# Appendix A

# Barnet Council - Library Options Paper

## October 2014

**2.    Overview of the current service and recent changes**

**2.1    Composition of the service**

The library service is made up of:

- Fourteen physical sites, ranging in size from Hendon (19,375 sq ft) to Childs Hill (3,767 sq ft), providing access to books and learning materials, computers, printers, photocopiers and wi-fi, study and meeting space, and a range of activities run by library staff and local community groups.
- The mobile library service, which runs for four days a week with stops in 12 locations across the Borough.
- The home library service, which provides access to books and information for people whose mobility is restricted due to age, disability or illness.
- The Local Studies and Archives service, which offers access to local historical materials by appointment three days a week, as well as online resources
- e-books, e-audio and other online resources and learning materials.
- The Schools Libraries Resource Service, which provides professional advice and support to school libraries as well as loans to support the National Curriculum.
- The Early Years service, which provides activities in libraries for under-5s and their parents and helps administer the national Bookstart scheme
- Support for adults, children and teenagers, including homework clubs and other activities.

These services are supported by a central management team and a service development team of professional librarians.

LBB is a member of the Central Buying Consortium for the purposes of stock purchase. The consortium bulk-processes new stock and does so cost-effectively.

The borough has two community libraries, in Friern Barnet and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

**2.2    Budget**

The full 2014-15 budget for the service is £4,536,910.  The Schools Libraries Resource Service and other traded services generate income of around £13,000.

Friern Barnet Community Library receives an annual grant of £25,000, and Hampstead Garden Suburb will receive £26,630, covering rent, utilities and other services.  Hampstead Garden Suburb library is located in a leased building with expiry of the lease in 2016; the rent is currently included in the annual grant from the council. Friern Barnet Library is located in a council owned building with no current obligation for rent.

The Media Fund budget for 2014-15 is £668,196 for physical and electronic books, CDs, and other audio and visual materials.

## 2.3 Staff and volunteers

The service is staffed (as of August 2014) by 101.82 FTE (150 posts; 73 full time and 77 part time; 33 of the part time posts Saturday and evening assistants only).

85.97 FTE (131 staff members) work across the physical network, including the home and mobile library services, and 15.84 FTE (19 staff members) are in central roles.

There were 83 volunteers working within the library service in 2012-13, against an average of 193 for the Borough's Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) comparator group, which benchmarks the performance of the service against similar local authorities. The proportion of hours worked by volunteers was 0.6% against a comparator average of 5.3%.

154 new volunteer applications were received in 2013-14, 98 from adults and 56 from young people.

## 2.4 Recent and future developments to the service

Following 2011's Strategic Library Review, the service has carried out a programme of changes, including:

- Extending customer self-service and introducing free wi-fi across all sites.
- Initiating a phased capital maintenance programme made up of nine projects. Those still outstanding are:
  - Works to East Barnet, East Finchley and North Finchley which will improve community meeting space and ensure Equality Act compliance for these libraries.
  - Procurement of a new mobile library vehicle.
- Creating the two community libraries (as a consequence of proposals to close Hampstead Garden Suburb and consolidate North Finchley and Friern Barnet into a new landmark library).
- Initiating an ICT transformation programme which will increase network capacity, replace staff and public access PC devices, improve wi-fi, replace software such as the Library Management and public network booking systems, and resolve current firewall issues which create revenue implications and barriers to good customer service.
- Planning further rationalisation of the estate, being developed through the Council's regeneration programme and including:
  - A new library in Colindale, relocating the existing library in Grahame Park.
  - A new library in the redeveloped Gateway House building, relocating the existing library in Finchley Church End.

## 2.5    Condition of the library estate

The condition of the current library estate varies but many sites are likely to require significant maintenance work in the next five years. The table below summarises known major works required by site.  Many sites have not been surveyed in recent years and it is likely that additional works will be required.

| Library | Major work required |
| --- | --- |
| Burnt Oak | None |
| Childs Hill | External and internal building works, full electrical rewiring, Equality Act compliance |
| Chipping Barnet | External and internal building works, new lighting system, new heating system, Equality Act compliance |
| Church End | *Moving to new site* |
| East Barnet | Internal building works, substantial electrical works, Equality Act compliance |
| East Finchley | Internal building works, substantial electrical works, Equality Act compliance |
| Edgware | Equality Act compliance |
| Golders Green | External building works, Equality Act compliance |
| Grahame Park | *Moving to new site* |
| Hendon | Minor internal and mechanical works |
| Mill Hill | External building works, Equality Act compliance |
| North Finchley | Equality Act compliance |
| Osidge | Full electrical rewiring, new boiler and heating system, asbestos, Equality Act compliance |
| South Friern | None |

Consideration needs to be given to the likely cost of completing these works when evaluating the future options for each site.

## 2.6    Current service – summary table

| | Burnt Oak | Childs Hill | Chipping Barnet | Church End | East Barnet | East Finchley | Edgware | Golders Green | Grahame Park | Hendon Library | Mill Hill | North Finchley | Osidge Library | South Friern | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Size (sq ft)** | 2,691 | 3,767 | 17,222 | 6,405 | 5,834 | 5,113 | 5,748 | 5,070 | 7,040 | 19,375 | 5,597 | 6,512 | 4,445 | 4,445 | 99,265 |
| **Staffed opening hours (per week)** | 51.0 | 35.0 | 56.5 | 50.5 | 50.5 | 40.0 | 53.5 | 46.0 | 35.0 | 56.5 | 43.0 | 43.0 | 39.0 | 35.0 | 634.5 |

## 3.	Statutory duties

## 3.1	Definition and guidance

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a library service. The Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) states that "It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof".  However, whilst there is a power to make facilities available to any person, the duty only applies to those persons whose residence or place of work is within the Borough or those who are undergoing full time education within the Borough.

In fulfilling its duty, a local authority must have regard to the desirability of:

- securing that facilities are available for the borrowing of and reference to books and other printed material and pictures and film to meet the general and special requirements adults and children;
- encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service and of providing advice as to its use and information as may be required by users of the service;

Case law has considered the meaning of the duty, specifically Ouseley, J in Bailey v London Borough of Brent [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin), stated that:

'A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.'

