

Draft Library Strategy 2025-2030

Library Strategy 2025-2030

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Foreword

Our libraries are at the heart of our communities in Enfield, with over a million visitors per year, over 2 million digital engagements, and working with over 100 external partners. Our library service includes books and access to digital resources, quiet spaces for study and reflection, access to support groups and social activities for all ages, health and wellbeing support, makerspaces, training and employment advice. This diverse offer serves a common goal to improve the lives of Enfield residents.

The way people use and access our libraries has changed over the past 10 years. There is an increased digitalisation of services and new digital opportunities; there is an increasing need for warm public spaces in winter and cool public spaces in summer; and our libraries have become community and family hubs, offering a breadth of services and support. We have also maintained one of the highest number of libraries of any London borough, and far higher than the average across the capital.

The Council has also changed over the past 10 years. The way people interact with us and the way we deliver services has changed. We also face budget challenges – we are having to do more with less following over a decade of government underfunding, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, historic inflation and interest rate rises, and the ongoing cost of living crisis resulting in more residents needing our support.

There is an urgent need to do things differently so that we can continue to deliver accessible and responsive services for our diverse communities, whilst remaining financially resilient. Our library strategy outlines our vision for how our library service will evolve to achieve this. We want to improve our libraries, so that they are all hubs for learning, creativity, information, health and wellbeing, welcoming everyone who lives, works or studies in Enfield, as well as ensuring our offer matches other London boroughs.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our strategy and I look forward to working with residents, community groups and businesses to ensure that we have a modern and sustainable library service for everyone in Enfield.

Cllr Ergin Erbil, Leader of the Council

Executive Summary

Vision

Our vision is that all Enfield libraries will be hubs for learning, creativity, information, health and wellbeing, welcoming everyone who lives, works or studies in Enfield.

To achieve this, we have identified five priorities:

- Support life-long reading and literacy for all
- Create hubs of activities for communities
- Support good health and wellbeing
- Improve skills and access to work
- Deliver a sustainable service that's fit for purpose

Summary of proposals

This library strategy sets out how we will deliver library services, use our library buildings, and support, develop and empower our staff and volunteers to make a positive impact on people's lives in Enfield.

The library strategy is informed by analysis on the use of libraries; the varying needs of communities in different parts of the borough (population and deprivation data); the accessibility of our library buildings by different travel modes; feedback from the first phase engagement and second phase consultation with stakeholders; and finally the operating and maintenance costs of library buildings.

Enfield Council's current statutory library provision consists of 16 public libraries, together with the digital library service and a home library service. In addition to these 16 libraries, Angel Raynham library is also classified as a public library, however, it is located inside Raynham Primary School, is not accessible to the general public, and is not staffed by the Council's library service. Finally, it has its own stock of books and the operating costs of this library are funded by Raynham Primary School.

To meet the Council's principles to deliver accessible and responsive services and be financially resilient, we have considered how our library service can be delivered in a more efficient way, while ensuring that it continues to meet people's needs and is comprehensive. Therefore, the library strategy proposes to:

- Retain the library service at Ordnance Unity Centre, Edmonton Green, Ponders End, Fore Street, Millfield House, Palmers Green, Oakwood, Enfield Town and Ridge Avenue.
- Retain the home library service and digital library service.
- Close Bullsmoor, Enfield Highway, Enfield Island Village, Bowes Road, Southgate, Winchmore Hill and John Jackson libraries.
- Formally declassify Angel Raynham located within the primary school as a public library.

It is estimated that the closure of 7 buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.5 to £0.56 million once fully implemented. These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that will close. Additionally, the buildings also require maintenance work and by delivering the library service from fewer buildings, the Council will also be saving an estimated £4.8 million in future upkeep and maintenance costs over 10 years. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £3 million and £3.85 million.

Statutory Duty

We must provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for people who live, work or study in the borough of Enfield in accordance with the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964. This includes books and access to digital resources, quiet spaces for study and reflection, access to support groups and social activities for all ages, health and wellbeing support, makerspaces, training and employment advice.

National supporting policies

These documents have informed our approach to developing our library strategy. These national policies provide a framework for ensuring that we deliver a comprehensive, accessible and responsive library service.

- ❖ [An independent review of English public libraries](#)
- ❖ [Libraries as a statutory service](#)
- ❖ [Universal Library Offer Framework](#)
- ❖ [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England](#)

Local supporting strategies / policies

These interconnected strategies and policies have informed the development of the priorities and principles in our library strategy.

- ❖ [Investing in Enfield, Council Plan 2023 – 2026](#)
- ❖ [Fairer Enfield 2021 – 2025](#)
- ❖ [Early Help for All Strategy 2021 – 2025](#)
- ❖ [Empowering Young Enfield 2021 - 2025](#)
- ❖ [A Cultural Strategy for Enfield 2020 - 2025](#)
- ❖ [An Economy that Works for Everyone, Enfield's Economic Development Strategy](#)
- ❖ [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024 - 2030](#)
- ❖ Medium Term Financial Strategy
- ❖ Town Centre Action Plans

Key facts about Enfield's library service

- ❖ There was a decrease in the number of issues and renewals of books annually across all libraries by 181,897 when comparing 2023/24 to 2018/19.
- ❖ The number of e-newspapers, e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines accessed annually through the digital library service increased by 2,046,200 when comparing 2019/20 to 2023/24.¹
- ❖ There has been a decrease in library visits by 379,974 when comparing 2023/24 visitor levels to 2018/19.
- ❖ The number of ICT hours used annually across all libraries decreased by 75,536 hours when comparing 2023/24 to 2018/19.
- ❖ In 2021, our community hubs service opened at Enfield Town and Edmonton Green libraries. In 2023/24 over 3,900 people received in-depth support for money, employment and skills, housing, health and wellbeing.

