

# Appendix B

## Libraries needs assessment

October 2014

### **Executive summary:**

This needs assessment analyses current and recent use of the library service. It includes an analysis of relative take-up of the service by different demographic groups, including those protected under the Equality Act 2010 and those identified as having specific needs from libraries under the Charteris Review (2009). The data shows that service provision is extensive, but take-up is below average for some aspects of the service. The public are sometimes unaware of the range of services that libraries offer. Activity varies greatly across different libraries within the network. Use of the overall service has fallen over the last three years. Use of digital library services has seen a substantial increase in the same period, though this is still only a small part of overall use.

There are a number of instances in which users are unaware of the wider library offer or of services which are targeted specifically at them (consultation in Barnet in 2011 and 2014). Consultation carried out in 2013 produced strong feedback that libraries could widen their offer. Overall, this suggests that Barnet could make its provision more comprehensive by increasing awareness of the library offer and by looking to increase access to the service to extend its reach.

The needs assessment then examines the efficiency of the current service, looking at the distribution of resources, the condition and location of the library estate, opportunities for partnership, and use of digital channels. It identifies a number of opportunities to improve the efficiency of the service. The use of digital resources could be increased: many current library users are interested in online resources but unaware of the scale of what is available. The proportion of hours worked by volunteers is currently very low in Barnet in comparison to its local authority peer group. Other local authorities, such as LB Redbridge, have realised substantial efficiencies from working more extensively with volunteers.

There are opportunities to use the estate more effectively, making more efficient use of space within existing libraries and realising more opportunities to generate revenue. Some libraries might be better relocated or redeveloped into modern buildings able to meet residents' access needs more effectively and lacking the substantial maintenance liabilities of the current estate or to rationalise it. Rethinking

opening hours could also help target potential user groups more efficiently, particularly working age adults who are currently less well represented among library users.

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## **1. Note on data sources:**

This needs assessment draws on the following data sources. The publically available statistics used are listed at the end of this paper.

### **1.1 Quantitative data on library use:**

- Annual statistics on library use and management, collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and used to benchmark Barnet against a group of fifteen comparable local authorities (CIPFA 2013-14). Because there is a two-year time lag for verification of statistics, this includes information on the libraries at Friern Barnet and Hampstead Garden Suburb.
- Annual statistics collated by the Library Service about activity in libraries, including loans, reservations, and visits to libraries, between 2011-12 and 2013-14 (Barnet Annual Statistics, 2011-12, 2012-14, 2013-4).
- Data collected by the Library Service on other activity in libraries (other transactions, computer use; library-led events; community activities) in 2013-14 (Barnet Library Data, 2013-14).

### **1.2 Satisfaction surveys:**

- Satisfaction survey undertaken with adult library users in 2009 (CIPFA Adults, 2009)
- Satisfaction survey undertaken with children in 2014 (CIPFA Children, 2014).

### **1.3 Consultation:**

- Research and consultation carried out by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association on the future of libraries (MLA, 2010)
- Consultation undertaken to inform the development of the 2011 Library Strategy (Barnet 2011)
- Consultation and engagement undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Priorities and Spending Review (Barnet 2013)
- Consultation undertaken to inform the development of these options (Barnet 2014).

More detail about the methodology and a description of past consultation can be found at the end of this paper.

## **2. Use of libraries by the general population**

***Service provision is extensive, but take-up is below average for some aspects of the service. The public are sometimes unaware of the range of services that libraries offer. Activity varies greatly across different libraries within the***

***network. Use of the overall service has fallen over the last three years. Use of digital library services has seen a substantial increase in the same period, though this is still only a small part of overall use.***

## **2.1 Service provision is extensive**

Barnet's library infrastructure is large. The network had 17 service points, including the mobile and community libraries, against the average of 12; there are still 15 libraries, including the mobile library, run directly by the Council in 2013-14. The number of computer terminals is above average (67.3 against 61.6 on average). The proportion of libraries offering public wi-fi is relatively high at 76% against an average of 58%. The number of visits to Barnet libraries is also slightly higher than average for comparable local authorities (6,043 per 1,000 population against an average of 5,666; fifth highest in the group). (All figures CIPFA 2013-14.)

