

Report Title:	Library Transformation: Consultation and Recommendations
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage, and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 24 June 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Adele Taylor, Director of Resources Angela Huisman, Library and Resident Contact Lead Louise Freeth, Head of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks Cabinet approval to implement the recommended changes to the Library Service delivery model and to adopt the revised Library Transformation Strategy.

The original proposals recommended closing certain Libraries and further reducing the opening hours of others to provide a total 217.5 opening hours per week. The final recommendation is to keep all Libraries open and deliver 314.5 opening hours per week. This will include a Select and Deliver Service / Home Library Service supported by 50 volunteers, which will replace the Mobile Library vehicle, and an Accessibility Service to support people with disabilities, in particular autism, dementia, and other hidden disabilities.

The recommended opening hours will be dependent on the establishment of approved Service Level Agreements with potential funders with whom discussions were held during the Consultation and Engagement period.

Implementation will deliver savings of £292,000 for the Council. If approved, implementation will commence in October 2021 with the aim to be fully operational by April 2022. The LTS will run through to 2025 and will be regularly reviewed by the relevant Cabinet Member and Head of Service/Lead Officer to ensure alignment with Corporate and Community priorities.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i) Notes the outcome of the Consultation and the Comprehensive Needs Analysis**
- ii) Approves the adoption of the Library Transformation Strategy, the recommended changes to the service and the associated savings**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Approve the adoption of the Library Transformation Strategy, the recommended changes to the Library Service and the associated savings. This is the recommended option	This will allow the Council to deliver a Comprehensive and Efficient Library Service in line with its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and statutory obligations that meets the needs of residents while confirming changes that will deliver savings of £292,000 in total, split between 2021-22 and 2022-23.
Do not approve the Adoption of the Library Transformation Strategy, the recommended changes to the Library Service and the associated savings. This is not recommended	This will not enable changes that meet the needs of our residents. This will not allow the council to deliver savings of £292,000.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This report seeks to advise Cabinet of the outcome of the recent consultation and engagement exercise and requests approval to implement subsequent changes to statutory library provision in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) in line with the revised Library Transformation Strategy (LTS) while delivering savings for the Council.
- 3.2 The recommended savings and the impact on statutory library provision are detailed in Appendix B.
- 3.3 The findings of the refreshed Comprehensive Needs Analysis alongside the feedback from the Consultation and Engagement exercise have shaped the recommendations. Significant changes have been made to the final recommendations, alternative income streams have been explored and sustainable funding options have been identified.
- 3.4 The new proposals have been shaped by conversations with partners and stakeholders which have potentially secured £60,500 in additional support made up of reductions in rent, reductions in cleaning costs and funding for staffing should the changes proposed in this report be agreed.
- 3.5 Taking into account the results of the refreshed Comprehensive Needs Analysis, a re-examination of the library estate and the retiring of the Mobile Library vehicle, which is end of life, and its replacement with a volunteer-supported Select and Deliver service, it has been possible to revisit the proposals relating to Boyn Grove and Dedworth libraries.
- 3.6 Residents will continue to benefit from a comprehensive and efficient library service that meets their needs, drives aspiration and remains accessible to all

including the most vulnerable whilst demonstrating excellent value for money for the council taxpayer.

3.7 Councils are statutorily responsible for ensuring the delivery of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service and are also responsible for supporting the overall health and well-being of their communities.

3.8 In reaching its decision, Cabinet should be able to demonstrate that it has considered the legislation that governs the Public Library Service and be certain that its new decision would result in a "comprehensive and efficient library service" as required by Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Appendix E explains the Role of the Secretary of State in Library Superintendence and the risks relating to Judicial Review and challenge when Councils undertake significant changes to Public Library Services.

3.9 The Library Transformation Strategy (LTS), Appendix D, will facilitate delivery of corporate and community priorities through a sustainable and resilient Library Service. It will provide direction for the Library Service so that it can help to release the power and assets within communities by working closely with partners, stakeholders and residents to meet local need.

3.10 The Library Service Vision outlined in the LTS can be summed up in the following statement and is underpinned by the six strategic priorities found in the LTS itself:

We will provide physical and virtual spaces that build connections and facilitate access to knowledge, resources, and support so that residents are equipped to aspire and thrive

3.11 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Library Service has demonstrated that low cost, high impact support and expertise from trained library staff has encouraged communities to develop and implement their own mitigations against isolation, disadvantage, and digital exclusion. Evidence from national studies show that this approach contributes to Health and Wellbeing, lowers costs in Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing, the NHS and other Public Services, and empowers local communities.¹

3.12 The recently refreshed Comprehensive Needs Analysis in Appendix C has informed the recommendations to ensure that, where need has been identified, impact has been reviewed and changes to the original proposals applied.

3.13 The Comprehensive Needs Analysis identified the Ward of Clewer and Dedworth East as having high levels of disadvantage in terms of employment, education, and health while Boyn Hill Ward was ranked at the bottom of the table for Index of Multiple Deprivation. Clewer and Dedworth East and Boyn Hill Wards also had the highest percentages of residents aged 0-24.

3.14 These factors have been taken into consideration and even though neither library location has the support of a local parish council or established Trust to help them achieve an element of financial independence from the Council, the

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/The%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20benefits%20of%20public%20libraries.pdf>

original proposals to close Boyn Grove Library and substantially decrease the opening hours at Dedworth Library have been changed

- 3.15 It is now proposed that Boyn Grove should remain open for 13 hours per week and Dedworth Library should retain its current opening hours of 23 hours per week. These changes will be funded by reinvesting the savings achieved by re-designing the Home Library / Select and Deliver Service which will retire the Mobile Library and recruit up to 50 additional volunteers. The Service will seek support from the proposed Windsor Town Council to support Dedworth Library, in line with support provided by other Parish Councils, and will work closely with residents from Boyn Grove to explore opportunities to gain revenue from hiring out the library space.
- 3.16 Another key finding of the Needs Analysis is that more residents arrive at a library on foot than by car and only 4% use public transport. The report notes that the evidence suggests that: "it is a reasonable assumption that a proportion of residents will find it difficult to travel distances to libraries and this is likely to be in those households without a vehicle and where income deprivation makes public transport unviable. For some, at least, increased distance to a library offering suitable facilities and opening times will be a disincentive to use".
- 3.17 Eton Wick Library in particular is mentioned in this context while Clewer and Dedworth East featured highly for households without access to a vehicle. It is important, therefore, that these two communities continue to benefit from access to a local community library that remains accessible to residents.
- 3.18 By keeping the Container Library in one location the Council can save £55,000 per year on towing costs. The recommendation is to retain the Container at Wraysbury.
- 3.19 The Needs Analysis report suggests that increasing distance to libraries is likely to have an impact on access. The two locations where this could have the greatest impact are Holyport and Furze Platt where it is proposed that the Container Library will no longer visit. Instead, these two communities will be served by a Select and Deliver offer. This risk is therefore mitigated although the Service will continue to work with local community partners to seek to identify alternative options that can be explored, such as a pop-up library, should alternative resources and funding allow.
- 3.20 There is a revised recommendation to retire the Mobile Library Vehicle, which is end of life, and replace it with a comprehensive Select and Deliver / Home Library Service. Savings of £40,000 per annum can be achieved by transforming the service in this way. These savings will ensure that Boyn Grove can remain open and Dedworth Library will retain its current opening hours. An additional 50 library volunteers committing to 5 hours per month each will ensure the benefits of a hybrid model of professional expertise and volunteer support improves the customer experience.
- 3.21 The Library Volunteer Programme is managed by a highly qualified specialist in Community Engagement and Volunteering. The Consultation and Engagement process has encouraged a number of residents to come forward to offer their time and energy to support the library service. The service is confident that it will be able to recruit 50 additional volunteers to ensure no resident loses access to

library services because of the retiring of the Mobile Library vehicle. This will generate 3,000 additional volunteer hours per year.

- 3.22 Currently the service has 102 library volunteers. It has successfully managed 170 volunteers in the past. If 50 new volunteers are not forthcoming then current volunteers may be asked to increase their monthly contribution. The Service has a strong track record of recruiting volunteers and is confident that it will be able to achieve these additional volunteer hours, particularly following the consultation where renewed interest in the service emerged.
- 3.23 Volunteers will continue to be closely vetted and will undergo an enhanced DBS check. They will be required to attend safeguarding and other training and the expectation will be that they meet the high standards required of current volunteers.
- 3.24 It must be noted that volunteers are not a free resource and the service does not have the capacity to manage volunteers who cannot offer consistency, reliability and an element of self-direction whilst complying with all service standards. There are costs related to recruiting, training, coordinating, managing, and showing appreciation to volunteers. These costs will be carried by the Library Service which already runs a very robust volunteering programme.
- 3.25 Two trained library staff with appropriate expertise will coordinate the new volunteers and facilitate the taking of books to residents who cannot access a physical library. They will ensure that demand is met, and customers receive the books, information and support they need. This will include deposit collections and regular visits to people in residential homes, Select and Deliver services, and a Home Library Service.
- 3.26 The extended service will include digital support to tackle digital exclusion and will identify residents who may benefit from the Digital Device Loan Initiative.
- 3.27 Current customers of the Mobile Library Service will continue to have access to a wide range of books, both digital and physical, and volunteers will be able to spend more time with customers than staff currently can. The service will continue to be professionally led with volunteers supporting the delivery of the service resulting in an enhanced experience and contributing to the reduction of social isolation and loneliness.
- 3.28 An additional 97 opening hours per week have been added to the original proposals. The related costs will be covered by contributions from partners, primarily Parish Councils and local Trusts, by savings generated from re-shaping the Mobile Library Service and by efficiencies identified in cleaning regimes. Digital transformation has also contributed to staff efficiencies.
- 3.29 Income generation from hire of library spaces, charged at current rates, will continue to be encouraged as this remains an important element of the budget.
- 3.30 The overall recommended reduction in opening hours is 38.5 hours per week. This will be further reduced if alternative provision such as a pop-up library can be established at Holyport and Furze Platt and if additional funding can be secured from partners or from hire of library spaces. If funding commitments from partners are reduced then opening hours will be impacted.

- 3.31 The financial support from partners will be based on the establishment of approved Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to enable the service to plan for the future.
- 3.32 RBWM Libraries are community hubs that operate as a gateway to physical and digital information and are used by a range of partners to bring people together, giving them access to a greater breadth and depth of services and support. They are also trusted safe spaces.
- 3.33 The aim in redesigning the overall library service is to continue to grow this capacity and resilience within the community whilst ensuring partners who use library spaces contribute to running costs of the buildings to support a sustainable library delivery model.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Confirm a saving of £145,000 in 2021-22 and a further saving of £147,000 in 2022-23 to meet the savings target of £292,000.	Savings target not achieved	01 April 2022	Dec 2021	Sept 2021	01 April 2022
Deliver on the six Strategic Priorities that underpin the Library Service Vision as outlined in the LTS	Fail to deliver on all Priorities during the life of the Strategy	01 April 2025	01 April 2024	01 April 2023	01 April 2025
Deliver against the six outcomes in Section 11 of the LTS	Fail to deliver on all outcomes during the life of the Strategy	01 April 2025	01 April 2024	01 April 2023	01 April 2025

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 This report seeks approval to confirm a saving of £145,000 for 2021-22 and to make a further £147,000 reduction in the budget in 2022-23 while designing a library service that is sustainable, resilient, and able to adapt to changing circumstances, opportunities and demands.

- 4.2 This saving is made up of £183,000 in staff costs and £109,000 in building costs against the bottom line for the authority. The total savings are £292,000.
- 4.3 These recommendations are dependent on new funding commitments to the value of at least £60,500 from partners as a result of the engagement sessions carried out during the Consultation period. Prior to this the library service received £276,000 pa in fees, charges, and hires.
- 4.4 Partner funding will be tied to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) ranging from three to five years. This will give the Library Service an element of stability.

Table 3: Financial impact of report's recommendations

REVENUE COSTS	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Additional total	£0	£0	£0
Reduction	-£145,000	-£147,000	£0
Net Impact	-£145,000	-£147,000	£0

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Full details of the potential implications are outlined in Appendix E but are summarised here.
- 5.2 Library services must comply with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and other legal obligations, including the Equality Act 2010 (under which the Public Sector Equality Duty arises).
- 5.3 When considering any change to statutory library provision Cabinet should have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To have due regard means that in making decisions it must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 5.4 In providing this service, a library authority must secure adequate stocks sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements of adults and children; and encourage adults and children to make full use of the library service.
- 5.5 Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on those with protected characteristics in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.6 The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has a duty under the Act to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by councils in England and also to secure the proper discharge by councils of their functions as library authorities.
- 5.7 The Act provides the Secretary of State with the statutory power to intervene and call a local inquiry when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service.
- 5.8 If a representation is made to the Secretary of State about a library service not meeting its legal obligations, the library authority will be required to demonstrate

that it has met its obligations to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service that meets local need and is shaped by consultation and engagement.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
A representation is made to the Secretary of State about the library service not meeting its legal obligations.	High	An extensive consultation and community engagement process has shaped the Library Transformation Strategy and reduction proposals. A rigorous and comprehensive analysis of need has informed these recommendations.	Medium
An individual or group challenges the lawfulness of decisions relating to the Library Transformation Strategy through a Judicial Review	High	During a judicial review, the courts will examine the council's decisions and the process the council took in reaching those decisions, including the council's approach to equality considerations. Therefore, Councillors must be able to demonstrate that they have made their decisions based on the statutory requirements of the relevant legislation, and that they have clearly met their Public Sector Equality Duty obligations.	Medium
Delivery of the outcomes and strategic priorities of the strategy are not achieved.	Medium	A phased Delivery Plan will be developed with indicative timescales. The Library Lead Officer will drive delivery and report on progress to the Cabinet Member at regular intervals.	Low
The strategy is not aligned, conflicts with or does not complement other strategies and policies resulting in	High	Two-way communication between the Library Lead Officer and senior officers across the Council will be established enabling consultation and input	Low

lack of clear objectives, inefficiencies and mixed messaging to residents.		into the development of Corporate Strategies and Delivery Plans and ensuring the Library Service adapts to support emerging priorities across the Council.	
Savings are not achieved due to unforeseen events or a withdrawal of funding from partners	High	Robust Service Level Agreements are established, and contingencies put in place in good time where shortfalls are identified because of robust budget monitoring. Financial forecasts have been based on pre-covid income levels.	Medium
The enduring impact of Covid-19 alters the library and community 'landscape' significantly.	High	The strategy will be reviewed and updated dynamically as the impacts of Covid-19 become clearer.	Medium

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities. A full EQIA has been carried out and this should be read and considered by Councillors before taking the decisions identified in this report . The Council has to give due regard to its Equalities Duties, in particular with respect to general duties arising pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, section 149. Having due regard to the need to advance equality involves, in particular, to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic. Further details about the Equalities Duties are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment which is published on the [council's website](#).

7.2 Climate change/sustainability. The Green Agenda is central to the Library Service's strategic approach to service development which it aligns to the Corporate Climate Strategy.

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. The Library Transformation Strategy does not relate to personal data and a DPIA is not required. However a DPIA will be completed for individual elements of the action plan as they are developed and delivered if required.

7.4 Staff. Should the recommendations be approved a new staffing model that aligns to the new LTS will be introduced. Changes to contractual working hours and patterns will be required. Consultation with affected staff will follow once a formal decision has been taken.

7.5 Property Services. Support from Property Services will be sought to assist with the development of Licences to Occupy and negotiated changes to lease agreements such as reductions in rent.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 An extensive twelve-week Consultation and Public Engagement exercise was carried out between 6 February 2021 and 30 April 2021

8.2 Over 1000 responses were received in total through both the online consultation form linked to from the RBWM website and via individual and group representations made directly to officers and the Cabinet Member.

8.3 Thirty-eight engagement sessions were held with a range of groups and organisations including the Girls Policy Forum, the Disability and Inclusions Forum, Parish Councils, Local Trusts, People with Learning Disabilities, People with Dementia and their Carers, as well as open public sessions. A British Sign Language video was also made available.

8.4 The Comprehensive Needs Analysis was considered alongside the extensive feedback received from residents, partners, stakeholders and library customers, and together shaped the final recommendations.

8.5 The Consultation generated some alternative proposals – these were all considered and taken into account when proposing the recommendations set out in this report.

Please note the full Consultation Report in Appendix A

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date if not called in: October 2021 to April 2022

9.2 The full implementation stages are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
24 June 2021	Consideration by Cabinet
1 July 2021	Staff Consultation
1 October 2021	Implementation Commences
1 April 2022	Implementation completed, Savings achieved, Library Transformation Strategy underway
31 December 2025	All outcomes achieved

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by 5 appendices:

- Appendix A: Consultation Report
- Appendix B: Savings Recommendations

- Appendix C: Comprehensive Needs Analysis
- Appendix D: Library Transformation Strategy
- Appendix E: Role of Secretary of State in Library Superintendence and the Courts in relation to Judicial Review (Statutory obligations)
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10.2 This report is supported by 2 background documents:

1. Communications and Engagement Plan
2. Consultation Comments

11. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Cllr Rayner	Councillor Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage, and Windsor	01/06/21	03/06/21
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	18/05/21	27/05/21
Adele Taylor	Director of Resources/S151 Officer	18/05/21	25/05/21
Andrew Durrant	Director of Place	18/05/21	27/05/21
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	18/05/21	
Hilary Hall	Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning	18/05/21	24/05/21
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance	18/05/21	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	18/05/21	26/05/21
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	18/05/21	27/05/21
Nikki Craig	Head of HR Corporate Projects and IT	02/06/21	
Louisa Dean	Communications	07/06/21	
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance	07/06/21	
Louise Freeth	Head of Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	18/05/21	24/05/21

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision 25 February 2021	No	No

Report Author: Angela Huisman, Library and Resident Contact Lead, 07717 693031

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library Transformation Strategy and Reductions

Consultation Report

24 June 2021

1. The Library Transformation Strategy aims to set out the direction of travel for RBWM libraries, ensuring that the Council will continue to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service which is creative, innovative, inclusive and affordable.
2. A savings target of £292,000 was set for RBWM Libraries. To ensure the Council continued to meet its statutory obligations and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) an extensive Public Consultation and Engagement exercise was carried out and a Needs Analysis commissioned. The results of both have informed the final recommendations to Cabinet.

Consultation Principles

3. The RBWM Library Service takes its duty to consult with residents, partners and other stakeholders very seriously.
4. Each year the library service conducts an in-depth Customer Satisfaction Survey which receives close to 400 responses from library service users and partners. These responses are scrutinised by the Library Management Team and Cabinet Member and used to adapt the library service to ensure it remains responsive and agile, meeting the changing needs of residents as they arise and pre-empting demand wherever possible.
5. An Opening Hours Consultation was carried out in the Autumn of 2020. The results of this consultation can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 28th January, 2021, 6.15 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
6. A further Public Consultation and Engagement Exercise was carried out between 6 February 2021 and 30 April 2021. This consultation was based on the following essential principles:
 - a. **Inclusive** – The documentation was available in hard copy on request, and in British Sign Language. Bespoke engagement sessions were held with people with learning disabilities and dementia and their carers. Several Forums, Panels, Parish Councils, Partners, Trusts, schools and organisations were engaged with individually and public engagement sessions were held throughout the process on different days and at different times.
 - b. **Informative** – a substantial volume of information was provided to support the proposals and bespoke presentations were delivered to

partners, stakeholders and at the public engagement sessions, panels and forums. Questions were answered and, where the answers were not readily available, followed up.

- c. **Understandable** – A summary of impact was provided, and bespoke sessions were held for different groups.
- d. **Appropriate** – The engagement process was very intensive due to the statutory basis of the public library service, the importance of relevant needs analysis and the potentially costly risks involved in not meeting the requirements of the legislation and the expectations of the Secretary of State in his role as Public Library Superintendent.
- e. **Meaningful** – the aims and other information were presented in different ways to different groups to ensure the consultation was meaningful to those who wished to engage with it.
- f. **Reported** – this report aims to summarise the results. For those who wish to conduct further analysis, the detailed results of the Comprehensive Needs Analysis can be viewed in Appendix C.

Approach

7. The Public Consultation and Engagement exercise was designed to elicit the views of the public, stakeholders and partners on:
 - a. Potential library closures
 - b. Potential further reductions in library opening hours
 - c. The removal of the Container stops (retaining a Container Service at one site only)
 - d. The proposed Library Transformation Strategy, including the Library Vision and Strategic Priorities
 - e. Alternative proposals
8. An opportunity to give feedback and comments was provided at the engagement sessions, through an online consultation and via email, letter and telephone.
9. Consultation commenced on 6 February 2021 and ran for 12 weeks, closing on 30 April 2021. Further representations will continue to be considered as the library service redesigns itself in line with the changing priorities of communities, other public services and library customers.
10. The extensive consultation and engagement period was intended to ensure that as many residents, customers, stakeholders and partners as possible had the opportunity to respond to the proposals.
11. A robust communications plan was developed to ensure that the pandemic did not prevent residents from responding.

Communications and Engagement Plan

12. The consultation was promoted on the RBWM website, via the e-newsletter and on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and was sent to 38,739 library customers electronically.
13. A British Sign Language Video was posted on the Libraries YouTube Channel.
14. Schools were asked to send the consultation to parents and older students via their newsletters.
15. Partners such as the Ascot Durning Trust, Library Volunteers including Library Teenage Volunteers, Reading Groups, Arts Centres, Book Festivals and Parish Councils were invited to participate. Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Children & Young People partners were contacted as well as partners in Optalis and AfC. The Town Centre Managers team and the Community Influencers Group were also advised of the consultation.
16. Hard copy posters and leaflets were distributed in libraries and by the Mobile Library. Leaflets were made available to residents and Members, and several volunteers and library staff went from house to house to distribute leaflets. Posters were put up in pharmacies, GP Surgeries, Convenience Stores, Parish Council offices and at other locations.
17. The service was able to make Large Print options available on request, however no requests were received.
18. Responses that were submitted outside the provided online questionnaire format were also included and reviewed carefully.
19. Throughout the consultation every effort was made to ensure that despite the Pandemic as many people as possible were made aware of the proposed changes and had an opportunity to have their say.
20. Particular effort was made to communicate the proposals in a clear and easy to understand way. This included a sign language video posted on the library YouTube Account and bespoke consultation and engagement sessions, prepared with the assistance of Optalis, held for residents with learning disabilities and for people with Dementia and their carers.
21. Young People were approached and the Girls Policy Forum was consulted. The consultation was presented and discussed at the One Borough Group, the Autism Partnership Board, the Disability and Inclusions Forum and the Health and Wellbeing Forum.
22. Intensive engagement took place with individual Parish Councils. The Parish Council Forum, the Clerks Forum, Local Trusts and Charities, Windsor Town Forum, Maidenhead Town Forum and Ward Councillors were consulted.

23. Efforts were taken to engage colleagues across the Council as many customers of other Council services, including Adults, Children's and Health, are impacted by the breadth and quality of library service provision in the Royal Borough. Library Services also provide a full range of Council customer services.

Consultation Respondents

24. Just over 1000 responses were received. Of these, 947 responses were received via the online form on the RBWM website and the rest were received by letter, email, over the phone or in person.

25. A total of 38 Engagement Sessions were held with partners, colleagues, residents and other stakeholders. Many of these were broadcast live on YouTube and remain available to view.

26. It should be noted that consultations that are open for anyone to answer will not necessarily be representative of the whole population or of the demographic that uses the Service. The 45+ age group tends to participate in consultations to a much greater degree, in general, than the under 30 age group. This was reflected in this consultation. Prior to Covid, the largest use of public libraries was amongst the under 24s and since the pandemic it has been the 18-34 age group. This, however, is not reflected in the consultation responses.

27. Almost 30% of the responders were over 65 years of age with only 5% under age 24. 20% of the responders were between 25 and 44 years old and 25% between 45 and 65 years of age.

28. 70% of responders were female.

29. 30% were employed full time, 18% worked part time, 10% were self-employed and 32% were retired.

30. Using the online form to respond, 757 answers were received for the first question which asked for feedback on the Library Transformation Strategy. 623 answers were received for the second question which asked for alternative suggestions to the proposed savings.

31. Active engagement sessions led to productive discussions between attendees, Library Service colleagues and the Cabinet Member. Notes were taken and the feedback received in this way has been carefully analysed and incorporated into the final recommendations.

32. The recommendations have been substantially altered as a result of the consultation process.

Consultation Themes

33. Several themes emerged during the consultation period. These are outlined below.

34. It was clear, throughout both the consultation responses and the Engagement Sessions, how much the Library service was valued by residents, stakeholders and partners alike. Not only was the traditional Library offering seen as a vital service but the role of the Library service in economic recovery, as community connectors and specialist services such as the Reading Development Service and Digital Reading Development Offer were all recognised as essential services for the community.

35. Travel was raised consistently. Many responders stated that the expectation that residents should have to travel by vehicle to get to a library further afield conflicts with the principles of RBWM's Green Agenda. Furthermore, the high parking costs in Windsor and Maidenhead risk making those two locations prohibitive for some residents. Poor public transport links were also cited by residents.

36. The impact of the pandemic on the education of young people was highlighted by many respondents. The deficit in children's education will need a joined-up approach by council and other services and there was a plea to not compromise the excellent services delivered by libraries for children when they need them most. Many responders recognised the importance of libraries for young people and suggested that curtailing access to children's books when education has been so disrupted is unacceptable.

37. The risk of decisions being based on a "false economy" where the money saved would be vastly outweighed by the impact on communities was highlighted, especially in the context of libraries functioning as community hubs as the country comes out of the pandemic. It was pointed out that costs of individual libraries are low due to shared use of spaces and when compared to other council budgets, the savings proposed were negligible.

38. The poor promotion of library services was a constant theme, in particular at the Public Engagement Events, with many residents and even partners stating that they were unaware of the range, breadth and quality of services on offer. Much more work needs to be done to improve the way in which the service promotes Royal Borough libraries and library services.

39. Many responses suggested increased volunteer support. This has helped shape the final recommendations and the service will embark on a recruitment

programme for 50 new volunteers to deliver 3000 volunteer hours per year between them.

40. It was pointed out that the Library Access Policy would be obsolete should the proposed recommendations be carried out. Access would be significantly curtailed. This has been reviewed and changes have been made to the recommendations. The Access Policy will be reviewed, alongside all the other published Library Policies, and approval for updated policies will be sought from the Cabinet Member and from the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Disability and Inclusions Forum will be consulted on the development of the renewed Access Policy.
41. The Girls Policy Forum discussed the library being a place that they would consider first to study. This is because it offers a safe environment, is not isolating, and they know no harassment will be tolerated. Libraries as a safe space for children to attend unaccompanied after school and for vulnerable adults to use as a safe haven was raised by several participants.

Consultation Results

42. Respondents were asked to prioritise their top ten library services from a list of twenty. 914 people responded to this question. Library services were ranked in the following order:
1. Browsing for books
 2. Requests and reservations
 3. Reading and literacy activities
 4. Public PCs and free Wi-Fi
 5. E-loan Library (e-books, magazines, etc)
 6. Home Library Service / Mobile Library Service
 7. Library staff as community builders and connectors linking people to information, books, resources, services, advice, assistance and health and wellbeing activities and safeguarding
 8. Printing, scanning and copying facilities
 9. Local Studies
 10. Community Health and Wellbeing activities, support and services including dementia and hidden disabilities
 11. Maidenhead and Windsor Library Services
 12. Community Library Services
 13. Library events for children
 14. Online resources such as Ancestry, Cobra, Encyclopaedia Britannica
 15. Business Support, Skills development, free online training and resource such as FutureLearn, Learn my way, Niche Academy, Universal Credit "how to" guide, Oxford Resources, Access to research
 16. Quiet Study Space
 17. Council Customer Services Support

- 18. Library events for adults
- 19. Volunteering Opportunities
- 20. Online Digital Offer (YouTube, Minecraft, Social Media Rhyme times and Craft Events, Online Author sessions and Book Groups, etc)

- 43. It is very clear from the above and from the comments received during the engagement and consultation period that an online digital offer alone cannot meet the reading and learning, health and wellbeing or creativity needs of communities.
- 44. Take-up of the digital offer was very high during the pandemic but this was not seen to be due to a permanent change in behaviour or a reduction in human need for connections and contact. Instead this was viewed as a response to the very unnatural circumstances people found themselves in.
- 45. There is strong evidence that during the pandemic quality interaction, reach, support and access to physical resources have been significantly limited and have curtailed the library service's ability to deliver a curated social experience and a wider range of benefits to communities.
- 46. This was particularly felt in relation to opportunities for structured and unstructured forms of interaction and engagement, study space and access to browsing facilities.
- 47. In response to these findings the recommendations have been changed so that physical provision of RBWM library services will remain strong while the digital offer continues to be developed, curated and promoted. The Service will aim to achieve a fully blended offer.
- 48. Alternative options were reviewed, investigated and analysed, and a number of suggestions have been incorporated into the final recommendations or will be explored further, in line with the objectives of the Library Transformation Strategies.
- 49. Suggestions included library cafes, bookshops, FabLab arrangements and shared spaces. These options have all been explored in detail and, where a benefit has been identified, have been incorporated into the service.
- 50. Volunteer-run libraries, as opposed to volunteer-supported libraries, were reviewed once again. The evidence appears to remain that cost per transaction and long-term sustainability for this model is not always favourable.
- 51. Other models that have been reviewed include mutualisation, out-sourcing and consortium working. Some elements of these and other models have also been incorporated into the service.

52. The engagement exercise with a range of partners led to very positive commitments in terms of financial support for the council. As a result of this financial support residents will be able to continue to benefit from a comprehensive and efficient library service that meets their needs, drives aspiration and remains accessible to all including the most vulnerable whilst demonstrating excellent value for money for the council tax payer.

Conclusion

53. The consultation did endeavour to engage with a wide range of residents and partners as outlined in the Communications and Engagement Plan but it was inevitable that the pandemic and the resulting closure of the libraries would have an impact.

54. Each response has been reviewed carefully and the feedback has had a direct impact on the final recommendations (See Appendix B).

55. This report empowers Cabinet to understand the views of residents as fed back through the Consultation and Engagement process and provides a sound basis on which to make decisions if read alongside the Comprehensive Needs Analysis and the Library Transformation Strategy.

Savings Recommendations

The savings proposals that went out to consultation

Table 1

Total Savings	Staff Savings	Buildings	Retain for mitigations
£292,000.00	£186,000.00	£182,000.00	£12,000.00

The new recommended savings

Table 2

Total Savings	Staff Savings	Building Savings	New Partner contribution
£292,000.00	£183,000.00	£109,000.00	£60,500.00

A summary of the impact of the new recommended savings on statutory physical library provision

Table 3

	Pre pandemic	Current hours	Consulted on	Recommendations	Total Reduction	Change from original proposals consulted on
Total opening hours	475.5	354	217.5	314.5	161	+97
Total sites / libraries	18	16	9	13	4	+5

Impact on each library / location

Table 4

Library	Pre pandemic hours per week	Current hours per week	Consulted on, hours per week	Reductions proposed per location	Final Recommended opening hours	Final vs proposed hours	Commentary
Boyn Grove Library	30	20	CLOSE	20	13	+13	Funded by Mobile vehicle retirement
Datchet Library	26	17	CLOSE	17	13	+13	Reduction in rent to Parish Council and staff efficiencies.
Sunninghill Library	26	20	CLOSE	20	20	+20	Funded by Sunninghill Reading Room Trust, Ascot Durning, S&A Parish Council
Old Windsor Library	20	14	CLOSE	14	6	+6	Opening hours and cleaning

							funded by Parish Council
Wraysbury - Deliver Container Library services from one site	8	7.5	7.5	0	10.5	+3	Additional opening hours funded by Parish Council
Sunningdale Container	17	9	CLOSE	9	9	+9	Funded by Parish Council
Furze Platt Container	6	6	CLOSE	6	0	0	Work with partners to seek an alternative
Holyport Container	8	7.5	CLOSE	7.5	0	0	Working with partners to seek an alternative
Woodlands Park Container	6	0	CLOSE	0	0	0	Closed as part of 2020 Consultation changes
Windsor Library	53.5	46	42	4	42	0	
Maidenhead Library	60	51	46	5	46	0	
Eton Wick Library	26	17	13	4	17	+4	Supported by EWVA and Eton Town Council
Dedworth Library	36.5	23	13	10	23	+10	Funded by Mobile Vehicle retirement
Cox Green Library	29.5	25	13	12	25	+12	Funded by Cox Green Parish Council
Cookham Library	26	20	13	7	20	+7	Funded by Cookham Parish Council
Ascot Library	45	35	35	0	35	0	Funded by Ascot Durning Trust
Eton library	17	0	0	0	0	0	Closed as part of 2020 Consultation changes
Mobile	35	35	35	0	35	0	Vehicle to be retired, hybrid model to be implemented
TOTAL	475.5	353	217.5	135.5	314.5	97.0	

1. A consultation that closed on 30 November 2020 led to a reduction in opening hours of 121.5 hours per week across the Service and to the closure of Eton Library and Woodlands Park Container site.
2. The Mobile Library currently visits Eton and Woodlands Park. The longer-term solution will be to replace the vehicle's visits with a Select and Deliver option at these two and other locations.
3. The proposals that went out to consultation presented the option to reduce opening hours by a further 136.5 hours per week which included the closure of three Container sites and four static libraries
4. As a result of the Consultation and Engagement Exercise and discussions with Parish Councils and local Trusts it has been possible to revise the proposals. The final recommendations have changed substantially.
5. The reductions recommended are for 39.5 hours per week which includes the closure of the Holyport and Furze Platt Container sites. Alternative options such as a pop-up library are currently being explored for the Sunningdale Container site. A Select and Deliver service will be available from all closed Container sites.
6. The Mobile Library vehicle, which is end of life, will be retired and replaced with an extensive, professionally managed Home Library and Select and Deliver Service which will be supported by up to 50 library volunteers.