In Draper v Lincolnshire County Council [2014] EWHC 2388 (Admin), the question of delivery method and access should be considered, based on the whole service, rather than the location of library buildings:

"An example of access by digital technology could involve the identification of a book followed by delivery through a mobile library. But there are no doubt other ways in which such access could be achieved. The key is a reasonable ability to access the service by all residents of the county. This means that distances and time taken to reach a library must be reasonable and any particular problems, whether physical disabilities, or created by age or family considerations, must be capable of being met. Furthermore, budgetary constraints can properly be taken into account in deciding the nature of the service provided that it meets the requirements of s.7 of the 1964 Act."

The Secretary of State has a superintendent role over libraries and can order public inquiries into library services, where there is a concern that the library authority is not

meeting its statutory duty.  In 2009, Sue Charteris led a public inquiry into Wirral public library services.  The key findings from this inquiry are of importance to all library authorities.  The following factors are considered relevant to this paper:

- Requirement to make assessment of local need prior to considering changes to the library service
- Requirement to consider the specific needs of adults, including older people, disabled people, unemployed people and those living in deprived areas.
- The need to have due regard for the general needs of children, including consideration of the role of schools in the library service.
- The need to take a strategic approach to the library service, rather than focusing on asset management and cost savings.
- The need to have a clear understanding of the extent and range of services currently provided within libraries.
- Consideration of the need for a comprehensive outreach service.

To comply with the duty, the Council needs to ensure that the breadth and quality of the service provided can be considered comprehensive and efficient. This will mean ensuring that the services provided meet the needs of local people. This would include:

- Securing and keeping a wide range of free resources, including books and other printed matter, pictures, sound recordings, films and other materials, to browse and borrow in sufficient number, range and quality;
- To meet the general requirements of both adults and children living, working or studying in the local area;
- Free independent information and advice from staff; and
- Encouraging use and participation of the service, for example, through clear and easy ways to join, access, shape and influence the service.


Consultation with Barnet's library users in 2011 and 2014 asked residents what they valued about library services.  Many of the key points from their responses are echoed in research commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association in 2010.  The main themes are set out below.

- Libraries are important community 'hubs' or 'centres', which help local residents connect with one another and access services and activities (MLA 2010, Barnet 2014).  Library buildings are also valuable as physical spaces, and mean different things to different people (MLA 2010, Barnet 2014).
- Libraries have a strong social role in bringing communities together. Libraries are seen as particularly welcoming and inclusive of marginalised people, perhaps in part because the service is free or cheap to use (MLA 2010, Barnet 2014).

- The public continue to see libraries' core purpose as focused on reading, learning and finding information. Book borrowing remains the most frequent activity, both for pleasure and study. The unique nature of library services (for example, access to reference books, free internet, an informal learning environment, children's activities, help from library staff and specialist services such as genealogy research) also attracts the public. That these services remain free or very cheap to use is again seen as essential. In Barnet, children's services and engagement with children in particular are consistently seen as core elements of the library service (MLA 2010, Barnet 2011, Barnet 2014).

The service being delivered also needs to be accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. It has never been the case that every resident lived close to a library, but distances and time taken to reach a library must nonetheless be reasonable and any particular problems, whether physical disabilities, or those created by age or family circumstances, must be able to be met. Budgetary constraints can be taken into account when deciding the nature of the service provided.

Lincolnshire County Council's 2014 review of their service reconfigured the library network so that 95% of the population were able to travel to a library within 30 minutes by public transport. This was tested through a legal challenge which found faults in their process but not the substance of their proposals. This 30 minute standard matches the Department for Transport's indicator measuring the accessibility of public services in a local area. Respondents to consultation carried out in Barnet in 2013 also cited a maximum journey time of 30 minutes as their optimal distance from a library.

The options in this paper use the 30 minute public transport travel time standard to judge access to sites in the Barnet library network and have modelled travel times to and from these, using Transport for London data.

In order to make best use of the assets available, proposals should not duplicate activities or resources already available elsewhere. This may involve reconfiguring activities within libraries to coordinate with those provided by other organisations and to ensure that they are not duplicating provision.

There have been a number of high profile judicial challenges to library authorities. These have focused on the following areas:

- Failure to ensure a sufficiently rigorous and timely consultation process.
- Failure to carry out a needs assessment or make a judgement as to whether, taking account of such assessment, the service is comprehensive and efficient.
- Failure to comply with the public sector equality duty.

- Failure to consider an expression of interest from a charitable organisation to manage libraries.

Successful challenges have been based on the process of decision making, as well as failing to meet the statutory duty.

The Arts Council England, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, has produced a guiding principles document in relation to community libraries. The key points in this document are as follows:

- Library services are responding to many drivers of change, including technological innovations, customer expectations, joining up services, financial challenges and localism.
- Community involvement in library services is growing, with more than one in three library authorities having at least one community library operating within their area.
- In considering community involvement, the library authority should take a strategic and long term view, preferably as part of a wider review of its library service.
- Community involvement can take many different forms, taking account of local need, partnership between the local authority and the community and asset management.
- Community libraries can be enterprising and generate income, including setting up cafes, running shops and providing related services.

## 4.    Needs assessment

The needs assessment underpinning this strategy has made use of quantitative data drawn from the Barnet library service and from benchmarking exercises, cross-referencing this with demographic data from the Office for National Statistics and transport and accessibility data from Transport for London.

It has also made use of qualitative data about the service, including satisfaction surveys, the extensive consultation work carried out to develop the 2011 strategy, more recent consultation including a number of focus groups carried out in summer 2014 to inform the development of these options, and it has linked these to national research about library use and the needs of different residents.

The full needs assessment is attached as Appendix B.

The analysis shows that current provision is extensive and includes a range of popular services and activities.  Libraries are also well-regarded by non-users.  However, the proportion of residents who are library users is relatively low in comparison to similar local authorities and use of some specific elements of the service (such as the home library service and use of library PCs) is lower than others.  Library use has been falling across the entire network over the past three years though there is variation between the different library branches.  Book-borrowing has fallen most in East Barnet and South Friern and remained more consistent in Church End and North Finchley.

Users are sometimes unaware either of the wider library offer or of services relevant specifically to them.  This has been a feature of both 2011 and 2014 consultation (for example, older people, young people, and disabled people).  Libraries in some geographical areas may not be reaching the resident population and could perhaps benefit from reviewing their access (for example, Muslim residents, Gypsies and Travellers) to ensure that the service continues to meet local need.  Overall, increasing awareness of the library offer is an opportunity to make it more comprehensive.