There were 2,609 library-led events in 2013-14, with more than 44,000 attendances (23,152 adult attendances and 20,954 child attendances). 218 of these were adult literacy events (1,281 adult attendances at these). 914 were child literacy events, including school visits and outreach (15,365 child attendances and 7,813 attendances by accompanying adults). There were 132 different types of community-led event delivered across the library service (Barnet Library Data, 2013-14).

## **2.2 Take-up is below average for some aspects of the service**

While the number of visits to Barnet's libraries is relatively high, the proportion of people in Barnet who are active library borrowers is the fifth lowest in the comparator group (148 per 1,000 people against an average of 182). Taken with the higher-than-average number of library visits (above), this suggests that Barnet has a relatively small but engaged user base. Similarly, the number of housebound readers using the home library service was the sixth lowest at 0.9 per 1,000 people against the average of 1.4.

The number of book issues (3,586 per 1,000 people against the average of 4,336), the stock turn (3.2 issues per item per year against the average of 3.5; third lowest in the group) and the level of stock (1,282 items per 1,000 people against the average of 1,408) are all below average for the group. The number of hours of PC use per 1,000 people is the fourth lowest in the group (433 against the average of 567). (All figures CIPFA 2013-14.)

## **2.3 The public are sometimes unaware of the range of services offered**

Both at national and local level (MLA 2010, Barnet 2011, Barnet 2014), consultation suggests that the public are unaware of the range of services offered by libraries, even among the specific groups they are intended to benefit. For example, in Barnet, disabled people were unaware of the home and mobile library service

(Barnet 2011, 2014), while children and young people did not know about online study resources designed to benefit them (Barnet 2011).

## **2.4 Activity varies from library to library across the network**

In 2013-14, there were:

- 1,209,483 loans and 22,663 reservations at static library sites.
- 18,967 loans from the mobile library and 35,675 from the home library, with 2,495 reservations across the two services (Barnet Annual Statistics, 2013-14).
- 2,363,023 transactions at the static library sites and 22,451 at mobile and home libraries (Barnet Library Data, 2013-14).

The libraries with the highest numbers of media-related transactions were Chipping Barnet, Hendon and Edgware. Osidge, South Friern and Grahame Park had the least. Hendon, Chipping Barnet and Edgware were most visited in order to borrow books. Childs Hill, South Friern and Grahame Park were the lowest on this measure.

The number of transactions per borrower gives a sense of whether the library has a larger number of users who each take out a small number of items or whether a smaller number of users are carrying out many transactions. In Hendon, South Friern, Grahame Park and Burnt Oak the number of transactions per active borrower is relatively low (implying the former), while in East Barnet, Childs Hill and Chipping Barnet it is relatively high.

The number of transactions per visitor gives a sense of the proportion of library activity that relates to borrowing books and other media. In Childs Hill, Mill Hill, Osidge and East Finchley the number of transactions per visitor is high, suggesting that many people using those libraries are doing so to borrow books and media. In East Barnet, South Friern, Church End and Grahame Park the transactions per visitor are low, suggesting that people visit those libraries for other services or activities. (Transaction and borrower figures Barnet Library Data, 2013-14.)

There were 49 visitors per hour across all static sites and 9 visitors an hour at the mobile library. Chipping Barnet (93 visitors per hour), Hendon (89) and Church End (77) were the busiest sites while the quietest were Burnt Oak (27), Grahame Park (26), Osidge (26) and Childs Hill (18).

The total average visits per open hour across the service are shown in the table below, broken down by day of the week. On Sundays, the network is only open for around 25% of the usual opening time, which may account for the higher visit rate.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
51	45	51	50	49	50	88

(Visitor figures Barnet Annual Statistics, 2013-4.)

The average number of computers per library is 16, with Hendon at the top of the scale with 28 and Childs Hill at the bottom with 4. Data on the hours of use per computer and the number of minutes of wi-fi usage suggest that:

- Computers are most in demand at Edgware, Church End and Burnt Oak.
- Those in South Friern, Grahame Park and Osidge are more lightly used.
- Wi-fi activity is concentrated in Hendon and Chipping Barnet.
- Wi-fi use in East Finchley and Childs Hill is particularly low (Barnet Library Data, 2013-14).