Analysis of Need

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library Service



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1. Introduction

We have been commissioned by you to produce a needs analysis of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, in relation to the borough's provision of library services. To do this we have:

- Considered the role of a modern library service
- Looked at the legal framework and considerations for public libraries
- Analysed the performance of RBWM compared to other library services
- Analysed the demographics to determine the needs of RBWM residents and where the library service can help to meet them
- Looked at changes of use during the pandemic
- Made recommendations for the service to meet any gaps in provision identified and suggested improvements

What is a modern library service?

While the core functions of libraries are seen by many people to be the lending of books and providing access to reference materials, there has been a recent surge of innovation over the last 10 to 15 years. These changes have been motivated by both positive and negative drivers, such as declining book lending, budget reductions, or new ideas about the role of libraries in society and in the digital age.

The current pandemic has dramatically changed the ways people use libraries and it remains to be seen how this will affect future services. Certainly, the upturn in use of digital services and digital engagement will continue. The national recognition of the role that libraries play in supporting communities may well lead to closer partnerships with other council services and local agencies. We have tried to factor in the possibility of a change of emphasis where we can, but time will bring clarity.

Public libraries are widely valued, even by people who do not currently use them. Most people see libraries as an important community service. The research suggests that public libraries are valued because: they are trusted; they are one of the few public services that people often think of as 'theirs'; and they are widely perceived to be important for groups such as children, older people and people on low incomes. Furthermore, libraries are seen as a social leveller, with an ability to bring people together and combat social isolation.

The most successful modern libraries are those that understand their role as part of the wider council vision and, working with partners, deliver a range of opportunities that respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of their local community.

To do this they:

- Add value through links between libraries and other policy areas such as culture, health and wellbeing, business and economic growth;

- Communicate the value of libraries, highlighting innovation and good ideas
- Recognise the ongoing importance of traditional library services but also the key importance of digital enablement;
- Use the latest technology to support service delivery and increase access to services; and
- Build the skills needed to help the library workforce deliver these priorities and to take on new roles as part of wider service provision

As local government service delivery models evolve, libraries present new opportunities to serve a wider purpose and address broader social, cultural and economic outcomes for local authorities.

In 2016, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) produced a national strategy document for public libraries¹ that sets out seven outcomes for libraries to deliver against:

- cultural and creative enrichment;
- increased reading and literacy;
- improved digital access and literacy;
- helping everyone achieve their full potential;
- healthier and happier lives;
- greater prosperity; and
- stronger, more resilient communities

This has been a catalyst for a range of national programmes and initiatives, such as the development of the Universal Offers for public libraries by Libraries Connected and the Carnegie Trust's Engaging Libraries programme.

What is the legal position?

The Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964

First tier local authorities² have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it. Local authorities have the power to offer wider library services beyond the statutory service to other user groups, and the Act allows for joint working between library authorities. In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:

¹ Libraries Deliver DCMS 2016

² Counties, unitary authorities, Metropolitan and London boroughs

- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b))

It is the statutory duty of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to:

- superintend, and promote the improvement of, the public library service provided by local authorities in England (section 1(1))
- secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred on them as library authorities

The Secretary of State has the power to make a remedial order against a library authority following a local inquiry. Such an inquiry can be commenced either on receipt of a complaint that a library authority is failing to carry out its statutory duties or of the Secretary of State's own motion.

Before deciding whether to order an inquiry the Secretary of State will carefully consider a local authority's compliance with the duties of the 1964 Act. They will not hesitate to use the power where, having regard to the duties on himself/herself and the local authority, there is good reason in all circumstances to direct an inquiry. In determining whether to order an inquiry, the Secretary of State gives consideration to a number of factors, including:

- whether there is any serious doubt or uncertainty as to whether the authority is (or may cease to be) complying with its obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service
- whether the local authority appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way
- whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the local authority's discretion, such as a decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community
- whether the local authority appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals
- whether the local authority has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals
- whether the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy
- the advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives
- whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered

To assist the Secretary of State in carrying out their statutory duty, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) carefully monitors and assesses developments concerning library services across England. Library authorities are also required to provide the Secretary of State with such information as he/she may require for carrying out their duties.

DCMS has stated:

We want library authorities considering changing their library service to inform the DCMS Libraries Team about their proposals prior to public engagement to assist the Secretary of State in the superintendence role. In providing this information, library authorities are asked to demonstrate:

- plans to consult with local communities alongside an assessment of their needs;
- consideration of a range of options (including alternative financing, governance or delivery models) to sustain library service provision in their area; and
- a rigorous analysis and assessment of the potential impact of their proposals

In addition to direct intervention by the Secretary of State, any individual or group can request a judicial review of proposed changes to determine compliance with the law and to ensure that due process has been observed. The Government and Courts understand that councils must make savings including by changing library services, but if the council cannot demonstrate that it has followed a fair and transparent process, any changes may be subject to a review on behalf of DCMS or legal action (judicial review or High Court case) with members of the public or other key stakeholders as plaintiff, or both. The consequences of an adverse result in either process can be severe, including reversal of changes already implemented.

Public Sector Equalities Duty

Local authorities must also comply with the public-sector equality duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty relates to groups who share any of the “protective characteristic” of age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, marriage, gender reassignment and civil partnership, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Equality Act outlines that due regard involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

How can a needs analysis help?

A needs analysis is an essential element of the background information needed to enable the council to make decisions on the future direction of their library service.

A needs analysis considers the potential need for libraries on different sectors of the community and different localities, including the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act and other characteristics in line with the Public Sector Equalities Duty, and also ease of transport. A needs analysis is made more meaningful by an analysis of recent

patterns of library usage within the authority – this can sometimes reveal unexpected trends. A needs analysis can also include comparisons with other appropriate library authorities. A needs analysis can reach evidence-based conclusions which should then be used to develop options and priorities for future service delivery. Due consideration of a needs analysis can also mitigate any risk of legal challenge or intervention by the Secretary of State.

2. Comparative analysis of performance with other similar library authorities

This section focuses on comparisons between the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library Service (WMLS) and other selected library authorities. This gives an indication of the value for money which WMLS provides, and the relative performance of the service compared with other similar services.

The basis for this section is the CIPFA public library service statistics for 2019/20. This is the most recent data published and has the advantage of showing the position before the bulk of the impact of the current pandemic was felt. Most library services return a completed survey form to the Institute of Public Finance which gives a picture of their costs and activity over the last financial year and a snapshot of membership at the end of March. Not every library authority provides data on every variable and, since it is not obligatory, some authorities do not provide a return at all. Although there are standards for the way in which each variable is collected, some variations in methodology can creep in. Since the data forms a snapshot, the performance of individual authorities may have changed since the time when the data was compiled. Nevertheless, the CIPFA data is the best way of comparing the relative performance of library authorities.

Library services are largely transactional, which means that many aspects of their business can be measured and therefore compared. Nevertheless, there are some uses of libraries for which no transactions are completed, and therefore these will not affect at least some of the data that can be gathered. For example, a person who visits a library to borrow books will affect data on both visits and issues, but a person who visits to read a newspaper will only affect visits.

To establish relative performance, WMLS was compared with the twelve other library authorities. Eleven of these were chosen because they have, like Windsor and Maidenhead, overall low levels of deprivation, albeit with pockets of higher deprivation. Reading, Slough and West Berkshire have been included because they form part of the former county of Berkshire, although both Reading and Slough are outliers in terms of deprivation. Unfortunately, neither Bracknell Forest nor Wokingham made returns to CIPFA in the relevant year.

During the process of assembling the data for this report, we discovered that stock issues in WMLS had been under-reported in the submission to CIPFA, as web-based renewals and issues to the school library service had been omitted from the total. We have corrected this in our comparisons, but it should be noted that the figures we have used will therefore differ from those reported in the published CIPFA report. Since the data for the CIPFA report was collected, Eton library has closed.

The library services used in this comparison are:

- Buckinghamshire
- Hampshire
- Oxfordshire
- Reading

- Richmond on Thames
- Rutland
- Slough
- South Gloucestershire
- Surrey
- West Berkshire
- Wiltshire
- York

Throughout we have presented the data graphically in order to enable easy comparisons. Some authorities did not provide complete sets of data and, where data for an authority which would have been required for a particular comparison is missing, that authority is omitted from the relevant graph.

Windsor and Maidenhead Library Service key performance indicators in 2019/20

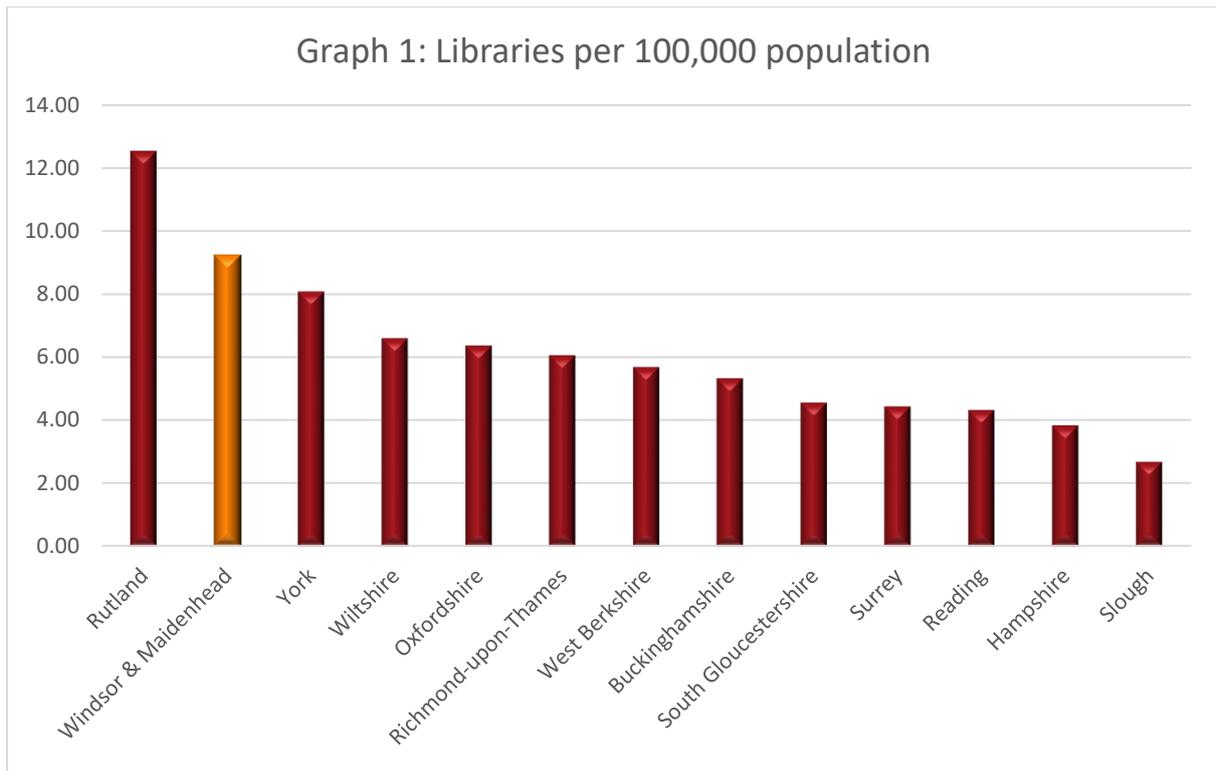
WMLS's performance for the year 2019/20 is summarised in the table below:

Number of static libraries	14
Total physical visits	656133
Total virtual visits	334621
Total issues	731001
Total PC bookings	53995
Total library book and other stock	180988
Total book and other stock acquisitions	32222
Total active borrowers ³	20211
Staff in post (FTE)	54
Volunteer hours	7315
Population of authority	151400

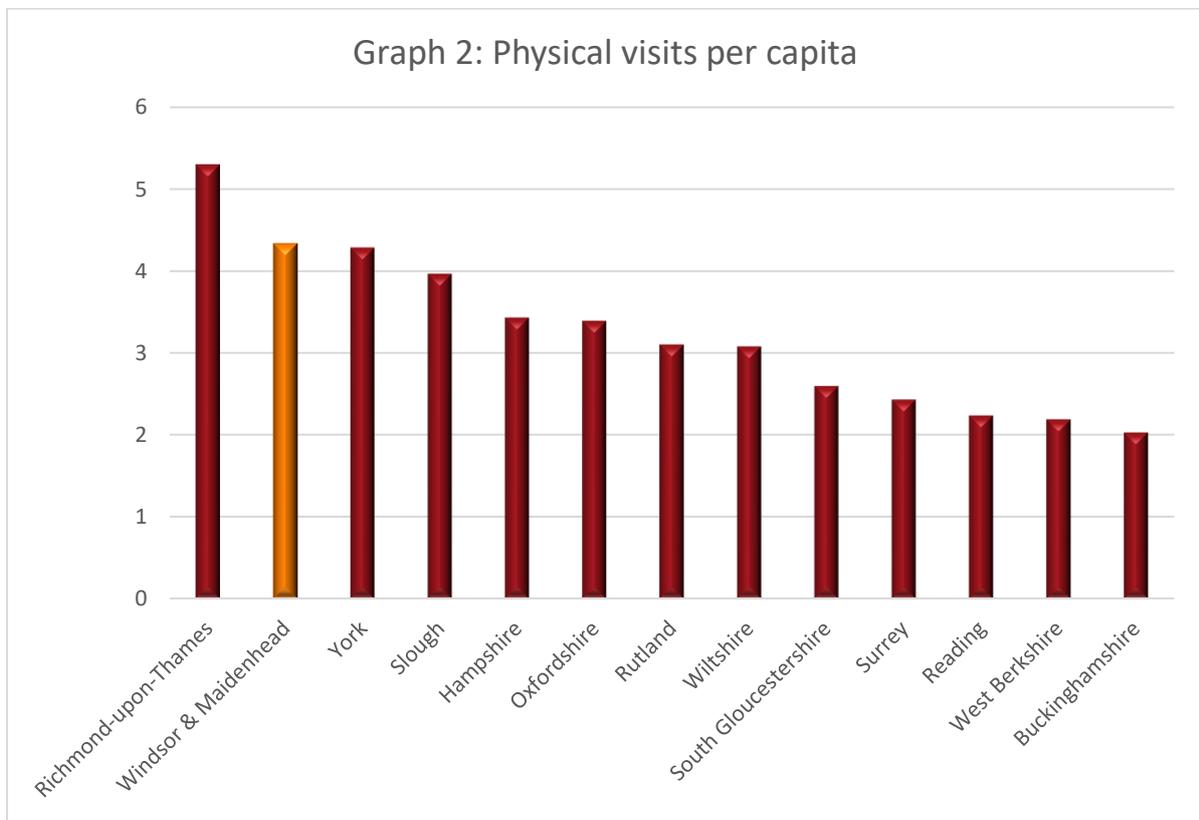
Comparison with other authorities on the basis of population

The populations of the comparator authorities vary from 33,000 to 1.38 million. In order to compare accurately the provision and performance of library services in each authority, we have presented the data below as a rate per head of population.

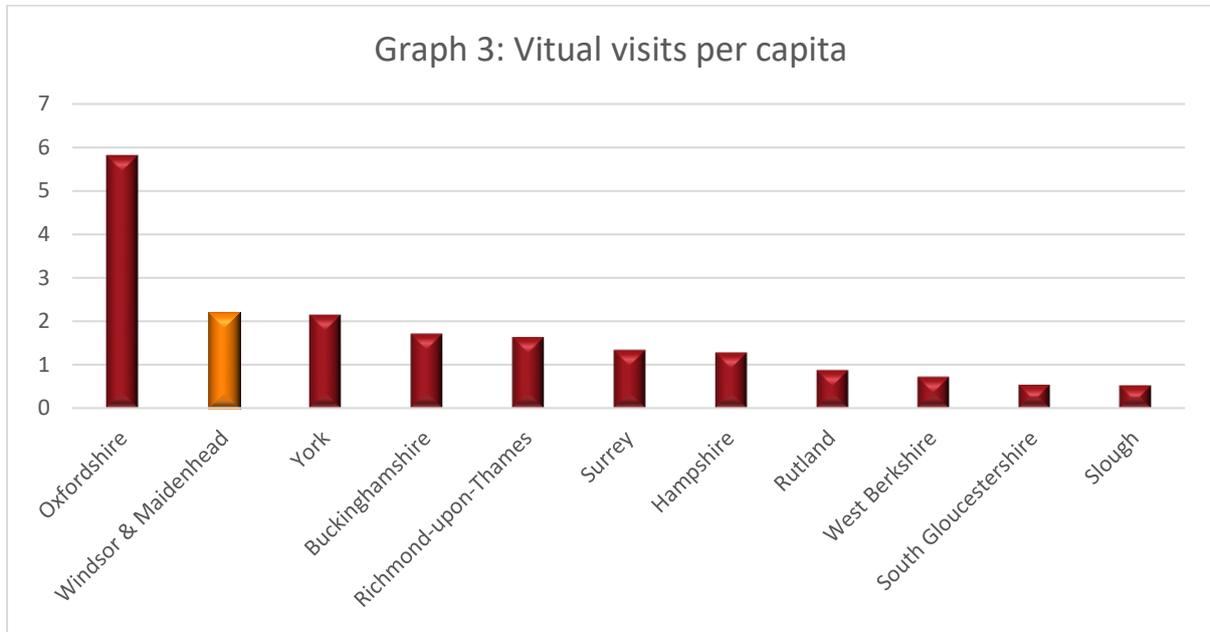
³ Active borrowers are defined as those people who have borrowed during the last year



Graph 1 shows the number of libraries in each authority for every 100,000 people. Windsor Maidenhead has a rather higher number than the average.

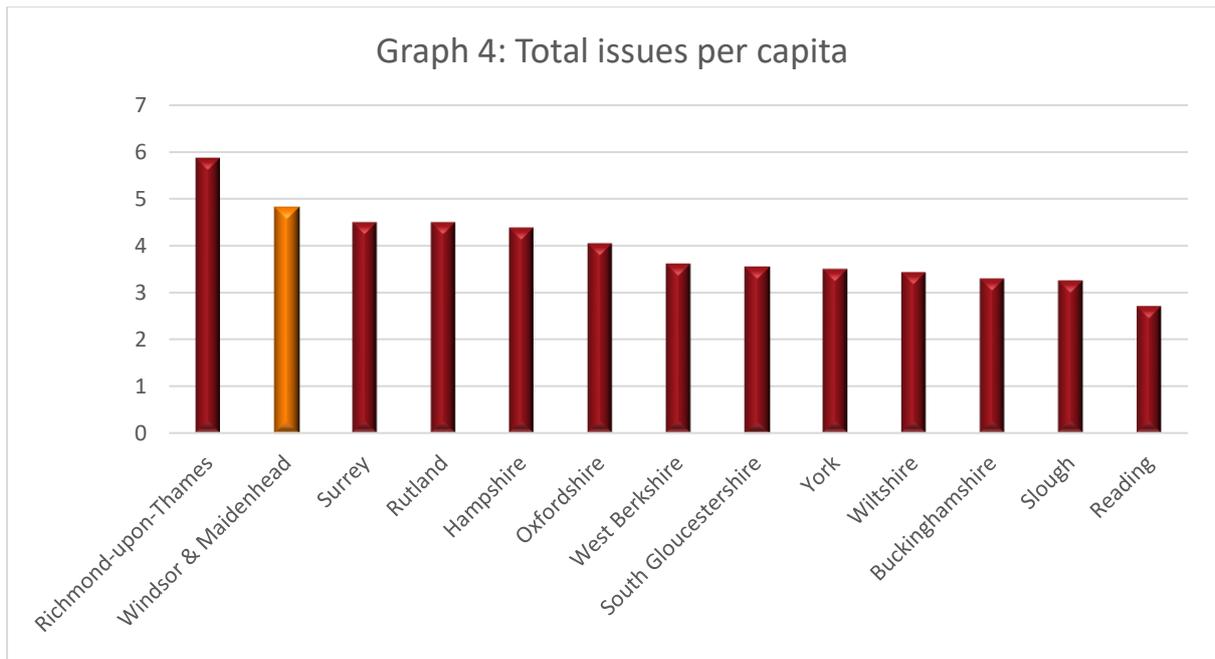


Graph 2 shows the number of physical visits per head of population for the authorities, in other words how well the library service is used by residents. Windsor and Maidenhead is exceeded only by Richmond on Thames and has an uptake of over twice that of Buckinghamshire. This is an indicator that WMLS is providing a service that is attractive to residents. It should also be noted that the comparator group generally performed well compared to the English average of 3.22 visits per capita.

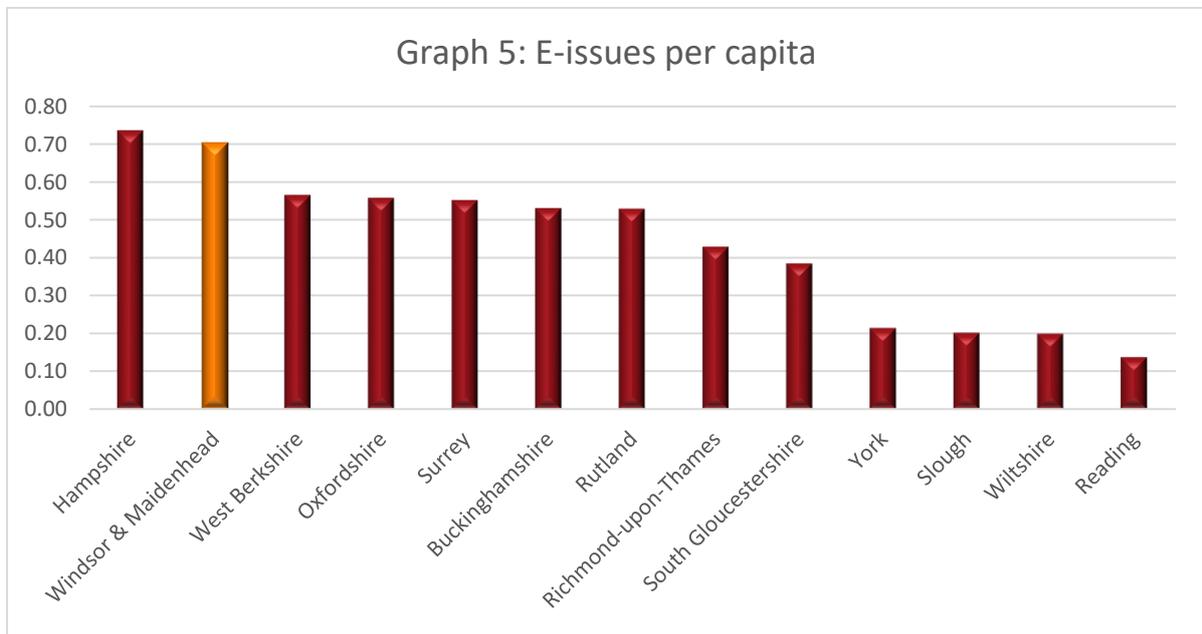


Graph 3 shows the number of virtual visits per capita in each authority⁴. Although considerably lower than Oxfordshire, WMLS outperforms all of the other comparator authorities.

⁴ Reading and Wiltshire did not provide figures so it is not possible to aggregate physical and virtual visits to provide an overall rate of visits per capita.

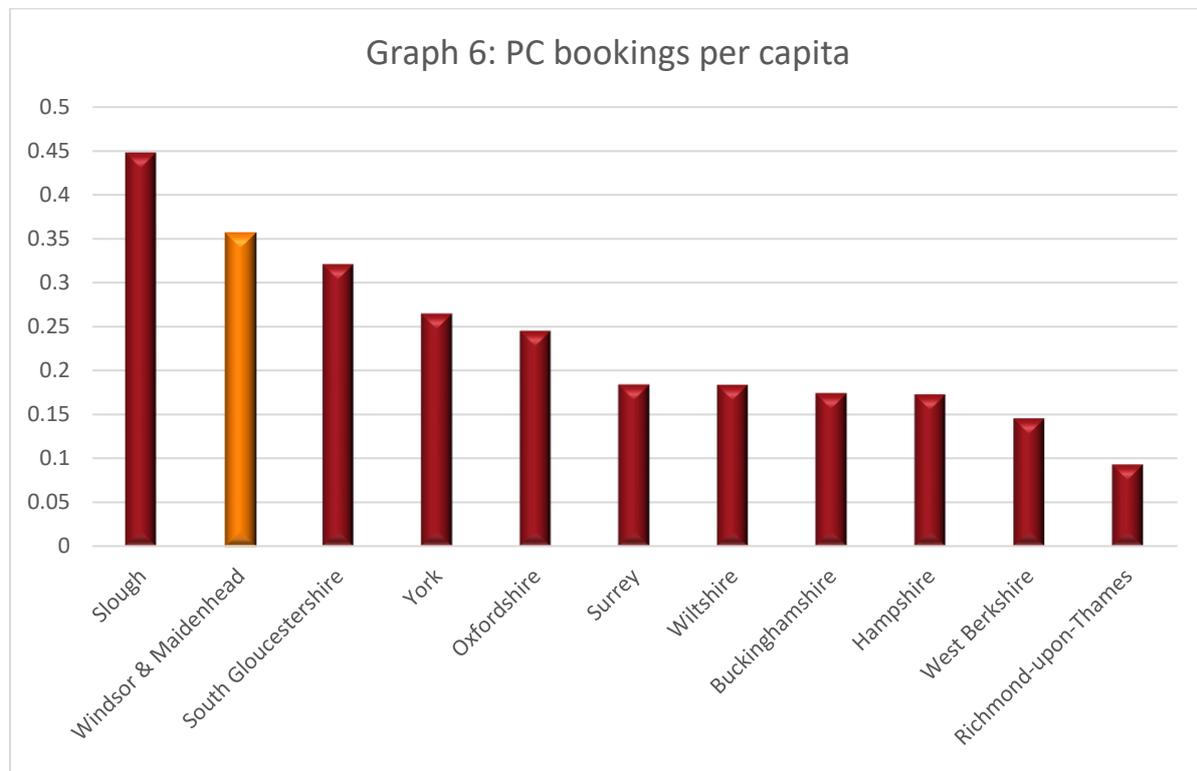


Graph 4 shows the comparative performance of issues of book, audio visual and electronic stock per head of population. Although libraries serve many functions, lending remains one of the most important. It can be seen that issues per capita are the second highest in the comparator group, reflecting the figure for visits per capita. Again, the comparator group was high performing compared to the English average, which was 2.64 issues per capita compared to 4.83 in WMLS.



To break this figure down further, we have examined issues of e-resources. Graph 5 shows the number of electronic issues per capita; this comprises e-books, e-magazines, e-audio and visual, and streaming services. WMLS's performance is high compared to most other authorities in this respect. Slightly over 16.4% of WMLS's issues were electronic, the second

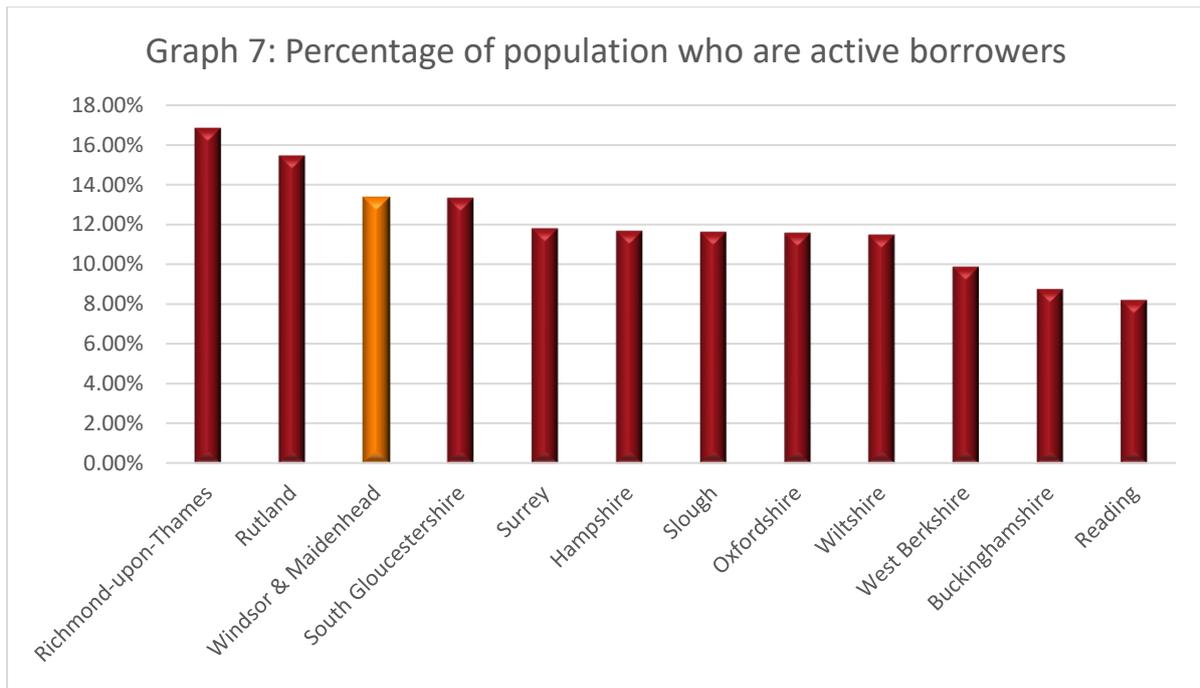
highest in the comparator group (after Richmond) and likely to be one of the highest in England.⁵



Since 2002, when the People's Network programme in public libraries was completed, public libraries have been major providers of computer and internet access to the public; in many authorities they are the principal source of free access, exceeding private sector provision many fold. Graph 6 shows that WMLS has a high uptake of use of publicly available library computers compared to the comparator authorities with the exception of Slough. In our experience, this is a characteristic more commonly encountered in densely populated areas where access to space for study at home is limited.

Even in WMLS, the actual numbers of computer bookings is less than 10% of the number of issues.

⁵ A considerable proportion of authorities did not submit figures on electronic issues to CIPFA and therefore it is not possible to calculate an average figure for the country.



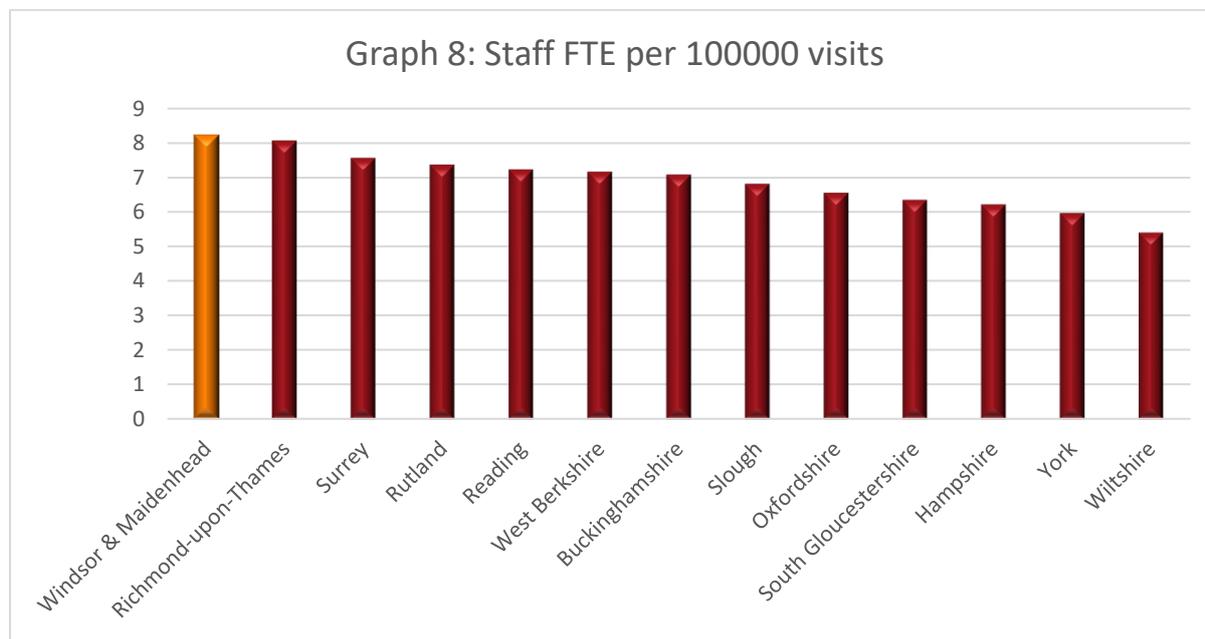
Active borrowers are those people who have borrowed from a library service within the last year. Graph 7 shows that WMLS is towards the higher end of the comparator group and well above the English average of 10.96%. As we have identified above, the rate of borrowing in Windsor and Maidenhead is amongst the highest in the comparator group, and it may be possible to infer from this that a significant proportion of library users visit the libraries in WMLS for purposes other than to borrow books – that is to use personal electronic devices via library Wi-Fi, to study or browse, to attend events and activities and to socialise.

WMLS also offers a range of corporate services, such as customer services, town hall reception and taxi licencing. None of these activities generate a transaction on library software and therefore cannot be included in this comparison.