Strong feedback was given that libraries could widen their offer during consultation carried out by Barnet in 2013.  To remain comprehensive in the future, the service should also look to continue diversifying its provision.  BME residents have expressed wishes for more services and activities appropriate to people from diverse backgrounds in both 2011 and 2014.  The BME population of Barnet is projected to increase from 38% to 42% by 2021, which suggests that these needs will increase.  This would also provide an opportunity to review provision for underrepresented groups such as Muslim residents and Gypsies and Travellers.  Other groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender residents, will need to continue to be able to access appropriate information and resources.

The service could also be made more comprehensive by increasing access in order to extend its reach.  Limits on opening hours have emerged as a consistent theme, focusing on the needs of working age adults (Barnet, 2014).  Use of the service is relatively low among working age adults and the service is in high demand on Sundays.  Extending opening hours could help it meet the needs of this group more effectively.

The themes identified in the needs assessment will be developed further in the discussion of the various considerations and options later in this paper.

## 5.      Outcomes and objectives

The Library Strategy was last updated in 2011. The following outcomes and objectives are largely based on those agreed at that time, but have been updated to reflect the feedback from consultation since 2011 and the financial challenges now facing the local authority.

The updated vision for the library service in Barnet is as follows:

> 1.  **A library service that provides children and adults with reading, literacy and learning opportunities.**
> 2.  **A library service that engages with communities.**
> 3.  **A library service that makes knowledge and information easily accessible.**
> 4.  **A library service that can withstand current and future financial challenges and safeguard services for vulnerable people.**

The Council needs to ensure that it continues to perform its statutory duties, promote literacy and access to information, and ensure that the library service is suited to the needs of the local community at the same time at meeting this significant financial challenge. Over the last few years accessibility in libraries has been improved, wi-fi access has been rolled out and investment in updating the IT equipment available has commenced.

People who use Barnet's libraries hold the service in high regard, with satisfaction ratings running at close to 90%.  We know that library buildings are highly valued community assets.  Through consultation, people have told us that they see their libraries as community hubs: welcoming, inclusive places where residents can connect with each other, find out about local activities, and benefit from an increasing range of services and facilities.

We also know that while satisfaction with the quality of the service is high, the proportion of the population who use libraries is relatively low compared to other local authority areas. Our challenge is to provide capacity to meet public service objectives, increase usage of the service and maintain satisfaction without the funds to maintain the status quo. Our ability to achieve this is dependent on greater community involvement and the application of new technology in libraries and online.

The service needs to maintain local access to libraries across the Borough, ensuring that almost everyone will be able to reach a library from their home in less than half an hour's public transport travel time.  We will make use of new technology to increase opening hours, extending the service to people who cannot currently access the service during the working day.

Promoting literacy is a vital role for the library service and we will continue to run a range of schemes and initiatives to further this goal. These will include early years activities, book clubs and homework clubs.

We will build on the strong positive support expressed by communities for their local libraries.  We know that more people want to volunteer in libraries than we currently have the capacity to manage.  We will ensure communities can get more involved in shaping, supporting and, where appropriate, running their libraries and the activities provided in them.  We will use the library estate to support local businesses, channelling the income generated back into the service.

### 5.1    A library service that provides children and adults with reading, literacy and learning opportunities

Reading and learning materials are provided for loan and library use, in traditional print/hard copy formats as well as provision of e-book, e-audio and online learning resources.

The Barnet Digital Library will increase reading and learning opportunities for local people, while the physical library estate continues to offer access to reading, literacy and learning opportunities for children and adults.

At least 95% of Barnet residents can reach their local public library by public transport and have access to study space and to learning activities run for communities by communities and by local partners.

Outreach and development is targeted at those most in need, with strategic partnerships in Education, Adult and Children's Services, and appropriate local partners.

The service continues to deliver onsite and online literacy activities and reading schemes (The National Reading Offer) such as the *Summer Reading Challenge*, *Six Book Challenge* and *City Reads*.

### 5.2    A library service that engages with communities.

Library buildings continue to act as focal points of community activity, with further integration of services and use of library spaces which reflects local needs.

Opportunities for local people to shape and support library services are increased, through an expanded range of volunteering roles and advisory groups.

Social media and new technologies are increasingly used to deliver peer to peer customer interaction and support, offering residents the opportunities to share reading recommendations, advice and support.

Local commercial partnership opportunities are exploited where possible.

### 5.3 A library service that makes knowledge and information easily accessible.

Local and Council information is provided in both hard and soft copy forms.

The library service continues to act as a gateway to local services, expanding its use of self-service technology to increase access to those provided by the Council.

Online library services, accessible 24:7, offer the library service increased opportunities to deliver literacy, learning and information services out of hours and to those unable to visit static service points.

Users of the physical libraries have access to modernised ICT equipment and ICT learning support.

### 5.4 A library service that can withstand current and future financial challenges and safeguard services for vulnerable people.

Barnet's libraries are configured in such a way as to support the Council in meeting these challenges.

Income from services, assets, trading and other unique capabilities is maximised in order to take the universal free-to-use library service to the maximum number of people.

Opportunities presented by new technology and improved volunteering support are maximised to preserve libraries as physical spaces/community assets.

## 6.    Considerations

This section outlines the approaches identified that could deliver cost savings or increase income for the library service.

### 6.1    Volunteering and community involvement

There has been a significant trend across the country in recent years towards a much greater involvement of volunteers in the running of library services. Barnet has an unusually low proportion of hours worked by volunteers and there are roughly four times more applications to volunteer in libraries than the number of volunteers who work there.  LB Redbridge is an example of a library service that makes use of volunteers to allow it to operate with lower revenue expenditure than Barnet but maintain a similar network size.  Redbridge's libraries are operated by a charitable trust which may also be a way to motivate more volunteers to get involved with the service.

Respondents to consultation in Barnet have expressed broad support for greater volunteer involvement in the service, to complement the work of library staff (Barnet, 2011, 2014).  Older people have expressed some concerns that this would lead to fewer trained librarians in the service; care should be taken to assure them that the number of trained librarians would not be affected.

