

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 11th February 2021 Item 4 – Hackney Library Services	Item No 4
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Outline

The current pandemic (Covid-19) has had a significant impact on the UK, its economy and the daily lives of people. For councils this is likely to have had a direct impact on cost from being in lockdown, on activity planned before the virus outbreak, recovery and the local economy.

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on library services. Libraries not only offer access to books and other reading material but also provide a valuable service to residents in the form of public computer use for those who do not have access to IT services within their home for example to make their benefit claim or look for employment. Not forgetting a quiet place for children to do their homework and access to online facilities outside of school hours.

With concern about the growing digital divide being exacerbated by the pandemic, particularly those digitally excluded, the Commission asked for the Council to provide information about Hackney's Library services phased re-opening strategy and digital divide. We asked:

1. its approach, response and phased re-opening following Covid-19
2. Online activities and changes to the service provision to make it fit for purpose in the future.
3. As more services and access to services move online what is the council doing to help residents overcome the digital divide?
4. How are council buildings, services and communal spaces being used to support this work?

Reports in the agenda:

To support this discussion the following report has been provided as background information

- Impact on Library services during Covid-19 pandemic.

Invited Attendees:

London Borough of Hackney

- **Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture & Inclusive Economy, Cllr Guy Nicholson**

- **Strategic Director, Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development, Polly Cziok**

Action

Members are asked to consider the reports, presentations and ask questions.