Hendon provides the largest numbers of library-led events (296), followed by South Friern (255) and East Finchley (244). The number of library-led events at Osidge is notably low (72). Chipping Barnet, Edgware and Mill Hill have the highest number of different types of community-led events (23, 20 and 14 respectively) with a smaller range of events delivered at Osidge (5), Golders Green (4) and Burnt Oak (1) (Barnet Library Data, 2013-14).

## **2.5 Use has changed over the last three years**

Across all physical library sites (excluding the home and mobile library and the two sites which are now community libraries), loan and reservation activity have each fallen by approximately 22% over the last three years.

- Book-borrowing activity (loans and reservations together) has fallen most in East Barnet (by 29.2% since 2011-12), Burnt Oak (by 27.2%) and Hendon (by 23.8%).
- Book-borrowing has remained much more stable in Osidge, where it is only 12.2% lower; Mill Hill (14.6% lower) and North Finchley (15.2% lower).
- The total number of active borrowers at the static and mobile sites has fallen by 16.5% (16.5%, again, for the static sites overall and 20.7% for the mobile and home library services).

Use of the digital library has risen by nearly 40% overall since 2011-12 (38.7%), driven by a 63.7% in e-book loans. e-audio loans rose substantially from 2011-12 to 2012-13 but then fell in 2013-14 in an overall decrease of 4.3%.

(All figures Barnet Annual Statistics, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14.)

### **3. The purpose of libraries: needs of the general public**

***Members of the public have certain expectations of what a library service should provide. Various public consultations in Barnet (in 2011 and 2014), as well as national research commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association (in 2010), have asked the public about their expectations and some consistent themes have emerged. Libraries also support the delivery of other public service outcomes in addition to their own statutory duties.***

#### **3.1 What the public want from library services.**

Consultation with Barnet's library users (Barnet 2011, Barnet 2014) asked residents what they valued about library services. Many of the key points from their responses are echoed in research commissioned in 2010 from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association. 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 valuable as physical spaces; safe places with a pleasant environment that people can visit for social contact, study or quiet time alone – significantly, libraries mean different things to different people (MLA 2010, Barnet 2014).

Libraries have a strong social role in bringing communities together. With library participation much more evenly distributed across the population than other cultural activities, this ability to reach across the social spectrum is an asset. 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).

Library use is motivated primarily by the services on offer. 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 (76% of those surveyed) and study (44%). A significant proportion of those surveyed make regular use of library computer services (20%) and DVD and CD rental (15%). 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).

Service delivery is similarly important, with a good customer experience highlighted in the report as something the public want from libraries. A good range and choice of books, friendly and knowledgeable staff and a convenient location were listed as the most important drivers of user satisfaction (MLA 2010).

Among non- and lapsed users, the primary reason for not using libraries involved 'motivations and preferences', i.e. having no need, no interest, or no time; or preferring to buy books. This accounted for 87% of responses. Only a small proportion (8%) attributed their non-use to 'barriers' such as poor health, lack of transport, lack of information, or illiteracy and an even smaller one (2%) cited 'disincentives' such as lack of choice, restrictive opening hours, inconvenience of returning books, or insufficient language provision (MLA 2010). In Barnet, much stronger emphasis has been placed on a perceived need to extend opening hours (Barnet 2014). In previous consultation, around one in eight non-users cited inconvenient opening hours or locations as a barrier in Barnet (Barnet, 2011).

Library services are widely valued, even by non- and lapsed users. There is, however, low awareness of the full range of services on offer. The MLA's report emphasises the need for libraries to not only raise awareness of what they do, but continue to communicate effectively with users and potential users (MLA 2010). Consultation in Barnet supports this finding with groups repeatedly being unaware of services from which they could benefit (Barnet 2011, 2014).

### **3.2 Libraries deliver other public service outcomes**

Local learning strategies for children and young people (Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16 and the Education Strategy for Barnet 2013-16) will require libraries to continue to work in partnership to provide services and support for children and young people in and out of educational settings. Libraries have an important role to play in delivering local adult learning and skills priorities through the provision of free support and access to information, and activities such as CV workshops and Job Clubs which support adults back into work. The service works closely with Barnet College on its Community Learning Programme. Specifically, the new library in Colindale will play a key role in the regeneration of the Grahame Park area. Middlesex University students are significant users of resources and study space in the Hendon library. There were 28,910 full time students in Barnet at the time of the 2011 Census; this is a group with significant needs from the library service.