There are a number of approaches for increasing the use of volunteers in libraries, including:

| Approach | Description | Potential for savings |
|---|---|---|
| Enhancement of service | Use of volunteers to run additional services in libraries (e.g. toddler activities, reading clubs, job clubs). | None – may be small increase in costs to manage volunteers. |
| New service delivery model | Libraries could be open with one member of staff complemented by one or more volunteers (all libraries are currently staffed by two or more individuals). Potential to increase engagement from local communities with the service. Would be very difficult to manage operations in this way – it would be likely to lead to more unscheduled closures should issues arise with volunteer dependency. | Would almost halve staffing costs for a library. |

| Approach | Description | Potential for savings |
|---|---|---|
| Volunteer run service, enabled by technology | The Council would provide the building, stock, equipment and other premises related costs along with additional technology to facilitate easier opening and closing. The local authority would undertake core management tasks and volunteers would staff the library. | Staff savings. |
| Community run library – with specification | The Council would provide the building and potentially stock, equipment and additional technology to facilitate easier opening and closing. A community or other voluntary group would run the library and meet a minimum specification set by the library. The inclusion of a specification is likely to result in the council paying a significant grant to attract a group to run a library in this fashion.<br>Potential to attract external funding, increased if the building is leased on a term in excess of 25 years. | Staff savings less any grant given to the community group. |
| Community run library – without a specification | The Council would provide the building and current stock.<br>This group would then run the library as it saw fit, without any kind of specification. This is likely to lead to a diversification of service delivery and the development of a community hub. The freedom and flexibility in running the space is likely to attract a broader range of groups / individuals and enable a more sustainable solution.  It is assumed that the Council would need to pay premises related costs.<br>Potential to attract external funding, increased if the building is leased on a term in excess of 25 years. | Staff costs.<br>Stock. |

## 6.2    Reduction in library size and rental of the released space

Another approach to reduce the operating cost of a given library is to make it smaller. Significantly, the rental of any freed up space has the potential to generate significant income to support the service. The suitability of each site for sub-division and multi-use is different and some lend themselves more effectively to such proposals dependent on size, location, layout, independent access and alternative

uses. Respondents to consultation have been broadly in favour of use of libraries to generate income but are keen to ensure that profits were channelled back into the service.

The minimum size for a library has been assumed to be something similar to that in Hampstead Garden Suburb (c.540 sq ft) and moving to a library this size would lead to the greatest potential saving. This would clearly lead to a reduction in the range of stock immediately available in a given site, but this would be mitigated to some extent by the continued availability of the 'reserve and collect' service at each branch.

Achieving these savings would require some capital works to separate the space and is dependent on finding suitable tenants for each site. The lettings process and budgetary risk of not finding tenants would best sit outside of the library service in estates management where the expertise in these matters is situated.

In some cases, a better financial return from reducing library size may be secured through redevelopment and / or relocation than rental. These approaches are explored below.

## 6.3    Re-location

A whole library, or an element of a library, could be moved to an alternative location. The main opportunities identified are:

- Moving a library into new build premises on a development site. Under this approach, a new, more efficient library could be provided which reduces premises costs and buildings maintenance, and it can be ensured that the use of space is fit-for-purpose.
- Moving a library into an alternative Council or public sector partner building. There would be more opportunities to do this if the size of the library was also reduced.
- Moving a library into a 'community hub' building with a range of voluntary and community sector tenants could create a more sustainable format for a volunteer run library.
- Moving a smaller library into a leased property if the cost of the lease is exceeded by the potential income from the released site.
- Moving a children's library into a children's centre or alternative community venue.

Relocation would free up existing sites for rental, development or disposal and the additional income would be a further saving.

## 6.4    Redevelopment

A number of library sites have the potential for mixed use development with a new library facility below a number of residential dwellings, funded through the residential

development. This could reduce premises costs and buildings maintenance and would ensure that the use of space is fit-for-purpose along with the potential for a capital receipt.

## 6.5    Reduced opening hours

The opening hours of each library could be reduced to release staff and, to a much smaller extent, utility costs. In developing proposals of this sort consideration would need to be given to:

- Peak usage times.
- Usage by targeted groups.
- Opening across the network.
- Ability to efficiently rota staff.

## 6.6    Income generation

There are a variety of ways in which the service could attempt to generate additional income with varying degrees of risk. These could include:

- Digital barrier-buster for job seekers (charged to DWP)
- Hires of flexible library spaces
- Ticketed arts and cultural events
- 'Friends of Barnet Libraries' scheme
- Digital independence circles
- Vending machines and commercial collection points
- Advertising and sponsorship
- Increased fees and charges including the introduction of fines for children's stock

## 6.7    Library closures

The complete closure of a library service on a given site would generate revenue savings of between £135k and £480k. The statutory duty to maintain a comprehensive and efficient service relates to the service, rather than the buildings. It is therefore possible to provide a comprehensive and efficient service with fewer library buildings and other options for accessing library resources.

If the old library site was then leased, the rental income generated could also be used to mitigate the need for further cuts in service. Alternatively, income could be secured through the redevelopment of the site.

When considering site closures, a number of factors need to be considered to identify which sites would be most suitable. These would include:

- Impact on travel times for local people to their next closest library.
- Current usage of the library including equalities impact.

- Financial impact.
- Condition of the site.

## 6.8    The 'open' library.

The use of technology can now allow the Council to open and close a library without the need for any staff to be on site. Visitors would access the library during unstaffed periods by scanning their library card and entering a PIN number. Once inside they would be able to use self-serve technology to borrow and return items, use computers, print and copy. CCTV would provide additional security.

There is limited precedent for this for UK public libraries but the approach is standard for public libraries in Scandinavia and is now the norm for university libraries in the UK. It would be feasible (with some capital investment) in all libraries – but some sites would be challenging to enable and would require significant capital investment. The ongoing revenue costs are relatively low at around £10k per library per year. Unstaffed opening hours will generate activity for staff or volunteers to do at a later point – e.g. re-stocking.

This approach to library opening could be enhanced by a remote voice or video information and advice service allowing interaction with library staff in other libraries.

The technology could be implemented to:

1. Extend opening hours.
2. Mitigate a reduction in staffed opening hours.
3. Move to an entirely unstaffed opening model.

