

**Responses to questions from councillors requiring a written response  
20 May 2024**

**WQ1**

**Question to be asked by Councillor Kirsty Jones requesting a written response from the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture**

---

Could the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of funds generated from fines and reservation costs by the City's library service since 2019, together with the costs of administering the same?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Following the lockdown for Covid in March 2020 all charges in regard to fines and reservations were suspended and then subsequently abolished. The reason for the change was to reduce barriers for people using the Library Service and in recognition that the cost of administering, auditing and banking such small sums being taken was often not cost effective. This was also in recognition of communities having been adversely impacted by Covid and requiring support that libraries can provide. Research has identified increased take up of services in authorities which do not charge fines.

The implication of removing fines and reservation charges income was a reduction in £15,605 per annum for the last year the Council was charging in 2019/20. Alternative ways of finding those savings were made which enabled this income target to be removed from the Libraries Service budget. A small breakdown is shown below.

- Fines: Fines are a deterrent to library use, and for citizens who cannot afford fines, they have a highly disproportionate negative impact. Fines result in fears of return, or disengagement as a result of the perception of being punished.
    - In 2019 / 2020 income received from fines was: £13,682.
  - Reservation charges: Similar to the detrimental effect of fines, reservation charges serve only to create further barriers to the customers that we are seeking to encourage into our libraries.
    - In 2019 / 2020 income received from reservation charges was: £1,923.
- Total: £15,605