Key services at Enfield libraries:

- ❖ Under 5's
 - Storytime sessions
 - Baby rhyme and time
 - Sensory space
 - Health and wellbeing advice and guidance
- ❖ 5 – 12-year-olds
 - School holiday activities
 - Summer reading challenge
 - Sensory space
 - Health and wellbeing advice and guidance
- ❖ Teens
 - Study zones
 - Home school support
 - Homework and study clubs
- ❖ Older People
 - Activities and events, including knit and natter, memory cafe and chess club
 - Health and wellbeing advice and guidance
- ❖ Computers
 - One-hour slots for adults and children
 - Free e-learning courses and employment support

¹ We began recording performance data on the usage of the Digital Library Service in 2019.

Impact

The quotes below are feedback we received about the positive impact of our library service in our phase one engagement.

Library Services

'The libraries offer excellent services, computers, books, e-books, digital and educational material.'

'Enfield Town library is wonderful. Every time I visit, I am in awe of the facilities provided. It is great to see teenagers studying and others making use of the computers or enjoying browsing the books. The atmosphere is welcoming. It is a lovely, safe space.'

'I feel proud to have such an institution in our town welcoming people from the whole community and providing help and support to those in the most vulnerable groups.'

Library Staff and Volunteers

'We are very lucky in Enfield to have so many lovely libraries and staff who care a lot for the people here.'

Hubs of activities for communities

'I am fortunate in living close to Palmers Green Library, where I find the services provided are outstanding. There is easily viewed information about many Council services and internally, help for visitors and many new initiatives with regard to health, events and activities and useful contact points. Whenever I visit, I am always heartened by the sight of so many people, young and old alike studying and enjoying the environment.'

'Libraries are hugely important to communities in helping them function and empower themselves – they're invaluable.'

'I visited recently with my parents who don't live in Enfield. They were amazed by the activity in the library. There were toddlers enjoying the sensory area, teenagers studying, older people using the computers and people of all ages and ethnicity using the council counter. Enfield Town Library is such a vibrant community hub. My kids love it there.'

Digital Library Service

'I daily use the digital library and feel it is a fantastic tool for residents of Enfield.'

Home Library Service

'Volunteers bring a choice of books to me at my home once a month as I am not able to go to a library any more ... I am very grateful to still have books to read as I reach my 100th birthday'

Why do we need a new strategy?

We must provide a comprehensive, sustainable and efficient library service for people who live, work or study in Enfield. This includes books and access to digital resources, quiet spaces for study and reflection, access to support groups and social activities for all ages, health and wellbeing support, makerspaces, training and employment advice. As a community leader, we are working with our partners to manage services for all our communities and focusing where possible on the areas of greatest need.

Our library service plays a critical role in helping people realise their full potential - including those living, working, studying in or visiting Enfield and particularly those facing disadvantage. A number of factors have impacted what people need from their library service, including the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council also faces budget challenges after over a decade of government underfunding, historic inflation levels and recent interest rate rises, and the ongoing cost of living crisis resulting in more residents needing our support. Savings will inevitably need to be made now and in years to come across Council services to balance our budgets. In this context, we need to ensure our libraries are delivering accessible and responsive services in the best and most efficient way to meet local need, and matches the offer delivered by other London boroughs.

As a Council, we want to work with our partners to provide support as early as possible to children, young people, families and adults to prevent problems from escalating. This will ensure that services within our libraries are relevant and address the local needs of each area. To achieve this, we will work closely with our residents and voluntary and community groups to empower them to take positive action in their neighbourhoods. We will also target investment to maintain and refurbish the ageing estate of the library to ensure the service is delivered in the most accessible places possible.

Enfield has 16 public libraries in the borough, including 4 flagship Hubs. The average number of libraries for a London borough is 12; the highest being 17 (Barnet²) and the lowest being 6 (Brent³, Harrow⁴, Hammersmith and Fulham⁵ and Kensington and Chelsea⁶).

The map below shows the locations of each library in our current estate and their one-kilometre catchments. Many of the libraries are relatively close to each other.

