4 Digital services enable Warwickshire residents to access online services 24/7, complementing and enhancing the in-library offer.

5.5 The Virtual Library Service consists of:

- eBooks and eAudio books.
- eMagazines; for example Gardeners World, Top Gear, Countryfile, Good Food.
- eNewspapers; over 2,000 popular UK and international titles.
- Electronic Information Resources; subscription sites providing free online reference information from encyclopaedias, dictionaries, Driver Theory Test, GoCitizen (UK Citizenship Test preparation), Britannica Online, Naxos Classical Music Library, Ancestry.com, Times Digital Archive.

- 5.6 EBook and eAudio, eMagazines and eNewspapers downloads have risen year on year since these were introduced in 2010:

2021/2022	2022/2023
925,308	1,025,769 (11 %increase)

Electronic Information Resources (eSubs)

- 5.7 Our eSubs performance exceeded the cumulative total of the previous year by a percentage of 9.5%:

eSubs	2021/2022	2022/2023	% increase
Ancestry	34,747	66,028	90
Britannica	3,175	3,645	14
Oxford English Dictionary	1,877	4,560	142
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography	2,220	1,828	-18
Oxford Reference Online	141	556	294
Oxford Research Encyclopaedia (new from April 2021)	146	84	-42
Very Short Introductions (Oxford press)	7	0	-100
Times Digital Archive	59,577	52,449	-11
Naxos – Classical Music Online	38,609	31,648	-18
Driver Theory Test	13,082	16,035	23
Libby	43,275	39,989	-7
Cobra		280	0
Press Display – eNewspapers	629,605	697,276	11
GoCitizen – Life in UK Test Questions	52	167	221
Totals overall	826,513	914,545	11

Physical Visits

2021/2022	2022/2023
594,164	946,679 (59 % increase)

Physical Issues (loans)

- 5.8 Up until 2019/2020 physical issues had been declining as part of a national trend.
- 5.9 The onset of the pandemic meant libraries had to completely close to the public, the service gradually re-opened as Government guidelines permitted, this resulted in a severe reduction in the number of books issued, however, the last two years have seen a period of recovery.

Book Issues and Spoken Word CDs:

2021/2022	2022/2023
1,084,127	1,313,076 (21% increase)

Community Managed Libraries

- 5.10 Since April 2012 Warwickshire Library Service has supported 12 Community Managed Libraries (CML). These libraries use the same library management system as the County Council libraries and are stocked with County Council library books including receiving regular allocations of new titles.
- 5.11 The libraries have a weekly library van delivery service and visits from library staff four times a year. The staff undertake stock work and liaise with the individual CML management team regarding performance, training and other issues. The libraries are also supported by a dedicated telephone helpline. The successful transition of these libraries from the Council to becoming community managed has been used as a model for other local authorities looking to restructure their library service. The Council library service and several of the community managed libraries have hosted visits from colleagues from other authorities to share our collective learning and experiences.

CML physical issues:

2021/2022	2022/2023
39,510	59,332

Home Delivery Service

- 5.12 Working with 29 volunteers, library staff currently deliver to 333 vulnerable customers around the county who are unable to get to a static library or access the mobile library. Customers of the Home Delivery Service get a 4-weekly delivery of books and spoken word titles direct to their home. The Service also delivers to nursing homes to ensure the residents have an 8-weekly exchange of stock. Volunteers are key to the successful delivery of this service providing approximately 350 hours of their time each month.
- 5.13 The Mobile Library Service delivers a 3-weekly service to rural areas in Warwickshire, stopping at 258 locations on 36 different routes around the county using 3 purpose-built vehicles, serving over 3,390 registered library customers. The mobile libraries and the home library service issued 71,646 items in 2022/2023.
- 5.14 The Home Delivery Service and Mobile Library Service also signpost to partner services such as Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Home Safety Checks and Age UK Safe & Well services. All these services enable residents to stay safely in their own homes for longer and the delivery of library services to them helps them stay connected and continue with their leisure or educational reading, promoting mental well-being. <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries-2/mobile-libraries>

6. 'Let's Make' in Warwickshire Libraries

- 6.1 With the help of Arts Council England Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation funding, Let's Make spaces have been developed in Nuneaton, Rugby and Leamington libraries. This equipment can be taken to other libraries as required.