Libraries also contribute to targets for improving health and wellbeing in Barnet, including reductions in social isolation, increased inclusion in local communities, providing access to information, and participating in neighbourhood and community-based networks for older people (Barnet Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-15). They support specific initiatives such as Dementia-Friendly Communities and the Safer Places scheme providing respite for vulnerable adults. They are likely to be required to continue doing so under any renewed Health and Wellbeing Strategy.



#### 4. The specific needs of particular demographic groups

*This section of the assessment sets out differences in use of the library network by different demographic groups, and research, consultation and feedback from those groups about their needs where these differ from those of the general population.*

*Groups covered include those protected under the Equality Act 2010, as well as groups identified within the Charteris Review (2009) as having specific needs from the library service (unemployed people, people from areas of high deprivation).*

The library service does not collect data on many of the demographic characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 as this would be considered disproportionate given the purpose of the service. In some cases such as users' date of birth, information is often collected but the gaps in the data are large enough to make it an unreliable source of evidence about differential use of the service.

For the purposes of this review, the Council needed to ensure that it could access data which would give it an up to date picture of how the service was being used, and enable it to pay due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Transaction data from the year 2013-14 was drawn from each library, anonymised, weighted, and matched to data at small area level from the 2011 Census. This created a picture of the likely extent to which each library was being used by people from different demographic groups.

The data has been treated as indicative, has been supplemented with qualitative feedback from residents and other research findings, and will be used as the basis for some elements of the consultation process. Findings are not definitive – they are to be used as the starting point for further investigation.

##### 4.1 Overall profile of library users

The overall demographic profile of library users is similar in makeup to that of the Borough, but the data suggests that there are statistically significant differences for the following protected characteristics:

- **Disability:** People whose day to day activities are limited a lot do not use libraries as much as other sections of the population.
- **Ethnicity:** White British and Irish people form a higher proportion of library users than their percentage of the Borough's population. Gypsy and Traveller residents are underrepresented among library users.
- **Religion and faith:** Jewish residents form a relatively high proportion of library users. Muslim residents use libraries slightly less than would be expected.

This section of the paper sets out the needs of specific demographic groups and where their use differs from that of the general user population of libraries, including high use of particular libraries within the network. Again, these findings are indicative rather than definitive.

## 4.2 Profile of the needs of different groups

### 4.2.1 Ethnicity

The library service does not collect user data on ethnicity in the course of providing the service.

Analysis of transaction data suggested that the breakdown of library usage by different ethnic groups was:

	Library	Borough
White; English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British/Irish	50.4%	49.8%
White; Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<0.5%	<0.5%
White; Other White	15.9%	16.1%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black Caribbean	0.8%	0.8%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black African	0.8%	0.8%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian	1.6%	1.6%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Mixed	1.4%	1.4%
Asian/Asian British; Indian	7.6%	7.6%
Asian/Asian British; Pakistani	1.4%	1.4%
Asian/Asian British; Bangladeshi	0.6%	0.6%
Asian/Asian British; Chinese	2.2%	2.3%
Asian/Asian British; Other Asian	5.8%	5.9%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; African	4.8%	4.9%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Caribbean	1.1%	1.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other Black	0.9%	0.9%
Other Ethnic Group; Arab	1.3%	1.3%
Other Ethnic Group; Any Other Ethnic Group	3.5%	3.5%

(Barnet Library Data, 2013-14)

White British and Irish people's use of libraries was higher than would be expected given the makeup of the Borough's population.

Of individual Black and Minority Ethnic groups, Gypsy and Irish Traveller people were the only ones to show disproportionately low representation. Gypsies and Travellers were more likely to use the libraries in Chipping Barnet and Golders Green than in other parts of the Borough. While the error rate is potentially high given that the Gypsy and Traveller population is small, there is often low take-up of public services among the Gypsy and Traveller community and the Council will undertake further engagement with this group to ensure they are not being excluded.

National research (Taking Part, cited in MLA, 2010) has shown a substantial difference in library usage levels between those of white ethnicity and those from a BME background. BME people are much more likely to have visited a library in the last year, and while library visits have fallen across the board over the last five years they have done so much more slowly among BME library users (by 6.9% against 9.3% for white library users, MLA, 2010).