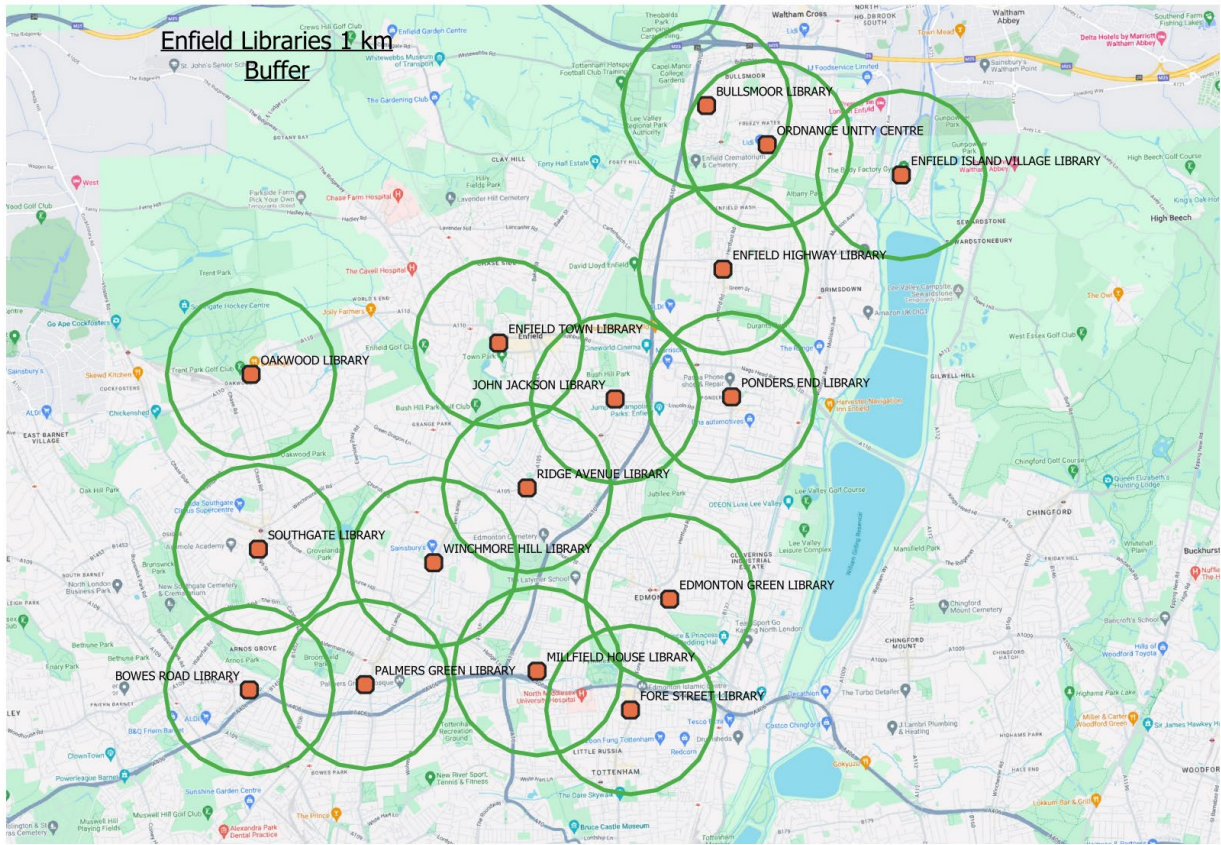
² Population: 389,300 (Census 2021)

³ Population: 339,800 (Census 2021)

⁴ Population: 261,300 (Census 2021)

⁵ Population: 183,200 (Census 2021)

⁶ Population: 143,400 (Census 2021)



To meet the Council's principles to deliver accessible and responsive services and be financially resilient, we have considered how our library service can be delivered in a more efficient way, while ensuring that it continues to meet people's needs and is comprehensive.

Principles

To design a sustainable future library service, that enables us to deliver on our five priorities, we have three underlying principles which have informed the changes to our library estate:

- Focusing resources in areas of greatest need
- Ensuring an accessible library service for everyone
- Delivering a financially resilient library service

Focusing resources in areas of greatest need

As part of the development of the library strategy we have looked at a series of indicators of need at ward level for each library, to determine the different levels of need in the populations living closest to each library. The combined indicators have been used to rank the 25 wards by level of need.

The ranking includes:

- Population demographics – This includes the number of younger people, older people, the percentage of households where English is no-one's first language and population density.⁷
- Community safety – This includes the number of recorded criminal offences between April 2023 and March 2024.⁸
- Health and disability – This includes the percentage of residents in good health and the percentage of residents with a disability.⁹
- Deprivation – This includes the percentage of children in low-income families, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals, the percentage of adults on unemployment benefits and universal credit, the percentage of households in fuel poverty and indices of deprivation.¹⁰
- Educational attainment – This includes the percentage of children achieving expected literacy and reading standards, the percentage of children achieving grade 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths, and the percentage of adults with no qualifications.¹¹
- Broadband coverage - The percentage of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s.¹²

⁷ The higher the number, the higher the number of younger people and older people, the higher the percentage of households where English is no-one's first language and the higher the population density.

⁸ The higher the number, the higher the number of recorded criminal offences.

⁹ The higher the number, the greater the level of ill health and disability.

¹⁰ The higher the number, the greater the level of deprivation.

¹¹ The higher the number, the lower the percentage of children achieving expected literacy and reading standards, the lower the percentage of children achieving grade 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths, and the higher the percentage of adults with no qualifications.

¹² The higher the number, the lower the number of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s (so greatest level of 'digital need').

The combined indicators have been used to rank the 25 wards by level of local need. The highest level of local need on the criteria used is in wards that are in the east of the borough.

	Population Demographics	Community Safety	Health and Disability	Deprivation	Educational Attainment	Broadband Coverage	Total
Edmonton Green	22	25	24	25	25	25	145
Carterhatch	20	19	23	20	24	22	128
Upper Edmonton	23	24	16	24	18	19	123
Ponders End	17	22	19	20	21	20	119
Brimsdown	7	23	21	22	23	21	117
Lower Edmonton	24	17	17	23	20	11	112
Haselbury	25	19	16	20	17	1	98
Bullsmoor	13	12	25	17	22	7	96
Jubilee	11	15	12	21	19	15	93
Enfield Lock	11	20	20	16	16	9	92
Southbury	17	16	19	12	14	13	91
Whitewebbs	2	13	22	11	10	25	83
Bowes	21	8	8	15	15	5	72
Southgate	17	10	5	10	7	18	67
New Southgate	19	7	10	13	13	2	64
Palmer's Green	18	14	6	8	9	8	63
Town	14	21	7	7	9	4	62
Cockfosters	4	6	14	9	11	16	60
Ridgeway	7	11	13	5	6	17	59
Highfield	13	5	10	14	12	3	57
Bush Hill Park	2	9	11	3	6	14	45
Arnos Grove	9	3	4	6	4	10	36
Grange Park	4	1	1	1	1	23	31
Winchmore Hill	7	4	1	4	2	12	31
Oakwood	9	2	4	2	3	6	26

Ensuring an accessible library service for everyone

As well as focusing on areas of greatest need, we must ensure that our library service is accessible to everyone.