The third approach would still require staffing to maintain effective running of the library (for example in re-stocking) but these would not be offering information and advice to visitors. Some of this work could be done by volunteers.

## 6.9    Alternative delivery models

A range of delivery models have been considered for the library service. These are summarised in the following table:

| Delivery model | Quality of services | Savings potential | Control of services | Citizen and service user focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-house | Service quality is currently strong – high satisfaction with the service. | None additional. | Maximum control. | Strong – although some distrust arising from implementation of previous strategy may limit ability to engage. |
| Educational partnership | Educational providers should have strong track record in delivery of library services. | Joining up public and educational libraries should deliver a significantly more cost effective service. | Medium – would be contractual or partnership arrangements in place. | Risk that service would cater for students at the expense of the general population – would need to be mitigated through clear partnership agreement / specification. |
| Staff or community owned mutual | Current management team are supportive of this approach. This would increase the likelihood of retaining expertise during change.<br>There is evidence from other public service mutuals that staff are more productive and satisfied with their work and are better able to innovate. | The mutual could benefit from reductions in business rates (over half of which would be a net saving to the borough) and may be more successful at engaging communities and securing the services of volunteers or access alternative funding streams.<br>No requirement for profit generation.<br>Risk of limited commercial management expertise.<br>Cost of transition. | Medium – likely to be contractual arrangements in place. | Strong – distinct identity could also improve ability to engage. |

| Delivery model | Quality of services | Savings potential | Control of services | Citizen and service user focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Outsource - including charitable organisations | The market for delivery of library services has grown over recent years and there is evidence in London and other areas of sustained levels of service combined with savings delivery. | The models promoted tend to include an increased use of volunteering – looked at separately in this document – and from reductions in management, premises related costs and business rates (due to the charitable status of the delivery vehicle - effective 56% saving to borough). The commercial provider is likely to require a profit and this needs to be accounted for when estimating savings. Cost of procurement. | Medium – would be contractual arrangements in place. | Strong evidence from other boroughs of ability to significantly increase volunteering suggested ability to maintain this focus. |

| Delivery model | Quality of services | Savings potential | Control of services | Citizen and service user focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared service | Should be maintained – would depend on partner authority / authorities. | There are minimal costs that would be lowered through a shared service – stock is already purchased through a consortium and the impact of operating scale on the costs of running an individual library are minimal. There are central service costs that could be shared amongst authorities such as the management overhead. Some neighbouring boroughs already have outsourced arrangements, which may impact on the availability of a shared service partner. | Medium – less control when trying to meet objectives of multiple boroughs. | May lose unique borough identity. |

### 6.10 Changing the stock purchase model

Alternative stock purchasing models have been investigated but none have been feasible. Barnet is already part of a stock purchasing consortium and so benefits from negotiated discounts. Though individual items could be purchased cheaper in some instances, especially if purchased second hand, the processing cost of protecting the books, tagging them and entering them onto the system would negate any potential savings.

Sourcing shelf-ready second-hand stock from a major retailer or aggregator would be the only way to make material savings and still sustain high enough quality and volume. Initial market testing of this approach suggests that it is unlikely to be viable.

### 6.11 Reduce spend on stock

The service could reduce spend on physical and / or digital stock.

## 7.    Financial challenge

Despite economic growth, public sector cuts will continue until 2020, coupled with rising demand. Barnet has dealt effectively with the first wave of austerity, by anticipating the cuts before they arrived and planning ahead. The Council is now planning for the next 5 years and how a further £72m will be saved.

On 23 June 2014 the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee noted the savings target of £8m allocated by the Policy and Resources Committee and agreed to complete a Commissioning Plan and savings proposals by December 2014. Each of the Committees has an allocated savings target and there are difficult decisions to make in all areas. The business planning process since then has considered each of the service components within the committee remit including:

- Education services.
- Children with disabilities, special educational needs (SEN) and high needs, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
- Looked after children and young people.
- Safeguarding and children in need.
- Family support.
- Youth (incl. youth offending).
- Libraries.

The process started with investigating the financial contribution libraries could make whilst still delivering a comprehensive and efficient service. As a result of this, the options presented in this report deliver a saving of £2.85m between 2015 and 2020.

## 8.    Conclusions

Having considered the approaches in the light of the financial challenge a number of conclusions have been reached. This section outlines some opportunities for which there is a clear proposed direction of travel and others where a range of approaches still need to be considered through consultation and further investigation.

### 8.1    Use of volunteers

Increasing the use of volunteers should definitely be pursued to improve the services offered from libraries and / or to help mitigate other changes implemented. This will need the right resource and an improved approach to recruitment, training and volunteer management.

Of the approaches identified for a volunteer led service in a library, the preferred approach is for a community run library without a service specification. This has been chosen because it:

- Allows the facility to be used according to local community demand.
- Provides the most attractive and practically manageable approach for potentially interested groups and individuals.
- Delivers significant savings.

### 8.2    Closures and reductions in size

Options with and without closures need to be tested through consultation to explore potential trade-offs between this and other approaches.

When determining which libraries should be closed in the options below, the primary factor considered has been to look at the sites that can be closed whilst maintaining access to a library within 30 minutes of public transport travel time for at least 95% of residents.

Where there is a choice of sites, consideration has been given to usage levels, site condition, financial impact and proximity to other sites.

With regard to a reduction in the size of libraries, it has been concluded that if reducing, it is best to maximise income from the freed up space by leaving around 540 sq. ft. for the library. This would allow all essential services to be delivered on-site and though stock would be limited, the ability to reserve and collect any item from the whole service will significantly mitigate this.

**8.3    Re-location and redevelopment**

The physical condition of many library buildings means that over the medium term the likely cost of improvements to maintain them is high. Consultees have given feedback that the current library buildings can be a barrier as they are not well matched to modern library use. Elderly and disabled library users have highlighted the need for improved parking and disabled access to the library buildings, and the current estate makes it difficult to achieve these aims.  As such, it has been concluded that opportunities to create new provision through relocation or redevelopment should be actively identified and explored for feasibility.

The current network is not inaccessible but only 50% of library sites are in the upper half of the Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) scale.  Libraries are positioned near many of Barnet's high streets and shopping centres but their locations often limit the footfall they can attract

Plans already exist for a new library in Colindale, relocating the existing library in Grahame Park and a new library in the redeveloped Gateway House building, relocating the existing library in Finchley Church End.

