Community Engagement and Wellbeing

222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR

Report of: Assistant Director of Community Learning and Libraries

Meeting of: Employment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Date:

Ward(s): All

Subject: Libraries Quarter 3 2023-24 Performance Report

1. Synopsis

1.1. The council has in place a suite of corporate performance indicators to help monitor progress in delivering the outcomes set out in the council's Corporate Plan. These indicators are in the process of being refreshed, with a view to more accurately measuring libraries' contribution to strategic council priorities. Progress on key performance measures is reported through the council's Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis to ensure accountability to residents and to enable challenge where necessary.

1.2. This report sets out Quarter 3 2023-24 progress against targets for those performance indicators that fall within the Library Service outcome area, for which the Employment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has responsibility.

2. Recommendations

To review the performance data for Q3 2023/24 for measures relating to Library Services.

3. Background

The performance measures covered by this report are largely based on the Corporate Performance Indicator set, which is refreshed annually. The performance indicators for the library service are:

Number of library visits
Number of library issues (physical and online)
Number of active members – someone who has used their library ticket in the past 12 months.

In addition to these Corporate Performance indicators, this report shall include data/feedback for the following:

PC usage
Library activities – number of attendees at events
User feedback.

PI No.	Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	Better to be	2023/24 Q1	2023/24 Q2	2023/24 Q3	2023/24 Q4	In-year trend	Notes on measure, targets and benchmarking
Empowering strong and supportive communities										
CEW1	Number of library visits	342,384 (Q3 & Q4 Only)	766,000	↑	202,394	210,045	207,762			Target **800,000** per annum
CEW2	Number of Library issues (online)	221,353	253,644	↑	62,469	69,306	76,932			Target **256,180** (1% increase on 2022/23) per annum
CEW3	Number of Library issues (physical)	444,146	515,227	↑	125,800	131,654	123,227			Target **520,379** (1% increase on 2022/23) per annum
CEW4	Active Library members	17,463	20,516	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A			Target **22,346** (5% increase on 2022/23) per annum

3.1 Corporate Indicator CEW1: Number of Library Visits: Q3 Figure 207,762 (target 800,000)

Visits	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
2023/24	202,394	210,045	207,762		620,201
2022/23	185,321	182,660	190,756	207,263	766,000

Visitor figures for Q3 are above the quarterly target of 200,000, an increase that continues the upward trend in visits seen over the majority of 2022/23. The service is forecast to exceed its annualised target.

3.2   Corporate Indicator CEW2: Number of Online Library Issues Q3: 76,932

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
2023/24	62,384	69,306	76,932		208.707
2022/23	62,100	61,176	64,470	65,898	253,644

This corporate indicator aims to highlight the breadth of the library offer and the uptake of online and e-resources. The issues here show the take-up of a number of resources: e-books; e-audio books; e-newspapers and e-magazines that users can access via Libby, Borrowbox and other library apps.

3.3   Corporate Indicator CEW3: Number of Library Issues Physical Q3 123,227

Issues	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
2023/24	125,800	131,654	123,227		380,681
2022/23	123,620	128,881	126,756	135,970	515,227

The library service continues to promote physical and online stock and has a programme of stock promotions across the year many of which link in with the cultural calendar. In Q3, the service had stock promotion at all libraries for Black History Month including a new book list celebrating Black female authors.

3.4   Corporate Indicator CEW4: Active Library Members Q3 20,516

Target of 21,541 which is a 5% increase on the figure achieved in 2022/23.
This data is only available at year end. The trend for the active members for the last four years is as follows:

2022/23 - 20,516
2021/22 – 17,463
2021/21 - 6,954
2019/20 - 26,821.

3.5   PC Usage

All the libraries offer public computers and Wi-Fi which are free to use. In addition to using the software on the PCs and accessing the internet, users can print and scan from them. There are a total of 123 computers across all the 10 libraries.

The PC booking system provides detailed reports on the uptake of the public PCs, with usage currently standing at circa 50% take up of available sessions.

- In Quarter 3, there were **17,075** hours of computer usage across all 10 libraries. This is the actual number of hours that the PCs were used and needs to be considered in relation to the number of hours that the PCs were potentially available. For example:

- In Q1 – We had a total of 4652.5 library opening hours across all 10 Libraries and recorded 16,924 hours PC usage. If we calculate average usage across all the opening hours its's **3.45** hrs PC usage per opening hr.

- In Q2 – We had a total of 4993 opening hours across all 10 Libraries and recorded 18,215 hours pc usage. If we calculate average usage across all the opening hours its's **3.64** hrs PC usage per opening hr.

- In Q3 – We had a total of 4835.5 opening hours across all 10 Libraries and recorded 17,075 hours PC usage. If we calculate average usage across all the opening hours its's **3.53** hrs PC usage per opening hr.