We will retain 9 library hubs in the borough, this will mean that:

- 86% of residents live within a 25-minute walk from their nearest library, (this was 98% for the 16 library buildings).
- 94% of residents live within a 20-minute public transport journey from their nearest library, (this was 97% for the 16 library buildings).
- 95% of residents live within a 10-minute cycle ride from their nearest library, (this was 99% for the 16 library buildings).
- 97% of residents live within a 10-minute car journey from their nearest library, (this was 100% for the 16 library buildings).

We will retain libraries in areas with good transport connections across the borough and have focused resources in key shopping and leisure areas, as people are likely to travel to these areas for other reasons as well as to visit the library. All these libraries are within 137 metres of a bus stop and 5 of the libraries have car parking spaces (57 spaces overall).

The 9 libraries will be collectively open for 454.5 hours per week. This is a net increase in their weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week. We will annually review our opening hours to ensure that they are at optimal times for communities.

We will update the library website with bus and train information, as well as local car parking arrangements, for each library.

For those who would prefer to access the library service online, we have a digital library service, which enables library users to access free e-learning, e-books, e-audiobooks, e-newspapers and e-magazines on their digital devices at their convenience.

If a resident faces significant difficulties in visiting a library, the Royal Voluntary Service can deliver services on our behalf to their home. There is no charge for this service and the Royal Voluntary Service visits our home library users once every two weeks.

Delivering a financially resilient library service

The Council is under a duty to set a balanced budget but faces significant budget challenges after 10 years of government cuts and growing pressures. We face a budget gap over the next 5 years, so it is inevitable that savings will need to be made now and in years to come to set a balanced budget. In this context, we need to ensure our libraries are delivering accessible and responsive services in the best possible way to meet local need.

We have undertaken a review of our current library offer and developed an approach that intends to deliver a comprehensive library service for all those who live, work and study in the area, with reduced costs, by closing some of our libraries and matching the comparable offer by other London boroughs.

It is estimated that the closure of 7 buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.5 million to £0.56 million once fully implemented. These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that will close.

Additionally, the buildings also require maintenance work and by delivering the library service from fewer buildings, the Council will also be saving an estimated £4.8 million in future upkeep and maintenance costs over 10 years. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £3 million and £3.85 million.

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Our future library model

Buildings and assets

This strategy is about the library service as whole, not just its buildings, but we understand that many will be concerned about their future. Based on the principles outlined above, we will reduce the statutory library service into 9 buildings. This will be complemented by our strong digital offer and home delivery service.

We will:

- Retain the library service at Ordnance Unity Centre, Edmonton Green, Ponders End, Fore Street, Millfield House, Palmers Green, Oakwood Enfield Town and Ridge Avenue.
- Close Bullsmoor, Enfield Highway, Enfield Island Village, Bowes Road, Southgate, Winchmore Hill and John Jackson libraries.
- Formally declassify Angel Raynham located within the primary school as a public library¹³

The 9 libraries which we will retain as part of the statutory service represent:

- 89% of visits in 2023/24
- 83% of active users in 2023/24
- 84% of ICT time minutes used in 2023/24

This shows that they are well used by the communities they serve. The 9 libraries will be collectively open for 454.5 hours per week. This is a net increase in their weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week. We will annually review our opening hours to ensure that they are at optimal times for communities. The table below outlines the opening hours for the 9 libraries.

¹³ Angel Raynham is also classified as a public library, but it is staffed and managed by the primary school and is not open to public.

Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total opening hours
Edmonton Green	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	12noon-4pm	64
Enfield Town	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	12noon-4pm	64
Ordnance Unity Centre	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	Closed	60
Palmers Green	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	Closed	60
Fore Street	9am-7pm	9am-5pm	1-5pm	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	Closed	38
Ponders End	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-7pm	9am-1pm	9am-5pm	9:30am-1:30pm	Closed	42
Oakwood	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-5:30pm	Closed	53.5
Ridge Avenue	9am-6:30pm	9am-6:30pm	9am-6:30pm	9am-6:30pm	9am-6pm	1:30-4:30pm	Closed	50
Millfield House	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	Closed	35

The closure of 7 library buildings will enable us to invest in our remaining libraries to ensure that they are attractive, comfortable and inspire a love of learning and discovery. To ensure our buildings are modern, accessible and climate resilient we need to invest over £3.5 million in our libraries over the next ten years.

We believe that this will enable us to deliver a comprehensive, accessible and responsive service that is financially resilient, while continuing to meet people's needs.

Priorities

Support life-long reading and literacy for all

Increasing levels of literacy increases life opportunities, earning and health outcomes. We will deliver resources and activities to build literacy skills for all ages and promote a love of reading within libraries and via online platforms.