These facilities complement the existing library offer by supporting and addressing the needs of the digital agenda. This provides an opportunity to build on and improve digital knowledge and skills, together with enhancing local community confidence, helping to raise educational attainment and providing the opportunity to align much sought after digital and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) skills with the job market.

- 6.2 Let's Make spaces aim to encourage economic growth and support the skills agenda in Warwickshire. In 2022-2023 there were 120 Let's Make events with 922 participants.
- 6.3 'Let's Make' provides welcoming and accessible spaces where people come together to create, try out new ideas, learn and share new skills and expertise and make things in different ways, offering digital learning opportunities in libraries.
- 6.4 The spaces offer a range of inspiring activities which include virtual and augmented reality, robotics, coding and programming, 3D design and printing, animation and film making, sewing, embroidery and crafting, together with music creation and soundscapes. The intention is to 'grow' the offer, working in partnership with internal WCC partners, digital and design experts, liaising with local digital and design businesses and industries in the area and building on links with Higher Education/Further Education partners to provide additional expertise and user opportunities.
- 6.5 Let's Make services and resources help to build confidence and logical thinking, raise aspirations and support the Council's priorities and policies towards narrowing gaps and creating equality of opportunity for all. The spaces promote digital inclusion, widen participation and demonstrate the impact of libraries in supporting quality learning to meet the needs of 21st century communities.

7. Libraries as community hubs

- 7.1 There is a major opportunity to develop our libraries as community hubs, helping to support and embed our Community Powered Warwickshire approach. The Service continues to work with a wide range of partners to provide members of the public with the convenience of more integrated services in a single place. For example, Citizens Advice use libraries to meet clients. The library service works closely with Town and Parish Councils and District and Borough Councils to promote the service including contributing to events, such as the "Night at the Museum" which is run in collaboration with Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.
- 7.2 The Library Service recently met with national leaders in the sector, including the CEO of Libraries Connected, the sector support organisation for public libraries, New Local and Heads of Libraries, who have developed strategies around community power and library outreach. The service has developed a draft action plan to enhance its role in community development and co-creation.

- 7.3 The library service works in partnership with community artists and the Adult and Community Learning Service to deliver programmes in libraries. The Children and Families Service work closely with libraries as do the Family Information Service who attend events to promote their services.
- 7.4 The Service is a front-facing, skilled and trusted service that has much to offer other service providers, to help them meet local needs and priorities cost-effectively. Libraries have a physical presence in local communities and the ability to reach, attract and serve wide-ranging audiences.
- 7.5 Partnership services and arrangements include the following:
- Multi-skilled library teams administer concessionary travel pass applications.
 - The service supports the Health & Wellbeing agenda including the Reading Well scheme, that makes available a collection of self-help titles for people with mild to moderate mental health problems. The collection is promoted via the Social Prescribing Network and is supported by Adult Social Care and NHS Warwickshire and continues to be used by members of the public. The service is seeking to develop closer ties with colleagues in Public Health.
- 7.6 Libraries Connected, (formerly the Society of Chief Librarians) have developed six universal offers: Culture and Creativity, Health and Wellbeing, Information and Digital, Reading, Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise and the Children's Promise, which are an integral part of our services:
- **Health and wellbeing offer** – Public libraries contribute to the health and well-being of local communities. This offer promotes and enables key health partnerships.
 - **Reading Offer** – Libraries provide a modern reading service within local communities, in all formats and for all ages.
 - **Digital and Information Offer** – Digital services, skills and access underpins a 21st century library service; Digital supports and enables the delivery of all the offers. Libraries support people to access information and services in vital areas: government online information and services, careers and job seeking, health, personal financial information and benefits.
 - **Culture and Creativity** – Sharing of resources with the County Records Office, Heritage and Culture traveling display case. There will be further developments of the library offer in this area following the successful achievement of National Portfolio Organisation Status.
 - **Children's Promise** – Shaping 21st century children's library services and sets out the library journey and the way libraries engage with children and young people as they grow. The promise underpins all other offers in relation to children.