Library	Number of Hours Q1	Number of Hours Q2	Number of Hours Q3
Archway	1,509	1,611	1,545
Cat & Mouse	360	436	356
Central	6,125	6,794	6,483
Finsbury	2,216	2,165	1736
Lewis Carroll	2	5	1
Mildmay	851	969	883
N4	2,580	2,751	2,425
North	1,240	1,264	1,120
South	1,057	1,244	1,240
West	984	976	1,005
Total	**16, 924**	**18,215**	**17,075**

4.   **Number of residents attending events and activities in Libraries**

4.1.   In 2022/23, the service recorded 43,970 attendees to a wide range of events across the library service. This was above the target of 32,000 and represented approx. 15% of the Islington population.

4.2.   The free activities on offer cut across a range of themes under the Library Service strapline of Read, Learn, and Connect. They are responsive to community need and support the 7 Universal Library Outcomes identified by the Department for

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in their strategic ambition for public libraries, 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 – 2021.

The 7 universal library outcomes are:

1. Increased reading and literacy
2. Cultural and creative enrichment
3. Improved digital access and literacy.
4. Happier and healthy lives
5. Stronger more resilient communities
6. Helping everyone achieve their full potential.
7. Greater prosperity

These universal outcomes are referenced in our Library Strategy and events offered reflect these as well as the Council's Islington together 2030 plan and it's five missions.

- Child Friendly Islington
- Fairer together
- Safe place to call home.
- Community Wealth building
- Greener, healthier Islington

We have a range of regular activities and offer bespoke and themed activities throughout the year.

Some of the regularly timetabled activities include:

- Weekly under-fives and baby bounce sessions
- Chess and games clubs for adults and children
- Reading groups for adults and children
- Gentle exercise class for older adults
- Gadget support sessions
- Knit and natter groups.
- Lego clubs for children
- Toy libraries.

In quarter 3 we had a total of **15,595** attendees attending a wide range of events. There were 876 events with 7861 child and 7734 adult attendees.

Library	Number of Attendees at events Q1	Number of Attendees at events Q2	Number of Attendees at events Q3
Archway	1,699	1,697	2,513
Cat & Mouse	785	1,376	1,118
Central	2,149	2,457	2,609
Finsbury	1,292	1,357	1,638
Lewis Carroll	811	782	1,062

Mildmay	1,367	1,707	1,588
N4	931	847	1,095
North	1,358	1,520	1,233
South	710	943	1,168
West	1,481	1,630	1,573
Total	**12,583**	**14,316**	**15,595**

The table below shows the range and number of activities during Q3 broken down per month. Across the quarter we had a total of 876 events.

	Baby Bounce Under-fives Toy Library	Chess clubs	Comic forum reading groups poetry groups	Craft	Exercise sessions	Gadget support	Knit/ stitch	Lego clubs	Other events	Story sessions
Oct	120	20	28	31	27	4	5	15	42	16
Nov	119	18	30	20	31	10	5	16	27	14
Dec	102	18	30	25	23	9	5	18	31	17
Totals	341	56	88	76	81	23	15	49	100	47

4.3   Q3 included a range of events to celebrate Black History Month, Libraries week and Recycling week.

Events included:

Repair café at North Library – with waste minimalisation team

Dr Energy and Shine advice sessions – Central and Finsbury 5.10.23 & 16.10.23

Community planting event at North Library – with Greenspace 3.11.23 & 17.11.23

Windrush Scandal author (Amelia Gentleman) and panel event – Central Library.

Panel left to right – Cllr Khondoker, Amelia Gentleman (author) Michael Braithwaite (Windrush victim) Judy Griffiths (Windrush victim) Cllr Rosaline Ogunro

Writing workshops x 3 Increasing diversity in publishing – Central Library

October half term and Christmas holiday family events at all Libraries

New dyslexia collections added at all libraries and a booklist.

Get online – digital sessions to show users how to use online resources.

Hannukah family events x 3 at Archway, Mildmay and N4 library.

Happy Flow free period products initiative started at Central and Finsbury Library in December.

Love Libraries campaign – for Libraries Week. Users told us why they love libraries and filled in love hearts. We had well over 200 responses - users told us that they love libraries because:

- The wide range of books, resources, and services. It also provides an oasis of tranquillity.

- It is my safe space, my place to get books/graphic novels, print, be calm and enjoy seeing staff (who are excellent)
- When I visit the library, the staff help me and I feel happy, comfortable and able to get all the help and support from staff. Lovely books and a great place for everyone no matter what the age.
- It's a great place to get some work done.
- I It is real and personal. Not electronic!
- It is an almost last haven of knowledge and fun.
- Books should be universally available for everyone for free.
- It is local and a core part of my community.
- It is a safe place for children.
- It is inviting and accessible and welcoming!
- The library is quiet, the environment is good. I like to read books and live nearby.
- It is a nice working environment.
- It is a place where everyone is welcome. In an ever privatised and commercialised world, it is becoming harder and harder to find free accessible, cosy places full of knowledge and inspiration, plus it is so clean here! Thank you, library staff, for doing all the great work!
- I feel great when I am here. I am in a beautiful and peaceful place, and the atmosphere helps me concentrate much better than in other places, everyone seems to care and is positive, which just fills the air!
- Free books, free and quite place to read/work/relax/free computer access, free e books on Libby, you can ask the librarians for books in other libraries, comfortable seats, large tables, water fountain, well-maintained toilets, free classes, weekly clubs as a great way to make friends , having like 12 items out at once, your card working at all Islington Libraries, the peace and quiet.
- It's a space for me to work, relax, be part of the community.

