

Developing a new library strategy for Enfield - Frequently Asked Questions

We must provide a comprehensive 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.

Like all local authorities, the Council is facing significant funding pressures. The Council has had a 42% reduction in overall funding since 2010. The Council is under a duty to set a balanced budget. The Council must make savings of £39.4 million in 2024/25, and there is a forecasted budget gap of £118.7 million for the 5 years through to 2028/29. It is inevitable that savings will need to be made now and in years to come across Council services in order to set a balanced budget.

The Council is under a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. In light of these funding pressures, we need to consider whether our library service can be delivered in a more efficient way, while ensuring that it continues to meet people's needs and is comprehensive.

We want to hear from you about whether you use our library service, your experience of our libraries and how we could deliver our library service more efficiently so as to make savings in the library budget.

We will use your feedback and ideas to help us develop a draft proposal for a new library strategy for Enfield. We will then publish and consult on this draft strategy in summer 2024. We will carefully consider any responses to that consultation and anticipate being able to finalise a new library strategy and implement any changes in early 2025.

What is the statutory duty for libraries?

Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local councils in England have a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all people working, living or studying full-time in the area who want to make use of it. In providing this service, councils must encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and lend books and other printed material free of charge.

In considering how best to deliver this statutory duty, the council is responsible for determining local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources. There are therefore a wide range of approaches open to the council in deciding how to meet its statutory duty.

How long is the phase one engagement?

The phase one engagement will take place over 12 weeks between December 2023 and March 2024.

Who can participate in the engagement?

Residents of Enfield, people who study in Enfield and people who work in Enfield, representatives of schools, colleges, health organisations, local business, voluntary

and community sector organisations, and Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade.

Why does the Council need to make financial savings?

Like all local authorities, the Council is facing significant funding pressures. The Council has had a 42% reduction in overall funding since 2010. The Council is under a duty to set a balanced budget. The Council must make savings of £39.4 million in 2024/25, and there is a forecasted budget gap of £118.7 million for the 5 years through to 2028/29. It is inevitable that savings will need to be made now and in years to come across the Council in order to set a balanced budget. There are no plans to reduce the libraries services budget until decisions have been taken on any future library strategy. However, given the funding pressures, it is inevitable that savings will need to be considered.

The Council is under a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. In light of these funding pressures, we need to consider whether our library service can be delivered in a more efficient way, while ensuring that it continues to meet people's needs and is comprehensive.

Is it possible that some libraries might close?

There are no plans to reduce the libraries services budget until decisions have been taken on any future library strategy. However, given the funding pressures, it is inevitable that savings will need to be considered.

Our phase one engagement is to find out more about how people are currently using our libraries, their experience of our libraries and how we could deliver our library service more efficiently so as to make savings in the library budget.

We will use your feedback and ideas through this engagement to help us develop a draft proposal for a new library strategy for Enfield. We will then publish and consult on this draft strategy in summer 2024. We will carefully consider any responses to that consultation and anticipate being able to finalise a new library strategy and implement any changes in early 2025.

How will the Council decide what changes to make?

Any future library strategy will be informed by analysis on the use of our 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; the first phase engagement with stakeholders; and the operating and maintenance costs of library buildings.

What are the equalities implications of this? Is there an equality impact assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to inform our phase one engagement plan - so that all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 are informed and encouraged to respond to the engagement.

We will carry out a further Equality Impact Assessment to inform the development of a draft proposal for a new library strategy.

The EqIA for the phase one engagement is published [here](#).

How do I find out more about the current library locations and opening times?

Information about the locations of our library service and opening hours are available on our Council website.

www.enfield.gov.uk/services/libraries/contact-information-and-opening-hours

How long is the phase one engagement?

The phase one engagement will take place over 12 weeks between December 2023 and March 2024.

Who can participate in the engagement?

Residents of Enfield, people who study in Enfield and people who work in Enfield, representatives of schools, colleges, health organisations, local business, voluntary and community sector organisations, and Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade.

How can I find out more and have my say?

This public engagement exercise on the library service in Enfield is running from 13th December 2023 to 6th March 2024. More information and an engagement questionnaire are available in all Enfield libraries and online at:

<https://www.enfield.gov.uk/consultations/library-engagement>

In addition, there will be public engagement sessions to be held around the borough for face-to-face questions, answers and discussion. A full schedule is available at your local library or online at:

<https://www.enfield.gov.uk/consultations/library-engagement>

How can I volunteer in my local library?

Volunteering for the library service can give you the opportunity to meet new people, develop new skills, improve your CV for future job opportunities and help your local community.

The following volunteer roles are available in Enfield libraries:

- [Adult's activity volunteer \(PDF, 112.51 KB\)](#)
- [Baby rhyme time, toddler time and under 5's volunteer \(PDF, 114.34 KB\)](#)
- [Children's activity volunteer \(PDF, 112.53 KB\)](#)
- [Community library volunteer \(PDF, 116.43 KB\)](#)
- [Computer buddy volunteer \(PDF, 114.65 KB\)](#)
- [ESOL conversation club volunteer \(PDF, 113.42 KB\)](#)

- [Library support volunteer \(PDF, 115.54 KB\)](#)
- [Meet and greet volunteer \(PDF, 113.93 KB\)](#)
- [Shelving squad volunteer \(PDF, 112.09 KB\)](#)
- [Summer reading challenge volunteer \(PDF, 114.92 KB\)](#)
- [Volunteer coordinator \(PDF, 115 KB\)](#)
- [Pantry support assistant volunteer \(PDF, 82.64 KB\)](#)
- [Community Hubs mental wellbeing champion volunteer \(PDF, 103.08 KB\)](#)
- [Community Hub volunteer \(PDF, 196.09 KB\)](#)

Volunteers must be aged 14 or over. Volunteers under 18 will need to provide a signature from their parent or guardian before they take up their role.

You will need to provide the contact details of 2 referees who are over 18 and know you well but are not members of your family. We will contact your referees if you are successful at interview.

Can I become a member of your Home Library Service?

The Home Library service provides books direct to people's homes if they cannot get to a library due to disability, age and/or medical condition.

For more information or to see if you can sign up for this service, email enfield.hls@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk or call 07826 511094.