Any scheme would need to result in a library that compares favourably to the proposed changes in whichever option of change was agreed for implementation. This would mean the new site would need to be at least the same size and in a location at least as well served by public transport.

Opportunities will also be sought for the co-location of libraries with other public services and community facilities. There is greater potential for this to be viable if a library is reduced in size.. There should be a presumption that under options that include smaller library sites re-location is likely to secure the best financial return.


**8.4    Opening hours**

Consultation exercises have consistently shown the value placed on an accessible service open at a range of times to suit various segments of the population. Experience from around the country has shown that when a library's opening hours significantly reduce and do not follow an easy to understand pattern, usage quickly declines.  As such it is the Council's intention that opening hours are extended through the use of technology for all libraries remaining open.

To achieve the level of savings required from the service will require a reduction in staffed opening hours. Preparing a timetable to allocate staffed hours across the estate will need to ensure a good level of accessibility for all and safeguard usage for groups with additional requirements. Ensuring staffed times provide access for children and young people will be prioritised to ensure priority outcomes of the service can continue to be achieved.

## 8.5    Income generation

Additional income generation should definitely be a feature of the response to the challenges facing the service. A significant financial opportunity is to commercially rent any freed up space in the libraries estate and retain this rental income to subsidise the service. Whilst further work would be needed to deal with implementation issues (including planning) there is confidence that a range of tenants could be found should space be made available. Usage could vary from office space to community, café or retail.

Having assessed the additional income opportunities identified, the following have been chosen as priorities for implementation based on feasibility, return on investment and impact:

- Hires of flexible library spaces and parking spaces.
- 'Friends of Barnet Libraries' scheme.
- Vending machines and commercial collection points.
- Advertising and sponsorship.
- Increased fees and charges including the introduction of fines for children's stock.

Other opportunities could be explored in future to help provide additional investment for the service.

## 8.6    Alternative providers

The initial consideration of the various options for alternative delivery of libraries suggests that either a community or staff owned mutual or outsourced option would deliver the greatest level of benefits. The analysis shows that additional savings can be achieved through these options with the potential for other service improvements. The next phase of work should include a fuller options appraisal to be informed by consultation feedback, engagement with the management team and soft market testing.

For Hendon library the most effective option would seem to be for a partnership with an educational institution given the potential for an enhanced service that meets the needs of the predominant user base whilst also delivering savings. If this option proved unviable following further investigation, Hendon would be considered as part of the whole service as set out above.

Relevant interested parties could express an interest in running a library or a group of libraries to the Council and any expression received would have to be properly considered.

During the consultation we will explore options for the delivery model, including in-house and shared services as well as the other delivery models. While these are not preferred options, they will be considered further during the next phase and will be included in the consultation questionnaire.

## 8.7    Stock

If libraries are made smaller, the stock purchasing budget would be reduced accordingly so that the stock level was appropriate to the new level of storage space – all stock would be available from all libraries through the 'reserve and collect' service. Given the increasing demand for and wide accessibility of digital stock, it is proposed that the purchasing budget is maintained. This will ensure a more efficient library service.

## 9. Options

### 9.1 Common features of all options

A number of features would be common across all options. These would include maintaining the following elements of the existing service:

- A mobile library service – maintained at current levels and used to 'top up' access to the library network for communities across Barnet.
- A home library service – maintained at current levels and used to ensure easy access to the library network for people with mobility issues.
- A Local Studies and Archives service – maintained at current levels.
- Support for adults, children and teenagers, including homework clubs and other activities – available in all staffed libraries.
- The Schools Libraries Resource Service – maintained at current levels, ensuring that school-based literacy activities for children and young people in the Borough continue to develop
- The early years service – maintained at current levels.

These services will be critical in promoting access for people who find it difficult to reach physical library buildings. They also allow the service to explore different routes for maintaining literacy-related activities and access to information outside the physical library network. It will be important to raise awareness of these services as consultation has suggested many groups who could potentially benefit from them do not know that they are on offer.

The following elements of the existing service would be expanded or developed:

- Improved self-service online technology – including existing 'reserve and collect' service making any book available to collect from any library now made available through new account service on Council website and delivered more efficiently using new Library Management System.
- e-books, e-audio and other online resources and learning materials – maintained at current levels or increased.

Both these developments will make the service more accessible. Self-service online technology supports a flexible library network with residents able to access any book from the library most convenient to them, while the digital library will enable people to access resources without needing to go to a library building and help the service meet the needs of older and disabled people. Consultation suggests that many people who would be interested in using these services do not know they are available and use of the digital library is currently relatively low at 1.5% of all transactions, even though market developments elsewhere suggest that the appetite for digital media is expanding significantly. This suggests there is scope to extend the offer and ensure potential users are aware of it.

The options also assume:

- A new delivery model for libraries. This could be an employee or community owned mutual, a community trust or similar or an outsourced provider. It has also been assumed that a partnership with an educational institution would manage the Hendon branch, maintaining a smaller library on that site or nearby and allowing alternative use of some or all areas of the current building.
- Making use of opportunities to generate additional income. This would including increasing the use of facilities, potentially including meeting room hire, offering parking spaces for rent, collection points such as Amazon Lockers and businesses advertising in libraries and on the mobile library vehicle. It would also include some increases to fees and charges.
- A greater role for volunteers to enhance the service provided in libraries.
- Continued support to community libraries in Hampstead Garden Suburb and Friern Barnet.

Three options have been developed to best achieve the vision and objectives for libraries in Barnet and achieve the savings required. These are outlined in the following sections.

**9.2    Option 1: Maintain the full reach of the existing library network.**

The service would centre on four 'core' libraries, in Chipping Barnet – the busiest of our current sites; in the new libraries in Church End and Colindale (replacement for the current Grahame Park library), each of which will have state-of-the-art reading, activity and study services, and a smaller library in Hendon.

Outside these four libraries, the library space within each building would be smaller – around 540 square feet on average.   We would let out space within the library buildings for commercial use – utilising our assets to their full potential and potentially supporting small and medium enterprises in line with our ambition to become the best Borough in London for small businesses. Alternatively income will be secured through redevelopment of sites, ensuring continued provision of a library in each case. It is likely that a number of libraries would move locally but any new sites would ensure equally good if not better access via public transport. Library users will still have access to books from anywhere in the network at their local library through the reserve and collect service.