National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)

- 7.7 Warwickshire County Council's library service has been successful in a bid to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) in Arts Council England's funding plans for 2023-26.
- 7.8 The new NPO status means that Warwickshire Libraries will receive up to £630k in funding from Arts Council England's Investment Programme over the next three

years. There has also been a separate external oversight and advisory board, with independent membership, established in order to lead and guide the project.

- 7.9 This will support with cultural and creative programming and outreach activities delivered through Warwickshire Libraries, with a particular focus on the North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth areas, which aligns with the majority of the 22 Lower Super Output Areas identified as priorities in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up.
- 7.10 All libraries managed by the County Council will reap the local and national benefits of the funding received, but as an Arts Council England priority place there will be particular emphasis to support the creative and cultural offers at Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire libraries, which also meet the criteria for assistance as part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda.
- 7.11 The work of the NPO will feed into relevant Local Levelling Up Plans.
- 7.12 Over the three-year funding period, Warwickshire Libraries will work closely with Arts Council England to:
- promote libraries as places for people to access great art and culture within their local communities;
 - create new and exciting opportunities for the people of Warwickshire to enjoy and participate in culture;
 - seek new opportunities to work with creative individuals and organisations to explore, develop and deliver new work through Warwickshire Libraries’ events programme; and
 - grow and develop the creative and practical skills of library staff and embed new opportunities for them to think and approach cultural programming differently and to grow their skills working with artists and creatives.

8. The Library Services - Wider Service Offer for Children

- 8.1 Library services contribute towards achieving council objectives, local priorities and wider agendas as set out in the Council Plan’s seven areas of focus (more detail is available in Appendix 4).

Warwickshire’s Seven Areas of Focus (relevant to Children and Young People)	Current Library Service Provision
Deliver our Child Friendly Warwickshire Strategy – happy, healthy, safe children	Early years offer includes: Bookstart (universal and targeted offer); Rhymes Times/Story Stomp Library offer 5-11 - Lego Clubs and Code clubs
Through education, improve life opportunities for	Clearvision (large print/braille books); Bagbooks; wide range of children’s fiction/non-fiction

Warwickshire's Seven Areas of Focus (relevant to Children and Young People)	Current Library Service Provision
children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities	<p>Electronic resources – Britannica et al</p> <p>Joint operation of the Library and Children's Centre at Stockingford to include delivery of both library and Family Learning Service led activities</p> <p>Partnerships with schools and nurseries to offer library class visits and third sector organisations</p> <p>School Library Service available to advise on Library provision within schools</p> <p>The library service contributes to the Council's Early Years offer, e.g., delivering Bookstart programme, both as part of the Universal Offer and a targeted offer at the most socially deprived</p> <p>Develop the library service's Sensory Offer in Stratford Library; incorporate sensory offer in all refurbishment plans</p> <p>Sensory Storytelling collections and toys available in all libraries</p>

Bookstart

- 8.2 Bookstart aims to encourage a love of books, stories and rhymes in children from as young an age as possible. Funded by the Reading Agency there are two elements:
- i.) a universal offer gifting a free Bookstart pack to every child before the age of 12 months old; and
 - ii.) Bookstart also offers two further packs, Bookstart Toddler (1-2 year-olds) and Bookstart Pre-schooler (3-4 year-olds), which are gifted by a variety of Early years partners to families who need them most.
- 8.3 Libraries manage the Bookstart Programme through a dedicated officer. Libraries work closely with partners such as Early Years settings, Health Professionals, Adult Community Learning and Children's Centres, to ensure that the most vulnerable children benefit from the programme and the opportunity to develop their early literacy and oracy skills. The number of Baby packs gifted in 2022/2023 was 4,080, with 738 Toddler packs and 1,878 pre-school packs.