Nationally, the Government have set a target that by 2030, 90% of children will be reading at the expected level. In 2023/24, 73% of children in Enfield met the expected standard for reading. Our libraries can improve literacy by encouraging people to read for pleasure, through making sure books remain at the heart of all our libraries, and by delivering a range of initiatives and events to inspire a love of reading for all.

Reading for pleasure increases vocabulary growth and reading fluency to such an extent that research shows that if all children in the UK read for pleasure, the number getting five good GCSEs by the age of 16 could increase by 1.1 million within 30 years.¹⁴ Research also shows that libraries play a key role in promoting adult literacy by re-engaging adult learners, by supporting referrals to adult education services and identifying adults who need literacy support.¹⁵

Our libraries are a universal service that address one of the key causes of the literacy gap related to socio-economic disadvantage: in a society where book ownership and reading is strongly linked to socioeconomic status, our libraries offer free access to books to everyone.

What we will do:

- Explore introducing automatic library membership and becoming ‘fines free’ to expand library membership
- Provide access to high quality physical and digital reading materials that are relevant and reflective of all our communities
- Work with early years providers and schools to support early learning and literacy development to give every child the best start in life, through a rolling programme of activities and events for children, young people and families across our libraries
- Support national and local literacy initiatives for all ages
- Expand our programme of author readings and talks for all ages across our libraries

¹⁴ [Public libraries and literacy recovery - final version.pdf \(literacytrust.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁵ [Public libraries and literacy recovery - final version.pdf \(literacytrust.org.uk\)](#)

- Inspire visitors to discover new books through creative and imaginative book displays and in how we design and use our library buildings

Case Study – Summer reading challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge is an annual reading event aimed at children aged 4-11 years old to encourage reading over the summer holidays, and to teach children the joy of reading for pleasure. Children participate by visiting their local Enfield library to join the challenge and aim to read up to six books over the summer in exchange for stickers, prizes and medals.

In 2023, 1,914 children participated in the Enfield Summer Reading Challenge and 82 children joined the library so they could take part.

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Create hubs of activity for communities

The library service is more than just a place to borrow books. Our libraries are hubs which bring communities together and are trusted to provide reliable information and support on a wide range of issues.

We will work with other council services, partners, and community organisations to be responsive to local community need. We will provide welcoming and inclusive library spaces that everyone in our community feels comfortable to access, and where a range of services, support and information can be provided from council services and by our partners in the heart of our communities.

Libraries enable people to connect with other members of their community, helping to tackle social isolation and loneliness and build community cohesion. Our libraries provide a hub for creative and cultural activities, providing spaces for exhibitions, workshops and events, which support development of the local cultural economy and celebrate the diversity of our communities. Our archive service, within our libraries, also provides a unique and irreplaceable source of information and insight into the diverse heritage and history of our borough.

What we will do:

- Train library staff, volunteers and partners working in libraries to connect people to local information, activities, services and support
- Provide locally based services, working in partnership with council services, community groups and organisations that focus on early intervention and prevention
- Develop an integrated cultural offer which celebrates the heritage and culture of our communities and establish libraries as recognised cultural venues for all
- Publish and promote a comprehensive annual programme of events and activities in our libraries and create a new online booking system for attendees
- Facilitate a circular economy in the community through exploring the introduction and support for initiatives such as 'fixing factories' and 'libraries of things'

Case Study – Makerspace at Ordnance Unity Centre

In 2023, a new makerspace opened at Ordnance Unity Centre Library, which provides a collaborative space for residents to learn new skills and participate in activities where they can develop new friendships. Popular activities have included a podcasting workshop, a photography workshop and a writing workshop.

The photography workshop began with demonstrating the way lighting affects photographic images. Participants were shown how to improve their images on their devices and were assigned the task of taking photos to show at the next workshop where suggestions for improvement would be discussed. The writers' workshop provided attendees an opportunity to write a piece on a subject of their choice for the next session where feedback was provided.

Between March 2023 and February 2024, over 480 people participated in makerspace activities at Ordnance Unity Centre.

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Support good health and wellbeing

Our libraries promote good mental and physical health and wellbeing by connecting people with knowledge, opportunities, services and with each other. Libraries are a trusted source of information about health conditions, including prevention, treatment and prognosis. This can support people to manage their illnesses and conditions through free and accessible information and signposting to additional support.

Our libraries provide warm public spaces in winter and cool public spaces in summer, which are essential for our response to the cost-of-living crisis and climate crisis. By welcoming communities into our libraries as a safe and comfortable place, events and activities can improve mental wellbeing by reducing isolation and feelings of loneliness, as well as provide physical comfort.

The home library service delivers books directly to people's homes and is essential for children and adults who face significant difficulties in visiting a library.

What we will do:

- Provide accredited health information in libraries, books on prescription, and designated spaces for health services to be delivered within our communities
- Work in partnership with healthcare providers and the voluntary sector to deliver a robust programme of healthy initiatives across our libraries
- Signpost people to organisations and activities that could help improve their health and wellbeing
- Provide events, activities and meeting spaces which increase social connection and reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness
- Provide a home delivery service of books and resources to those unable to physically visit libraries
- Promote our libraries as warm and cool spaces for communities

Case Study: Grow, Feed, Eat, Read

Outside Edmonton Green Library, a new urban garden has been developed. Through delivery of workshops on food growing, cooking and nutritional education, the Grow, Feed, Eat, Read project delivers opportunities for young people to learn life skills through basic principles such as understanding where food comes from, food preparation and a healthy diet. The project aims to challenge learned behaviour towards unhealthy food versus healthy options, motivating young people to replicate their newly developed skills at home.