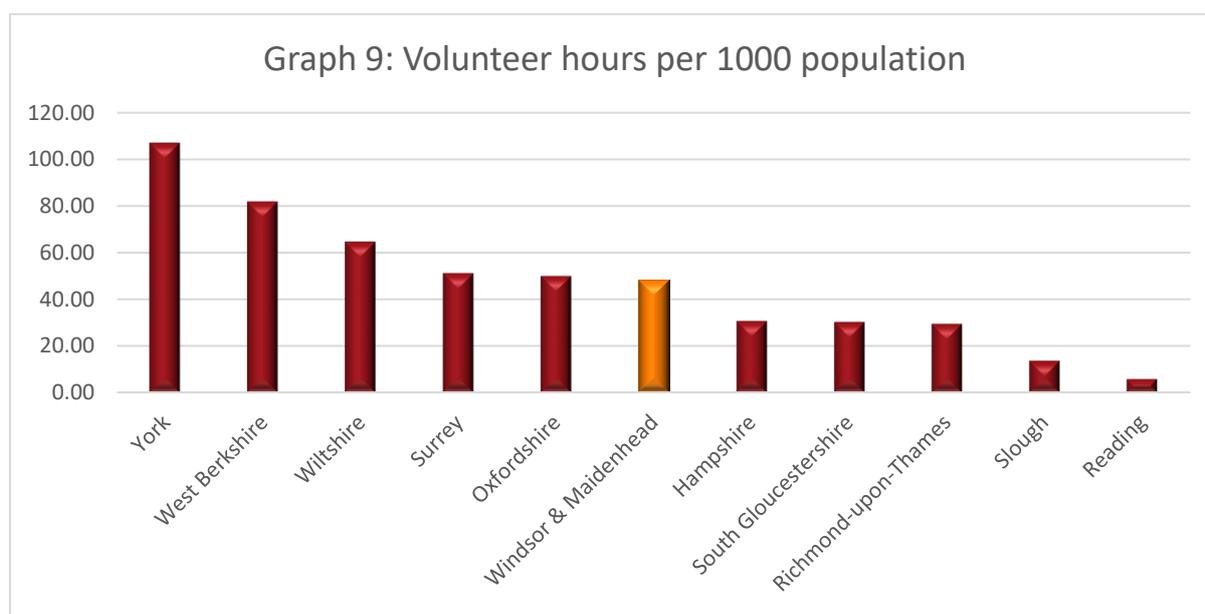
As we shall see later, not all active borrowers are actually residents of the authority in which they have borrowed, but CIPFA does not allow us to make this distinction and therefore the rates shown above are the total number of active borrowers divided by the authority population.

Resources

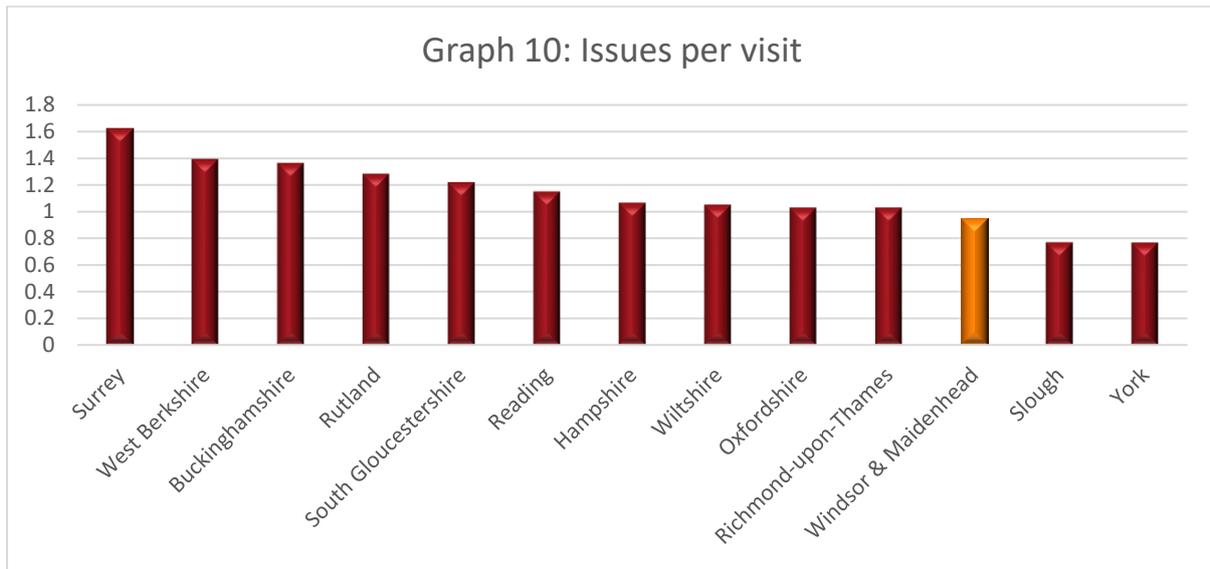
This section compares the resources in each of the comparators with their performance.



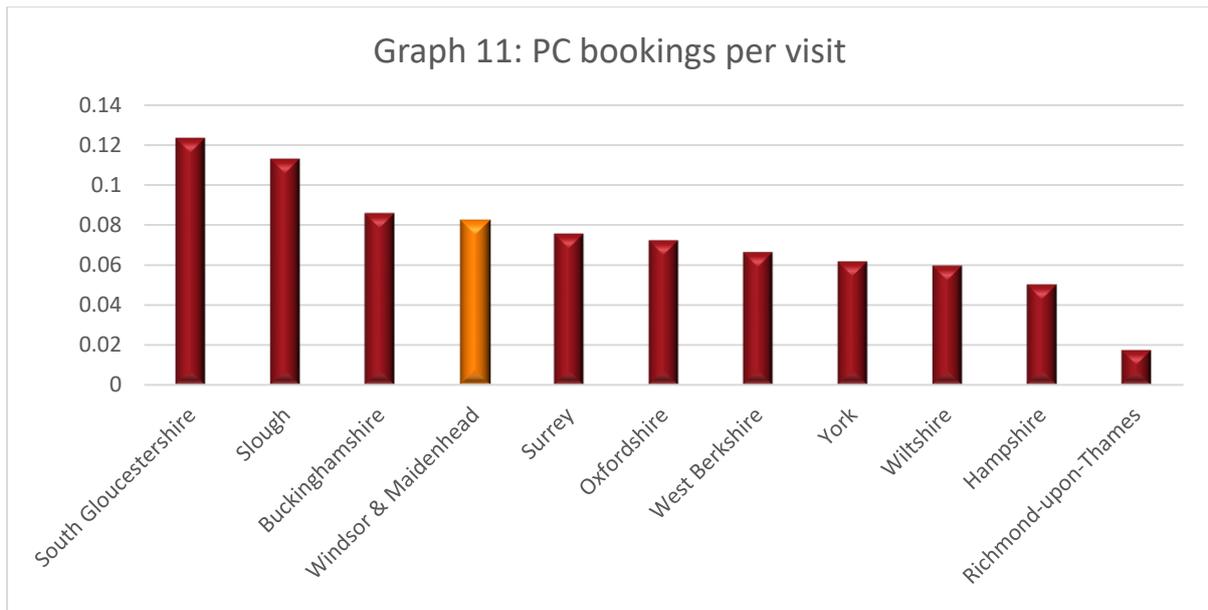
Graph 8 shows the total full time equivalent staff employed by each authority per visit, and that Windsor and Maidenhead has more staff per visit than the comparators. The way that library staffing is calculated can vary from authority to authority – for example, administrative support may be provided by another team, although this is not the case in WMLS – but these results suggest that WMLS’s current establishment is relatively high. This is due in part to the high number of library branches within the borough but also to the fact that library staff in Windsor and Maidenhead deliver a wide range of customer services. Issues are also high and the activity associated with issue, return and re-shelving can be staff intensive.



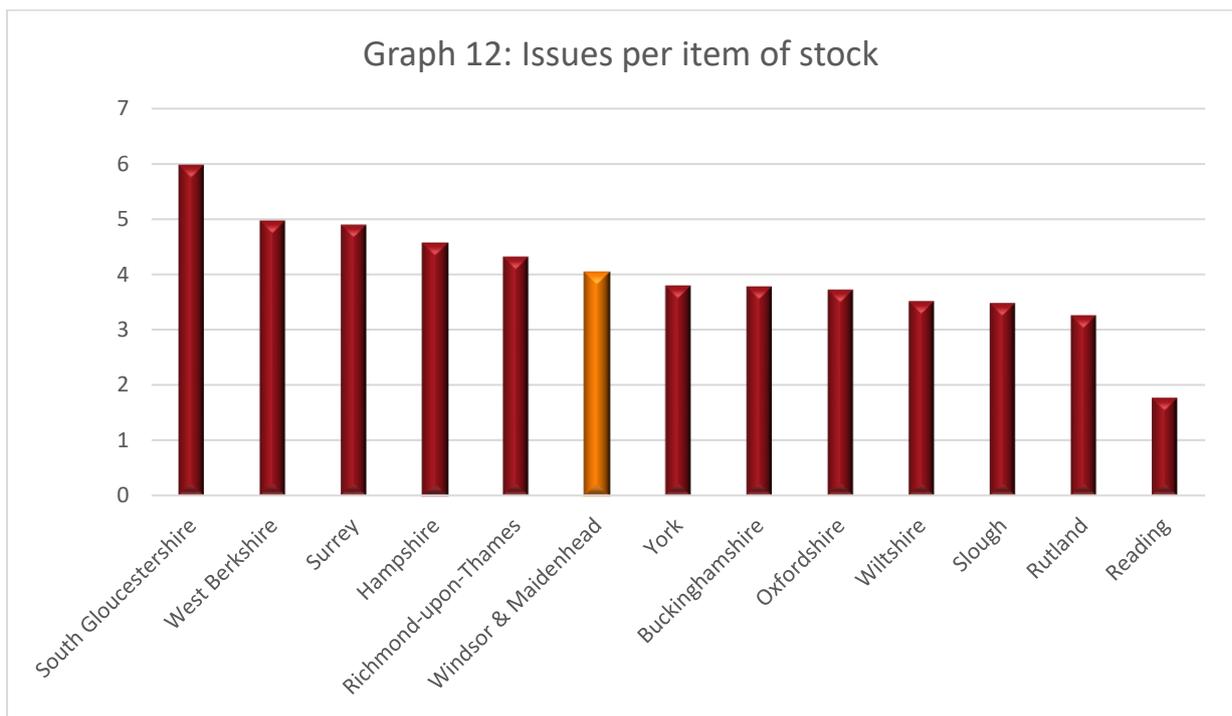
Increasingly, paid library staff are supported by volunteers, but the degree of use of volunteers varies widely between authorities. Graph 9 shows that WMLS is around average in its use of volunteers in the comparator group. It should be noted that York City Libraries is a staff mutual and not directly run by the local authority – it is possible that this increases its ability to attract volunteers. However, this graph shows that much higher levels of volunteer engagement are possible and have the potential to reduce the need for high levels of paid staff.



The ratio of issues to visits is useful in determining the proportion of library activity related to borrowing. In Windsor and Maidenhead there are 0.95 issues for every visit, above the English average of 0.82, but third lowest in the comparator group. This implies that many people are visiting WMLS libraries for a purpose other than to borrow or to use a library computer. This could include to use personal electronic devices via library Wi-Fi, to study or browse, to attend events and activities and to socialise. They could also be using the customer services functions provided at the libraries and described above.



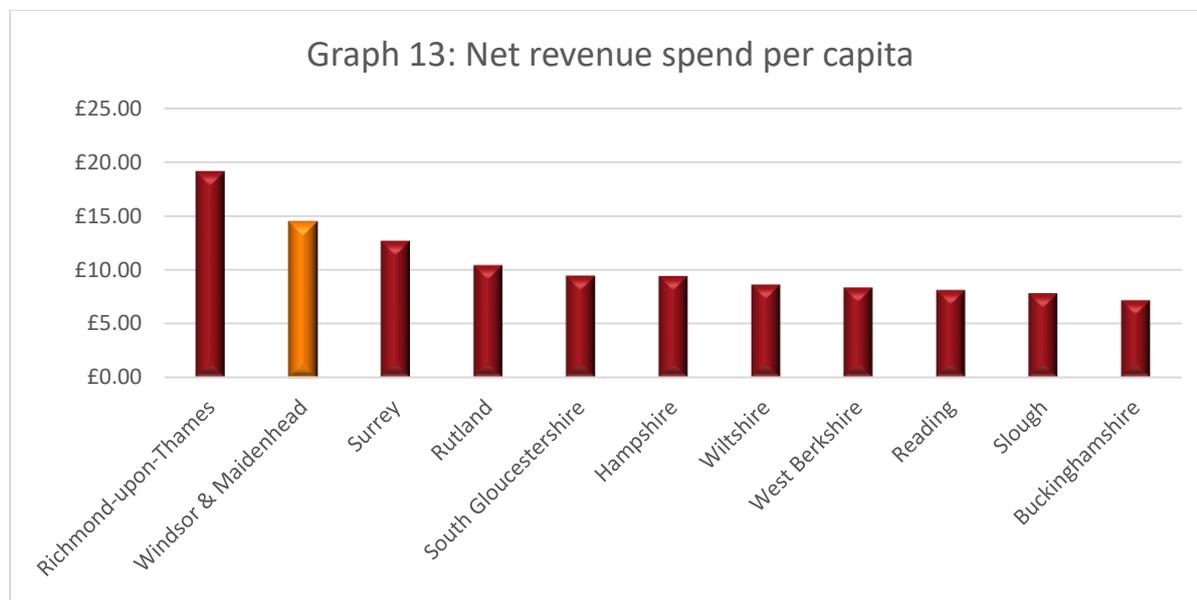
Graph 11 shows that the ratio of public PC bookings is higher than in all but three of the comparator authorities.



Graph 12 shows how well the stock within each library service is used. Stock in WMLS was issued on average at about the median point within the comparator authorities, despite the high overall numbers of physical issues, in other words each item of stock was not as well used as in some other authorities. This is doubtless in part due to the relatively high number of libraries in the borough. There is also a phenomenon of diminishing return on an increased range of stock – the greater the number of titles, the lower the average number of issues as a comparatively few titles account for a disproportionate number of issues.

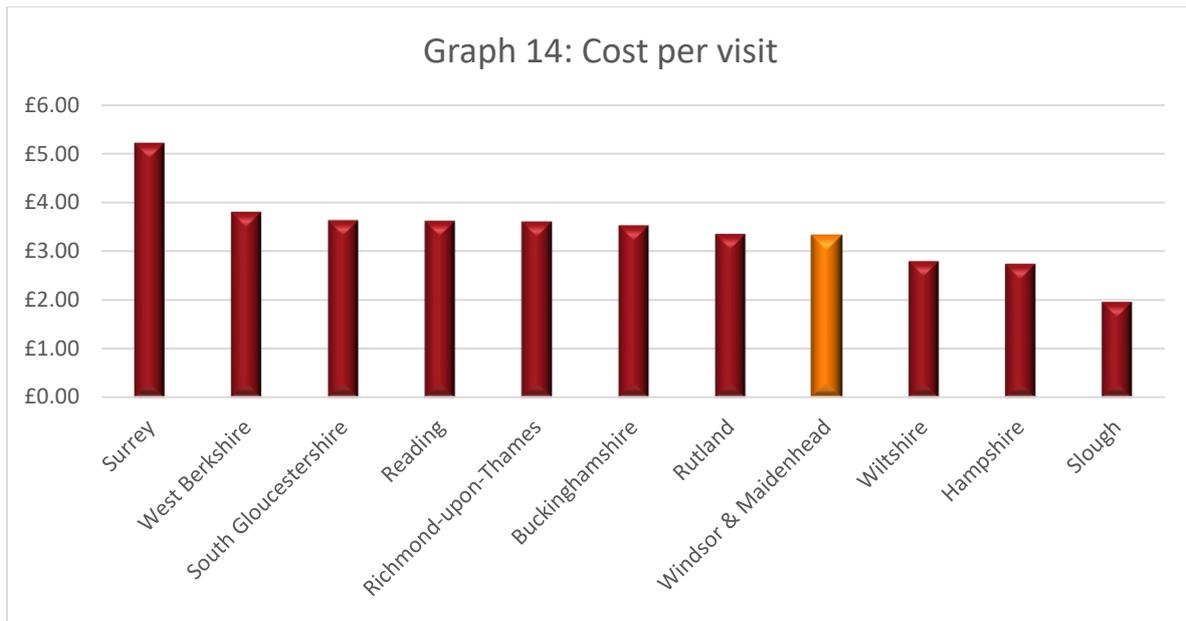
Financial comparisons

In this section we compare the financial aspects of the comparator group⁶. WMLS also comprises customer services, town hall reception and taxi licencing; and staff work across all parts of the service so that the finance required to deliver library services cannot be disaggregated from the total.

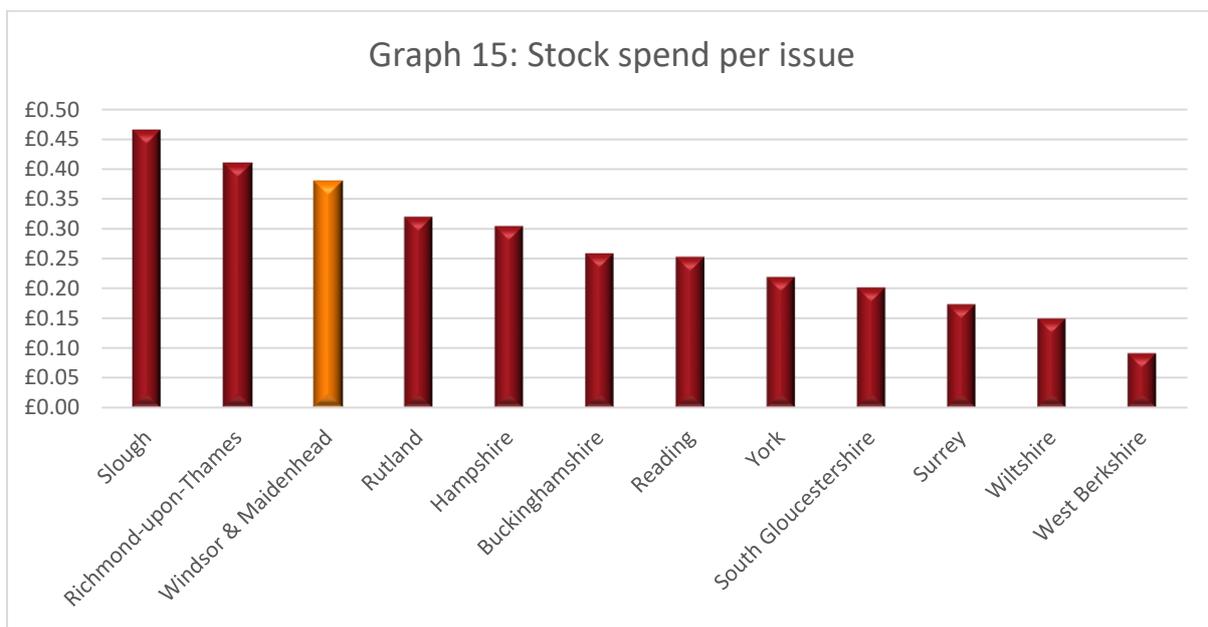


Graph 13 shows how much each authority spends on its library service adjusted for level of population. Within the comparator group, expenditure per capita was only exceeded by Richmond on Thames. However, as we have mentioned above, in WMLS the remit of library staff is greater than the delivery of library services and this may help to explain the higher investment.

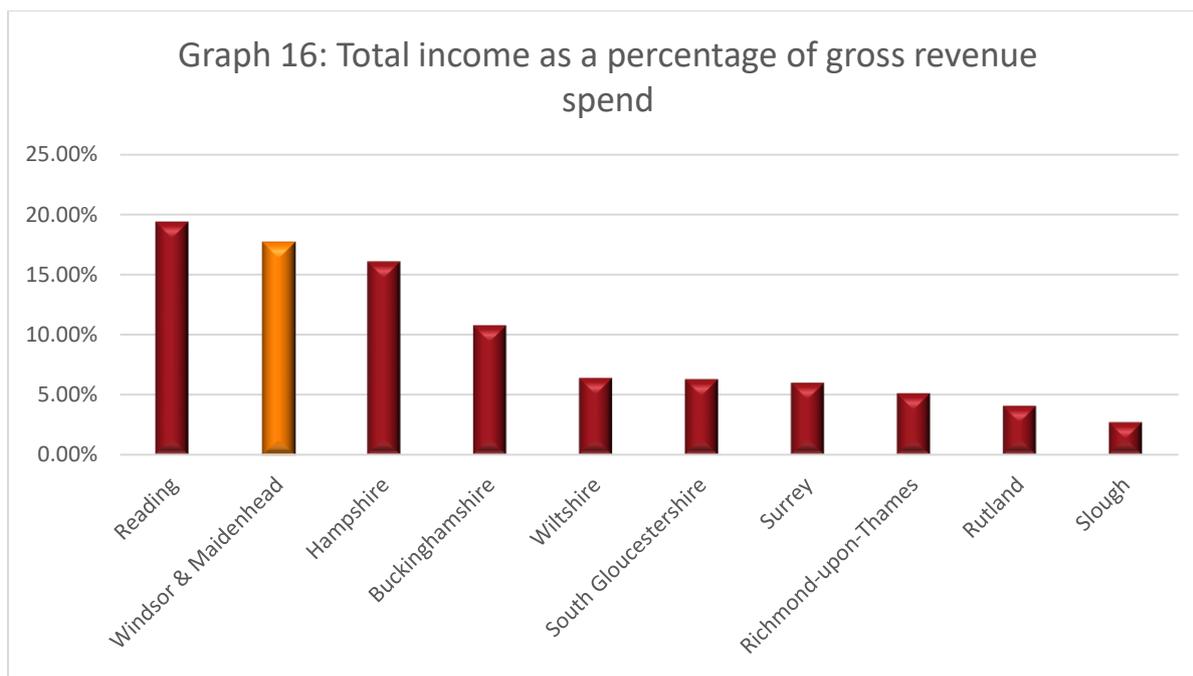
⁶ For this analysis only ten authorities are included; this is because Oxfordshire did not provide financial data whilst York libraries, as a staff mutual, shows financial support from the City Council as income, which distorts their results.



Graph 14 shows the average cost of each visit to each library service (total net expenditure divided by total visits) and is a good indicator of the overall cost effectiveness of the service. WMLS is below the average for the comparator group, and therefore one of the more cost effective by this measure.



Graph 15 show the amount spent on new stock acquisition divided by the total number of stock issues and can be an indicator of the cost effectiveness of stock acquisition. Although issues were high in WMLS, the average cost per issue was the third highest in the comparator group. This may be partly due to the high number of library branches in WMLS compared to the population and the consequent need to purchase more copies of the same item.



Graph 16 shows the proportion of income generated compared to the total gross revenue spend and is an indicator of how efficiently the service generates income. Income is comprised of receipts from the public including fees and charges, grants and corporate income – income from other parts of the local authority. WMLS generated more income – about £470,000 – as a proportion of gross revenue spend than any other in the comparator group except Reading, and at 17.7% considerably better than the English average of 11%. Although about 40% of this income was corporate income, WMLS also performed better than all but two of the comparator group when receipts from the public were considered, and far better than the English average⁷.

CIPFA conclusions

WMLS is an effective service in engaging with residents and has a high proportion of visits per head of population. Issues per capita are also high and lending in WMLS considerably exceeded the English average. This is true both of physical and electronic issues. Bookings of public computers were also high in WMLS. WMLS had the third highest proportion of active borrowers in the population within the comparator group. Issues per visits are towards the lower end of the comparator group, implying that many people are visiting WMLS libraries for a purpose other than to borrow or to use a library computer. This could include to use personal electronic devices via library Wi-Fi, to study or browse, to attend events and activities and to socialise.

WMLS has more library branches per head of population than the comparator group, and probably as a consequence of this, there were more staff per visit than elsewhere in the group. The number of volunteer hours given was around the average for the comparator group. Average issues per stock item was average within the comparator group.

⁷ WMLS generated 10% of gross revenue spend; the English average was 4.7%.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead invested more in its library service per head of population than all but one of the comparators, but overall, the service demonstrated financial efficiency with a lower than average cost per visit. This is emphasised by the fact that WMLS delivers more than a traditional library service with certain corporate functions also undertaken; this may also be true of some of the comparator authorities. Stock spend per issue was high, indicating a lower level of cost effectiveness than the comparator group as a whole, but income as a proportion of overall spend was very high, indicating an effective service.

Overall, the service is performing well and although financial investment is high, this is justified by the level of usage and the range of services provided.

3. The need for a library service in RBWM

This section sets out a summary of the overarching need for library services in RBWM and identifies areas of need that could be addressed by the library service. The information here is at borough level, the next section analyses at ward level.

Geography

Windsor and Maidenhead is a royal borough and unitary authority, located about 30 miles west of central London. Most of the authority lies in the historic county of Berkshire, but it includes areas north of the River Thames that belong to the historic county of Buckinghamshire. The main towns of Windsor, Maidenhead (the administrative centre), and Ascot are surrounded by more than a dozen villages, many of which are linked by the Thames.

Population

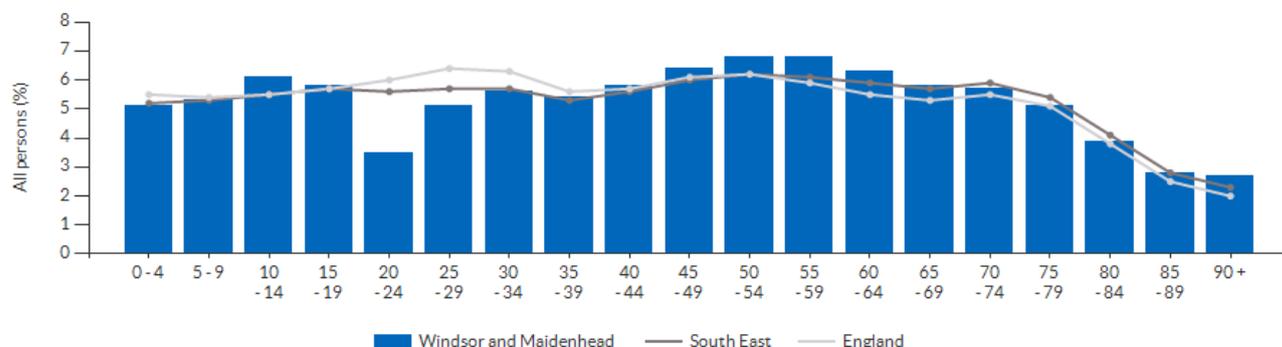
151,422 people live in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. (2019). The borough's population as a whole is set to rise by around 5% by 2041, a growth of approximately 400 people per year. This is stable in comparison to some areas of the country. Around 16.5% of the population regularly use the library service

What this means for the library service: Consider how you might increase the percentage of the population that use the library service. Analysis later in this report will help you to target particular groups and communities.

Age

20.3% of the population are aged 0-15, 60.6% are aged 16-64 and over 65s make up the remaining 18.8%. This breakdown is within the average for both the south east and the whole of England. The age group predicted to rise the most by 2041 is the over 65s, with the other groups falling.

The graph below shows the projected rise/fall in comparison with the rest of the country. An important element to note from this graph is that the number of residents aged 20-30 is lower.



Date: 2041 Source: ONS

What this means for the library service: You will need to take into account the rise in over 65s when planning your services.

Economic activity

The employment rate in RBWM is higher than the national average, with a higher proportion in managerial and professional employment. The average salary is significantly higher.

17% of RBWM's population between 16 and 64 are economically inactive (15% men, 20% women).

The percentage claiming all benefits is 4.7%. This has risen significantly (from 1.3%) since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

What this means for the library service: Look at what support is needed for those looking for work. Although employment is high, this is likely to change significantly owing to the Covid pandemic.

Ethnicity

The table below illustrates how the ethnic composition of the borough has changed from 2011 to the latest figures from 2017.

	Asian	Black	Mixed heritage	White British	All other white	Other background
2011	9.6%	1.2%	2.3%	77.5%	8.6%	0.8%
2017	12.0%	1.3%	2.1%	72.5%	10.7%	1.34%

What this means for the library service: Are there any considerations that make the library service less accessible to people from ethnic minorities?

Deprivation

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was the 14th least deprived local authority in England, out of 317. Nevertheless, like almost all areas, there are pockets of deprivation within the borough.

What this means for the library service: Focus on the needs of those in deprived areas and see how libraries can support them. Even in relatively prosperous boroughs like RBWM, the Covid pandemic is likely to increase deprivation and child poverty, and this should be monitored.

Business

There are almost 11,000 businesses operating in RBWM. A high proportion of them are small businesses.

What this means for the library service: The current economic situation may mean that businesses are struggling, and libraries can provide a range of support: resources, advice, working space.

Health

Health for both adults and children are overall above the national average in RBWM and life expectancy is marginally higher. There will be, however, differences at ward level and in areas of deprivation. In a survey of adult visitors to libraries in 2018⁸, 34% of visitors responded that the library service had helped with their health and wellbeing.

What this means for the library service: Consider areas where health is poorer or where specific health issues, such as obesity or smoking are higher. Library services can provide support with information and advice, hosting clinics and workshops, as well as health related stock.

Education

Levels of educational progress and attainment in RBWM are generally good. However, the level of black and ethnic minority children achieving a good level of development (69%) is lower than that of other children (75%). There is also a large gap in reaching expected standards at Key Stage 2 between disadvantaged pupils (35%) and other pupils (73%), a gap that is significantly larger than the national average. 61% of adult visitors responding to the

⁸ Public Library User Survey 2018

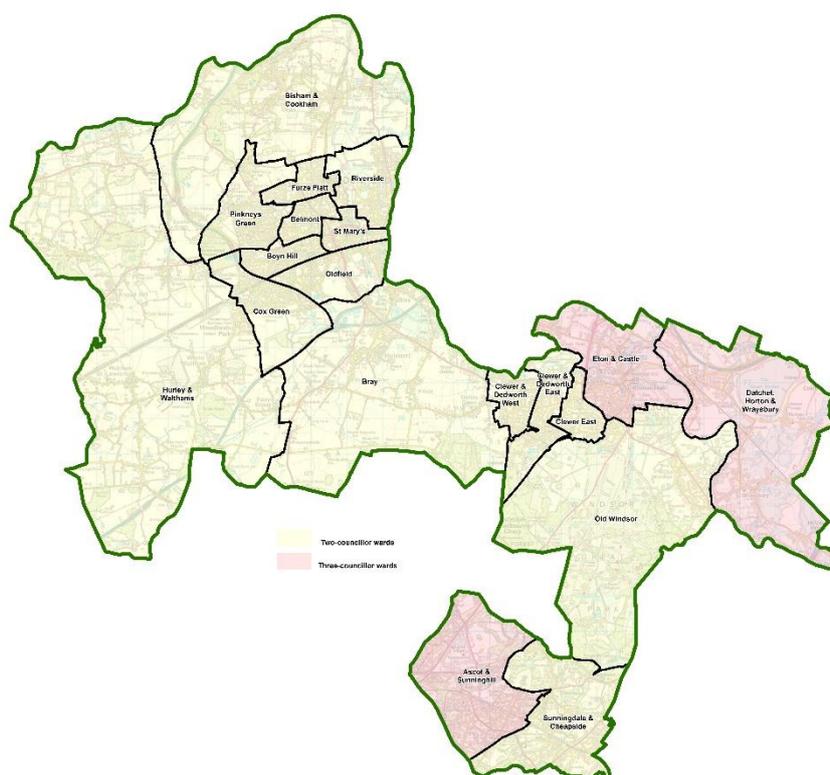
Public Library User Survey said that they used the library to learn or study, 17% said that they used the library to get online, and 9% said that the library helped with job seeking.

What this means for the library service: Identify where educational progress is less good and target children's services towards supporting improvement.

4. Analysis of need within the borough

In this section we analyse the demographic and socio-economic profile of Windsor and Maidenhead, focussing on those characteristics which can be most meaningfully affected by the provision of a library service, and which we have identified in the introduction.

We have undertaken our analysis at electoral wards level so that we are able to compare actual library usership to the population. We can therefore identify the strengths and weakness of current library provision and inform decisions for the future. A map of the wards within the borough is shown below.



Since this analysis is intended to be used to assist with the allocation of resources to different areas within the borough, we have conducted our analysis at a level where differences between areas within the borough can be identified. We have chosen ward level analysis because we compare this data with actual library usage by residents. Although data for smaller areas are available, the numbers of library users in within each subdivision is small, and this could lead to statistical anomalies. As we shall see below, it is not possible to divide the borough into library catchment areas accurately, as many residents are not members of the library geographically closest to their address.