This would allow us to maintain the existing library network – no libraries would close.  We would extend current opening hours by 50% across the network.  Library staff would be present to support library users and provide information and advice for half of current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends.  Overall, hours would be extended using new technology to keep libraries open outside staffed times, with remote access to information, advice and support available by telephone from within the libraries during core business hours.

Under this option, savings will be achieved as follows:

|  | Staff | Buildings | Stock | Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proportion of total savings** | 68% | 5% | 11% | 16% |

Consultation tells us that residents value the ability to access a library near their homes and that this is particularly important for students, children and older people. Residents also tell us that they value library buildings as welcoming, inclusive spaces where communities can come together and that this is particularly important to certain groups (people with mental health issues, BME residents, and people from areas of deprivation).

This option prioritises continued access to a 'local' library for all residents who currently have this.  It provides the greatest number of points at which residents can access the service of any option, and allows the largest extension to current opening hours of any of the three.  Almost all residents favour this but it is likely to be of particular benefit to working age people who are currently underrepresented among library users.  The network would be as physically accessible as the current service,

if not more so, with better facilities for older people, people with disabilities, and parents with children.
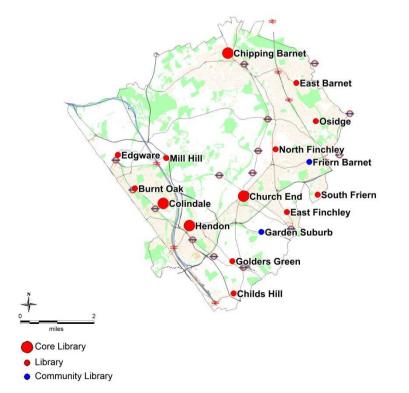
It is likely that people would use different libraries for different purposes, with the four core libraries as centres for literacy and learning activities for people from across the Borough.  The smaller libraries would see some reductions in the range of activities available (activities would be likely to fall by about one fifth across the network overall), and space would need to be used flexibly, with compromises made between different uses.  Some activities could be provided in appropriate locations elsewhere (for example, job clubs). The reconfiguration of library buildings needed to implement this would be likely to result in better accessibility and modernised library spaces.

Some groups of users would be less comfortable with the reduction in staffed hours (older people; adults with learning disabilities; people with mental health issues) though continuing telephone support from staff and, potentially, assistance from volunteers should mitigate this.  It is proposed that unaccompanied children would not be able to access a library during unstaffed hours, although activities where an adult is present, such as school visits, could still proceed.  Staffed hours would be targeted at hours of peak use, taking into account times when children most need to access libraries.

**Option 1: Maintain the full reach of the existing library network – summary table**

| | Burnt Oak | Childs Hill | Chipping Barnet | Church End | East Barnet | East Finchley | Edgware | Golders Green | Grahame Park / Colindale | Hendon Library | Mill Hill | North Finchley | Osidge Library | South Friern | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Size** | 539 | 538 | 17,222 | 6,405 | 539 | 571 | 539 | 539 | 7,040 | 19,375 | 538 | 538 | 538 | 538 | **55,460** |
| **Staffed opening hours (per week)** | 25.5 | 17.5 | 28.3 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 20.0 | 26.8 | 23.0 | 17.5 | 28.3 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 19.5 | 17.5 | **317.3** |
| **Un-staffed opening hours (per week)** | 51.0 | 35.0 | 56.5 | 50.5 | 50.5 | 40.0 | 53.5 | 46.0 | 35.0 | 56.5 | 43.0 | 43.0 | 39.0 | 35.0 | **634.5** |

**Option 1: Maintain the full reach of the existing library network – library map**



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### 9.3 Option 2: Maintain the depth and quality of service provision within a consolidated library network.

The network would consist of eight libraries: the two new libraries in Church End and Colindale (replacement for the current Grahame Park library) and the existing libraries in Chipping Barnet, East Barnet, Edgware, North Finchley, Hendon and Golders Green. Libraries would be concentrated around the Borough's travel hubs – at least 95% of Barnet's population would be able to access a library within 30 minutes' travel from their home. We would review the mobile library's current routes to ensure any less accessible areas would also have the opportunity to access a mobile library stop.

Each library would provide a full range of activities supporting literacy for all. The libraries would be staffed for 60% of the current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends. Opening hours would be increased, using new technology to allow access to libraries from 7am to 10pm, outside staffed times. This would mean an increase of over 30% in open library hours across the borough despite the reduction in branch numbers. During unstaffed opening times, remote access to information, advice and support would be available by telephone.

Libraries at Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Mill Hill, East Finchley, Osidge and South Friern would be closed and the buildings rented out for commercial use – utilising our assets to their full potential and potentially supporting small and medium enterprises in line with our ambition to become the best Borough in London for small businesses. Alternatively income will be secured through redevelopment of sites.

Under this option, savings will be achieved as follows:

|  | Staff | Buildings | Stock | Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proportion of total savings | 55% | 11% | 8% | 26% |

This option would allow eight of the Borough's largest, busiest libraries to continue providing libraries, similar, in physical size and in the range of activities provided, to the service which operates today.

The libraries that would close currently provide around 40% of activities across the network but some of these would be consolidated into other sites or could be re-provided through alternative routes. Children and young people would benefit from continued access to a broad range of literacy and learning provision under this option. Larger sites would also mean a larger amount of study space distributed across the network, benefiting children, young people and students.

This option has the highest level of staffed hours of the three, offering the highest levels of access for children and young people. Some groups of disabled people (in particular, people with learning disabilities or mental health issues) would also

benefit from longer staffed hours.  Opening hours would not increase overall to the same extent as in Option 1.

The closure of the library at Burnt Oak has an impact on some BME and faith groups and on unemployed people, a high proportion of whom use this site.  However, Burnt Oak library is frequently cited as an unpopular site by consultees and alternative provision is available nearby in the libraries at Edgware and Grahame Park (in future, Colindale).
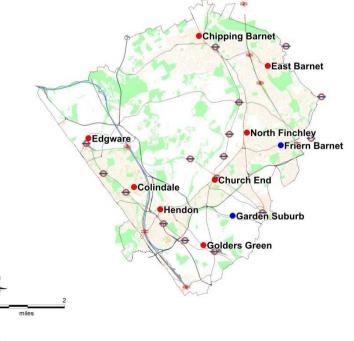
Closures would affect the ability of certain groups of residents to access a library. Just fewer than 15,000 people would be unable to travel from their homes to a library by public transport within 30 minutes.  Disabled people and some BME and faith groups (Black British: Africans and Muslims) are particularly affected by these changes.