This urban garden and growing space was designed in collaboration with young people from schools in the east of the borough, where wards are among the 10% and 20% most deprived in England, and children face higher levels of obesity. Many children attending schools in these areas use Edmonton Green Library and the urban garden and growing space provides a further safe, warm and inviting space for young people in the borough.

Working in partnership with libraries, public health and schools, the project encompasses the priorities of the Enfield Food Action Plan, Enfield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Enfield Poverty and Inequality Commission, to tackle the wider determinants of health that limit children and young people's life chances, such as obesity, deprivation and food poverty.

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Improve skills and access to work

Enfield residents face higher levels of unemployment than the London average and younger residents are more likely to be unemployed than other age groups. We will use our library service to improve residents' skill levels, help residents into work and promote business enterprise. Our libraries offer free learning resources and quiet places for study that people may not have access to at home.

Our libraries help facilitate inclusive growth in the borough by providing information to support businesses to grow, through our new business and information centre, and working with sector experts to signpost businesses to sources of advice and guidance.

Our employment support programme and job clubs are also based in our libraries, providing free information, advice and guidance and individual needs assessments to develop employment, training and volunteering pathways for Enfield residents aged 16+ who face barriers to entering the workforce.

We know that some residents do not have the digital skills needed to access essential services, support and information online and our libraries are providing support to connect people digitally. We help people who would otherwise be digitally excluded, teaching basic computer skills and providing access to equipment and ongoing learning resources. This will enable residents to increase their confidence, skills and motivation to go online and improve their employability and access to civic life.

What we will do:

- Provide information and signposting for businesses to sources of support and advice
- Explore opportunities to provide affordable spaces for co-working and small businesses to start up and operate
- Provide targeted support to residents looking for volunteering, work experience, training or to find a job
- Support people to develop their digital skills and confidence, and provide up-to-date ICT infrastructure to improve digital literacy

Case Study: Skills Training Employment Pillar (STEP)

STEP is based in our libraries and provides free information, advice and support to Enfield residents aged 16+ who face barriers to entering the workforce, to access work experience, training and employment. STEP offers an individual assessment with a personal advisor to identify skills and develop employment, training and volunteering pathways based on the individual's career goals.

STEP achieved the following successful outcomes in 2023:

- 69 economically inactive residents transitioned to actively looking for work.
- 101 residents supported into volunteering, education or training.
- 43 residents supported into employment.
- 10 residents supported into sustained employment for 6 months or more.

STEP also offers a free recruitment service to support businesses in Enfield with local recruitment opportunities, to develop work experience and apprenticeships, and help developers and businesses with meeting S.106 employment and skills obligations.

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Deliver a sustainable library service that is fit for purpose

We want to deliver a modern, responsive and sustainable library service, with facilities that are attractive, accessible, comfortable and inspire a love of learning and discovery. We want to provide study spaces, assistive technologies, makerspaces, digital suites, and flexible workspaces that are open to everyone. We want to provide spaces that are quiet and reflective and others that are energetic and busy.

We aim to increase income through commercial activities, applying for grants and seeking opportunities to be commissioned to support the delivery of other services.

We will continue to invest in the development of our libraries workforce and volunteers to deliver services that meet the current and future needs of our communities and expectations. Our library service is dependent on a passionate and committed library and volunteer workforce who provide access to free, trusted information and in-person support, which library users rely on to make the most of our services. By employing those who reflect our values and behaviours, we can continue to reach the standards our communities expect from their library service.

We want to ensure that everyone in Enfield is aware of the services, support and facilities that our libraries offer. This can be achieved through delivering high service standards that encourage word of mouth recommendations and creative approaches to service promotion.

As part of the council's asset management programme and our work to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service in the context of financial pressure for the council, from 2025/26 we will deliver our libraries from a rationalised estate, with 9 libraries. As part of our programme of asset improvement, we will deliver energy efficiency improvements and heat decarbonisation across our library estate to support our ambition of being a carbon neutral council by 2030.

What we will do:

- Design our library spaces to inspire a love of learning and discovery, and enable both quiet spaces for study and reflection, and spaces that allow for busier and more energetic activities
- Promote our volunteering offer to enable residents to get more involved in the running of their local library
- Decarbonise our library estate through energy efficiency investment, heat decarbonisation and utilisation of renewable energy
- Explore digital solutions that enhance library users experience both in libraries and remotely, including self-service options and investment
- Increase income generation and commercialisation to improve the sustainability of the service and explore opportunities to work in partnership to deliver value for money

- Ensure library staff and volunteers have the skills and knowledge to promote the library service and the full range of activities and events that happen across our library estate
- Encourage and support active travel to and from our libraries with the provision of safe and accessible bike and scooter parking

Case Study: Fore Street Library

In July 2022 the refurbished Fore Street Library in Angel Edmonton was opened into the new 'Living Room'. This refurbishment was carried out in response to concerns raised by the local community about a lack of essential spaces to host local groups, workshops and engage with large scale redevelopment in the local area. The Living Room creates an open shop window space in the front of the library for exhibiting drawings and models, as well as hosting talks, presentations and advice surgeries.

This provides residents with a versatile space to take part in community activities, which has allowed for greater community cohesion. As well as this, the 'Living Room' has provided a platform for the diversity of Angel Edmonton to be celebrated. The capacity to hold evening functions has also expanded the opening hours of the library, promoted economic growth and improved security on the high street.

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What will be different in 5 years' time?