Throughout we have used the most recent data available for each of the characteristics. Some of the data available at ward level (and indeed at any level below borough-wide) was collected at the 2011 census. This does mean that it may not perfectly reflect the current situation, but this is the only data available at this level. This data from the 2021 census is

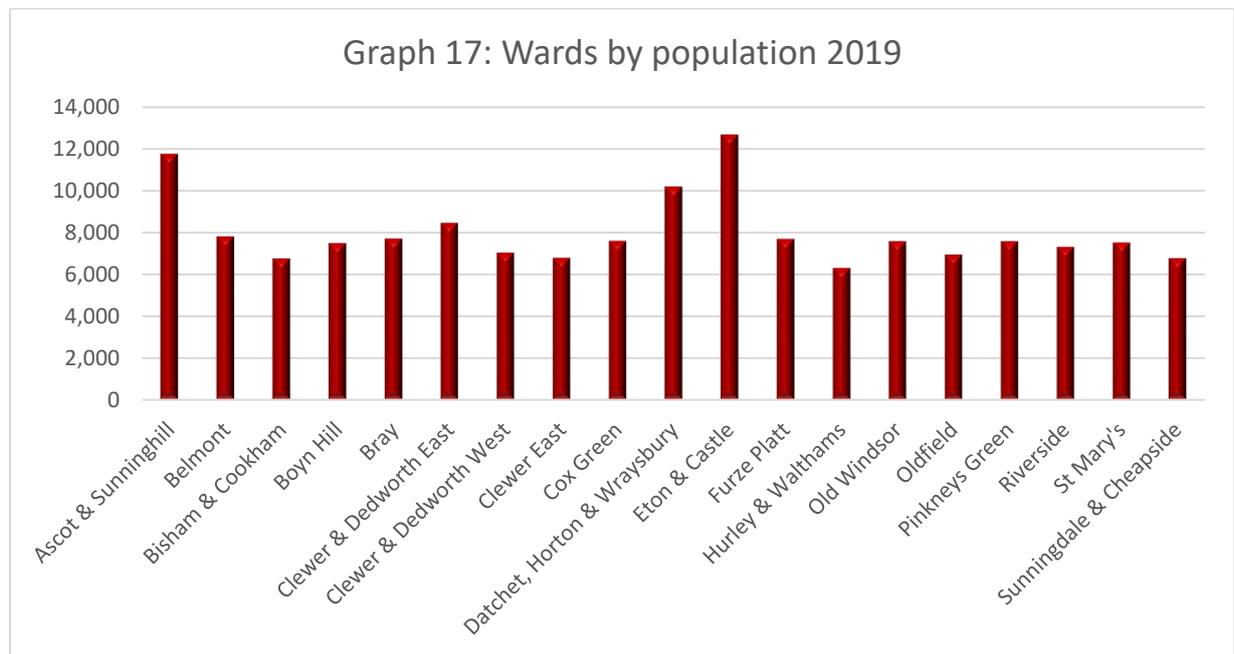
not likely to be published for at least two years. Since 2011, the wards in Windsor and Maidenhead have been altered; to address this we have used an Office of National Statistics (ONS) resource to ensure that modern boundaries are reflected.

Once again, we have presented our results graphically.

Population characteristics

Population

There are nineteen wards in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. They vary in population from 6,271 to 12,339⁹. Total resident population was 151,422. This is shown in graph 17 below.



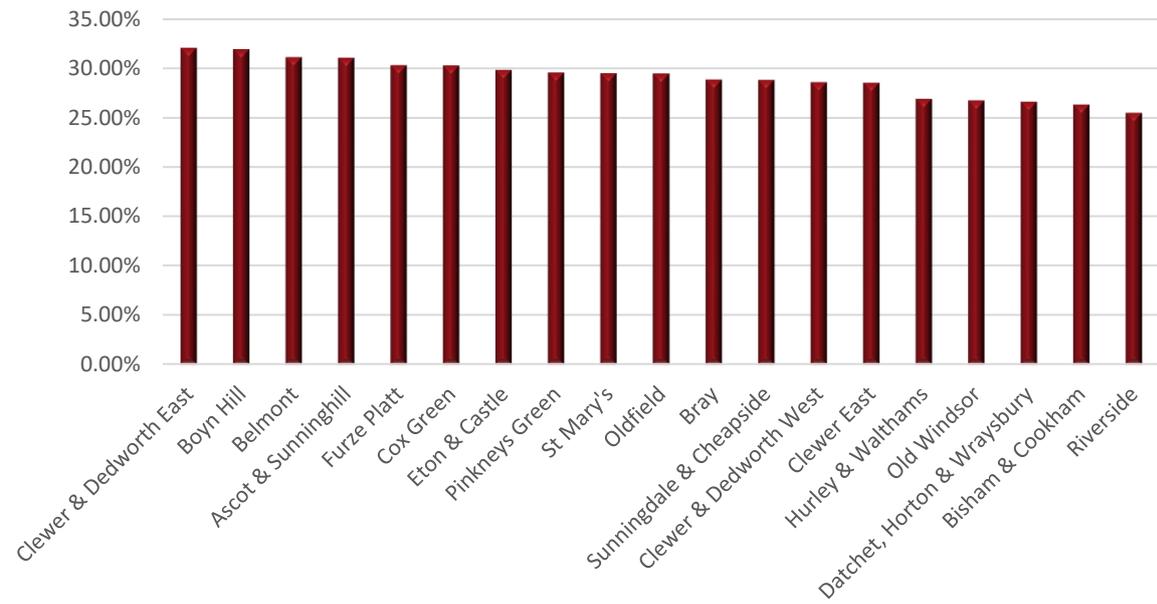
Age

Whilst public libraries are a universal service and therefore provided for all, some age groups may experience more difficulty in travelling to a more distant library. Age is therefore a factor in determining local need.

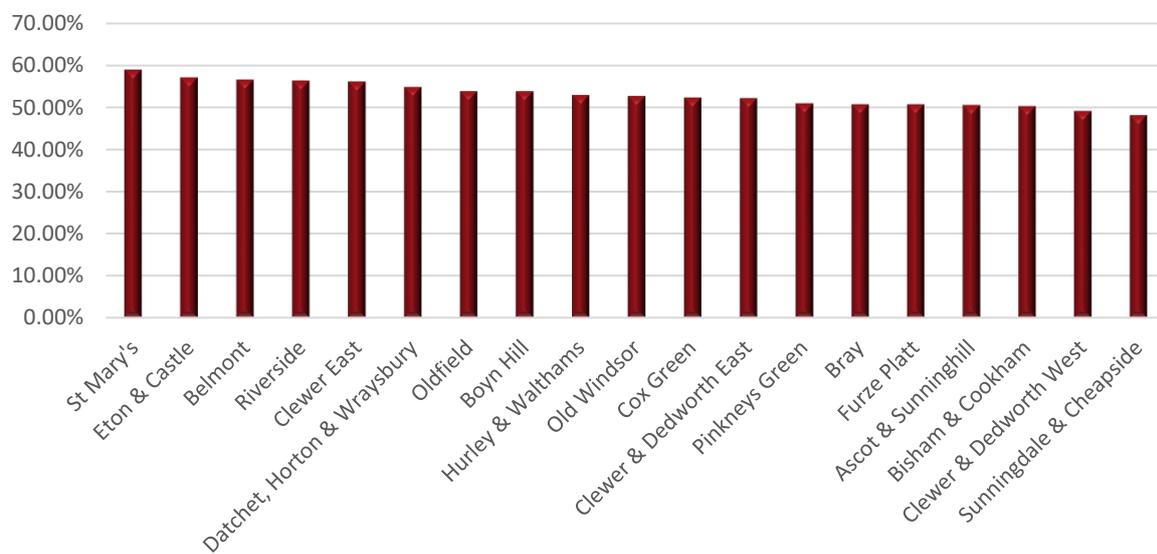
⁹ ONS Ward level population estimates

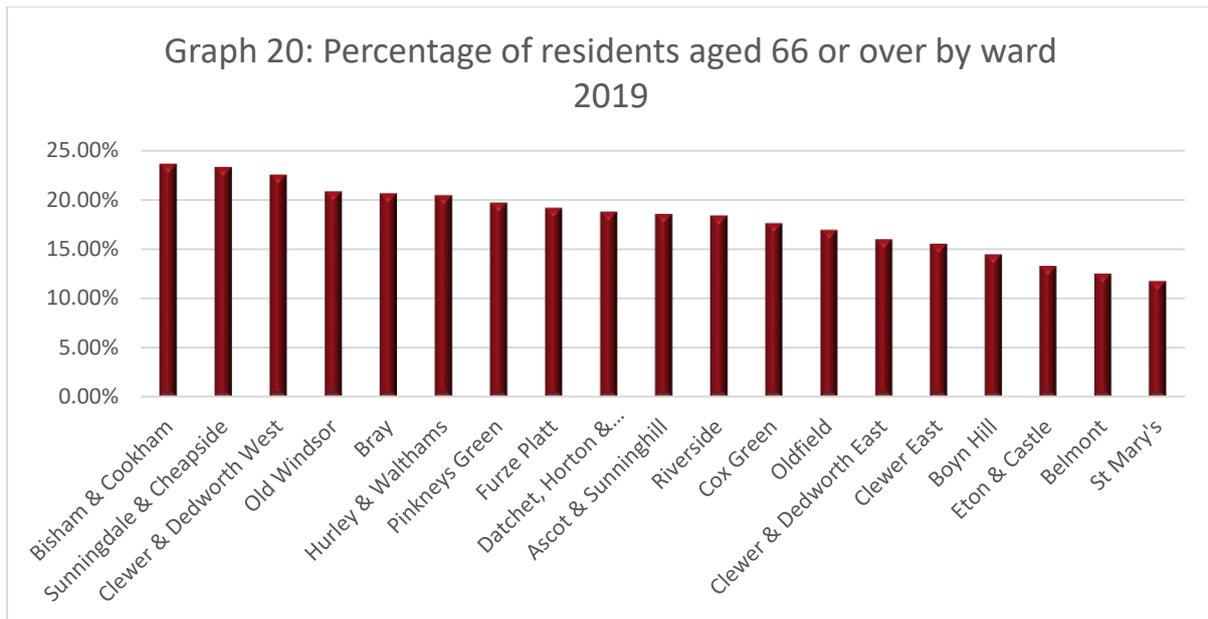
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevelmidyearpopulationestimatesexperimental>

Graph 18: Percentage of residents aged 0 - 24 by ward 2020



Graph 19: Percentage of residents aged 25 - 65 by ward 2020



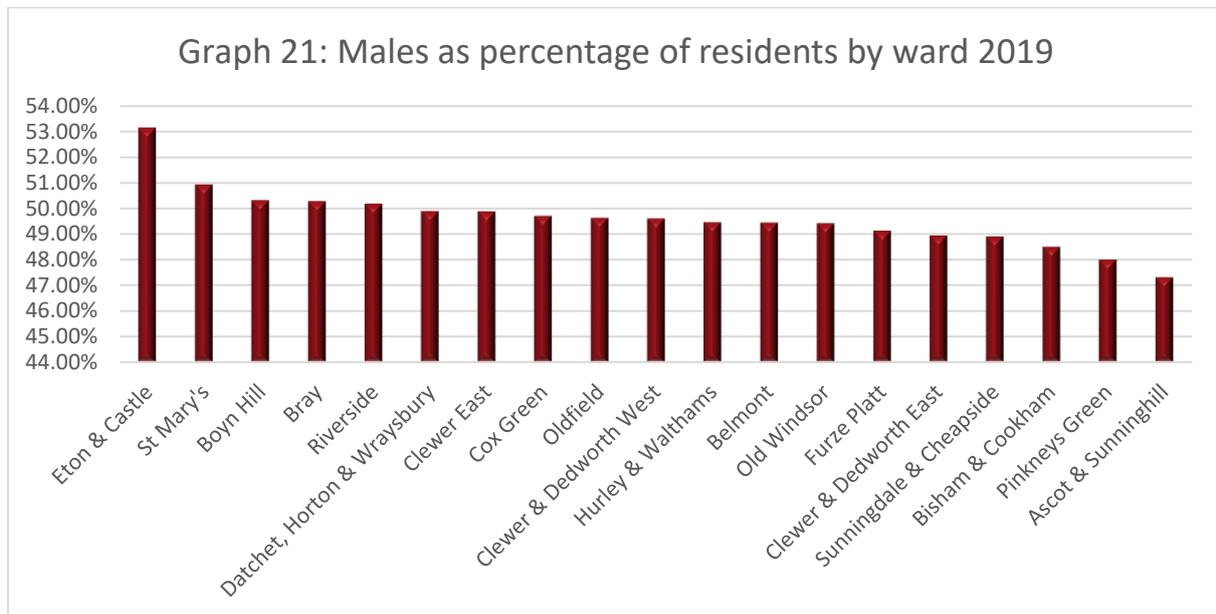


Graphs 18, 19 and 20 show the relative proportions of residents within each ward for age bands.

There are marked differences between the wards. There are high levels of young people in Clewer and Dedworth East, Boyn Hill, Belmont and Ascot & Sunninghill wards, and low levels in Riverside, Bisham & Cookham, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury and Old Windsor wards. St Mary's and Eton & Castle wards had high levels of people aged between 25 and 65¹⁰, and Sunningdale & Cheapside and Clewer & Dedworth West had lower levels in this age group. Older residents were a higher proportion of the population in Bisham & Cookham, Sunningdale & Cheapside and Clewer & Dedworth West but there were very low proportions in Eton & Castle, Belmont and St Mary's wards.

¹⁰ Eton & Castle ward contains the Victoria and Combermere Barracks, which will distort the figures somewhat.

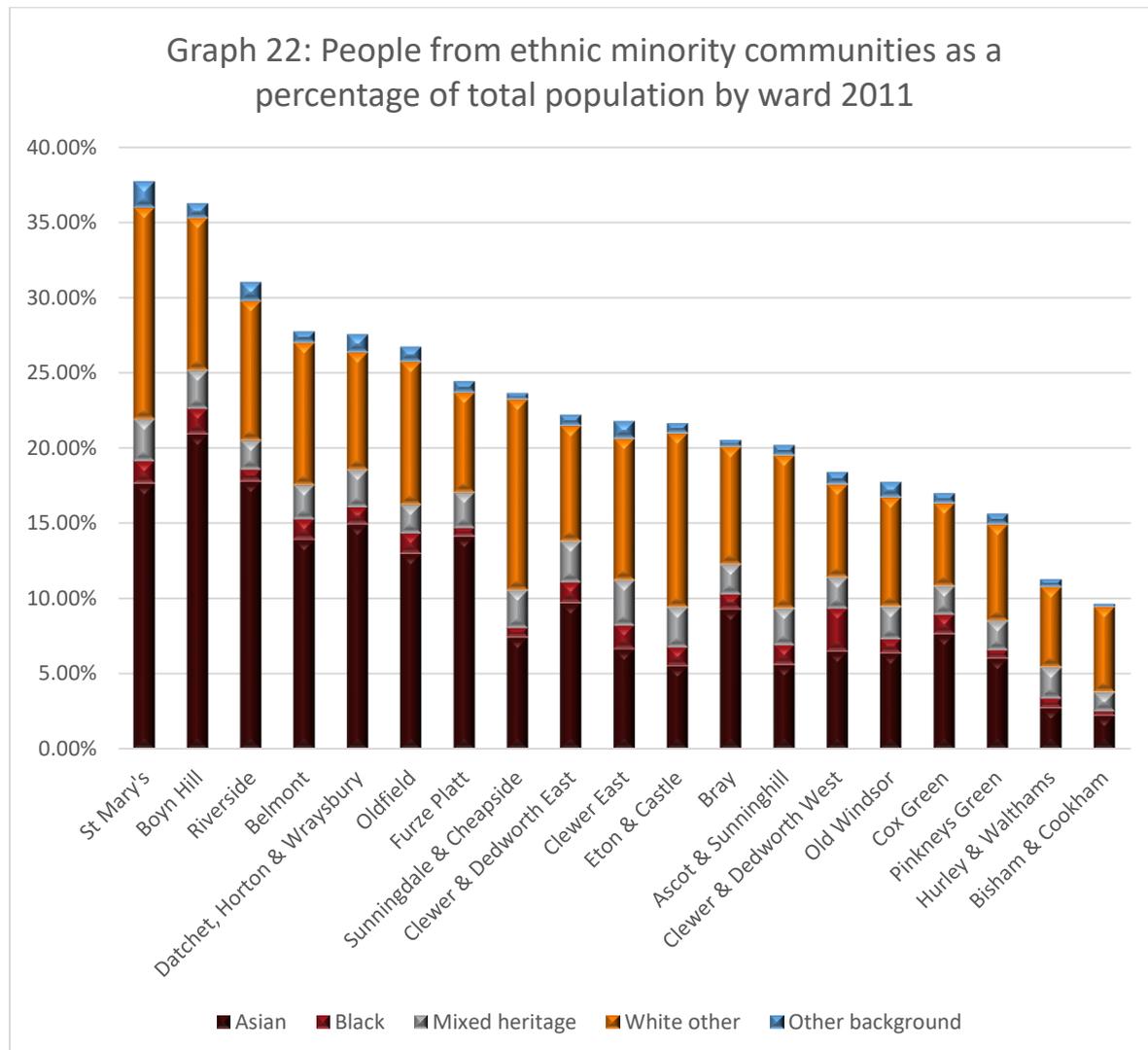
Gender



Graph 21 shows the proportion of males within the population of each ward. The x axis is truncated to exaggerate differences. The very high proportion in Eton & Castle is likely to be accounted for by the presence of two barracks. There is a very high correlation¹¹ between low proportions of males and high proportions of older people, no doubt due to the fact that life expectancy is higher for women.

¹¹ 0.97 Pearson correlation coefficient

Ethnicity



Data on ethnicity at local authority level was most recently compiled in 2017¹²; at ward level the most recent source is the 2011 census¹³. In 2017 the borough has a slightly lower proportion of White British people than the average for England – 72.5% compared to the English and Wales average of 77.9%.

There had been some changes in the ethnic composition of the borough in the period 2011 – 2017. These are shown in the table below:

¹²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/methodologies/researchreportonpopulationestimatesbycharacteristics>

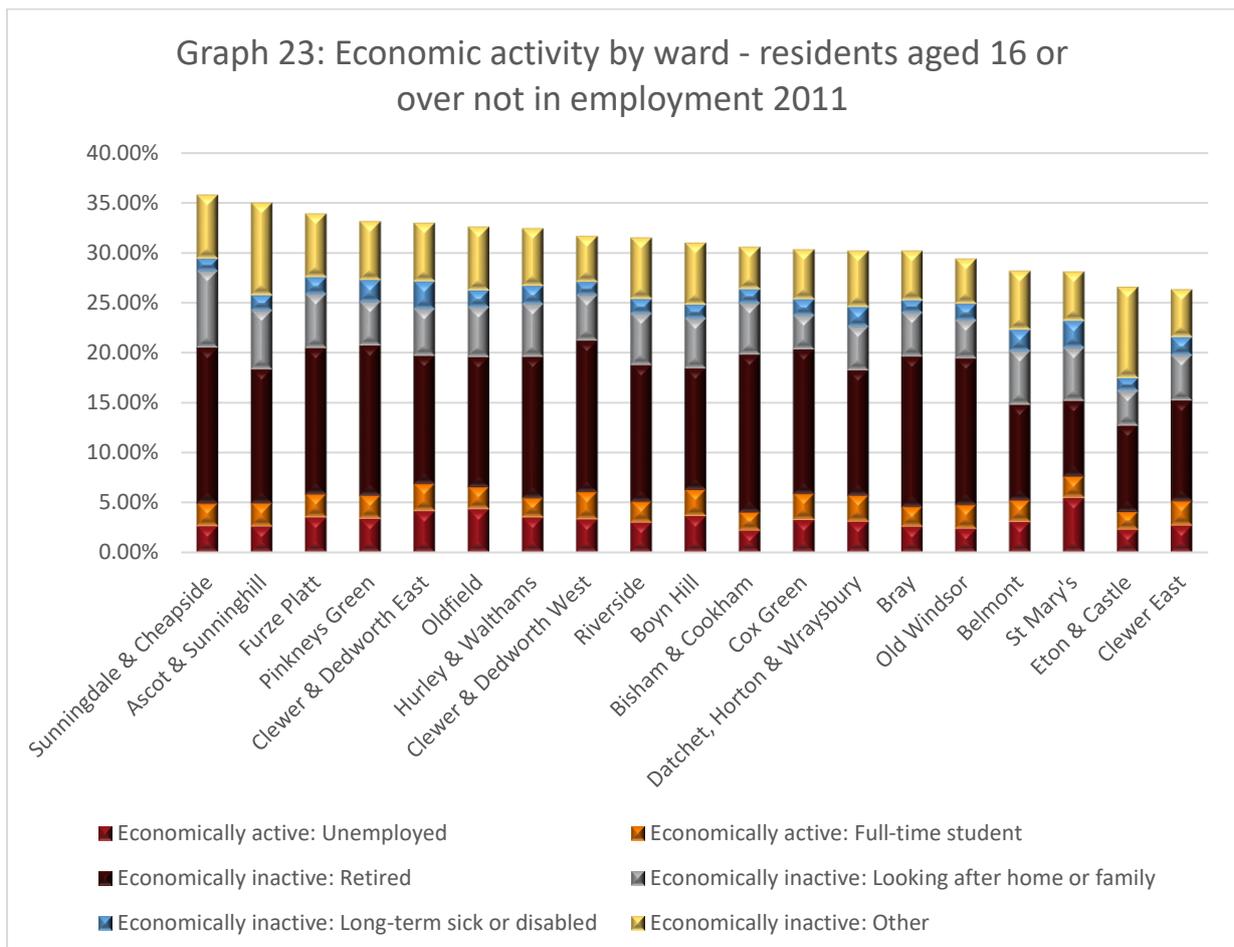
¹³ 2011 Census table KS201UK

	Asian	Black	Mixed heritage	White British	All other white	Other background
2011	9.6%	1.2%	2.3%	77.5%	8.6%	0.8%
2017	12.0%	1.3%	2.1%	72.5%	10.7%	1.34%

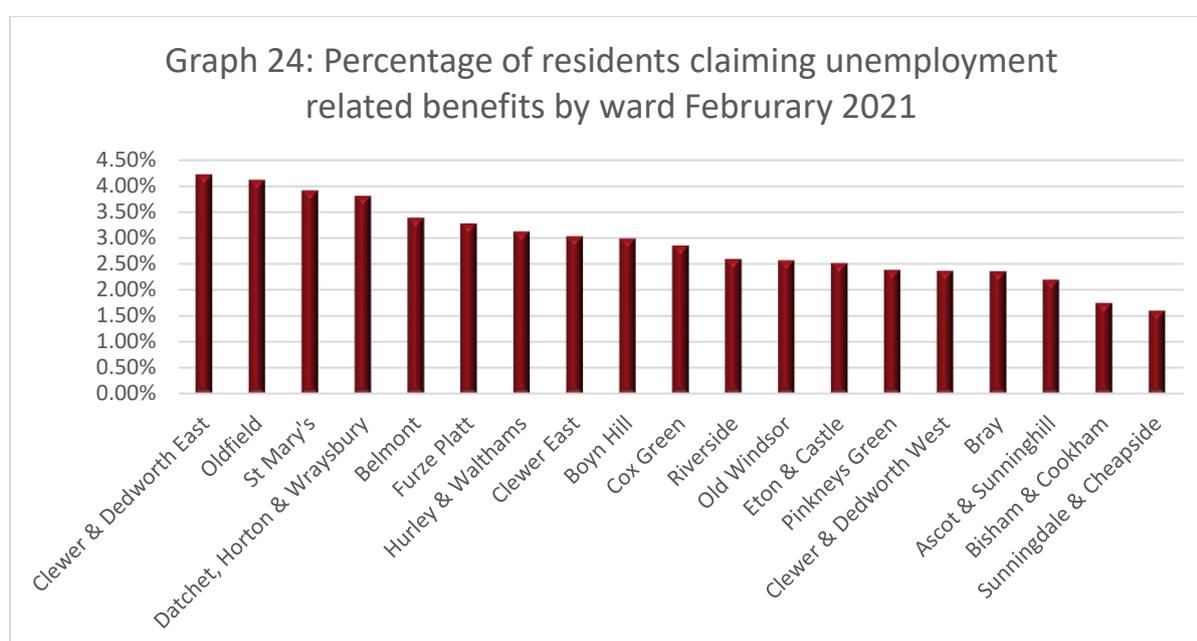
Although the proportion of Black people has remained about the same, the borough is more ethnically diverse than at the time of the census. This fact must be taken into account when considering the ward level data, which draws upon the 2011 census.

Graph 22 shows the composition of wards of people from ethnic minority groups in 2011. The most ethnically diverse communities were around Maidenhead and also Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury. Bisham & Cookham and Hurley and Walthams were the least ethnically diverse.

Economic activity and unemployment



The most recent breakdown of economic activity at ward level is again from the 2011 census¹⁴. At that point 74.5% of the population aged 16 or above was economically active. By 2017 82.8% of residents aged 16 -64 was economically active¹⁵. Graph 23 shows those people who were not in employment by ward. The lowest levels of employment are observed on the left of the y-axis in St Mary's, Eton & Castle and Clewer East wards. There are high levels of student in Clewer & Dedworth East, Clewer & Dedworth West, Cox Green and Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury wards. High levels of retired people are encountered in Bisham & Cookham, Sunningdale and Cheapside and Clewer & Dedworth West wards. Those wards with the highest proportions of people looking after the home or bringing up a family are in Sunningdale & Cheapside and Ascot & Sunninghill, with low rates in Eton & Castle and Cox Green. Clewer & Dedworth East and St Mary's have high rates of long term sick.



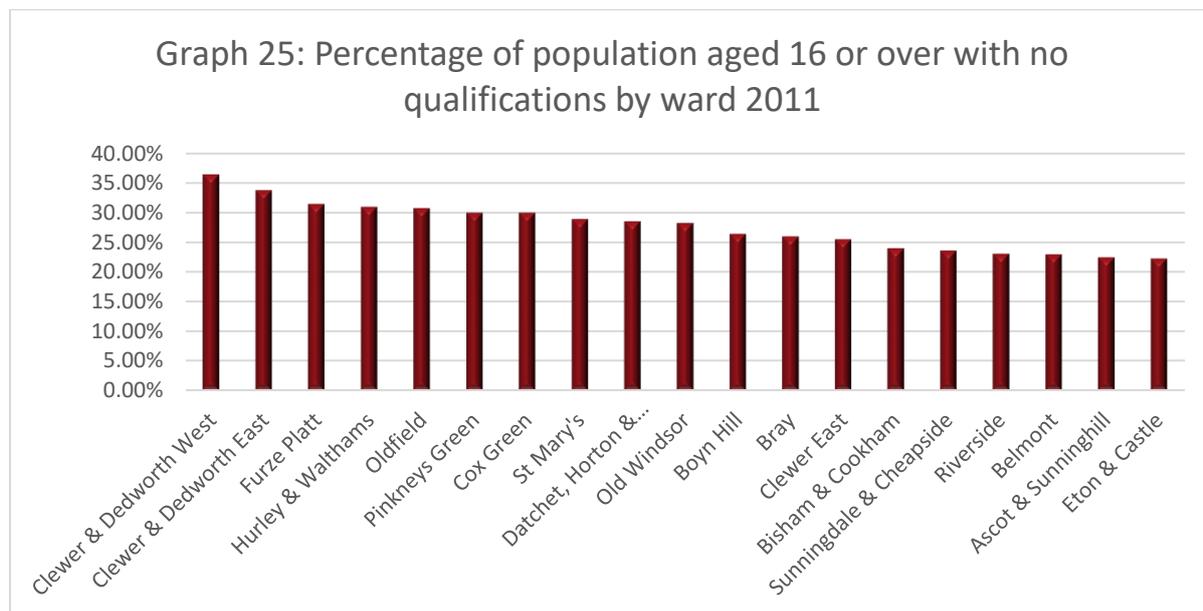
There is more recent data on unemployment¹⁶, shown in graph 24. The highest rates are in Clewer & Dedworth East, some parts of Maidenhead and Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury. This pattern is similar to that encountered in 2011, although overall rates of unemployment had fallen across the borough.

¹⁴ 2011 census table KS601

¹⁵ This figure excludes people aged over 65 and therefore it is to be expected that it is higher than the 2011 figure

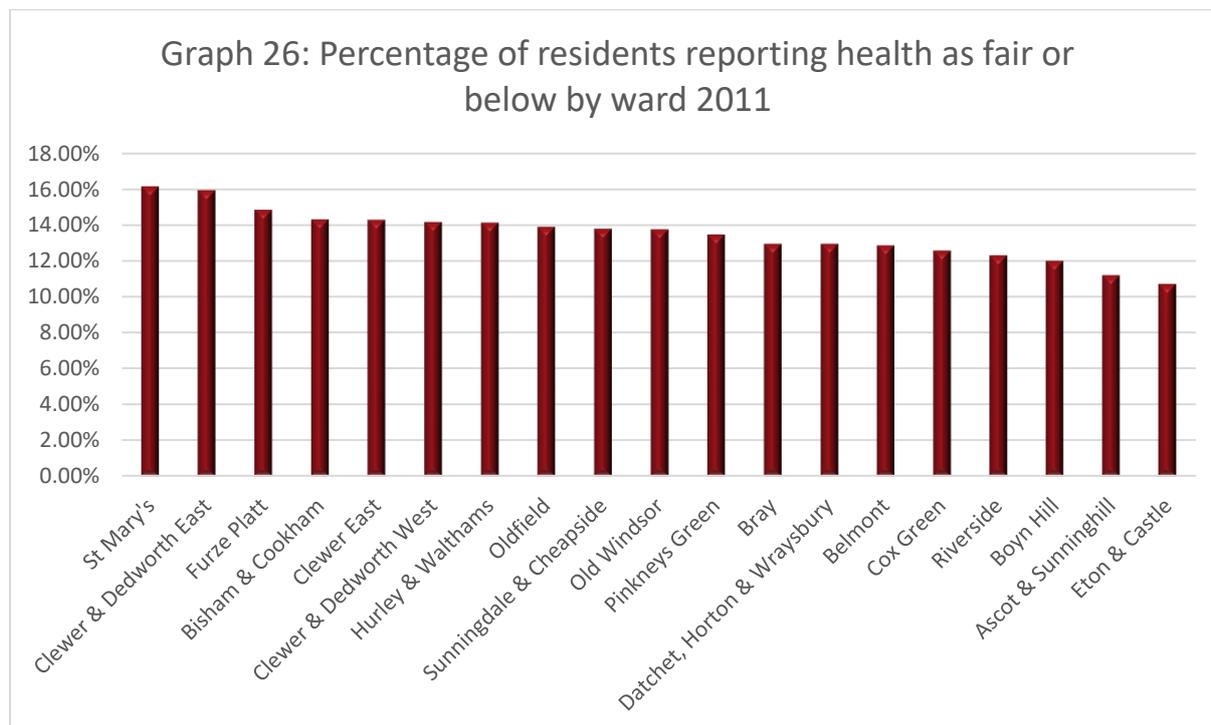
¹⁶ <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Education



Across the borough, 48.4% of key stage 4 students achieved 5 GCSEs or more, well above the national average of 43.4%. Once again, the most recent data for qualifications at ward level comes from the 2011 census. This is likely to have changed considerably since – In England 23% of the population aged 16 or over had no qualifications, but by 2020 the figure for those aged 16 – 64 was 6.2% (these figures are not directly comparable due to the difference in age range). Graph 25 shows a very considerable variation in the proportion of people with no qualifications between wards, with both Clewer & Dedworth East and Clewer & Dedworth West having high rates and well above the national average at that time.

Health



The Health Index is an Experimental Statistic to measure a broad definition of health, in a way that can be tracked over time and compared between different areas. In 2020, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead scored the third highest rating for health of all first tier local authorities in England, although it was below average in certain criteria such as access to housing and affordability, air pollution and noise.

In the 2011 census, respondents were asked to state how they rated their own health from very good to very bad. In Windsor and Maidenhead, 87% gave ratings of either very good or good. Graph 26 shows responses that fell outside this group. There is a strong correlation with the age profile of the wards, as is to be expected, but particular outliers are St Mary's, Clewer & Dedworth East and Clewer East wards where reported health is lower than the age profile might suggest, and Ascot & Sunninghill, Sunningdale & Cheapside and Bray wards where the converse is true.

Deprivation

The most comprehensive and widely adopted overall measure of deprivation is the Department for Communities and Local Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹⁷. This was updated in 2019.

The overall IMD combines indicators across 7 domains, each of which is scored separately:

- income
- employment

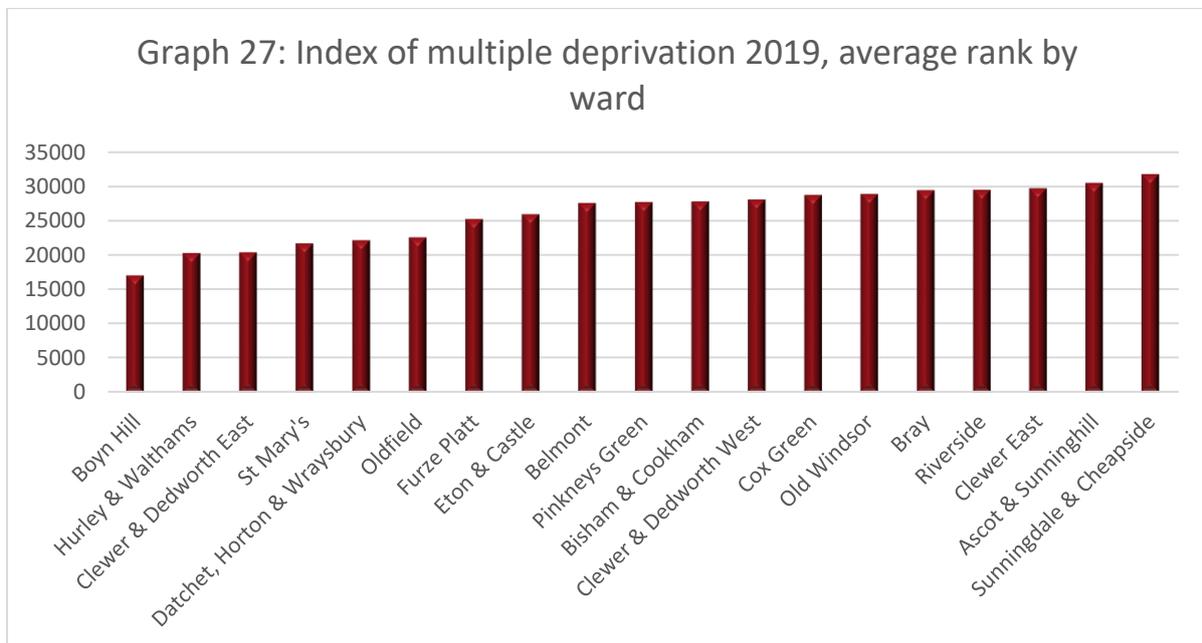
¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

- health deprivation
- education/skills
- barriers to housing/services
- living environment
- crime

The IMD is calculated for each Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which is a geographical area for which demographic statistics are available; several LSOAs comprise each ward in Windsor and Maidenhead. Each LSOA is given a rank to indicate how deprived it is in comparison to the other LSOAs in England, so that the LSOA with rank 1 is the most deprived in the country. The ranks are then arranged into deciles (so that the most deprived 10% is in the lowest quintile). In order to produce scores for wards we have averaged the ranking for each LSOA within that ward; this is a recognised way of processing this data.