In Barnet, BME consultation respondents have been significantly more in favour of proposed changes to the service, such as the increased use of volunteering, self-service, and technology than the general population (Barnet 2011, 2014). In 2011 BME respondents were particularly supportive of the idea of the digital library, though some groups (such as parents) were also less likely to be aware of existing online resources.

BME respondents have consistently been keen to see more tailored activities aimed at people from diverse backgrounds, including (in 2014), people from different age groups. They valued libraries as physical spaces in part because this provided opportunities for people of shared heritage to meet, and were particularly keen to see more and improved spaces and services for children and young people (Barnet 2014).

#### 4.2.2 Religion and belief

The library service does not collect user data on religion or belief in the course of providing the service. Analysis of transaction data suggested that the breakdown of library usage by different religious groups was:

	Proportion of library usage	Proportion of Borough population
Christian	40.1%	41.2%
Buddhist	1.2%	1.3%
Hindu	5.9%	6.2%
Jewish	17.6%	15.2%
Muslim	9.2%	10.3%
Sikh	<1%	<1%
Other religion	1.1%	1.1%
No religion	16.1%	16.1%
Religion not stated	8.5%	8.4%

(Barnet Library Data, 2013-14)

The data suggests that the proportion of use by Jewish people is higher than would be expected given the makeup of the Borough's population (to a statistically significant extent), while Muslim residents use libraries slightly less than would be expected given the makeup of the Borough's population.

This finding is surprising because the national Taking Part survey, which monitors the uptake of cultural events among different demographic groups, shows that there are differences in participation between religious groups and that Muslims are significantly more likely to use libraries than other religious groups (DCMS survey, cited in MLA, 2010). Barnet's consultation exercises have ensured that people from a range of religious backgrounds are represented and these did not identify any specific needs or barriers relating to use by people from different religious groups. However, further engagement will be undertaken to identify whether there are any specific access barriers for Muslim residents in Barnet.

The data also suggests that some libraries are used more than would be expected by people from particular religious groups. Muslim people are relatively heavy users of Burnt Oak and Childs Hill libraries. Jewish people are heavier users of Edgware, Golders Green, Hendon and Mill Hill than would be expected even given the high numbers of Jewish people in those areas.

### **4.2.3 Disability**

The data suggests that disabled people are responsible for roughly 14% of library usage, 7.5% of transactions being carried out by people with a moderate disability and 6.5% with people whose day to day activities are limited a lot. People whose day to day activities are limited a lot make significantly higher use of libraries in Burnt Oak, Childs Hill and Grahame Park, and relatively low use of the libraries in Church End, Hendon and Mill Hill.

Consultation with disabled people has suggested that the aspects of the service they value most highly are

- Book lending.
- Access to information and resources.
- Access to online facilities.
- Education and community facilities.
- Libraries as a focal point of the community and of learning for local people.
- Libraries as places which offer a warm welcome at the same time as learning, social and personal development opportunities (Barnet, 2011).

Following on from this, respondents who had mental health issues or learning disabilities describe libraries as welcoming, inclusive places, and as community 'resources' which reduce social isolation (Barnet, 2014). People with sensory impairments were enthusiastic about the role of library reading groups in reducing isolation.

People with disabilities have reported relatively 'heavy' library use: 64% of disabled respondents said that they also used a library at least once a week in Barnet, 2011. Parents of disabled children reported high levels of library use in Barnet, 2013.

Respondents have stressed the importance of working toilet facilities and user-friendly furniture (Barnet, 2011). More generally, access is seen as a potentially significant issue for disabled users by both users themselves and by others (Barnet, 2011, 2014).

Some users suggest the mobile library can mitigate lack of access to more centralised services. However, physical disability and mental health disability focus groups and participants in the in-depth interviews for people with sensory impairments reported that they had not known about the mobile and home services and were keen to learn more about other services and activities on offer (Barnet, 2014). Again, this suggests that the library service could be better at marketing its offer to those who may need it.