We will have considered this strategy to have achieved our visions and priorities for the library service if by 2030:

- We have delivered a comprehensive, sustainable and efficient library service for people who live, work and study in Enfield.
- We have increased library membership at all ages, which will increase opportunities, learning and health outcomes.
- We have created hubs for the community, working with other council services, partners, and community organisations which are responsive to local community need.
- We have created a new online booking system, whereby we can publish and promote an annual programme of events and activities.
- Libraries in Enfield are recognised as cultural venues for all. To achieve this, we will have developed a cultural offer for each library, which celebrates the heritage and culture of our communities.
- We have continued to provide a diverse range of activities and events for audiences of all ages.
- We have ensured our libraries provide accredited health information and spaces for health services.
- We have more people using the digital library service, with opportunities for library staff to offer guidance, training and support for residents to access the library online and digital technology.
- We will continue to explore commercial opportunities and ensure the library service is value for money.
- We have delivered initiatives to support the decarbonisation of our library estate.
- We continue to serve those in the community that face significant difficulties in visiting a library through our home library service.
- We have improved the library buildings and the opening times are optimal for the communities they serve.
- We have continuously used customer feedback and insight to develop and improve the service.

Our annual libraries report will summarise work (over the last year) to deliver on the actions in the library strategy. The report will include good practice case studies that provide an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with partner organisation and residents to deliver initiatives which achieve the outcomes outlined above.

Appendix 1: Library Proposals

Closure of library buildings

- **Bullsmoor**

We are recommending the closure of Bullsmoor Library given its relatively low usage, proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre as an alternative provision and the opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The library is in Bullsmoor ward which is ranked 8th for level of need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. However, the library is comparatively one of our least used libraries. In 2023/24 it had the lowest number of visits per hour open (4.4) and percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (6%) of all council run smaller libraries in Enfield. The library is in close proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre, which is 1.5km away. This would take the average person 19 minutes to walk or 5 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk this is a 4-minute car journey or 11-minute public transport journey.

- **Enfield Highway**

We are recommending the closure of Enfield Highway Library given its relatively low usage, proximity to Ponders End (1.5km) and Ordnance Unity Centre (1.6 km) as an alternative provision and the opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The journey to Ponders End would take the average person around 21 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 6-minute drive or a 10-minute public transport journey bus journey. Alternatively, Ordnance Unity Centre is a 23-minute walk for an average person or a 10-minute cycle.

Whilst Brimsdown has a high level of local need, it is ranked 5th for level of local need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. Enfield Highway has below average usage compared to other council run smaller libraries in Enfield.

- **Enfield Island Village**

We are recommending the closure of Enfield Island Village Library given its relatively low usage, proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre (1.8 km) as an alternative provision and the opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need. This journey is a 25-minute walk for an average person, or a 7-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 7-minute drive or a 13-minute public transport journey.

During the second phase consultation, concerns were raised by stakeholders about the accessibility of travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre through active travel and public transport from Enfield Island Village. Having considered this feedback, it remains our

recommendation that Enfield Island Village Library should be closed. This is because it had the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (40%) in 2023/24, the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (2.9) in 2023/24 and the third lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (17%). This low usage means it would not be efficient to continue to provide public library provision at the Enfield Island Village Library.

Therefore, we intend to explore whether we can work with community groups to provide pop-up library provision in their community spaces in the Enfield Island Village area, in addition to the statutory service in the 9 libraries.

- **Bowes Road**

We are recommending the closure of Bowes Road Library given its lack of accessibility for users with a disability, low usage and proximity to Palmers Green and Oakwood libraries. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The library is in New Southgate ward which ranks 15th out of the 25 Enfield wards for level of local need. It is considered that it would be reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Palmers Green and Oakwood libraries, due to the good transport links. Palmers Green is 1.8km away, which would take the average person 23-minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, this would be a 6-minute drive or 16 minutes by public transport. This library is 5km from Oakwood Library which would take 14 minutes to travel by car or 18 minutes by public transport.

Bowes Road Library is comparatively one of our least used libraries and during 2023/24 had 7,076 visits. The library is not accessible for users with a disability as it does not have step free access or a public toilet, which are both available at Palmers Green and Oakwood.

- **Winchmore Hill**

We are recommending the closure of Winchmore Hill Library, as it is in area of low need and is located within a reasonable distance of other library provision (Ridge Avenue and Palmers Green respectively). This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Winchmore Hill is ranked 24th out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It is considered that it would be reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue, due to the good transport links.

Palmers Green is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 25 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue Library is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For

those unable to walk the journey would take 6 minutes to drive or 8 minutes by public transport.

- **Southgate**

We are recommending the closure of Southgate Library, as it is in an area of relatively low need and is located within a reasonable distance of alternative library provision at Palmers Green and Oakwood. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Southgate is ranked 14th out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It is considered that it would be reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Palmers Green and Oakwood, due to good transport links.

This library is 2.7km from Oakwood Library which is a 35-minute walk or 13-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it would take 8 minutes to travel by car or 10 minutes by public transport. The nearest large library is Palmers Green which is 2.9km away. This would take the average person 32 minutes to walk or 9 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 8 minutes to drive.

- **John Jackson**

We are recommending the closure of John Jackson Library given its low usage and proximity to Enfield Town and Ponders End as an alternative provision. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Southbury is ranked moderately (11th) for level of local need. However, given the proximity to Enfield Town (2.9km) and Ponders End (1.8km), there are appropriate alternative provisions for this age group. Enfield Town is a transport hub and main shopping and leisure area, and residents who visit John Jackson Library are likely to already travel to Enfield Town for other reasons, as well as to visit the library.