The IMD only gives an indication of deprivation, so that a high degree of deprivation does not necessarily mean a lack of wealth in that area. Equally, the IMD can say that an area is more deprived than another, but not by how much.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was the 14th least deprived local authority in England, out of 317. Nevertheless, like almost all areas, there are pockets of deprivation within the borough.



Graph 27 shows the average rank of each ward in the borough. The wards at the left of the y-axis are those which are on average most deprived. Deprivation within wards is not uniform; for example, Belmont ward consists of five LSOAs, for our which are in the least deprived decile, but one of which is in the fourth most deprived.

The LSOAs with the highest overall deprivation within the borough are in Clewer & Dedworth East, Oldfield and Belmont wards.

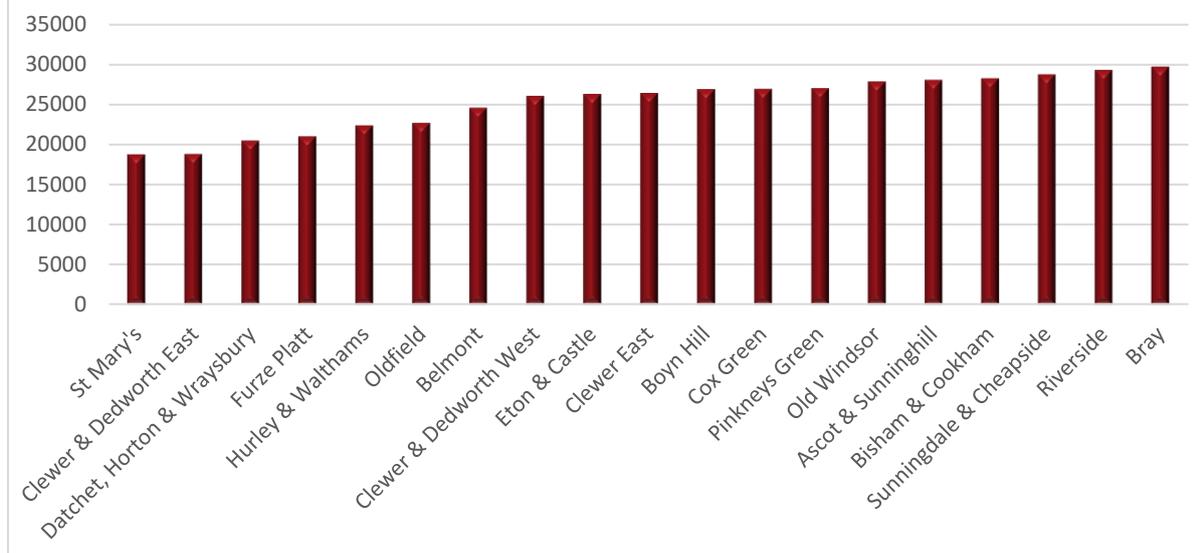
When the individual domains that constitute the IMDs are considered, there are significant¹⁸ pockets of deprivation in the following areas

Domain	Ward
Income	Belmont, Clewer & Dedworth East
Employment	Clewer & Dedworth East, Oldfield
Education, Skills and Training	Belmont, Clewer & Dedworth East, Clewer & Dedworth West, Furze Platt, Hurley & Walthams, Oldfield, Pinkneys Green
Health Deprivation	Clewer & Dedworth East, Furze Platt
Crime	Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury, Eton & Castle
Barriers to Housing and Services	Ascot & Sunninghill, Bray, Clewer & Dedworth East, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury, Eton & Castle, Hurley & Walthams, Pinkneys Green, Riverside
Living Environment ¹⁹	Bisham & Cookham, Bray, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury, Eton & Castle, Hurley & Walthams, St Mary's

¹⁸ Within the lowest 30% in England

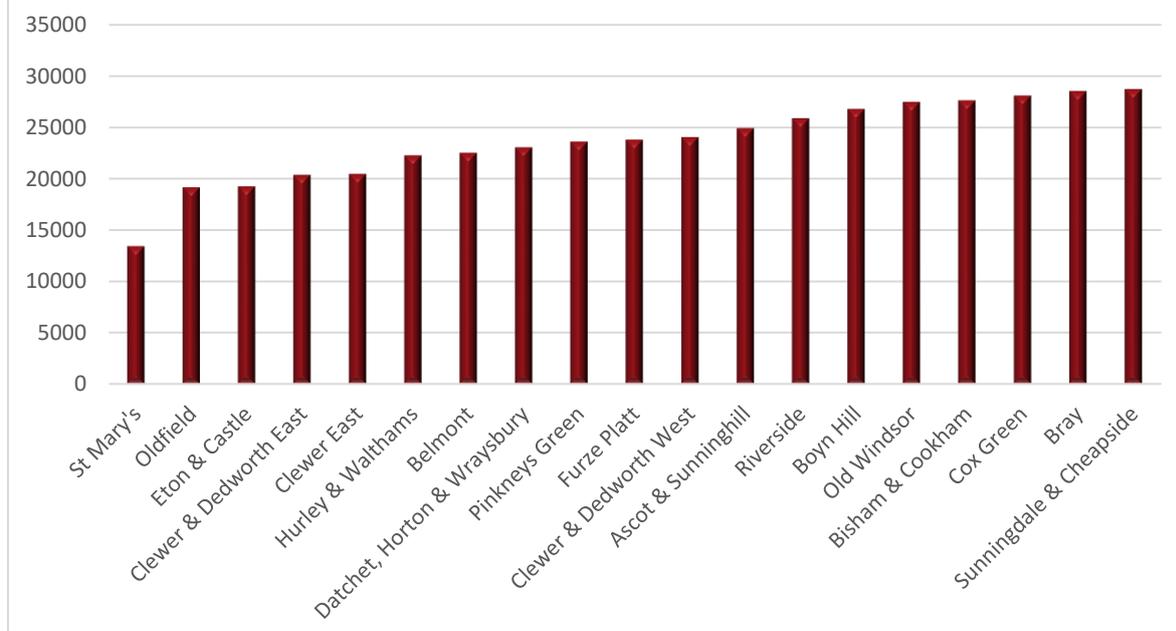
¹⁹ Some of the low scoring wards included in this domain may seem surprising, but are calculated partly using data for air quality and road traffic accidents

Graph 28: Index of income deprivation affecting children
2019, average rank by ward



Graph 28 shows the average rank for each ward of the index of income deprivation affecting children. Again the wards with the most pockets of deprivation are at the left of the graph. Those wards with pockets of deprivation²⁰ within this index are Belmont, Clewer & Dedworth East, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury and Oldfield. Three out of the five LSOAs in Clewer & Dedworth East fall into this category.

Graph 29: Index of income deprivation affecting older people
2019, average rank by ward



²⁰ Within the 40% most deprived in England

Graph 29 shows the average rank for each ward of the index of income deprivation affecting older people, with wards with the most pockets of deprivation at the left of the graph. There are only two LSAOs in the borough in the lowest 20% within England; in Belmont and Clewer & Dedworth East. There are other pockets of deprivation in the lowest 40% in Clewer East, Cox Green, Eton & Castle, Hurley & Walthams, Oldfield and St Mary's wards.

Implications for the library service

Libraries are universal services – that is, they are provided for everyone within the population. This is borne out by the usership of libraries – library customers include people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and locations. Nevertheless, library usage is particularly important for those in certain groups. Children, especially those aged between 11 and 18, and the elderly are disproportionately well represented amongst library users. For pupils, libraries can provide a range of study aids and for younger people more generally, inspiration through reading, events and social activity. For some they provide a route out of social isolation. Libraries can contribute to the economic regeneration of the area by providing a range of business information and signposting to other services. Libraries can be of particular importance to the less affluent, not only in providing free access to the internet and resources but also in providing space to work, study and to access computers and online resources. Library services have a significant role to play in addressing health inequalities

The age profile of wards across the borough varies significantly. There are high levels of young people in Clewer and Dedworth East, Boyn Hill, Belmont and Ascot & Sunninghill wards and high numbers of older people in Bisham & Cookham, Sunningdale & Cheapside and Clewer & Dedworth West wards.

Whilst there is no direct evidence to suggest that libraries are of benefit to any particular ethnic group, it is likely that minority groups are disproportionately high users of libraries. The most ethnically diverse communities are in certain areas of Maidenhead and also Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury.

There are pockets of deprivation across the borough even though the borough is well above the national average, and in there is a close correlation to areas of higher unemployment, low qualifications and health deprivation. The most affected wards are Clewer & Dedworth East, several wards within Maidenhead and Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury.

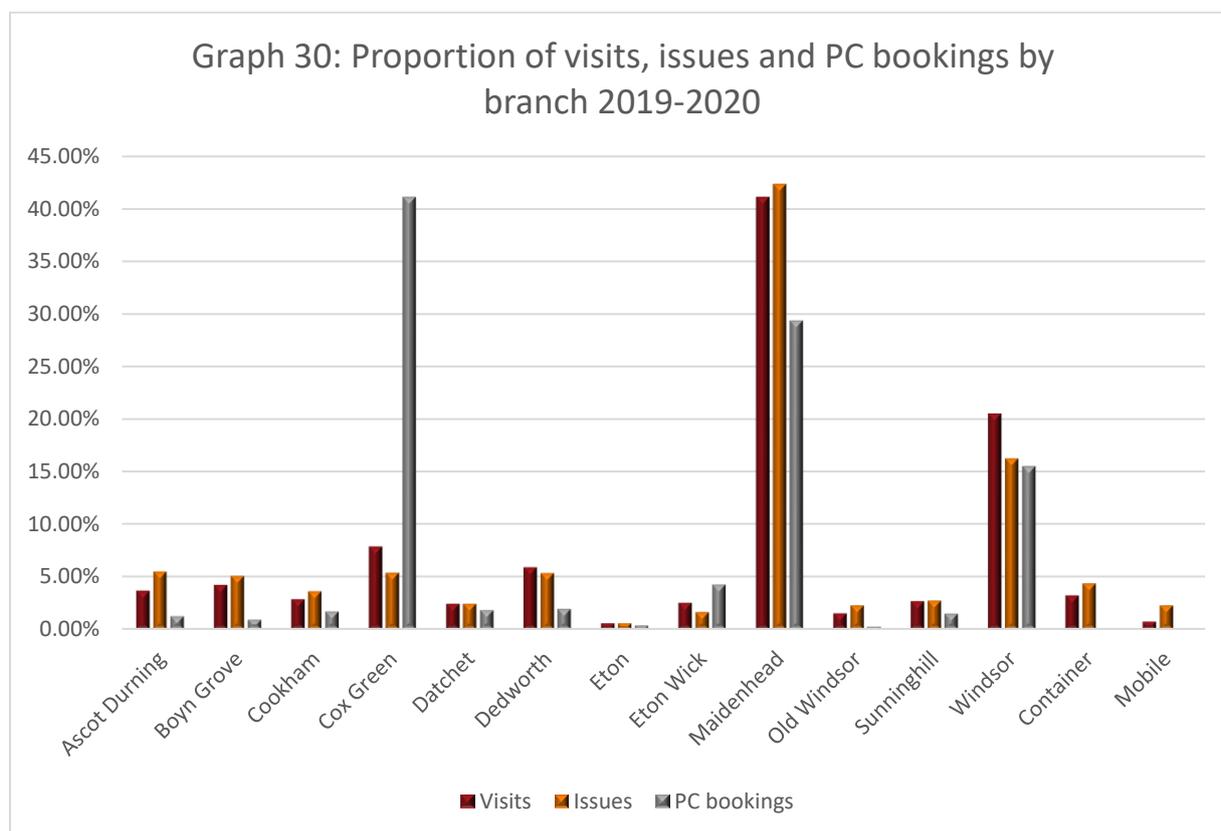
5. Analysis of library usage

This section analyses library usage by branch and looks at how well-matched library membership is to the population in the different wards of the borough and identifies gaps in provision to be addressed.

In 2019-20, the last financial year before the impact of Covid-19 was felt fully, a majority of library activity took place at two branches – Maidenhead and Windsor, reflecting the major centres of population in the area. Between them, they accounted for 61.7% of visits, 58.7% of issues and 44.9% of PC bookings.

Usage by branch

At that point, there were twelve static libraries in the borough, a mobile library and a container library which called at four locations each week. Eton library has subsequently closed and one of the locations for the container library withdrawn. Graph 30 shows the proportion of visits, issues and computer bookings at each branch, but excludes e-issues and renewals made online, and virtual visits.



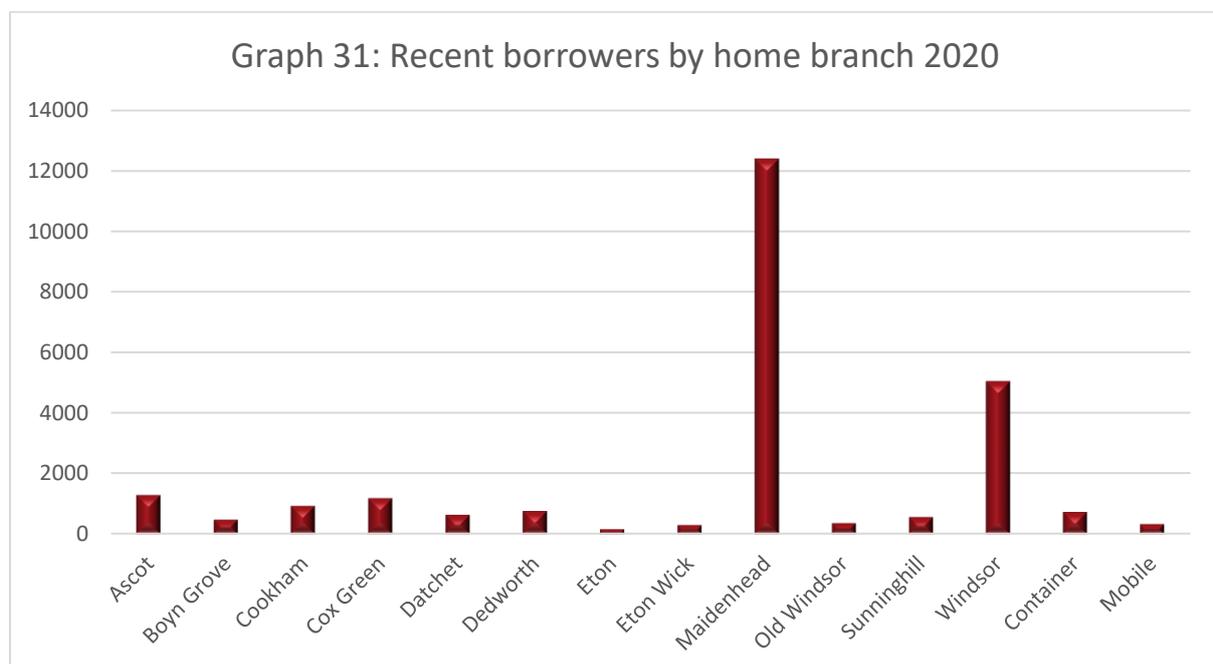
A striking feature is the degree of computer usage at Cox Green library.

Library membership is available by law to all who live, work or study in the area, and in Windsor and Maidenhead as in many other library authorities, it is not restricted to these categories. Of the total membership, there will be some who have not used the service for a long period but still remain members. This is normally addressed by using the twin

definitions of active borrowers and active members to ensure that only those actually making use of libraries are considered. Active borrowers are those people who have borrowed within the last year. However, the last year has been somewhat atypical and for that reason for the purposes of this section we have defined recent borrowers as those who have used the service within the last two years from the date of date capture – 12th March 2021²¹. This does mean that the number of people in this category is around 20% higher than the figures used in the CIPFA analysis.

Active members are all those who have borrowed, used a library computer or used the library Wi-Fi. Unfortunately, it is not possible for the library service to monitor Wi-Fi logins at any of the libraries as this service is provided corporately. This may have revealed some interesting patterns, as there is a general trend in libraries for customers increasingly to use their own devices when studying. Since library Wi-Fi data is not recorded, it is not possible to analyse active member statistics in this case.

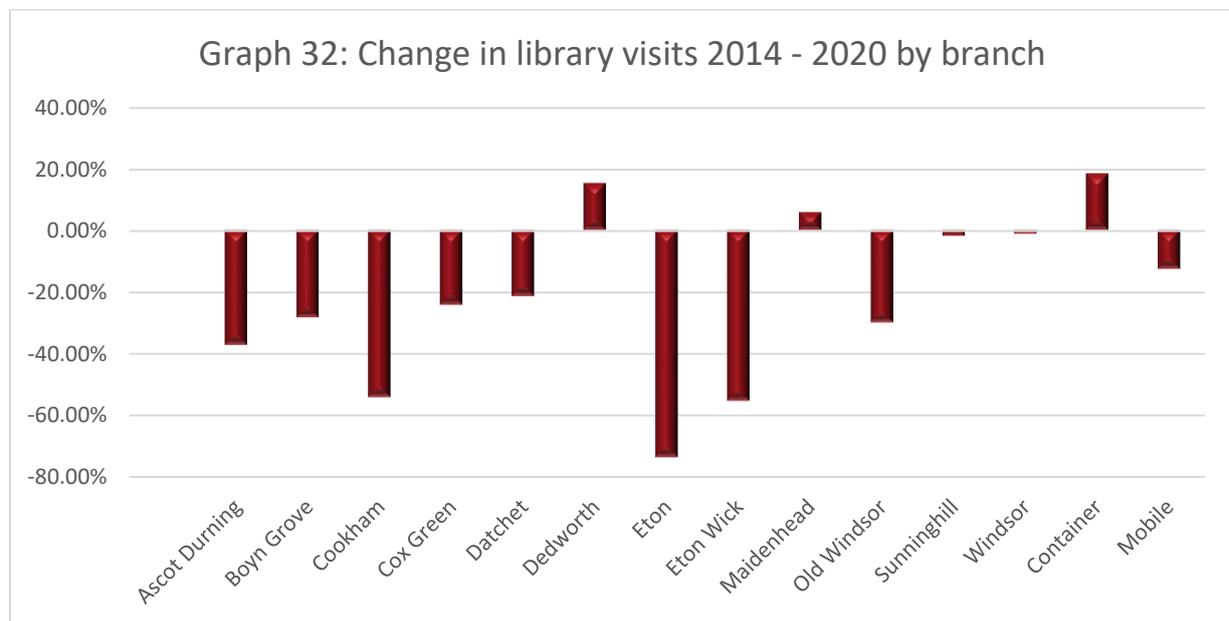
There were 25,250 recent borrowers in March 2021. Each member has a home branch allocated to them, normally the branch at which they joined the service or which they expected to use most often. Allocation to a branch does not mean that the member uses the branch all the time – many people use multiple branches and a change of address does not necessarily result in a change of home branch – but it is a good indicator of patterns of usage and does enable us to build a profile of use for that branch.



Graph 31 shows the home branches of recent borrowers. The degree to which membership is concentrated on the two busiest branches is more pronounced than the usage figures would suggest, with 69.2% having a home branch at either Maidenhead or Windsor.

²¹ Since this data is only available from the library computer system as a real time snapshot, it is not possible to recreate the data as it would have been at the end of March 2020.

Library visits in person declined by 11.2% in the five years leading up to 2020. This change was not uniform across all branches. This was not as severe as the decline in visits in England as a whole, which was 15.1%²².



Graph 32 shows that there were significant increases at Dedworth library and across the four container sites, but large decreases at Eton, Eton Wick and Cookham libraries.

We have so far analysed library membership by branch. This gives us some useful data on which library members gave as their home branch, but it is not possible to be certain that their home branch is actually the library that they use most. However, membership data also includes postcodes. This means that the place of residence of library members can be established and comparisons made to the demographics of that area to see how well-matched library membership is to the population in the different wards of the borough, and hence where there are gaps in provision that need to be addressed.

Although some postcode data may be out of date, WMLS’s record keeping in this respect is to be commended as only 0.01% of postcodes could not be identified, far less than many library authorities, and we can be sure of the validity of this data.

The council has a duty to provide a service to all who live, work or study in the borough and 1.1% of active users live outside the borough. Many of these live in adjoining areas – and had Reading, High Wycombe or Guildford postcodes, but there are a few users from further afield – for example, from Blackpool, Belfast and Chelmsford.

The wards in which library branches are located are shown in the table below

²² CIPFA public library service statistics

Library	Ward
Ascot Durning	Ascot & Sunninghill
Boyn Grove	Pinkneys Green, adjacent to Belmont and Boyn Hill
Cookham	Bisham and Cookham
Cox Green	Cox Green
Datchet	Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury
Dedworth	Dedworth & Clewer West, adjacent to Dedworth & Clewer East
Eton Wick	Eton & Castle
Maidenhead	St Mary's
Old Windsor	Old Windsor
Sunninghill	Ascot & Sunninghill
Windsor	Eton & Castle

The current container stops are in Sunningdale, Wraysbury, Holyport & Bray and Furze Platt.

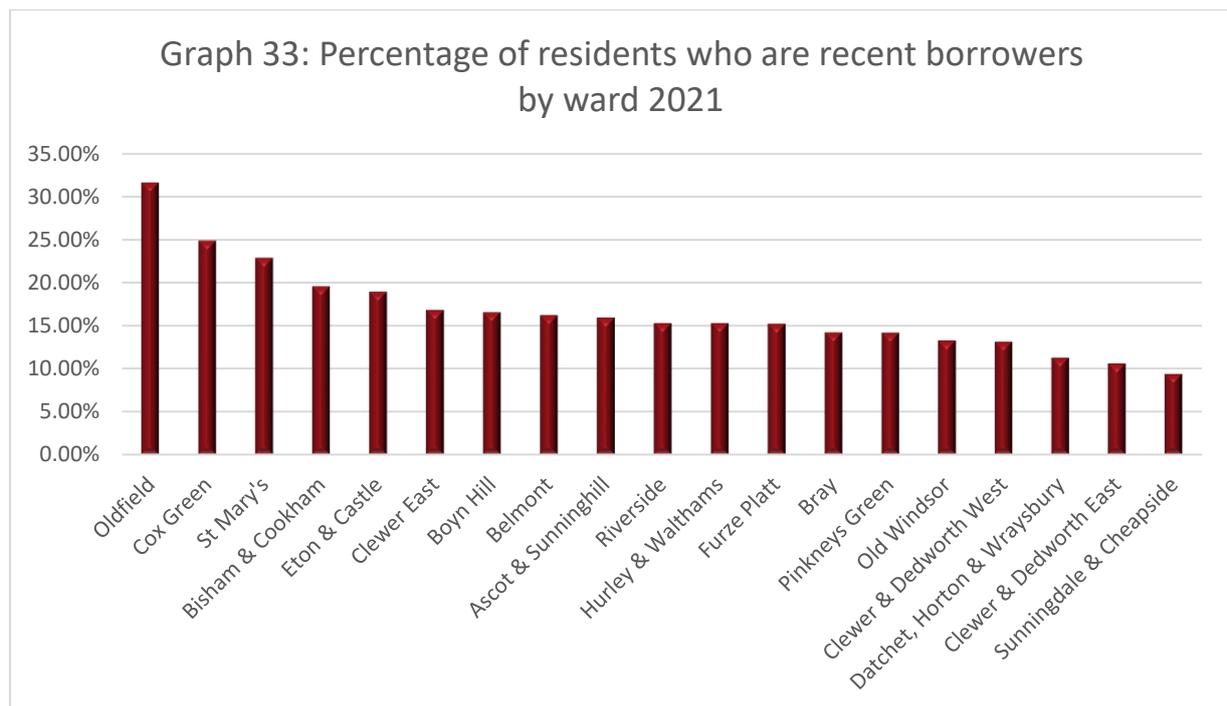
As we have mentioned above, analysis by home branch has its limitations – it does not present the full picture of patterns of usage, as borrowers may use more than one library, and their nominated home branch may not actually be the one that they use most frequently. Library usage may be related less to place of residence and more to the place where people work or study, do their shopping or even have friends and relatives. However, an analysis of the home branches nominated most frequently by recent borrowers in each ward does provide a useful analysis when this is borne in mind. The table below shows this, with the percentage of recent borrowers in that ward using particular libraries shown in brackets.

Ward	Most popular home branch	Second most popular home branch	Third most popular home branch
Ascot & Sunninghill	Ascot Durning (53%)	Sunninghill (24%)	Maidenhead (10%)
Belmont	Maidenhead (89%)	Cox Green (2%)	Cookham (1%)
Bisham & Cookham	Cookham (56%)	Maidenhead (39%)	Windsor (2%)
Boyn Hill	Maidenhead (83%)	Boyn Grove (13%)	Windsor (1%)
Bray	Maidenhead (68%)	Windsor (11%)	Holyport Container (9%)
Clewer & Dedworth East	Windsor (55%)	Dedworth (26%)	Maidenhead (14%)
Clewer & Dedworth West	Windsor (54%)	Dedworth (32%)	Maidenhead (10%)
Clewer East	Windsor (81%)	Maidenhead (8%)	Dedworth (7%)
Cox Green	Cox Green (52%)	Maidenhead (46%)	Windsor (1%)
Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury	Datchet (49%)	Windsor (25%)	Maidenhead (11%)
Eton & Castle	Windsor (68%)	Eton Wick (10%)	Maidenhead (10%)
Furze Platt	Maidenhead (91%)	Furze Platt Container (2%)	Boyn Grove (2%)
Hurley & Walthams	Maidenhead (66%)	Windsor (11%)	Cox Green (6%)
Old Windsor	Windsor (58%)	Old Windsor (30%)	Maidenhead (8%)
Oldfield	Maidenhead (86%)	Cookham (3%)	Cox Green (2%)
Pinkneys Green	Maidenhead (86%)	Boyn Grove (10%)	Windsor (1%)
Riverside	Maidenhead (92%)	Cookham (5%)	Windsor (1%)
St Mary's	Maidenhead (87%)	Windsor (5%)	Mobile (1%)
Sunningdale & Cheapside	Sunningdale Container (41%)	Ascot Durning (25%)	Sunninghill (3%)

Recent borrowers in nine wards most frequently nominated Maidenhead library as their home branch, and in five wards nominated Windsor. Ascot Durning, Cookham, Cox Green, Datchet and Sunningdale Container were the most frequently nominated in the wards in which the respective libraries are located. Dedworth and Old Windsor, whilst not the most frequently nominated in any ward, had significant proportions of nominations in the wards closest to the libraries.

Library uptake by ward

Using the postcode data, we can examine where recent borrowers live, regardless of which branches that they use.



Graph 33 shows the percentage of residents within each ward who are recent borrowers at any library in the borough. There is a great variation between wards. This is not explained fully by proximity to a library, although the wards that are closest to the two busiest libraries tend to have higher levels of uptake than those further away.

There is also no obvious link to deprivation in this pattern. Some of the more deprived wards such as Boyn Hill have relatively high library uptake, others like Clewer & Dedworth East have lower uptake. It must be remembered that the data presented in graph 33 only relates to people who have borrowed from the library. There will also be other library users in all wards who use the libraries, but do not borrow. As we have referred to above, it has not been possible to obtain this data in WMLS, but our experience elsewhere suggests that the uptake of non-borrowing library use is higher in areas of relative deprivation close to library branches.

Library services also ask customers to provide information about themselves when they become members of the library service. In WMLS customers are asked about their gender,

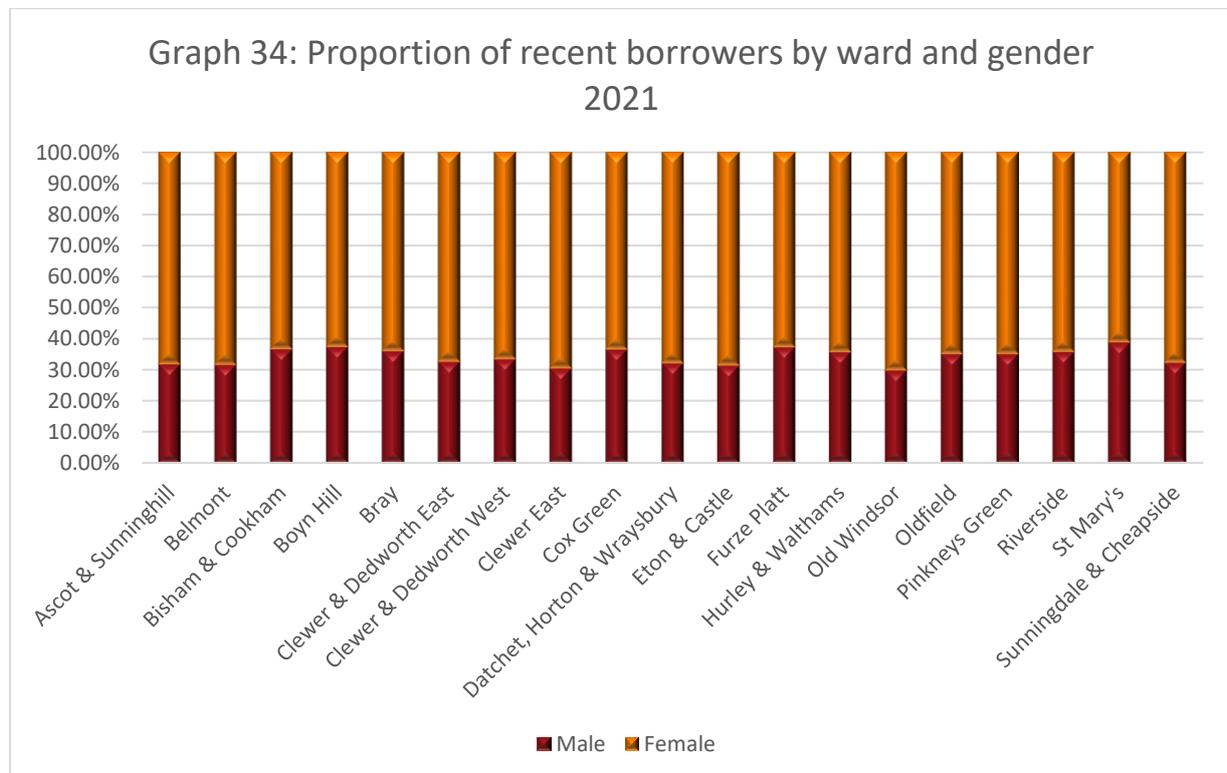
age and ethnicity. It is therefore possible to build up a picture of library users within each ward. We have been provided with anonymised data by WMLS for this purpose. However, library members may elect not to provide some or all of the data requested; in Windsor and Maidenhead these proportions are significant and so the picture is far from complete.

Gender

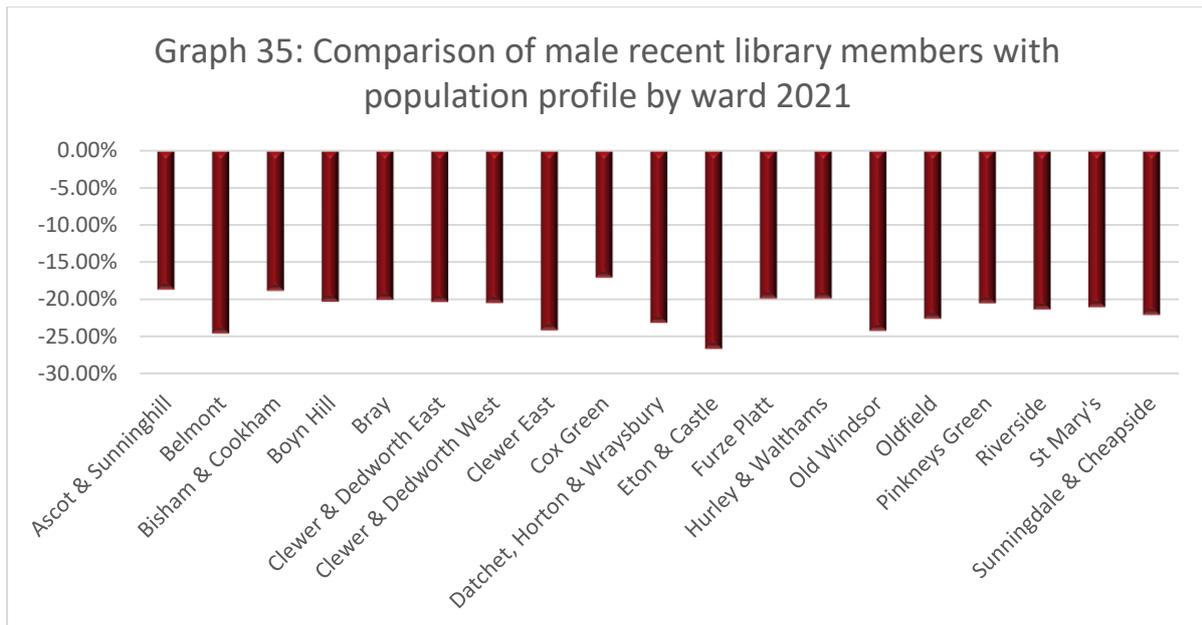
Amongst recent borrowers across the borough, 54% stated that they were female, 28% male and 18% did not provide a gender. A considerably higher proportion of females being borrowers is not unusual in library services across the country. In our experience, the gender imbalance is less marked when library use for other purposes such as internet access is taken into account, but we do not have that data for WMLS so we cannot be sure that this is the case here.