Disabled people praised the book exchange service within libraries (people with physical and learning disabilities were in favour of this) and the ability to access a wide network of local libraries. People with learning disabilities suggested that some improvements could be made around access to easy read print and audio book stock and more up-to date information about their disabilities. People with sensory impairments noted alternative ways of accessing content such as ebooks available from the Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) (Barnet, 2014).

Some specific views emerged around potential changes to the service:

- Potential concerns were expressed about a move towards more digital provision. The mental health issues group liked the therapeutic qualities of paper books, while people with learning disabilities were concerned that digital resources would be difficult for them to access (Barnet, 2014).
- The prospect of longer opening hours (especially if in the evening and if facilitated by volunteers) was welcomed (Barnet, 2011, 2014).
- People with sensory impairments had some concerns about the skills of volunteers and sought reassurance that volunteers would be properly trained (Barnet, 2014).
- If the library was not staffed, people with learning disabilities suggested that easy read symbols should be installed to help people find their way around the building and use the library (Barnet, 2014).

#### **4.2.4 Gender**

The transaction data suggests that library usage by men and women mirrors the profile of the Borough overall.

Some gender differences emerged in responses to the 2011 consultation. The most significant of these were:

- Men were more likely than women to agree with increased use of self-service technology.

- Men were more likely to access online resources while women were more likely to borrow books.
- Women were more likely than men to cite parking as a problem.
- Women were more likely than men to request longer opening hours.

No significant differences from the general population emerged within the 2014 consultation.

#### **4.2.5 Sexual orientation**

The library service does not collect user data on sexual orientation and this data is not available from the 2011 Census.

If use by lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) followed the proportion of the national population who are LGB it would run at approximately 6% or just over 11,000 active borrowers. A small proportion (3%) of respondents to the 2011 consultation identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual but this response rate was too low to draw out specific findings. The library service stocks materials tailored to LGB people. Research carried out elsewhere (*Voice Counts*, a 2010 consultation carried out in Hertfordshire) identified a need for libraries to continue to provide specific media relating to LGB people and access to relevant information.

#### **4.2.6 Gender identity**

The library service does not collect user data on gender reassignment and this data is not available from the 2011 Census.

GIRES, the Gender Identify Research and Education Society, estimate that 0.6-1% of the population may experience gender dysphoria (a medical term used to describe the negative feelings associated with the sense that a person's gender identity doesn't match up with the body they were born in). If this proportion held locally it would suggest that 750-1000 library users might be affected. National research suggests that people affected by gender dysphoria, particularly children and young people, often have difficulties because of a lack of relevant information about issues which affect them and improved access to information is therefore likely to have a particular benefit for this group.

#### **4.2.7 Marriage and civil partnership**

The library service does not collect user data on marriage and civil partnership. Analysis of transaction data suggests that library use by widowed people is higher than would be expected from the proportion of the Borough's population who are widowed.

Research carried out by Age UK (Loneliness and Isolation Evidence Review, 2014) suggests that widowed people may be disproportionately at risk of loneliness and

isolation, which may mean that the inclusive nature of libraries is important to this group.

#### **4.2.8 Older adults**

Analysis of transaction data suggests that 13% of library transactions are carried out by people aged 65 and over, as opposed to just under 14% for the Borough as a whole. This difference is not statistically significant.

The data suggests that Childs Hill has disproportionately heavy use from older adults, who are also less likely to use the libraries in Burnt Oak, Grahame Park and South Friern.

The service areas most valued by this group were similar to those valued by disabled people:

- Book lending (also in Barnet, 2014; and older people in 2011 were more likely than other groups to support higher spending on stock).
- Access to information and resources.
- Access to online facilities.
- Education and community facilities.
- Libraries as a focal point of the community and of learning for local people, supporting community events and activities as well as an expanded learning offer.
- Libraries as places which offer a warm welcome at the same time as learning, social and personal development opportunities (Barnet, 2011).
- Older people have consistently stressed the importance of having access to a library close to home, and of having adequate parking and disabled access (Barnet 2011, 2014).
- Parking was cited as a barrier to greater use of libraries, but older people were less concerned than others with potential barriers created by restrictions on opening hours (Barnet, 2014).
- Older people were concerned that any greater use of volunteers would dilute service quality (Barnet, 2014).

#### **4.2.9 Pregnancy and maternity**

The library service does not collect user data on pregnancy and maternity, but existing information and the 2011 consultation gives some specific findings relating to parents (including those of older children).