Enfield Town Library is 2.9km away. This would take the average person around 25 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk or cycle, it would take 9 minutes to travel by car and 14 minutes by public transport. Ponders End is another alternative library, which is 1.8km away, this would take the average person around 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. It is also a 6-minute journey by car or 21 minutes by public transport.

Declassifying Angel Raynham Library located within the Primary School as a public library

- **Angel Raynham**

Angel Raynham, though currently classed as one of our public libraries, is part of a primary school and is not accessible to the general public. It was historically used as a library as part of a Children's Centre in the building but is now only used as a school library. Taking this into consideration, along with the proximity to alternative library provision, we are giving this library permanently to the school and permanent closure of the public library.

Continue to deliver service in existing library buildings

- **Ordnance Unity Centre**

We are recommending that Ordnance Unity Centre Library remains open. Enfield Lock has a lower than average level of local need (10th of the 25 wards in Enfield). The library has a large floorspace which is sufficient to support an increase in usage as a result of the closure of nearby smaller libraries.

We are increasing the opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre by 4.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the service offer is consistent with Palmers Green Library.

- **Edmonton Green**

We are recommending that Edmonton Green Library remains open. Edmonton Green is ranked 1st out of the 25 wards for level of local need in Enfield. It has the highest percentage of children in relative and absolute (49%) low-income families out of all the wards in Enfield, which is significantly higher than the borough average (25%). The ward also has the highest proportion of adults on unemployment benefits (10%) and adults with no qualifications (30%).

Edmonton Green is a large library which is in a convenient location for residents in neighbouring wards to use, and its size means it can support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of other libraries.

We are increasing the opening hours at Edmonton Green library by 7.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the service offer is consistent with Enfield Town Library (3.1km).

- **Ponders End**

We are recommending that Ponders End Library remains open with no change to the proposed opening hours. Ponders End is ranked 4th out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has the highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (25%) and the second highest percentage of adults receiving universal credit (46%). The ward also has the third highest percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%). Of the areas of the highest deprivation and need in Enfield, Ponders End is the furthest from a large library (3.1km).

- **Millfield House**

We are recommending that Millfield House Library remains open. Haselbury is within the top 20% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 7th out of the 25 wards for level of local need. The ward has a high population density (8,960 people p/sq. km) and a high percentage of households in fuel poverty (17%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households, who may require a warm public space in winter.

Millfield House Library is managed by Platinum Performing Arts, which will be a condition of their lease. Therefore, although the library's usage is low, given the very low running costs of keeping this self-serve library open, we are not making any changes to this provision at this time.

- **Fore Street**

We are recommending that Fore Street library remains open. Fore Street Library is located in Upper Edmonton, which is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 3rd out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

Fore Street Library reopened in July 2022 and its refurbishment was supported by the Good Growth Fund. The 'Living Room' Library creates an open shop window space in the front of the library for exhibiting drawings and models, as well as hosting talks, presentations and advice surgeries. It is recommended that this multipurpose space is used as a flagship model for how our other libraries could be redesigned to ensure they are hubs of activities for communities, subject to available funding.

- **Palmers Green**

We are recommending that Palmers Green Library remains open. While Palmers Green is a relatively affluent ward (ranked 16th out of 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need), Palmers Green is a large library which is in a convenient location for residents in neighbouring wards to use, and its size means it can support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of nearby smaller libraries.

Given that the library has the lowest net expenditure of all the large libraries, Palmers Green represents a cost effective and efficient library which can be further developed to deliver an enhanced offer to Enfield residents. We are increasing the opening hours at Palmers Green by 4.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the service offer is consistent with Ordnance Unity Centre Library.

- **Oakwood**

We are recommending that Oakwood Library remain open. In the second phase consultation, we consulted on the closure of this library as, while the library is well used, Oakwood ward has the lowest level of local need. It was initially considered that it would have been reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Enfield Town and that this was an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

However, during the second phase consultation we received a high level of responses raising concerns about the impact of the proposed closures and the accessibility of alternative libraries in the Northwest of the borough. Some respondents raised concerns about not being able to use the tube to access a library in the borough, having previously been able to do so to access Bowes Road, Southgate and Oakwood libraries, and about the accessibility of parking at alternative libraries. Therefore, of these three libraries, we recommend keeping Oakwood library open as it has the highest usage, is fully accessible, is near transport links, requires the least maintenance work and is the furthest distance from an alternative library.

There is a high proportion of residents aged 65+ in Oakwood and neighbouring Cockfosters and Ridgeway wards, and it should be considered how we can further engage this cohort in the library service and provide services to support them to age well. The library also has a community room at the back of the building, and it should be explored how we can further maximise its usage to increase income at the library and share premises.

- **Enfield Town**

We are recommending that Enfield Town Library remains open. While Enfield Town ward has a relatively low level of need (ranked 17th out of 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need). Enfield Town is a large library which is in a convenient location for residents in neighbouring wards to use, and its size means it can support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of nearby community libraries.

We are increasing the opening hours at Enfield Town library by 1.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the service offer is consistent with Edmonton Green Library.

- **Ridge Avenue**

We are recommending that Ridge Avenue Library remains open. While Bush Hill Park and its neighbouring wards have a low level of local need, (21st out of the 25 wards), this library has a high number of visits and maximises value for money, in terms of space, as it is co-located with the borough's archive service.

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