The Public Library User Survey (PLUS) is an elective survey of visitors to libraries most recently conducted for adults over one week in 2016; there were 1,872 respondents. This also includes demographic data, although we cannot be certain that respondents were representative of library users as a whole. It does however capture information on non-borrowers. 70% of respondents were female, 27% were male and the remainder declined to answer. This broadly supports the data from the recent borrowers.

Graph 34 shows the variations by ward for those recent borrowers that did provide a gender.



We can now compare these figures to the population at large using the data in section 4. To do this we have compared the percentage of recent borrowers in each ward with the percentage of males within the same ward. This is shown in graph 35 below.



As is to be expected from the borough wide figures, there are significant under-representations of males in every ward. This is particularly pronounced in Eton & Castle (although this may be partly accounted for by the significant military presence there), Belmont and Old Windsor wards. In Cox Green ward, where the library is adjacent to a secondary school, the under-representation is much lower.

As with all comparisons we make to the population demographics, these findings must be treated with some caution due to the number of non-respondents in the library data.

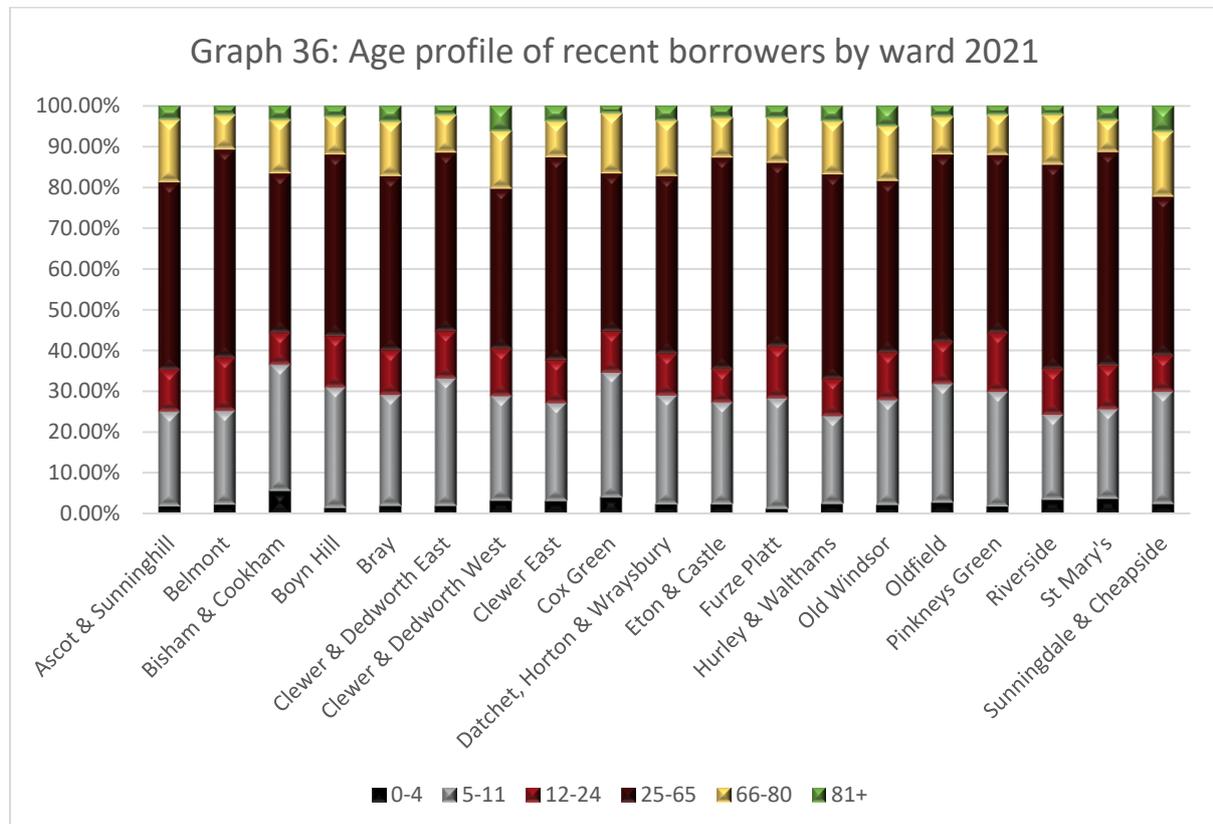
Age

Across the borough, the age ranges of recent borrowers is shown the table below

Age range	Number	Percent
0 – 4	562	2.2
5 – 11	5544	22.0
12 – 24	2284	9.0
25 – 65	9831	39.0
66 – 80	2249	9.7
81+	686	2.7
Not provided	3885	15.4

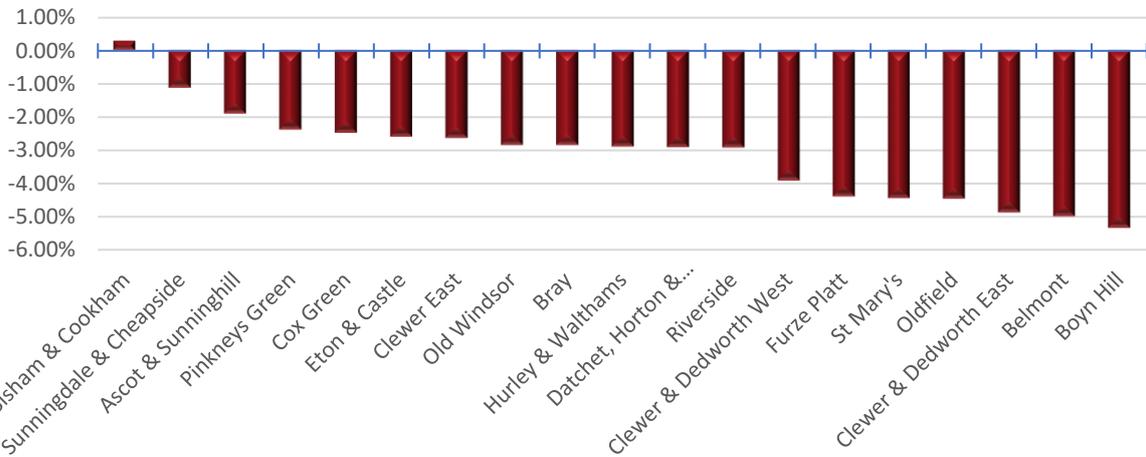
Once again, a significant proportion of recent borrowers did not provide data, and since the PLUS survey only included people aged over 17, we cannot validate this data with the PLUS survey results.

Graph 36 shows the age breakdown of recent borrowers by ward for those who did provide an age.



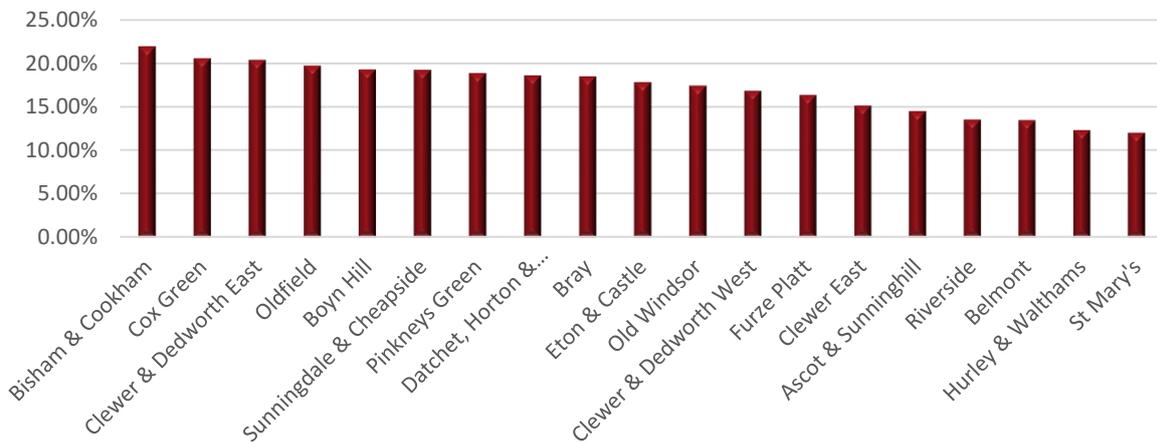
We can compare these figures to the population at large using the same methodology as we did for gender.

Graph 37: Comparison of recent library members aged 0 - 4 with population profile by ward 2021



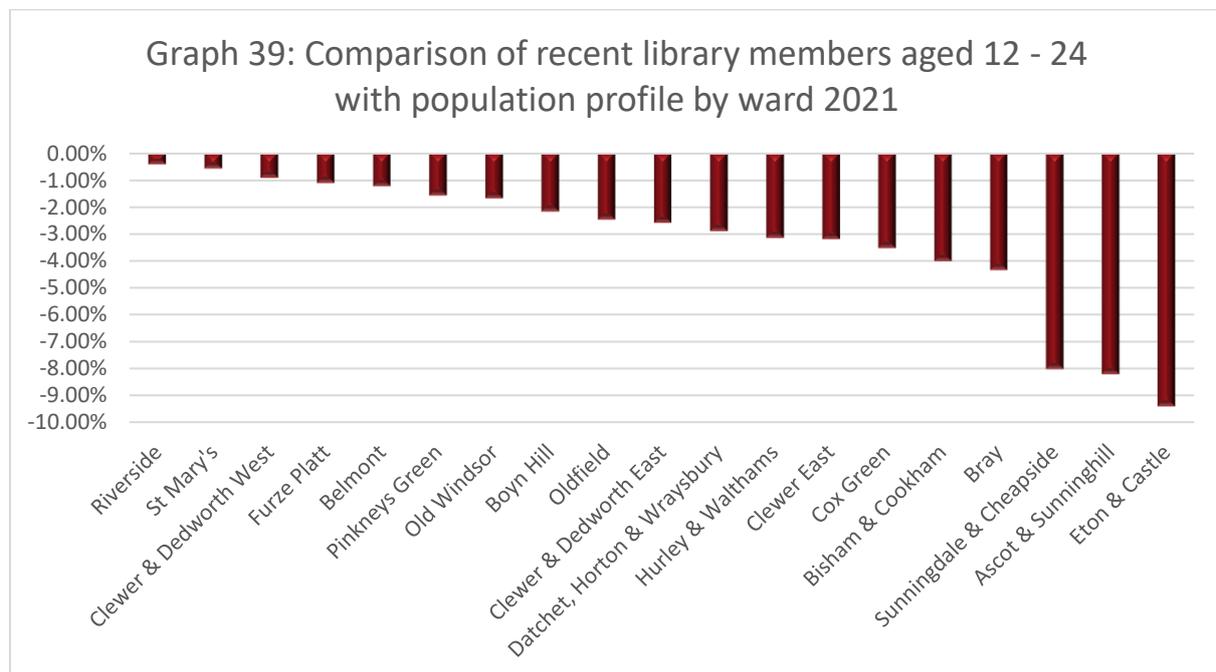
The age group 0 - 4 is under-represented amongst recent borrowers in all wards except Bisham & Cookham. Under-representation is to be expected partly because children do not join the library service at birth (although some authorities offer this to all new parents²³), and partly because parents may borrow on behalf of their children using their own library accounts. However, it is notable that some of the greatest degrees of under-representation occur in the most deprived wards.

Graph 38: Comparison of recent library members aged 5 - 11 with population profile by ward 2021

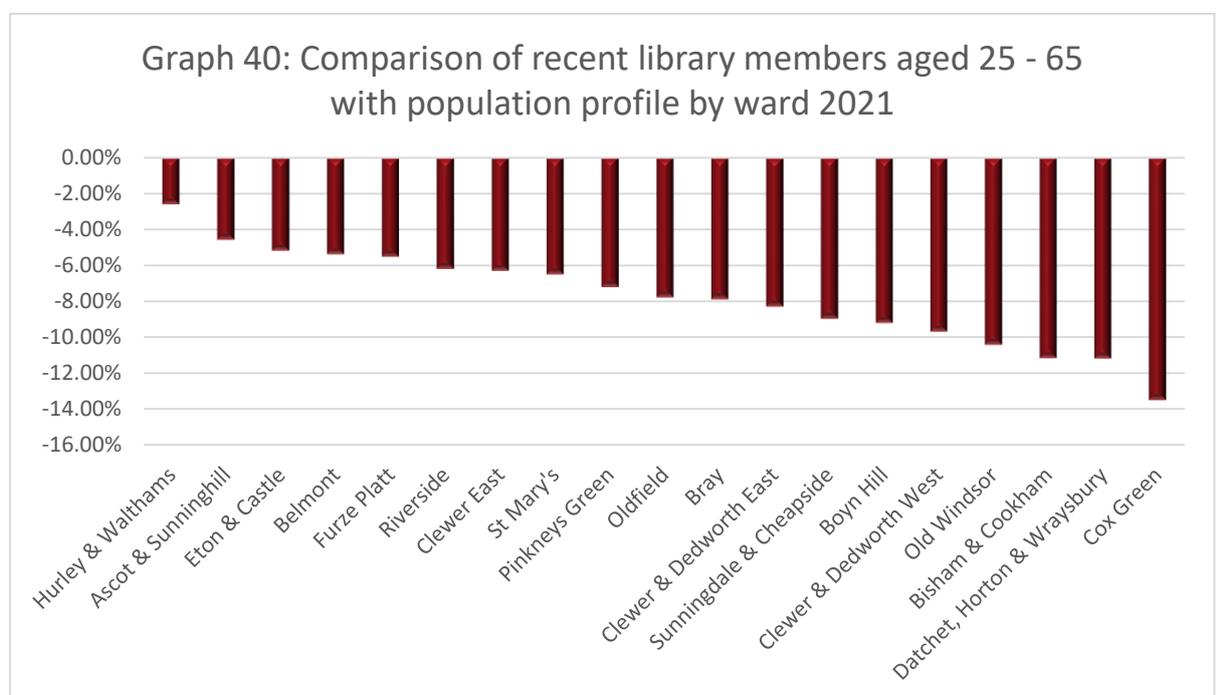


²³ The Automatic Library Card service takes place for all Reception age children rather than babies in WMLS

In comparison, the age group 5 – 11 is very well represented in the community. In this case, there is a less obvious link to deprivation, although Clewer & Dedworth East and Boyn Hill, both relatively deprived areas, have higher uptakes.

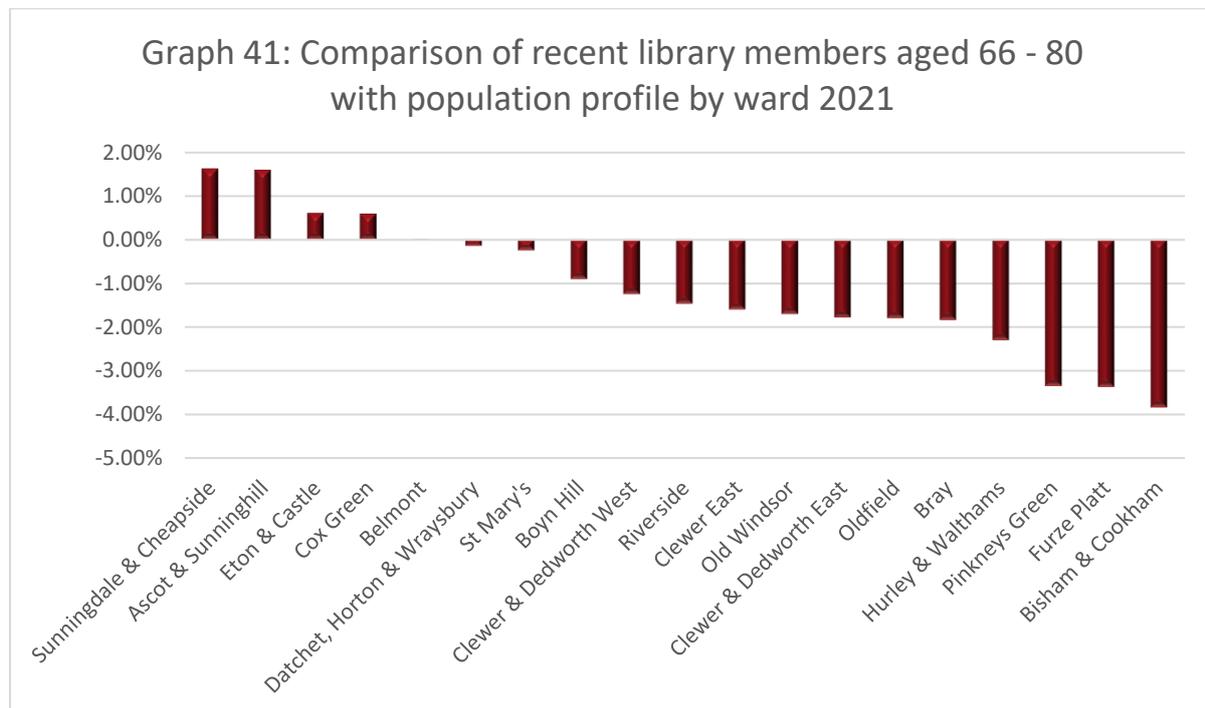


Nationally, library usership tends to fall during the later teen years and remains low throughout the 20 - 30 age bracket. In WMLS, this trend is less apparent. There is no obvious link to either deprivation or proximity to a library.

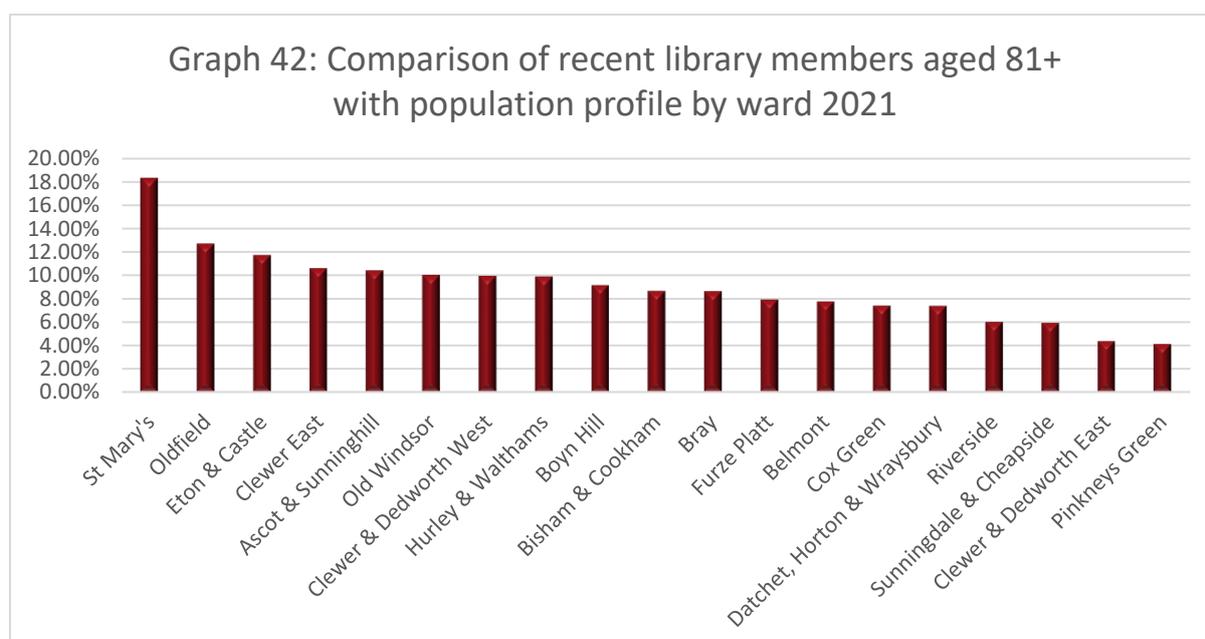


Library usage amongst those in the 25 -65 age group tends to be relatively low nationally. There are considerable variations between wards, and again without strong linkages to

deprivation or proximity to a library. People in this age group are more likely to be in employment and may have limited time to visit a library during the working day.



Nationally, library usage increases in the age group 66 – 80. In Windsor and Maidenhead, recent borrowers approximately match the profile of the borough with variations of between +1.5% and -4% within wards. Some wards at a distance from a library such as Hurley & Walthams, Bray and Furze Platt have a greater degree on under-representation within this age group, perhaps due to difficulties with transport.



In the oldest age group, it is often the case that library usage declines due to infirmity and difficulty in travel. This is not the case in WMLS. In all wards, on the data that we have, those aged over 80 are well represented within the population. This is particularly the case in the wards closest to the two large libraries, but there is over-representation in all wards.

We must again caveat the findings on age by the fact that we do not have complete data, and we do not know whether those who chose not to provide data are more prevalent in any particular age group. Nevertheless, the patterns that we have identified are likely to have some validity.

Ethnicity

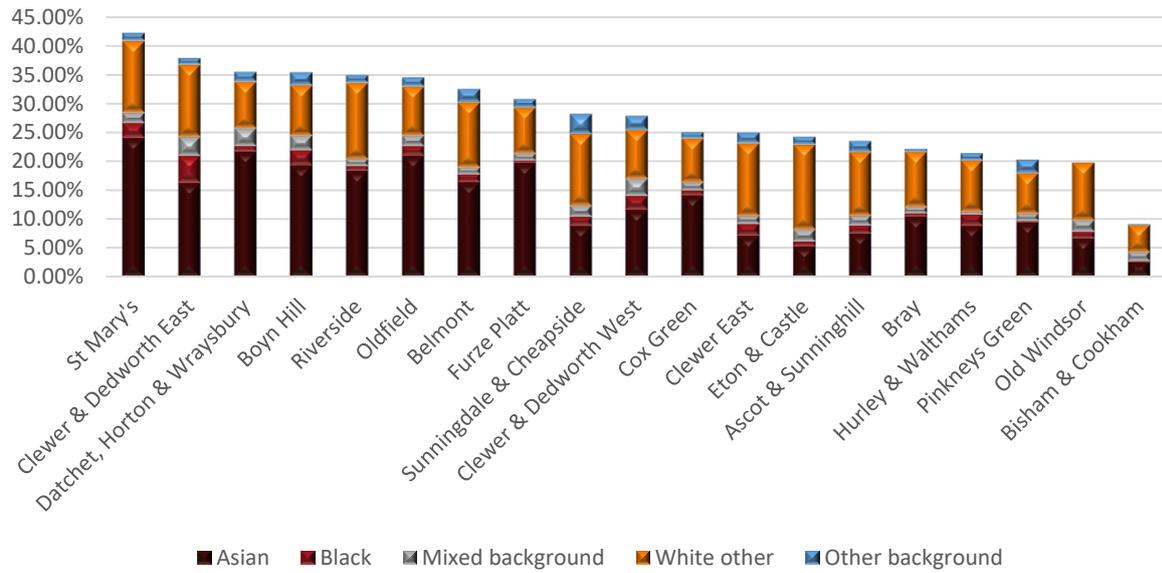
Nationally, library users are more reluctant to provide information on their ethnic background and in Windsor and Maidenhead, 61.1% of recent borrowers did not do so. However, in the PLUS survey, which only included adults, 89% of respondents provided an ethnic identity.

The borough wide results are shown in the table below. Ethnic group	All recent borrowers	Recent borrowers providing an ethnic identity	All PLUS respondents	PLUS respondents providing an ethnic identity
Asian	5.2%	13.3%	6.8%	7.6%
Black	0.6%	1.4%	2.0%	2.3%
Mixed heritage	0.7%	1.8%	1.3%	1.5%
White British	30.0%	72.0%	70.0%	78.3%
White other background	4.0%	10.1%	8.4%	9.5%
Other background	0.6%	1.5%	0.8%	0.9%
Did not provide an ethnic identity	61.1%	-	10.8%	-

Whilst we cannot be sure that respondents to the PLUS survey were representative of library users as a whole, there is a broad comparability between the two sets of figures.

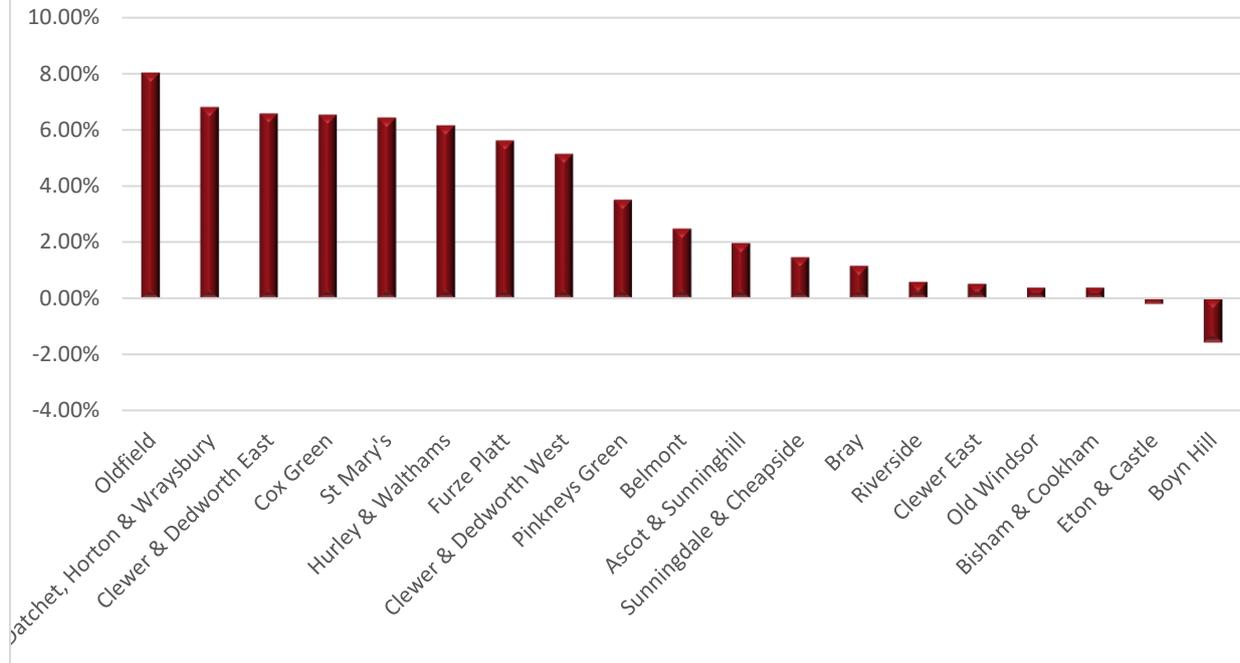
Using the figures from the recent borrowers, we can produce an analysis of the ethnic composition within each ward. Those people from minority groups are shown in

Graph 43: Library users by ward and ethnic group 2021



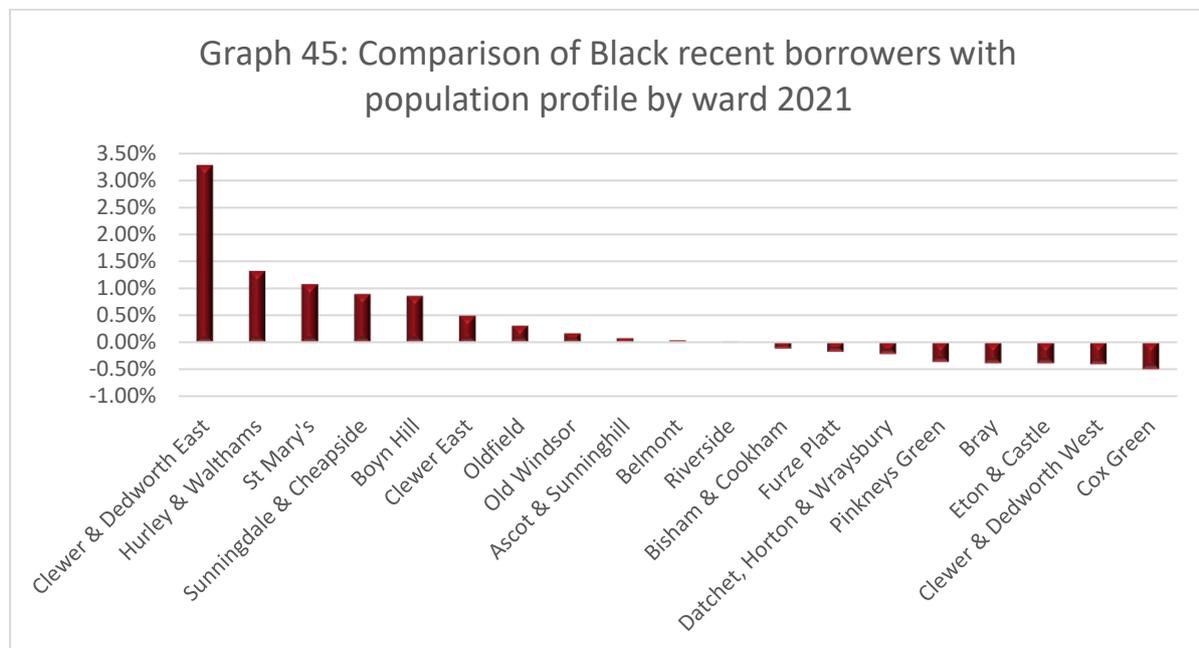
Taking this data, we can produce some analysis of representation of different ethnic groups in recent library users within each ward. However, this analysis must be approached with great caution. Firstly, this is calculated on data from only 39% of recent borrowers, and we do not know whether some ethnic groups provided more data than others; secondly, the comparative population figures are now ten years out of date and we know that the ethnic composition of the borough has changed since then; and thirdly, recent borrowers are not the same as the totality of library users. That said, we present the data below.

Graph 44: Comparison of recent borrowers of Asian heritage with population profile by ward 2021

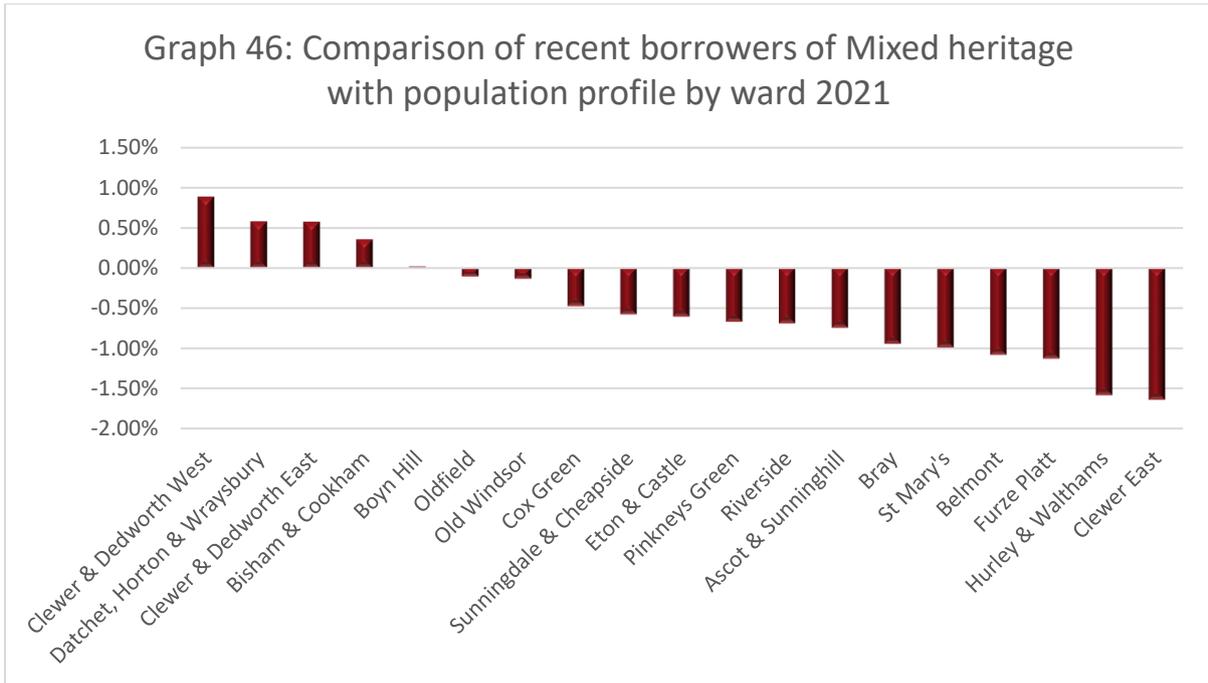


Graph 44 suggests that people from an Asian background are well represented amongst library users in all wards except Boyn Hill. This pattern is partially explained by the change in the population profile of the borough since 2011 identified in section 3, as people from an Asian background now form a greater proportion of the borough's population than in 2011.