We would invest in the remaining sites to improve their accessibility and modernise them, as well as exploring redevelopment or relocation to a modern building as an option where possible.

**Option 2: Maintain the depth and quality of service provision within a consolidated library network – summary table**

| | Burnt Oak | Childs Hill | Chipping Barnet | Church End | East Barnet | East Finchley | Edgware | Golders Green | Grahame Park / Colindale | Hendon Library | Mill Hill | North Finchley | Osidge Library | South Friern | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Size** | | | 17,222 | 6,405 | 5,834 | | 5,748 | 5,070 | 7,040 | 19,375 | | 6,512 | | | 68,749 |
| **Staffed opening hours (per week)** | Closed | Closed | 39.6 | 35.4 | 35.4 | Closed | 32.1 | 32.2 | 24.5 | 39.6 | Closed | tbc | Closed | Closed | **270.2** |
| **Un-staffed opening hours (per week)** | | | 65.5 | 69.7 | 69.7 | | 72.9 | 72.8 | 80.5 | 65.5 | | tbc | | | **569.8** |

**Option 2: Maintain the depth and quality of service provision within a consolidated library network – library map**



- Library
- Community Library

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### 9.4 Option 3: Community leadership of libraries

Four libraries (East Finchley, Mill Hill, South Friern and Edgware) would be offered to the community to be run as community libraries. The library space in each community library would be reduced in size to approximately 540 square feet. The library space in Burnt Oak would also be reduced to this size. The libraries in East Barnet and Childs Hill would be closed. In each case, the space released would be let out for commercial use – utilising our assets to their full potential and potentially supporting small and medium enterprises in line with our ambition to become the best Borough in London for small businesses. Alternatively income will be secured through redevelopment of sites. It is likely that a number of community libraries would move locally but any new sites would ensure equally good if not better access via public transport. We would review the mobile library's current routes to ensure any less accessible areas would also have the opportunity to access a mobile library stop.

Hendon, Burnt Oak, Chipping Barnet, Golders Green, North Finchley and Osidge, and the new libraries at Church End and Colindale (replacement for the current Grahame Park library), would be maintained as the core library network. The libraries would be staffed for 50% of the current opening hours, including peak usage periods in the late afternoons and at weekends. Opening hours would be increased, using new technology to allow access to libraries from 7am to 10pm, outside staffed times. This would mean an increase of over 30% in open library hours across the borough despite the reduction in branch numbers. During unstaffed opening times, remote access to information, advice and support would be available by telephone.

Under this option, savings will be achieved as follows:

|  | Staff | Buildings | Stock | Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proportion of total savings** | 65% | 7% | 9% | 19% |

This option takes the enhanced role of volunteers in the new service further by inviting communities to take over and manage a number of libraries. National research suggests that community-led library management structures tend to create clearer, community-directed visions for their libraries, fitting services to local need, increasing use by disadvantaged groups and creating stronger relationships with community service providers.

The libraries proposed as potential community libraries under this option are relatively heavily used by some BME groups, including Asian British: Indian people, Asian British: Pakistani, Black British: African and Black British: Caribbean people as well as Jewish residents. These groups would be likely to gain from the benefits associated with increased community involvement, though there would also be a

potential impact in terms of reduced professional support for these libraries and reduced space in the library buildings.

There is a cost associated with retaining sites as community libraries and the remaining Council-led network needs to be configured to prioritise efficiency as well as access. Some of the remaining core libraries would be smaller or less busy than those retained in option 2, and this option combines a lower increase in opening hours overall with a relatively high reduction in staffed opening hours.

Again, children and young people would benefit from continued access to a broad range of literacy and learning provision under this option. Maintenance of eight larger sites would also mean that study space remained distributed across the network, benefiting children, young people and students.
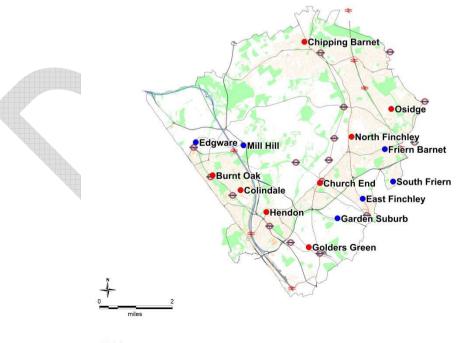
Library-led activities would be significantly reduced under this option – by around 50%. This option also has the highest fall in activities for unemployed people of the three. Library closures under this option have a disproportionate effect on disabled and older users though people in areas of deprivation and/or high child poverty are relatively unaffected.

It is possible that releasing space in the community libraries could result in re-provision of the library in a more modern, fit-for-purpose building in each case, potentially co-located with other community facilities. We would invest in the remaining sites to improve their accessibility and modernise them.

## Option 3: Community leadership of libraries - summary table

| | Burnt Oak | Childs Hill | Chipping Barnet | Church End | East Barnet | East Finchley | Edgware | Golders Green | Grahame Park / Colindale | Hendon Library | Mill Hill | North Finchley | Osidge Library | South Friern | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Size** | 539 | | 17,222 | 6,405 | | 571 | 539 | 5,070 | 7,040 | 19,375 | 538 | 6,512 | 4,445 | 538 | |
| **Staffed opening hours (per week)** | 25.5 | Closed | 28.3 | 25.3 | Closed | 0 | 0 | 23.0 | 17.5 | 28.3 | 0 | 21.5 | 19.5 | 0 | **188.8** |
| **Un-staffed opening hours (per week)** | 79.5 | | 76.8 | 79.8 | | 0 | 0 | 82.0 | 87.5 | 76.8 | 0 | 83.5 | 85.5 | 0 | **651.3** |
| **Community opening hours (per week)** | | | | | | TBD | TBD | | | | TBD | | | TBD | |

## Option 3: Community leadership of libraries – library map