Access emerges as a theme for parents, both in terms of physical access – more parents reported using a car to access the library than any other group – and in term of opening hours. 43% of those with children in their households who responded to the 2011 survey commented on potential increases to opening hours.

Parents also benefit from increased services for children and young people, and in particular, parents of disabled children have emerged as heavy library users (Barnet, 2013). Parents of young children also benefit from any increased accessibility for wheelchair users as this improves accessibility for buggies and pushchairs at the same time.

Consultation responses have suggested that parents are more likely to be internet users away from libraries and overall, slightly more likely to use Barnet library services online. However, BME parents were less likely to be aware of online services than parents from other groups (Barnet, 2011).

#### **4.2.10 Children and young people**

Children are a key library user group. Respondents to the 2011 consultation from all demographic groups saw engagement with children, including outreach and literacy services, as a core duty for libraries. The data suggests that take-up of library services by children and young people is relatively high for under-16s but falls for 16-17 year olds.

Children and young people responding to the consultation said that they want access to:

- Better space within physical libraries, set aside for their use.
- Appropriate music, film and computer games.
- Advisory services such as careers and education, but also social issues (Barnet, 2011).

This group welcomed the idea of more volunteers in libraries and the possibility of longer opening hours. In later consultation, access to study space was seen as an area where service provision could be stronger as existing space is currently used to capacity (Barnet, 2014).

Young people said they were unaware of a range of services which are specifically targeted at them, such as online learning resources (Barnet 2011, 2014). Both consultations suggested that a perception of libraries as 'boring' might be a barrier to use for children and young people (Barnet 2011, 2014).

Take-up of services might be improved by better communication about the library offer though if stigma is a barrier for young people who do not currently use libraries, alternative ways of providing study space might be a more appropriate option.

#### **4.2.11 Working age adults**

Analysis of transaction data suggests that only 45% of library activity is carried out by adults aged 18-64, even though they make up nearly 63% of the Borough's population. They are overrepresented in Church End and Hendon and underrepresented in Childs Hill. Issues for working adults have focused on restricted



opening times and the need for more weekend and evening opening (Barnet 2011, 2014). This group is likely to benefit more from longer hours, or hours targeted outside the working day.

#### **4.2.12 Unemployed people**

Analysis of transaction data suggests that around 2% of transactions are carried out by people claiming JobSeekers Allowance, matching the Borough profile, and just fewer than 6% by people claiming out of work benefits, against a Borough average of 7.1%.

The data suggests that Burnt Oak has a disproportionately high number of transactions from people claiming JobSeekers Allowance given its catchment area. Grahame Park and South Friern both have disproportionately high transaction rates from JSA claimants and people on out of work benefits, while Golders Green and Hendon have lower-than-expected rates. The library service has offered jobseekers additional free PC access through a JobCentre Plus referral scheme for several months. Take-up of this scheme was concentrated in Hendon, Chipping Barnet and Church End with data suggesting no use at all taking place in East Finchley or Mill Hill over the three-month period. The 2011 consultation suggested that unemployed people make heavy use of libraries – 84% of those responding to the consultation who were unemployed used a library at least once a week. Unemployed people were also more likely to use any of the online services provided (Barnet, 2011).

In 2014, the unemployed people's focus group was strongly invested in the physical library service, focused on libraries' role in making books, computers and the internet accessible and affordable and on libraries being a place of shelter, reducing isolation. The group was unaware of the e-book offer and the participants didn't own e-readers; they stressed the need to continue providing print books and warned that fines could be a barrier to low-income people accessing other media such as DVDs. They were also unaware of the library service's job clubs even though these would be specifically targeted at them.