I love my library because...

it is a lovely place to spend time reading and knitting! Also the librarian's are really lovely, welcoming and helpful.

I love my library because...

all the staff are so friendly and help lul. There are activities to enjoy such as Poetry, knitting, reading group. Any Computer Problems, there is always somebody to help. I have a comfortable and welcome when and visit the library.

I love my library because.

It is a knowledge base and does many extra curricular stuff like knitting groups and poetry group

In addition to events and activities library staff have carried out a large amount of community outreach in Q3. This outreach activity enables library staff to make contact with a large number of local organisations and residents as well as promote the whole range of services we offer. All libraries have a community profile which lists all the local organisations, community centres, school etc and staff try to have regular contact with all of the organisations within their local area.

In Q3 outreach activity included:

Stall at Thornhill Christmas fair

Stall at Cally Road Christmas fair

Visits to primary schools to promote the Winter Reading Challenge which started 1.12.23.

Brickworks cost of living event 8.12.23.

Visits to stay and play sessions at Children's centres.

Black History Month storytelling session at Willow Children's centre for childminders group.

4.4   The library service plays a key role in supporting local priorities and services that deliver on them. Some of the activities that were run in local libraries in Q3 included:

Central, North and West Library – pop up vaccination centres

Islington carers hub – reminiscence and BHM sessions at Central gallery

Reminiscence session at Central with North London cares

All libraries used as a collection location for Lunch Bunch Christmas hampers

Youth Employment Hub – West Library

1st Steps Learning Centre – Central Library

Islington Computer Skills Centre – Finsbury Library

ACL classes at Cat & Mouse Library

5.0   Feedback from users

5.1   The library service receives a large amount of feedback from users. Some of this is received in libraries via customer talk back forms, some comes in via the website, on Twitter or from contact Islington.

5.2   In Q3 a total of 24 compliments/suggestions, comments and complaints were received.

Examples include:

- Thank you for the fantastic service at Archway Library and the helpful staff. Archway has the best selection of audio books which I borrow for my blind 97 year old father.
- Library user wanted to know what events have been organised to celebrate Black History Month and there is a distinct lack of reference to this on the website. User directed to the Islington Directory and Islington life where the events were listed.
- Library user unhappy that the USB ports do not work on the public pcs. This issue was investigated and rectified.
- Library user was unhappy that her son did not receive a prize in the Summer Reading Challenge lucky did and her son was very upset. Better to give everyone the same or nothing at all. This issue has been discussed and we have decided to make changes to our ceremonies for the 2024 Summer Reading Challenge and will not have lucky dip prizes.

In Q3, the service trialled a new feedback form for adults attending events to ensure that we get as much feedback as possible about the events we are putting on as well as asking for more detailed equalities information about the attendees.

For example, we had the following feedback from the Windrush scandal author panel event:

We had 59 attendees and of these 38 completed feedback from. The response included:

Are you an Islington Resident	Yes - 26	No - 12		
Are you a library member	Yes - 19	No - 19		
How satisfied with the event were you	Extremely - 24	Very - 7	Not so - 1	
What age are you	65+ - 11	45-64 - 14	25-44 - 5	16-24 – 1
How would you describe your gender	Female - 19	Male - 10	Non binary - 0	Other – 0
To which of these groups do you consider you belong	White British – 10 White Irish - 1 White other - 2	Black Caribbean – 8 Black African - 3	Mixed Heritage - 1	Other – 6

Do you consider yourself to have a disability	Yes -4	No - 27		

6. Implications

6.1 Financial Implications

The cost of providing resources to monitor performance is met within each service's core budget.

6.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal duties upon local authorities to set targets or monitor performance. However, these enable us to strive for continuous improvement.

6.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

The libraries service is committed to contributing towards achieving a net-zero carbon Islington by 2030. All libraries are collection points for recycling bags and food waste bags and in December the Home Library Service started using an electric van.

6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and

promote understanding.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, because this report is looking at historical performance information and does not relate to a new policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision. Where a new policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision is mentioned in the commentary within this report, there should be a separate Equalities Impact Assessment for that specific development, rather than attached to the reporting on performance for any measures that this would affect.

The libraries service continues to offer a service that is inclusive, accessible, welcoming and relevant to all. Addressing inequalities is central to the 'Read, Learn, Connect' mission of libraries, and is reflected in opening hours, stock, the online offer (where e-audiobooks support those who have visual conditions access library materials); the activities offered (such as Eid craft events); thematic displays (such as for Pride and Black History months).

Operating within the Directorate of Community Engagement and Wellbeing, working alongside the Equalities team and reporting to the Executive member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion, the Library Service is committed to developing an even stronger offer that addresses inequalities by mapping the offer to need and addressing gaps where they may be identified.

7.Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

This report has presented a detailed narrative describing the performance of Libraries Services in Quarter 3 2023-24. Where performance is off target, a summary of the actions being undertaken to improve performance has been included.

Appendices:

- None

Background papers:

- None

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

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Date: 25.3.2020

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