Early Years

- 8.4 The Library Service run an extensive programme of Early Years activities. The activities include Rhyme Times aimed at the 0-2's their parents and carers introducing them to songs and rhymes that help a child's cognitive development. These sessions are offered at every library and are fun, friendly and extremely popular with large numbers attending.
- 8.5 Following on Story Stomp sessions are aimed at children aged 2 – 4 and develop the children's love of stories and associated activities that not only develop literacy skills but help develop social and fine motor skills.

- 8.6 Duplo sessions aimed at the under 5's are being piloted at Atherstone and Polesworth libraries. These fun sessions help develop fine motor skills. These sessions have been well received and will be rolled out to other service points over the next few months. (Early Years Events: 2,037 Total Attending: 43,351). There are approximately 40,000 children in this age bracket in Warwickshire.

Offer for Children aged 5-11

- 8.7 The library service offers a range of activities for children aged 5-11. These include Code Clubs, where the children can develop early computing skills; Lego Clubs, which develop creative, social and motor skills. Story and Craft events take place throughout the year, especially during holidays. Recent examples include World Book Day class visits to learn how to use the library, Theatre Group visits, celebrations for Shakespeare Birthday, Interactive Archaeology Activities, Musical performances, Author visits including story and poetry writing workshop.
- 8.8 These activities are popular with both adults and children alike.

Summer Reading Challenge

- 8.9 The Library Service engages enthusiastically each year with the Summer Reading Challenge offered by the Reading Agency. The programme encourages primary school children to read over the long summer school holiday, a time when reading attainment levels can dip. Children visit the library to borrow books and are rewarded with a fun pack containing quizzes, games and stickers. The library service runs a range of associated story and craft activities and Let's Make activities to accompany the challenge. At the end of the challenge, children who complete the scheme are invited to attend Award Ceremonies where they are presented with their certificates, which are often presented by local councillors.
- 8.10 The Summer Reading Challenge 2023 had 4,038 children who took part in the challenge and there were 127 Summer Reading Challenge Events with a total attendance of 2,213.
- 8.11 There are in Warwickshire approximately 60,000 children in the 5-11 age group.

Sensory Offer

- 8.12 The library service has recently introduced a new sensory offer. All libraries have sensory toys, sensory board books and access to Bagbooks story boxes, which are story boxes aimed specifically for use with children and adults with additional needs. Stratford Library is piloting several new sensory items including a bubble wall, weighted bean bags and a sensory projector. The library has specific quiet times for families with children who have additional needs. The area is blocked off and the blackout blinds drawn to enable the children to enjoy the space with limited distractions.
- 8.13 Sensory activities enhance learning through play, helping individuals to develop their senses, encouraging problem solving and building nerve connections within the brain. Sensory stimulation also engages different areas of the brain, helping individuals to absorb and retain more information. It can also promote communication, reduce anxiety and improve focus. Sensory input has also been

shown to improve reading and vocabulary as broadening sensory associations with words assists learning.

- 8.14 The service has reached out to colleagues, partners and meaningfully included individuals with lived experience of disability and their families in the decision-making process to ensure that the service offer meets the needs of this customer base. This offer will continue to develop over the coming months.

Schools Library Service (SLS)

- 8.15 The Schools Library Service operates as a traded service and offers subscribing schools value for money services that enable them to offer quality school library provision which supports children to develop their reading and literacy skills.
- 8.16 There are 230 Primary Schools in Warwickshire and 54 of these subscribe to the Schools Library Service. There are 72 Secondary schools of which 15 subscribe to the service.
- 8.17 In the academic year 2016/2017 the service had 78 subscribing primary schools and 17 Secondary. As schools face budget pressures, this is having an impact on the ability for schools to subscribe to the SLS.
- 8.18 The Service operates a project loan service. Delivered termly to schools, all boxes are handpicked from teacher requests and include book resources and an artefact related to the topics. Our boxes are inspiring, hands on and appropriate for the learners.
- 8.19 The Service also offers reading for pleasure loans. Delivered annually to schools, these are professional selected books to support school and student needs, often filling library shelves or schoolbook corners.
- 8.20 The School Library Service has a small team of highly experienced staff that can offer support to school staff. This offered through a training programme and associated support, including regular primary and secondary school network meetings for school staff. Telephone/email support and advice services. The service also runs annual book awards at junior, secondary and teen students.