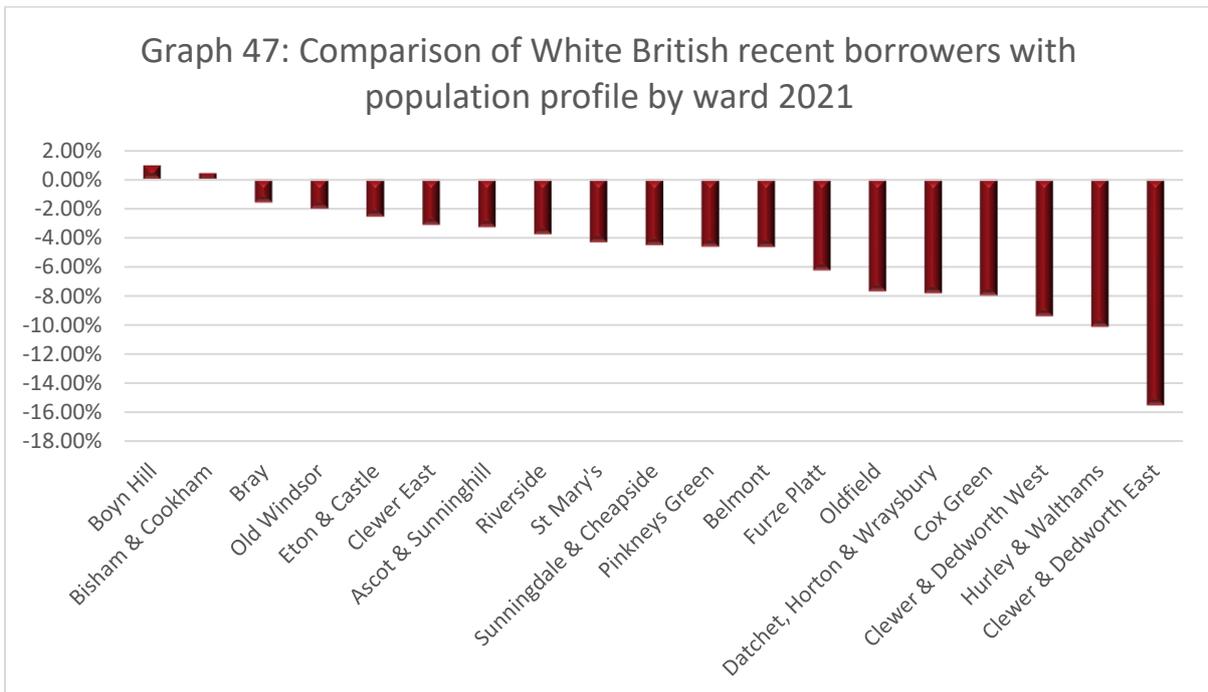
Graph 45: Comparison of Black recent borrowers with population profile by ward 2021



Graph 45 suggests that Black recent borrowers are well represented in Clewer & Dedworth East in particular, and elsewhere broadly match the population profile of the ward.

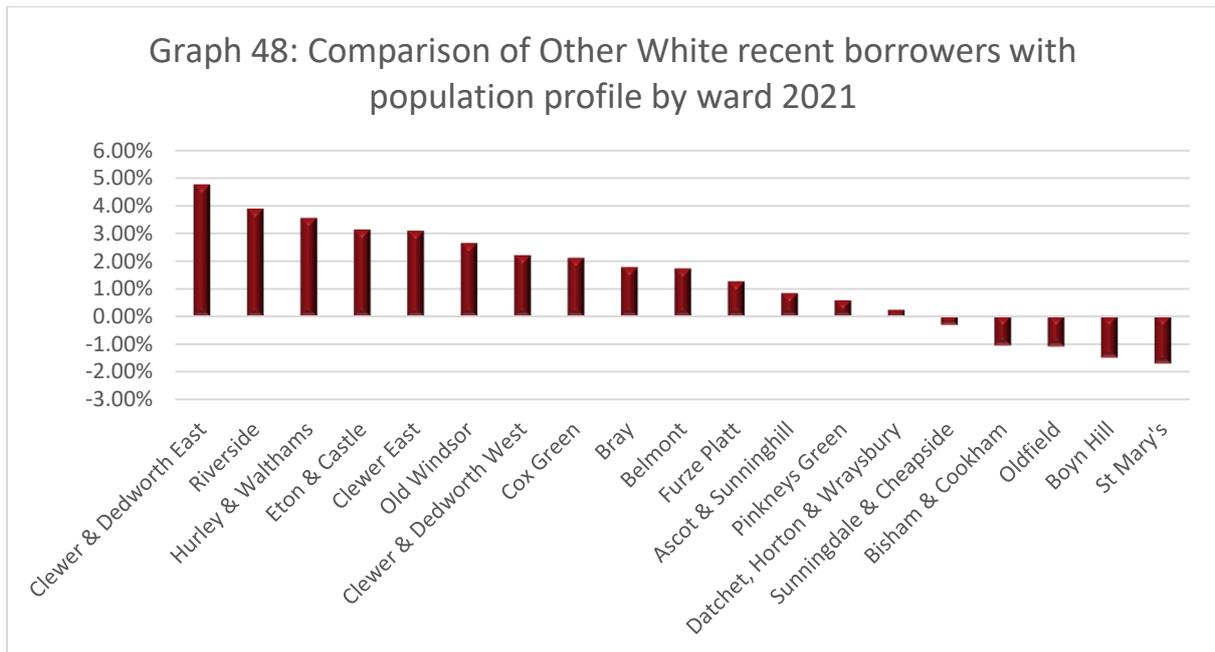


Graph 46 suggests that people of Mixed heritage are slightly under-represented in most wards, but well represented in the area closest to Dedworth library and in Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury and Bisham & Cookham wards.

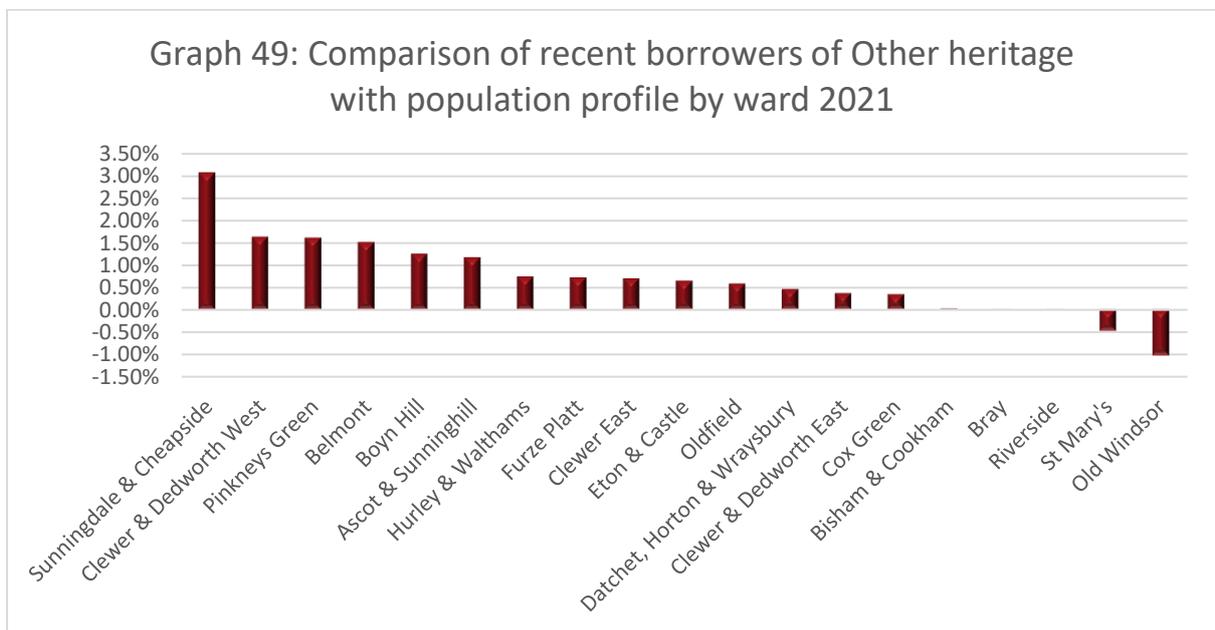


Graph 47 suggests that White British recent borrowers are under-represented in all wards except Boyn Hill and Bisham & Cookham. This pattern of under-representation within this group is one that we have observed elsewhere, especially in ethnically diverse communities. This pattern is particularly pronounced in the wards close to Dedworth library, and in Hurley & Walthams. This pattern is partially explained by the change in the population profile of

the borough since 2011 identified in section 3, as people from a White British background now form a lower proportion of the borough's population than in 2011.



Graph 48 suggests that people from Other White backgrounds are generally well represented in most wards, although less well in parts of Maidenhead.



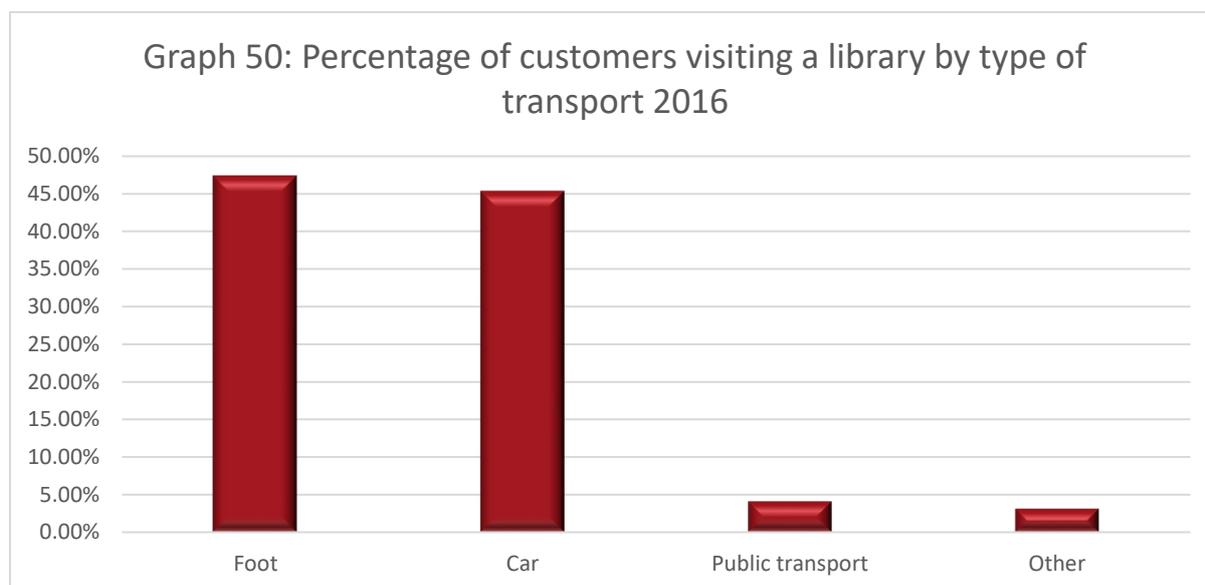
Graph 49 suggests that people from other ethnic backgrounds are well represented in most wards, although this group has seen a proportionately high increase across the borough population in the period 2011 – 2017, and this pattern may be explained partly by this factor.

Whilst drawing firm conclusions from the data that we have on ethnicity is not possible for the reasons explained above, it does appear that people from ethnic minority groups are generally well represented amongst recent borrowers across the borough and very well in particular areas, especially the two wards closest to Dedworth library.

6. Transport linkages

Understanding how customers reach libraries is important in planning future service delivery. We have seen that, prior to the pandemic, about one third of visits to WMLS were virtual and two thirds physical, and that about one sixth of issues were electronic. This does mean that a majority of customer interactions with the library service relied on a physical visit.

The 2016 PLUS survey of adult library visitors asked respondents how they had arrived at the library on the day of their visit. Of the 92% who gave an answer, 47% arrived on foot, 45% by car, 4% by public transport and the remainder reached the library by bicycle or other means.



The results in graph 50 only represent a sample week and only include responses from adults choosing to complete a survey. We can see from the data that the response rates were not uniform across the borough with some areas, notably Eton & Castle, Ascot & Sunninghill and Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury providing high levels of return and a number of wards where no responses gave a postcode in that ward. This data is therefore indicative rather than absolute.

We do not have any recent data on how under 18s travel to a WMLS library, but in this age group there is likely to be higher proportions of foot and public transport travel than for adults.

The transport network

The principal settlements in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are Maidenhead (with a population of about 60,000), Windsor including Clewer and Dedworth (35,000), Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale (18,000), the area between Datchet and Wraysbury (10,000), Old Windsor (7,000) and Cookham (6,000). The remainder of the borough (14,000) is largely rural.

The railway network in the borough is unusual in that there are no direct linkages from the north of the borough to the south. During the day, there are twice hourly services from Datchet, Sunnymeads and Wraybury stations to Windsor, and there is a twice hourly service and outside peak hours involving one change from Windsor to Maidenhead, but these services use different stations in Windsor and are not connected. There is an hourly railway service from Maidenhead to Cookham. Although there are stations at Ascot and Sunningdale, it is not possible to reach either Windsor or Maidenhead without a lengthy journey.

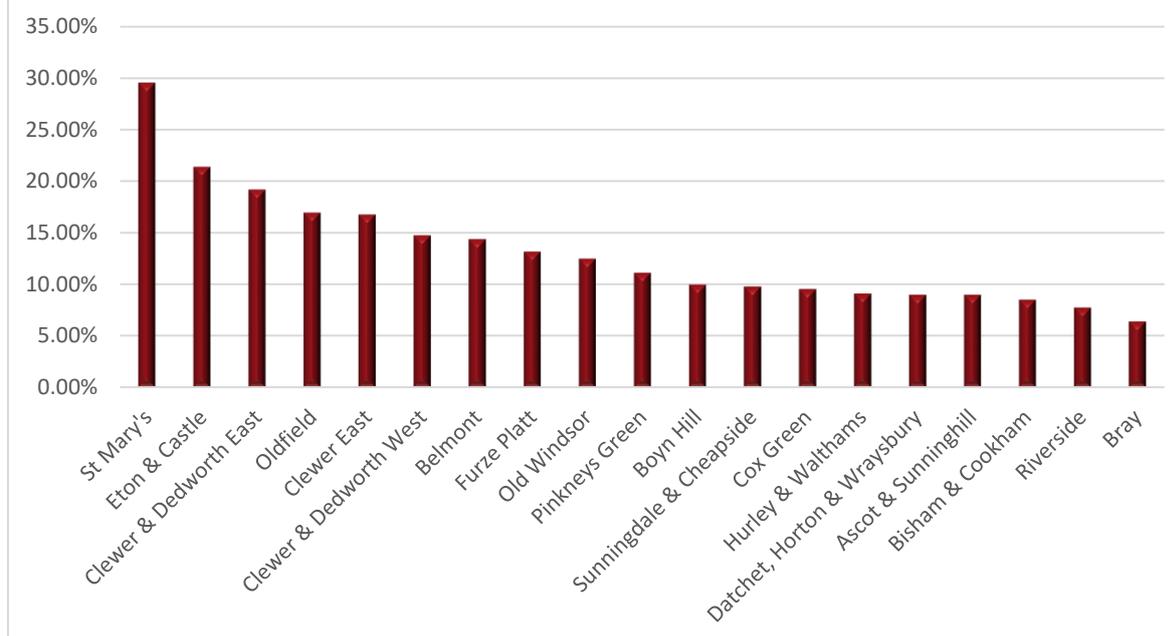
Buses run on a more frequent basis. There are hourly buses between Maidenhead and Windsor serving Bray, Holyport and Dedworth and these are supplemented by a second service following a similar route which runs seven times a day. Two further routes run between Dedworth and Windsor, one hourly and one five times a day. There are two buses an hour between Windsor and Old Windsor, and seven buses a day between Windsor, Ascot and Sunninghill. An hourly bus links Cookham and Maidenhead. There are five urban bus routes linking various parts of Maidenhead with the town centre and operating at either hourly or half hourly intervals.

The remainder of the borough is served more infrequently – there are four buses a day between the Walthams and Shurlock Row and Maidenhead, and four between Eton Wick and Maidenhead. In addition to these, there are other buses that run occasionally, especially as school services, and routes which link parts of the borough to towns outside the borough.

Access to vehicles

Vehicle ownership in the borough is high, but there are areas where this is less so. The 2011 census is the most recent source of data on vehicle ownership at ward level, and the results of this are shown in graph 51. Unsurprisingly, urban areas tend to have lower rates of access to a vehicle, and there is also a possible link to deprivation.

Graph 51: Percentage of households without access to a vehicle by ward 2011



Library locations and travel times

Libraries in the borough are quite closely spaced, due to the density of population in the area. The distance by road from each static library to its nearest neighbouring library within the borough is shown in the table below.

Library	Nearest library	Distance by road (miles)
Ascot Durning	Sunninghill	1.6
Boyn Grove	Maidenhead	1.7
Cookham	Maidenhead	3.5
Cox Green	Boyn Grove	1.9
Datchet	Old Windsor	1.9
Dedworth	Windsor	1.9
Eton Wick	Datchet	3.3
Maidenhead	Boyn Grove	1.7
Old Windsor	Datchet	1.8
Sunninghill	Ascot Durning	1.6

Windsor	Dedworth	1.9
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There are a few areas of the borough which are closer to a library in another authority than to a WMLS static library, although these are generally served by the mobile library service. These are Hurley village (closer to Marlow library), Knowle Hill (Wargrave), Waltham St Lawrence (Twyford) and Shurlock Row (Wokingham). In addition, parts of Ascot which lie in Windsor and Maidenhead are closer to Bracknell Forest's Ascot Heath library.

In order to calculate travel times between libraries, we have used the Google Maps application with the time set for 11am on a Monday morning. Travel time by car between the static libraries in WMLS are shown below, with the shortest travel time highlighted in green.

	Ascot Durning	Boyn Grove	Cookham	Cox Green	Datchet	Dedworth
Ascot		22	28	22	14	12
Boyn Grove	22		18	5	20	14
Cookham	28	18		16	26	20
Cox Green	22	5	16		20	14
Datchet	14	20	26	20		10
Dedworth	12	14	20	14	10	
Eton Wick	18	14	18	16	9	12
Maidenhead	22	6	10	10	18	14
Old Windsor	12	18	24	18	4	8
Sunninghill	4	24	30	24	16	16
Windsor	12	18	24	18	8	8

	Maidenhead	Old Windsor	Sunninghill	Windsor
Ascot	22	12	4	12
Boyn Grove	6	18	24	18
Cookham	10	24	30	24
Cox Green	10	18	24	18
Datchet	18	4	16	8
Dedworth	14	8	16	8
Eton Wick	12	12	20	12

Maidenhead		16	22	16
Old Windsor	16		12	6
Sunninghill	22	12		14
Windsor	16	6	14	

Travel times by public transport tend to be much greater. These are shown in the tables below.

	Ascot Durning	Boyn Grove	Cookham	Cox Green	Datchet	Dedworth
Ascot		85	101	77	49	77
Boyn Grove	85		51	18	88	62
Cookham	101	51		48	107	106
Cox Green	77	18	48		117	88
Datchet	49	88	107	117		35
Dedworth	77	62	106	88	35	
Eton Wick	84	43	74	78	40	63
Maidenhead	67	23	23	27	73	42
Old Windsor	44	74	78	83	44	37
Sunninghill	10	100	116	115	74	98
Windsor	45	65	52	51	22	25

	Eton Wick	Maidenhead	Old Windsor	Sunninghill	Windsor
Ascot	84	67	44	10	45
Boyn Grove	43	23	74	100	65
Cookham	74	23	78	116	52
Cox Green	78	27	83	115	51
Datchet	40	73	44	74	22
Dedworth	63	42	37	98	25
Eton Wick		27	71	46	41
Maidenhead	27		71	103	42
Old Windsor	71	71		12	16
Sunninghill	46	103	12		40
Windsor	41	42	16	40	

What does this data tell us?

As we mentioned at the start of this section, it is important to take into account the way customers reach libraries when planning future service delivery. We have seen that, as far as we can tell, almost half of adults reach libraries on foot and nearly as many on by car. We believe that it is likely that the proportions of younger people reaching libraries by foot or public transport is higher than in adults. There is a fairly frequent public transport network linking the existing libraries, but few branches are within twenty minutes traveling time of their nearest neighbour although most are within ten minutes driving time.

The selection of which branch that individual library customers use is not simply a function of where they live. The branch used most may be because of proximity to work, study or shopping or it may be because of the facilities offered at that branch. From what we know about the residential addresses of recent borrowers and the predominance of physical visits to two libraries – Maidenhead and Windsor – we can be sure that at least a proportion of recent borrowers travel some distance to use a library and do not necessarily use the library closest to their home as much. We do not know whether this is true for people who use libraries for purposes other than borrowing because we do not have data on this group.

However, it is a reasonable assumption that a proportion of residents will find it difficult to travel distances to libraries and this is likely to be in those households without a vehicle and where income deprivation makes public transport unviable. For some, at least, increased distance to a library offering suitable facilities and opening times will be a disincentive to use.

7. Analysis of changes to patterns of usage during the period of the pandemic

The current pandemic has affected public libraries in the UK in a way unprecedented by any previous event in their history. From the beginning of the first national lockdown on 23rd March 2020, it was illegal for libraries to allow customer browsing, although collection and delivery of library material was allowed. This ban was removed on 15th June as the lockdown was gradually eased. During July, August and early September, cases of coronavirus dropped dramatically in the UK, and whilst patterns of behaviour did not return to normal, there was a general increase in activities involving social interaction across the country. With cases rising once again in the autumn, a second lockdown started on the 5th November and ran until 2nd December. During the second lockdown libraries were allowed to remain open for certain restricted purposes and once again collection and delivery was permitted. Cases rose rapidly in December and the current lockdown began on 6th January 2021. Similar restrictions applied to libraries as in the second national lockdown until 12th April when these were lifted.

In practice, as a precaution, some local authorities closed libraries earlier than they were required to by law and did not open all libraries even when permitted to do so, because of the decreased likelihood of physical visits at a time of national caution, the need to protect staff and a desire to prevent the spread of the disease.

Library services during the pandemic

Windsor and Maidenhead was amongst this group. All libraries closed on the 18th March 2020 and the majority have remained closed since. From July onwards, it was possible for customers to continue borrowing using web access to the library catalogue and to collect books or to have them delivered. From the 6th July, Maidenhead library reopened for select and collect services and the mobile library offered the same service. On 20th August the mobile service was extended to select and deliver. On 17th August Windsor library also opened for select and collect. From 7th September both Maidenhead and Windsor libraries were fully open. With the start of the second national lockdown on 5th November, these libraries reverted to click and collect only. This remained the situation, together with click and deliver services from the mobile library, until 12th April 2021 WMLS branches began to reopen; all were open by 4th May with the exception of Eton library and one of the four locations served by the container library.

Library visits

Unsurprisingly physical visits to WMLS were catastrophically affected by the changes wrought by the pandemic. Although the last few days of the financial year 2019-20 had been affected by the lockdown, there had been 656,133 physical visits in that year; in the following twelve months there were 48,859, a fall of 93%. Even when the two main libraries reopened between September and early November visits never exceeded 30% of the previous year.

Library issues

The impact on issues was much less striking. During the same period, overall issues declined from 731,001 to 422,914, a fall of 42%, which is much lower than the fall in physical visits.

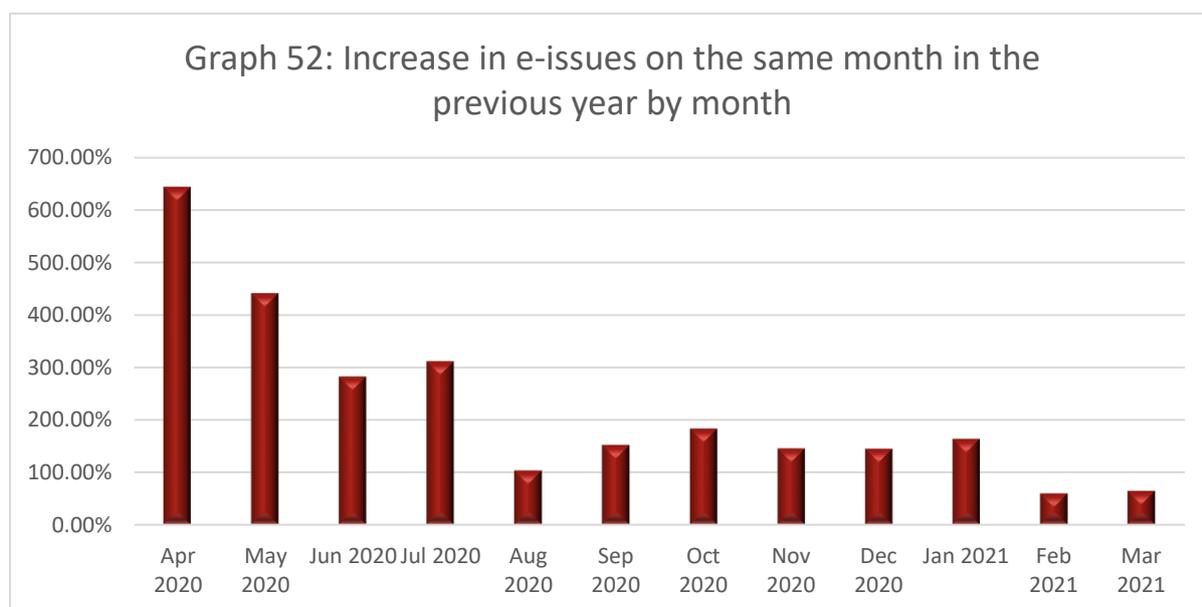
Of these, physical issues (that is those made in person at a library) fell from 503,612 to 95,702 and accounted for 22.6% of all issues in 2020-21 instead of 68.9% in the previous year. This was a reduction of 79%.

Online renewals of the same stock fell from 118,898 to 30,649, a fall of 74%, but this represented an increase in the proportion of all issues from 7.3% in 2019-20 to 16.3% in 2020-21. This is to be expected with the reduction in physical issues and the fact that loan periods were extended during lockdown.

E-books

The most striking change was in the use of e-books and resources. Issues of these grew from 106,662 to 296,336 during the period, an increase of 277%. WMLS's performance was considerably higher than the national figure of an increase of 146%²⁴; this may be due to the established number of e-book borrowers within the borough and the range of titles provided by WMLS. The proportion of electronic issues changed from 14.6% to 70.1%. During the lockdown, additional e-books, e-magazines and e-audio resources were added to library stock.

This change in borrowing patterns was most apparent at the beginning of the period. Not surprisingly, when comparisons on a month-by-month basis are made, physical and web issues fell most dramatically in the period from March to June 2020, and in June 2020 issues were 99.6% lower than in June 2019. Thereafter they recovered reaching a peak in October 2020 when issues were 45% of the previous October.

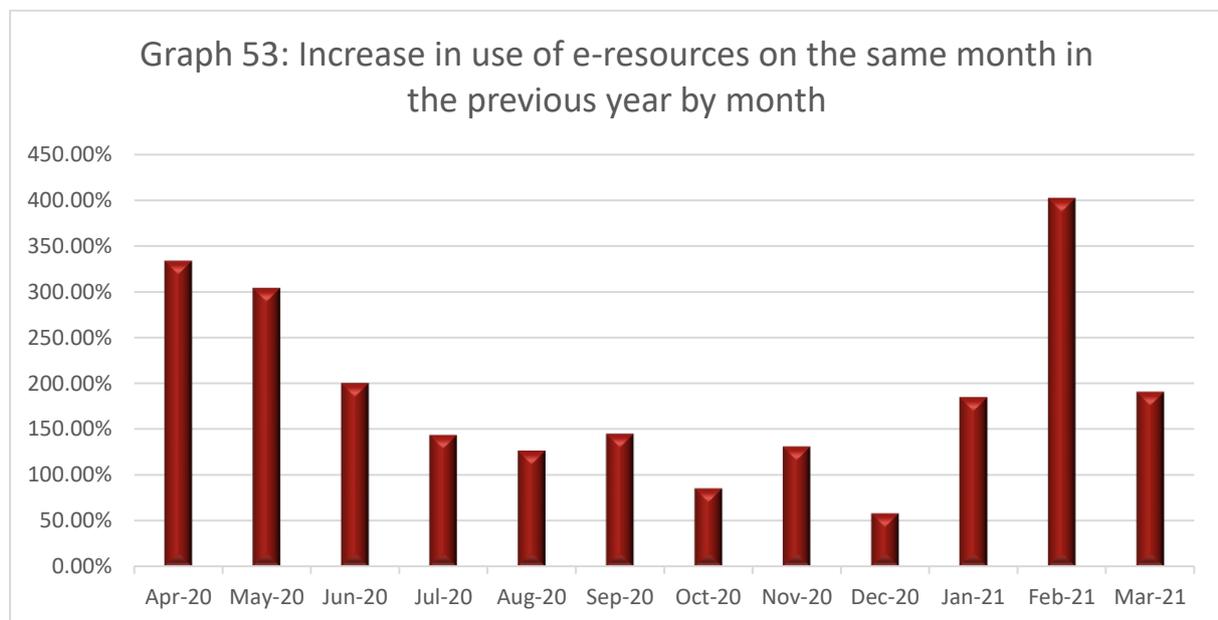


²⁴ <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-lockdown-connecting-communities-crisis>

Graph 52 shows the percentage increase of all e-issues by month when compared to the same month in the previous year. The greatest growth was during the first lockdown when all libraries were closed and when the greatest proportion of the population were not allowed to go to their workplace. With the easing of restrictions and the opening of libraries, this dropped considerably, but interestingly this pattern continued during both the second and the third lockdowns. Nevertheless, even in February 2021 when the change on the same month a year earlier was at its lowest, the increase was still 59%.

Electronic resources

WMLS also offers a wide range of online resources which library members can access without charge. These include Ancestry, the Oxford English Dictionary, theory driving tests and other reference sites. At the start of the first lockdown some of these were only available for use at library branches but most were made available from home during the period of the pandemic. Growth in the use of these exceeded even those of e-issues with an increase of 190% over the previous year to 28,550 transactions. The best performing resource was ancestry with an 1172% increase to 8,294 transactions.



However, the pattern of this increase was not the same as that for e-issues. Graph 53 shows the same strong increase during the first lockdown followed by lower increases from July to October, but with greater increases during both the second and the third lockdowns. A possible explanation for the difference between patterns of e-book and e-resource lending is that the range of e-books is limited in the UK, and that many textbooks and study aids available electronically are intended for the American market. It is also possible not all library customers have access to appropriate devices to use e-books.

With all the additional traffic online, virtual visits to the WMLS website increased by 133% on the previous year to 444,155 in 2020-21.

Other library activities

During the period of the pandemic WMLS developed a programme of 66 remote programmes events and activities which were delivered online. Some of these, for example Rhymetime, Storytime and Craft Videos, replaced regular face to face offers normally provided in the libraries. Many involved live interaction with members of the public, for example online quizzes, talks and forums, others brought in authors and poets. National and local events and programmes were celebrated and promoted, including the Summer Reading Challenge and Windsor Fringe Festival. Events were promoted through social media and often delivered through an online interactive platform. Several events attracted over 100 participants, most notably the celebration of World Book Day online where there was a total of 1,629 attendees at a series of author events.

Conclusions to be drawn from library activity during the pandemic

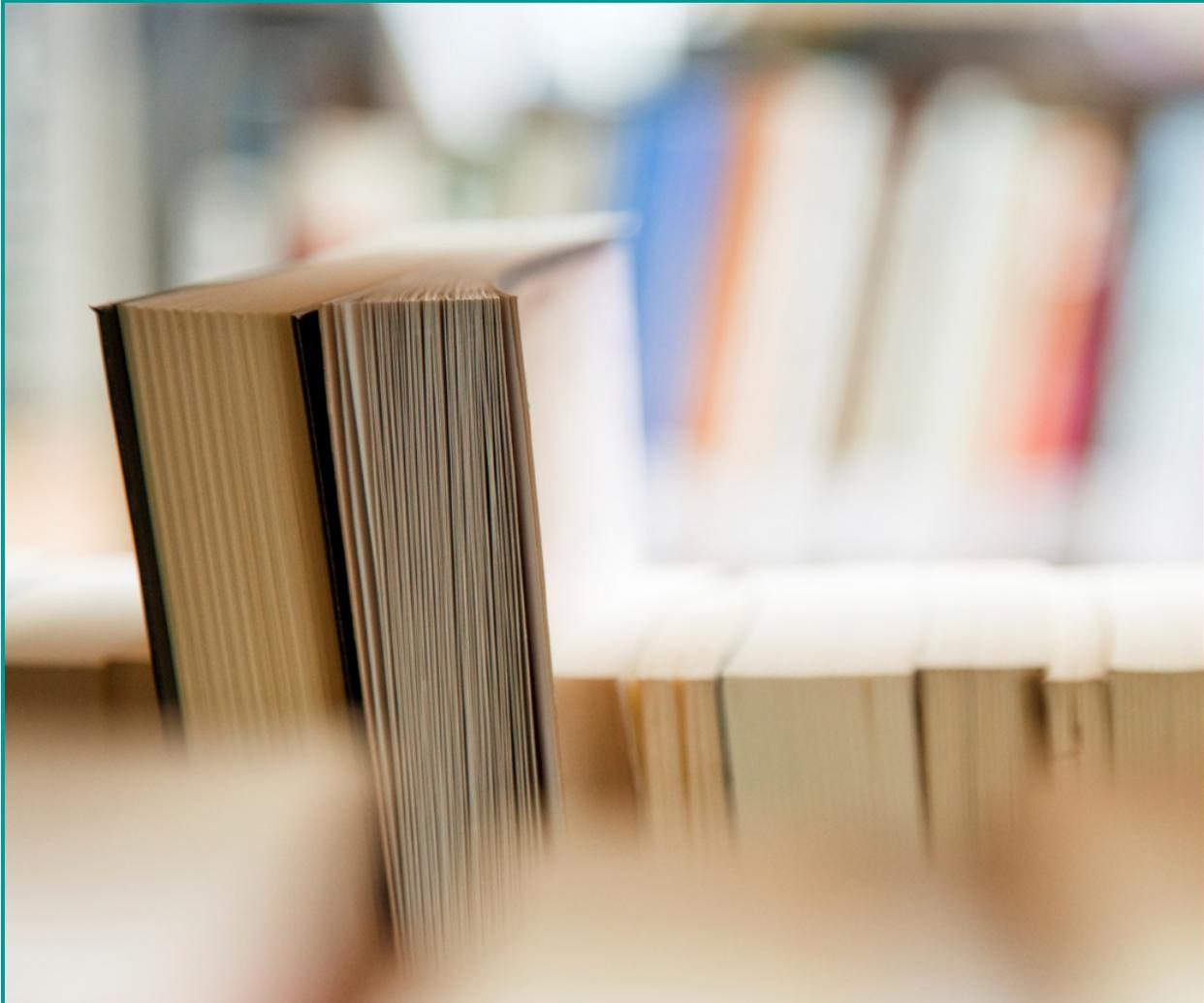
The remarkable growth in electronic issues demonstrates both their potential and limitations. E-issues certainly increased dramatically during 2020-21 but the level of growth was not maintained. Overall, issues were down by 42%, indicating that whilst e-books are a useful addition to the library offer, they cannot be a full substitute for physical lending.