Eduroam

- 8.21 Eduroam is a portable box, providing secure and seamless internet access for students to access their university resources via the Joint Informations Systems Committee JISC (National UK digital higher Education body) Eduroam network. Leamington Library is part of a pilot project run in partnership with JISC and Libraries Connected. The project aims to improve the connectivity between students and their 'home' University and resulted from many courses transferring on-line during the pandemic.

Library Membership

- 8.22 Membership of the library service is open to all Warwickshire residents. The service aims to encourage all parents and carers to join their child to library service from birth or at the earliest opportunity to enable their child to have the best start in life. At

present 37% of children in Warwickshire are library members, and our aim is to increase this through a Universal Library Membership scheme delivered in partnership with the Registration Service.

- 8.23 The service acknowledges that it would be beneficial to increase the number of children who become library members, and has the following plan to achieve this:
- i.) To work with colleagues in Registration to promote library membership from birth.
 - ii.) Work with partners such as Adult Community Learning; Family Information Service across the County Council to promote both the educational and social benefits for children of library membership.
 - iii.) Raise the awareness of parents/carers regarding the benefits of library membership and usage with respect to developing their child's literacy and educational levels. This work will be particularly focussed on the priority Lower Super Output areas identified in the Countywide Approach to Levelling Up. The service will monitor library take-up in these areas and this work will feature in the NPO action and monitoring plan.
 - iv.) To utilise opportunities provided at Summer Reading Challenge assemblies to promote library membership.

9. Volunteering

- 9.1 The service has a strong volunteer base and has over 240 volunteers used across the service.
- 9.2 As an example, Stratford-upon-Avon Library has a thriving and diverse community of volunteers. The long-standing group of IT Help volunteers support a range of customers with their digital needs. The Rhyme Time and Coffee Morning volunteers are both asylum seekers currently housed in Stratford, and a new young volunteer has also recently been recruited to support Chess Club who originally came to us as work experience.
- 9.3 A number of local reading groups are also supported from the library, which also hosts Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers and young people aged 13-19 assisting with Summer Reading Challenge. Following the success of last year's Fun Palace, volunteers will again be involved in running this year's community-led event. Volunteers enable Stratford-upon-Avon Library to enhance its programme and support staff to deliver an ever-increasing range of events and activities for our local community.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The Service continues to move forward to better meet the needs of the residents of Warwickshire (both young and old) and the 24/7 society. It will continue to innovate, exploring new ways to deliver services both physically and digitally. The shift towards digital lending has added a new dimension to library services, rather than merely transitioning from physical to digital. The strong return of physical issues, alongside digital issues, and active use of ePlatforms remaining at higher levels than pre-pandemic, seemed to indicate that the pandemic had not resulted in a simple shift

from physical to digital. This report also highlights the library service's commitment to social value and volunteering.

- 10.2 Our libraries improve individuals' quality of life and well-being, increased educational attainment, and reduced social isolation and are a key vehicle to support the levelling up agenda.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – A Year in Warwickshire Libraries Infographic.

Appendix 2 – Individual Library Profiles – These are a two-page summary for each library, showing the annual performance of the library and what services and events are available for customer use. *It is difficult to compare individual libraries, with each other, as they have varying opening hours, staffing levels, and service offer based on local need and population served.*

Appendix 3 – Library Service Offer Infographic.

Background Papers

None.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Ayub Khan Head of Communities, Libraries, Heritage and Registration	ayubkhan@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Bal Jacob Director of Workforce and Local Services	baljacob@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Rob Powell Executive Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Yousef Dahmash Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	cllrdahmash@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A – This is a countywide matter.

Other members: Councillors Adrian Warwick, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Sarah Feeney, and Will Roberts