The impressive range of online activities demonstrates the flexibility of the service, but such activities are staff intensive, and it is unlikely that they could be maintained at this level when normal face to face service is resumed fully.

8. Recommendations

This section sets out our recommendations on the basis of our research. From the data analysis and our conversations with you, we believe that the following will help you ensure that your service continues to meet the needs of its communities:

- **Ensure that areas of high need have adequate services.** Focus on wards with high levels of deprivation or other adverse facts, e.g., Oldfield, Boyn Hill, Clewer & Dedworth East. Consider targeting activities and events to encourage particular groups to use the library.
- **Address under-representation in audiences**
Our analysis shows that working aged white males are the most underrepresented group. This is a familiar statistic but also look at areas where there is significant underrepresentation in terms of overall uptake and by demographic characteristics. Plan your services to attract these groups.
- **Consider transport access when planning.** Some places have poor transport links (for example, Eton Wick). People living there without access to vehicles may find it difficult to travel.
- **Collect data for computer logins and Wi-Fi.** There are people using your libraries that do not borrow and it would be useful to find out who they are.
- **Match services provided to target audiences.** When planning future services, consider your target groups and their locations.
- **Ensure that the public and stakeholders help shape library service.** Continuous and meaningful engagement with your users (and non-users) is the key to understanding their needs.
- **Use more volunteers.** Our analysis showed that many comparator authorities use more volunteers in libraries than RBWM. As well as adding value to your day-to-day activities, volunteers can be powerful community advocates. Volunteering gives people work experience and confidence and can improve health and loneliness issues.
- **Improve the Public Computer Network** Library computers can be a lifeline for some, especially those needing to apply for jobs or benefits and fill in government forms.
- **Is there over provision in Ascot?** There are libraries at Ascot Durning and Sunninghill in RBWM, and at Ascot Heath in Bracknell Forest. Look at overall provision in the area and discuss possible mergers or alternatives with Bracknell Forest and how changes would affect residents.
- **Recognise the impact of Covid and the importance of physical visits as well as online.** Lockdown showed that whilst online transactions went up, overall issues and engagements went down. Visits to libraries fulfil many social benefits for all ages that cannot be replicated online. Look at national research on Covid and public libraries to find examples of how libraries are adapting to the new realities.
- **Consider how the library service relates to corporate objectives** and can contribute to meeting local priorities on health, education and employment. Partnerships with other council departments have already delivered substantial economies as well as bringing new audiences to libraries.



Library Transformation Strategy

2021-2025

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

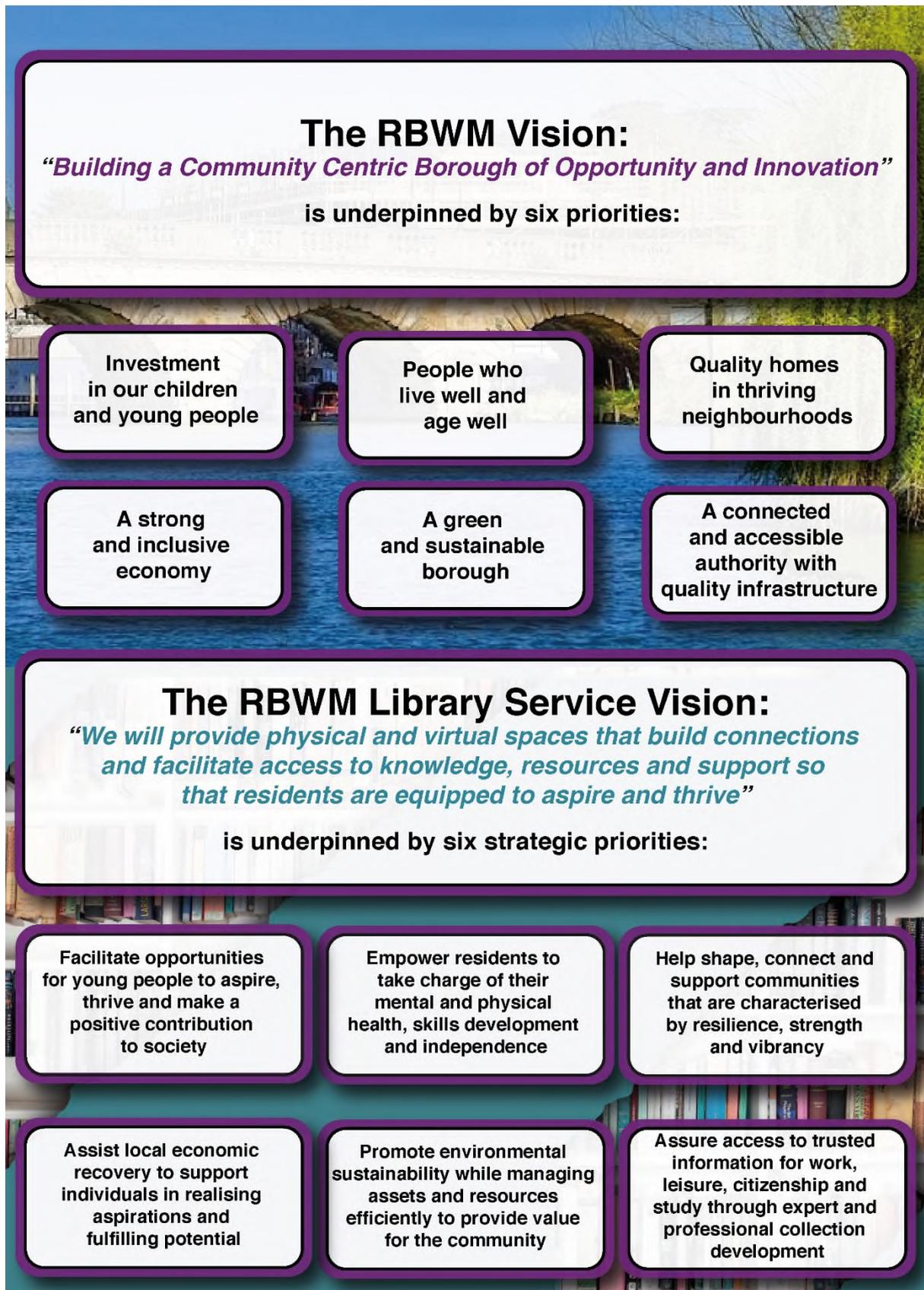
Library Transformation Strategy

2021-2025

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1. Vision and Strategic Priorities



2. Executive Summary (Deputy Leader of the Council)

This Library Transformation Strategy shows a strong, resilient and agile service adapting and changing to meet the demands of the community.

There are 11 library buildings across and in all corners of the Royal Borough in Ascot, Boyn Grove, Cookham, Cox Green, Datchet, Dedworth, Eton Wick, Maidenhead, Old Windsor, Sunninghill and Windsor.

Each one has its own identity and unique place in its community, whether it's next to a school, near shops or part of the Day Centre. The main libraries are in the centre of our two largest towns Windsor and Maidenhead. The buildings are the Royal Borough's presence and pivot to reach out to the community for many things such as literature, reference, mental health, economic assistance, digital and much more as well as a space that can be hired for activities bringing people together and into the libraries.

This strategy recognises how the libraries are evolving using their unique strength as a trusted provider of information and resources to be a critical part of the community.

The biggest resource are the staff, teams and volunteers who have incredible professional skills, empathy, a genuine desire to help and regularly adapt the service as needed. The teams will continue to look at diversity, need and technology to grow and shape the libraries.

Books are at the heart of the library and this is a key priority for the Royal Borough libraries so continually evolving and promoting literature and culture will be key to the success. Residents who are unable to visit physical library locations will continue to benefit from an enhanced Select and Deliver / Home Library Service which will ensure they have access to all the books they wish to read.

The Royal Borough sees its work with partners as being a key part of its future to support needs close to each location and tailor resources.

The Royal Borough aims for high quality, value for money and exceptional service for residents and partners. This strategy sets out the vision for 2021-2025.

Cllr Samantha Rayner

Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage, and Windsor

3. Introduction

- 3.1. A robust, objective and evidence-based Library Transformation Strategy (LTS) is required to help deliver corporate and community priorities through a Library Service that helps release the power and assets within communities to meet local need.
- 3.2. This strategy outlines how the library service will continue to adapt in an agile way to changing circumstances, opportunities and demands, and will assist councillors, senior officers, library professionals, stakeholders, communities and customers to understand the role that library services can play in delivering council and public service objectives, community priorities and place-shaping aspiration.
- 3.3. As demographic, technological and financial challenges increase so Councils must give communities more power to develop their own resilience and independence.
- 3.4. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Library Service has demonstrated that low cost, high impact support and expertise from trained library staff, has encouraged communities to develop and implement their own mitigations against isolation, disadvantage, and digital exclusion.
- 3.5. Evidence shows that this approach lowers costs in Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing, the NHS and other Public Services while empowering communities.¹
- 3.6. Councils remain statutorily responsible for overseeing and ensuring the delivery of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service² and are also responsible for supporting the overall health and well-being of their communities.
- 3.7. This strategy will promote books, digital resources, reading and literacy.



School Library Visit

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/The%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20benefits%20of%20public%20libraries.pdf>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75>

4. Background

- 4.1. The Royal Borough's Library Service initiated an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in 2013.
- 4.2. The aim of the new initiative was "*Volunteering that creates Opportunities*" and the objective was to "*Maintain and plan for a sustainable delivery of extended services offered by volunteers*".
- 4.3. To support the ABCD programme Library staff are trained to use NHS approved MECC (Making Every Contact Count) skills to encourage the people they interact with to come up with and implement their own solutions and changes in behaviour to effect a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.³
- 4.4. Up until the start of the Pandemic, more people visited libraries than attended Premier League football games, the cinema, and the top 10 UK tourist attractions combined. Maidenhead Library regularly had more than a thousand visits a day with residents using the versatile and flexible space to access a wide variety of information, resources, books, support and services.
- 4.5. Under 24s made up the largest demographic of library users prior to the pandemic. The 18-35 age group used library services more during the pandemic. This may be accounted for by the withdrawal of access to spaces for study or a safe space for young people to be. As soon as Windsor Library was permitted to open again bookings for study spaces were over-subscribed and young people had to be turned away.



Young People in Maidenhead Library

- 4.6. RBWM libraries are supported by a large cohort of volunteers, many of whom are young volunteers. During the consultation and engagement period many more residents stepped forward to offer their services to their communities through the library service. This support will be coordinated by a highly trained professional to ensure the best outcomes for communities.

³ <https://www.makeeverycontactcount.co.uk/>



Library Volunteer

4.7. Through libraries, partners also have recourse to significant reach into local communities, providing a cost-effective way to link capacity with need.

4.8. RBWM Library Partners include

- Age Concern
- DASH and the RBWM Domestic Abuse Coordinator
- Cards for Good Causes and other charities
- Public Health, Mental Health Recovery College and MIND
- The National Autistic Society
- RBWM Learning Disability and Dementia Support Teams
- Education, Schools, Children's Centres and CLASS (Community Learning),
- Broom Farm
- BookTrust and The Reading Agency,
- Braywick Rangers and Braywick Nursery,
- The Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Registrars
- Community Wardens and Thames Valley Police,
- Maidenhead Book Festival, Windsor Festival and Windsor Fringe,
- Economic Growth and Sustainability Services
- Family Friends
- Parish Councils and local Trusts
- A range of other organisations and groups who use library spaces for exercise classes, clubs and associations, hobbies, crafts, meeting spaces, after school activities and exhibitions.



Partnership working with Thames Valley Police at Dedworth Library

- 4.9. As well as access to books, information, sign-posting and digital support Royal Borough residents access library spaces in large numbers for study, social contact, community group exercise and council services support. Library staff are trained in the full range of Council Customer Services and can assist residents at every library location during all library opening hours.
- 4.10. There is strong evidence that during the pandemic quality interaction, reach, support, and access to physical resources have been significantly limited and have curtailed the library service's ability to deliver a curated social experience and a wider range of benefits to communities. This was particularly felt in relation to opportunities for structured and unstructured forms of interaction and engagement, study space and access to browsing facilities.

5. Legal and Statutory Requirements

- 5.1. Library services must comply with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and other legal obligations, including the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). In providing this service, a library authority must secure adequate stocks sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements of adults and children; and encourage adults and children to make full use of the library service⁴.
- 5.2. When making changes to the Library Service, equality analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on those with protected characteristics.
- 5.3. Library services must be delivered efficiently, within the resources available.
- 5.4. If a representation is made to the Secretary of State about a library service not meeting its legal obligations, the library authority will be required to demonstrate that, in drawing up its strategy, it had
- consulted with local communities alongside assessing their needs using robust evidence to make its judgements about local need
 - considered a range of options to sustain library service provision in its area
 - undertaken a rigorous analysis and assessment of the potential impact of its proposals
 - considered accessibility, quality, availability, and sustainability.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75>

6. The future of RBWM Library Provision

6.1. Statutory Library Provision in the Royal Borough will consist of:

- Three Town Centre Libraries open 7 days per week: Maidenhead Library, Windsor Library and Ascot Library
- Three dual use community libraries linked to local schools: Cox Green Library, Cookham Library and Dedworth Library.
- Five Community Libraries at Old Windsor, Boyn Grove, Datchet, Sunninghill and Eton Wick.
- A Container Library at Wraysbury.
- The establishment of pop-up libraries in Sunningdale, Holyport and Furze Platt will be explored with potential partners.
- The service will work with partners to secure financial support to fund library opening hours.
- A digital offer that includes e-books, magazines, newspapers, films, music and training courses.
- An online reference service that includes Genealogy, Business Support and a wide range of reference resources.
- A programme of activity both digital and physical to reflect the four national universal offers to support Reading, Information & Digital, Culture & Creativity and Health & Wellbeing
- A commitment, as expressly laid out in the legislation, to encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and to provide advice as to its use, making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required. A Communication and Engagement Plan will be developed and implemented to ensure this element of the Service is prioritised.
- A commitment, as expressly laid out in the legislation, to securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children who live, work or study in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

7. Key priorities to be delivered by RBWM Libraries

7.1. *Traditional Library Services*

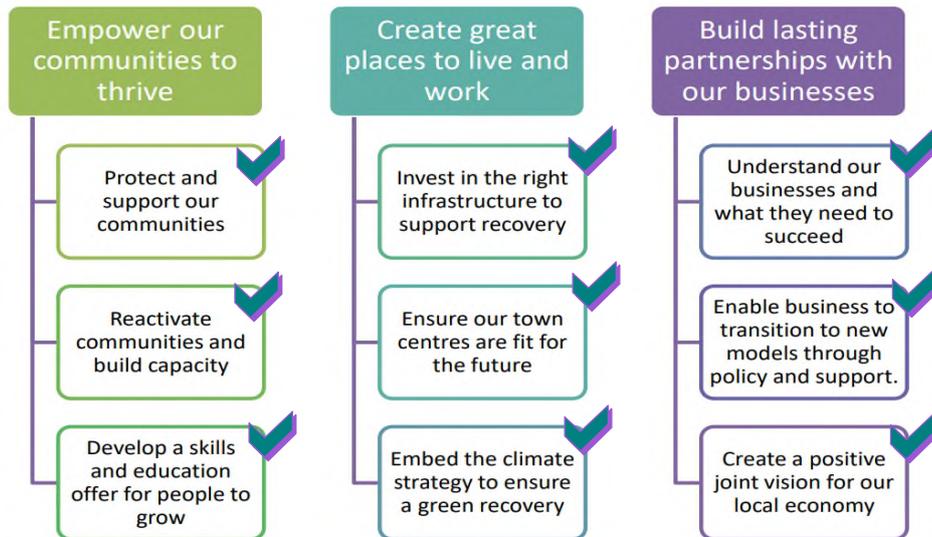
- Customers will visit RBWM Libraries to browse and borrow books.
- Requests, reservations and Inter Library Loans will be provided.
- The HouseBound and “Select and Deliver” Service will be expanded to ensure vulnerable residents and those in more remote communities have access to books, human contact, and digital support.

- Provision of e-resources (e-mags, e-books, e-newspapers, films, music, training options and online reference tools) will be carefully curated to ensure quality, range, and value for money.
- IT and digital support will be provided including Public PCs, Hublets, Wifi, Printing, scanning, and copying facilities.
- Virtual Reality, Interactive and Immersive Experiences, Library Minecraft, Lego Robotics, Coding Clubs, and similar activities will continue to be delivered.
- IT training, drop-in sessions and digital support from volunteers and staff will be expanded.
- Digital Devices for Loan, Synaptic Tablets for residents with visual impairment and a Library App will be introduced.
- The library volunteer and ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) programme will be directed to emerging priorities. Young volunteers will continue to be supported.
- The Inclusions Service will be delivered in a targeted manner, alongside partners, to ensure all Royal Borough children and vulnerable adults have access to reading for enjoyment.
- Curation and professional stock development, including maintenance and development of a high-quality Local Studies collection will ensure resources are accessible to all residents.
- The Green Agenda will run through all library initiatives.
- The RBWM Library Offer will be underpinned by the Libraries Connected Universal Offers.⁵
- Libraries will continue to be place based – in the locality with resources and spaces attuned to the unique needs of individual communities designed to create spaces that are fully flexible to accommodate changing requirements during the annual cycle and to allow the building to host cultural events, exhibitions and other community activity.

7.2. *Economic Recovery, Business Support, Training and Skills Development*

- The Service will work closely with the Economic Recovery Team to support the borough recovery strategy by developing the online information offer.
- It will focus on young people who have been adversely affected in their education and employment prospects.
- It will build on partnerships with Berkshire Opportunities, Job Centre, Kickstart, Further Education Centres and schools, to create signposting pathways to help young people navigate available resources effectively.
- It will develop the RBWM jobs, skills and business support webpages, adding links to Library business resources, jobs and skills resources and library online resources

⁵ <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers>



 = Library Transformation Strategy Work Strands delivering against these renewal priorities

7.3. *Developing Library Staff as Community Builders and Connectors to promote health and wellbeing, support aspiration and reduce dependency*

- Library staff will ensure exclusion is avoided, safeguarding is robust, health and safety regimes are compliant and efficient, signposting is effective and individual privacy is protected.
- Staff will be trained in Making Every Contact Count (MECC), Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), Domestic Abuse, Sensory and Autism Awareness and Safeguarding as well as professional library and information skills.
- They will help residents navigate access to digital and physical information sources and books to enrich lives, reduce dependency and encourage good decision-making.
- With assistance from trained library staff support services will emerge from within the local community to meet the unique needs of that community (“what the community cares enough about to do something about”).

7.4. *Reading Development Schools (RDS) Service:*

- The Reading Development Schools Service is a charged for professional library service that makes thousands of books and Topic Boxes available to Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead schools with unlimited options to exchange titles.
- The Service currently engages with over 40 schools. Just under half of this number subscribe to the RDS Service.
- Schools can access reading group and other special collections, online resource sessions and reader development sessions related to the Library Universal Offers.

- Demand for the Royal Borough's Reading Development Schools Service has increased as children and parents turn to books to support mental and emotional health as well as academic achievement after significant disruption to young people's education because of the pandemic.



Library Service Summer Reading Challenge supporting literacy

7.5. *Digital Reading Development Offer (DRD Offer)*

- The DRD Offer has been extended to meet increasing demand due to the pandemic.
- A programme of Author and Mental Health digital events for young people is underway.
- Social media has been a key element of this offer which includes Library Instagram and YouTube accounts as well as Facebook and Twitter, with thousands of followers.
- The e-lending offer has also been extended through expanding current collections and investing in new collections from different suppliers.
- The Service will continue to try to meet the increase in demand for digital library services but the significantly higher cost of e-books and digital reference resources, prohibitive licencing restrictions and the very limited range of titles to choose from does not make it possible to meet statutory requirements through a primarily digital offer. This is a challenge for the sector that is being brought to Government attention via appropriate Government Select Committees.
- It must also be noted that the digital offer is not a replacement for the physical library. There is no evidence that digital library services can deal effectively across the board with equality, loneliness, accessibility and mental health challenges or that it complies fully with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) or Public Library legislation. However, it must be acknowledged that there are many people in the community who benefit significantly from digital library services.
- A blended offer is required to fulfil the Council's obligations to its residents and its statutory duties.

8. RBWM's "Best Practice" Community Library Model

- 8.1. RBWM Libraries are community hubs that operate as a gateway to physical and digital information and are used by a range of partners to bring people together, giving them access to a greater breadth and depth of services and support
- 8.2. The community library model requires one single part-time staff member on site for a limited number of hours per week to facilitate and coordinate the range of activities and support services delivered by volunteers, charities and other organisations while helping residents navigate access to digital and physical information sources and books.



Library Volunteer assisting customer

- 8.3. The aim in redesigning the overall library service is to continue to grow its capacity and resilience within the community while ensuring partners who use library spaces contribute to running costs of the buildings to support a sustainable library delivery model.
- 8.4. Library spaces will be available to the community 7 days a week during and outside of opening hours.
- 8.5. Each community library will provide statutory library services for all published opening hours with a trained library officer on site to support volunteers, deal with complex enquiries, manage the building, take escalations and ensure safeguarding is robust.
- 8.6. There is strong evidence that the Community Library approach boosts communities' resilience and independence. As a trusted partner within the community the Community Library delivers high quality services and value for money while keeping residents safe and supporting their aspirations

9. Outcomes, Impact and Key Performance Indicators

- 9.1. The LTS has been developed through an extensive consultation and engagement process with stakeholders, partners, residents, and library customers.
- 9.2. The pandemic has had and will continue to have an impact on library services and all services will be delivered in a covid-safe way.
- 9.3. The primary aim of the Library Transformation Strategy is to deliver sustainable and resilient library services that support Corporate and Community priorities in the most cost-effective way possible. To achieve this the RBWM Library Service will
- support cultural and creative enrichment
 - support increased reading and literacy
 - improve digital access and digital literacy
 - help everyone achieve their full potential
 - contribute to healthier and happier lives
 - contribute to greater prosperity
 - help build stronger, more resilient communities
- 9.4. The impact of the above will be measured in terms of
- Audience participation and feedback
 - Feedback from partners in Education and Achieving for Children, partners who work with vulnerable and digitally excluded residents, the Economic Recovery Team and community engagement partners
 - Feedback from residents in terms of their health and wellbeing
 - Numbers of volunteers and number of volunteer hours delivered via the service
 - Transactions: Loans and visits to libraries (both physical and digital)



Children's craft activity

10. Next Steps

- 10.1. Develop Local Partnerships to add community asset value to serviced locations.
- 10.2. Develop and implement a Communications and Engagement Plan to promote library services effectively.
- 10.3. Raise awareness amongst Elected Members, partners, senior leaders and residents of the opportunities to make use of library spaces during and outside of library opening hours.
- 10.4. Take advantage of library design which has ensured maximum flexibility to facilitate multiple potential uses of the space for cultural activities, educational services, health and wellbeing events, community support and volunteering opportunities.
- 10.5. Make every effort to ensure the digital offer is inclusive to all and fully blended with the physical offer.
- 10.6. Work to ensure digital inclusion continues to be a priority across the service.
- 10.7. Develop the Housebound / Select and Deliver service to ensure all residents are able to access library services regardless of mobility, disability, distance from a static library or any other barrier.
- 10.8. Agree Service Level Agreements with all funders to ensure the libraries remain viable and sustainable and that the agreed objectives of funders are measured and met.
- 10.9. Explore pop-up library options within communities, initially focused on Holyport, Sunningdale and Furze Platt communities, and elsewhere should demand arise.
- 10.10. Review all Library Policies and Standards with a view to updating them in line with the Library Transformation Strategy
- 10.11. Work with the Disability and Inclusions Forum to ensure no residents are negatively impacted during the implementation of the Strategy.

Online Resources

www.rbwm.gov.uk



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Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Libraries

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Role of Secretary of State in Library Superintendence and the Courts in relation to Judicial Review

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has a duty under the “Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (the Act)” to:
 - 1.1.1. superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by councils in England
 - 1.1.2. secure the proper discharge by councils of their functions as library authorities
- 1.2. The Act also provides the Secretary of State with the statutory power to intervene and call a local inquiry when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service.
- 1.3. The Libraries Team at DCMS is responsible for the superintendence and promoting the improvement of libraries across England on behalf of Ministers. To support this duty, they closely monitor developments in library services across England. Library authorities are required to provide DCMS with such information as the Secretary of State may require for carrying out their duties.
- 1.4. Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for public libraries in England. ACE works with the leaders of library services and other partners and stakeholders, using its influence and convening power to help shape the future development of public libraries in England. It also funds Libraries Connected as the Sector Support Organisation.
- 1.5. Libraries Connected is the membership body for all public library services in England. Its focus is on shaping a positive operating environment for libraries, fostering innovation and sharing good practice across the sector. Its core asset is its members’ wealth of expertise as library leaders and practitioners, and their willingness to share this with their peers. It is particularly well-placed to broker strategic advice to decision-makers.
- 1.6. The DCMS Libraries team works closely with Libraries Connected. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is an active participant in Libraries Connected.

2 KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. The Local Authority is required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the Act. It must do so in a way which meets the needs of local library users taking into account the resources available.
- 2.2. It is the role of councillors and officers at a local level to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their service. However, this must be done:
 - 2.2.1. in consultation with their communities
 - 2.2.2. through analysis of evidence around local needs
 - 2.2.3. in accordance with their statutory duties
- 2.3. Councils can take their available resources into account when deciding how to deliver their public library service. Councils therefore have the freedom to design their library service based on their analysis and assessment of local needs.
- 2.4. In coming to a decision about future library provision DCMS will expect the council to act reasonably and rationally.
- 2.5. A council must be able to evidence the link between the design and delivery of its library service and identifiable local need. They should be able to demonstrate:
 - 2.5.1. how well the strategy meets local needs, now and in the future, using documented evidence held locally, as well as local knowledge
 - 2.5.2. an assessment of the equality impact on all 'protected groups' as specified in the Equality Act 2010.
 - 2.5.3. a careful consideration of feedback received before making a definitive decision
 - 2.5.4. a demonstration of how steps have been taken to mitigate the impact
 - 2.5.5. an openness to new options
 - 2.5.6. another consultation, if appropriate, before implementing changes
 - 2.5.7. an investment in working with communities and other partners to put new solutions in place, drawing on learning from elsewhere

- 2.6. When reviewing library service provision, councils are encouraged to seek early advice from DCMS and other sector bodies if they are contemplating major changes to the service.
- 2.7. If anyone believes a council is in breach of its duties under the Act they can make an official complaint to the Secretary of State. This is not restricted to residents, nor is the complainant required to follow the Council's Complaints Process in the first instance. DCMS has considered 20 formal complaints since 2010.
- 2.8. DCMS will consider investigating:
 - 2.8.1. following a final decision taken by the council on library service provision
 - 2.8.2. a representation about the effect of the proposals on overall area provision
 - 2.8.3. a representation about the library service as a whole
 - 2.8.4. a representation about the effect of proposed changes on particular groups within the community, such as those sharing a protected characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010

3 DETAILS

- 3.1. DCMS will consider each complaint on its own merits and following careful consideration against a number of factors. These include:
 - 3.1.1. Whether the local authority appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way.
 - 3.1.2. Whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the local authority's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community.
 - 3.1.3. Whether the local authority appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals.
 - 3.1.4. Whether the local authority has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals.
 - 3.1.5. Whether local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy.
 - 3.1.6. The advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives.

3.1.7. Whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered.

- 3.2. The process of consideration of a complaint is in two stages. The first is a thorough analysis of the evidence resulting in DCMS officials submitting advice and recommendations to Ministers to consider before issuing a Ministerial “minded to” letter setting out the reasons for the decision and indicating whether or not they are minded to order an inquiry. The second stage is a final decision by the Secretary of State which follows careful consideration of further representations submitted in response to the “minded to” letter. If the Secretary of State considers that there has been a failure by the library authority to meet its statutory duties, they may make an order declaring this and directing the library authority to carry out any actions required to meet the duties within a specified time.
- 3.3. If the council fails to comply with any requirement of the order, the Secretary of State, instead of enforcing the order, may make an order providing that the function of the council relating to the public library service shall be transferred to the Secretary of State.

4 RISKS

DCMS Inquiry

- 4.1. The Wirral Inquiry stated that “it becomes a rational impossibility for a library authority to design a service which comprehensively and efficiently meets those needs in a demonstrable way” in the absence of a comprehensive Needs Assessment. The Inquiry stated that the implicit and explicit interpretation of the 1964 Act is that a comprehensive and efficient service is one that is based on local needs. It went on to say “I have found that due to the absence of an assessment of needs and a strategic Library Service review, the Council has displayed a lack of logic around why some facilities were recommended for closure and not others.”
- 4.2. The Royal Borough has commissioned the development of an independent Needs Analysis to meet this stated requirement which has informed the recommendations put to Cabinet on 24 June 2021. Cabinet should be able to demonstrate that it had due regard for the analysis of need when making decisions that impact the library service.
- 4.3. The Secretary of State also cited the following: “that without adequate plans for outreach services, the Library Service as whole will not be compliant, and in particular that the Library Service in deprived areas will not meet the Council’s statutory duties.”

- 4.4. The Library Transformation Strategy re-integrates the Digital, Specialist, Promotional and Outreach function into the mainstream library service after a number of years of detachment and contraction of that element of the service.
- 4.5. With regard to 3.1.2 an action is arbitrary and capricious if the agency (1) fails to use reasonable diligence to determine facts necessary to its decision, (2) fails to give proper consideration to facts relevant to the decision, or (3) bases its action on conclusions reasonable people would not reach on the same facts.
- 4.6. The Service Lead and Lead Member undertook a deep examination of the Needs Analysis and Consultation responses, reviewed different approaches and options adopted across the Sector and also held a number of transparent engagement sessions with a wide range of residents, stakeholders and partners. Statistics were analysed and those with stories to tell were heard. The final recommendations have been developed as a direct result of this engagement process.

Judicial Review

- 4.7. Individuals or groups can also challenge the lawfulness of a council decision (whether due to a breach of the Act or for other reasons) through a Judicial Review (JR).
- 4.8. The judge in the Northampton Library Service JR said that the council's decision-making processes around its library provision broke down under increasing financial pressure. The council's Cabinet initially chose the least severe of three options presented to it following a review of its library services and a consultation. Then when the council's precarious financial situation worsened, with the council issuing a Section 114 Report saying that its expenditure would exceed its resources, the Director of Finance recommended Cabinet change to a more severe option 2 for its library service savings.
- 4.9. In her judgement the Mrs Justice Yip said: "They [Cabinet] were told in the Finance Director's report... that they had "no choice" but to consider proposals which ... were now being put before them". The judge said "this was serious error infecting the decisions of the Cabinet and that her "provisional view is that the Cabinet decisions ... should be quashed."
- 4.10. The judge said the cabinet failed to apply a statutory test – to make sure that its new decision would result in a "comprehensive and efficient library service" as required by Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. She said: "This judgement is a clear warning to local authorities contemplating similar decisions. Decisions have to be made in a lawful manner and cannot be based solely on financial considerations."

- 4.11. During a judicial review, the courts will examine the council's decision and the process the council took in reaching that decision, including the council's approach to equality considerations. The PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty) bar for library services is high.
- 4.12. A complainant can submit a formal complaint to DCMS in respect of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 as well as request a Judicial Review.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1. In the light of the above, DCMS suggests that councils should seek their own legal advice on any proposed changes they wish to make to their library service.
- 5.2. Under the Act, the Secretary of State can order a local inquiry of their own motion (section 10 of the Act) or following a complaint that a library authority is failing to carry out its statutory duties.
- 5.3. It is strongly recommended that this paper is noted and that Cabinet is clear about the drivers and the risks associated with the recommendations and is cognisant of its statutory duty with regard to the legislation governing the library service, national policy with regard to DCMS and the PSED elements as they apply to the recommendations.