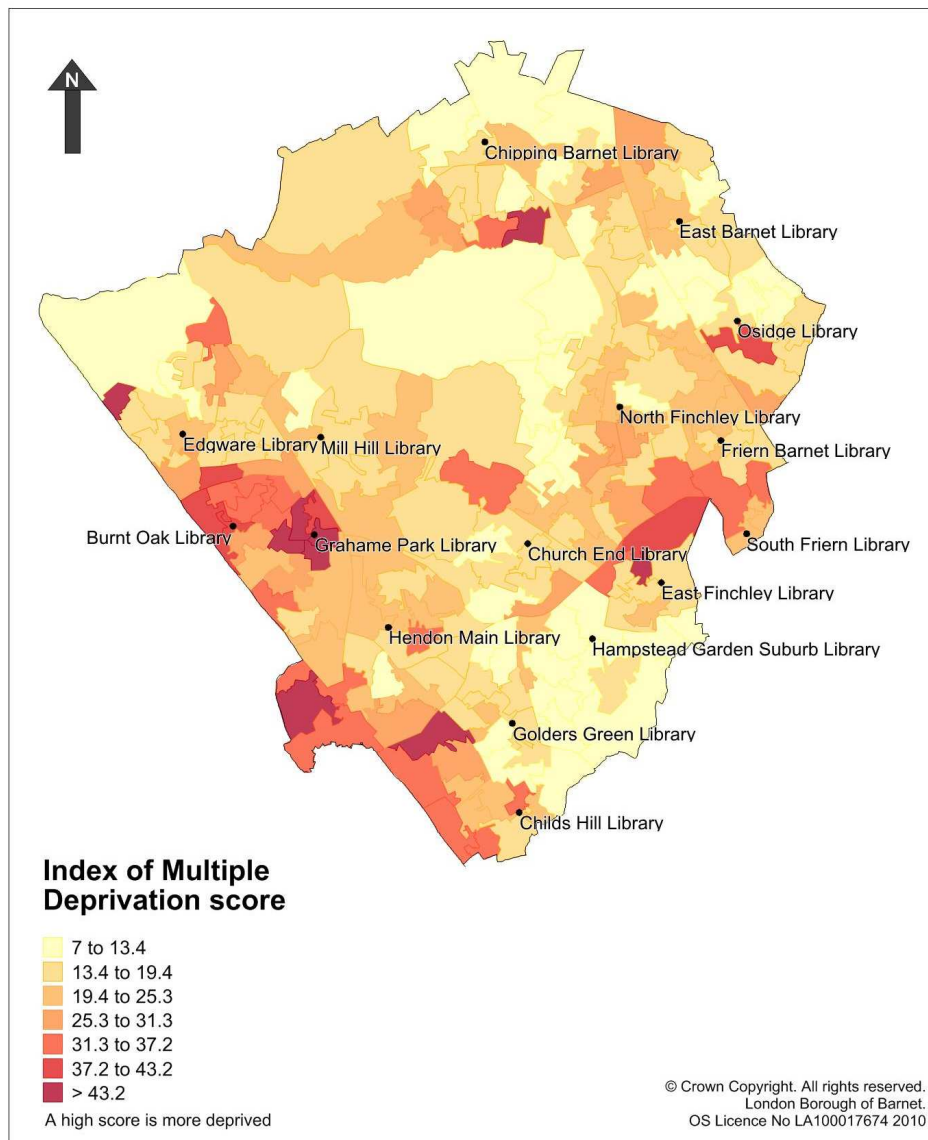
#### **4.2.13 Areas of deprivation and low income**

The data suggests that people from areas of deprivation and from areas with high child poverty are less represented among library use than they are among the general population. 17.2% of library activity comes from areas with high child poverty, against 20.1% for the Borough, while 4% of library transactions come from areas where deprivation is high, against 5.7% of people in the Borough who live in areas among the 20% most deprived nationally. Data suggests that users from areas of high deprivation or child poverty are more concentrated in Burnt Oak and Grahame Park, suggesting that people from areas of deprivation may tend to use libraries close to their homes. The data suggested that Golders Green has a low proportion of activity drawn from areas of deprivation.

Members of the deprivation and low income focus group during the 2014 consultation placed particular emphasis on the physical aspects of libraries and their ability to help reduce isolation, and their inclusive nature. This group expressed a wish for longer opening hours. They were not aware of the home and mobile library services.

The 2010 English Indices of Deprivation are the most recent indicator set relating to deprivation. The map below shows the Index of Multiple Deprivation scores for each LSOA in the borough (the higher the score the more deprived an LSOA). Clusters of more deprived areas can be found primarily in the west of the borough around the areas of Burnt Oak, Grahame Park and Colindale, in East Finchley in the east and Dollis Valley in the north. These areas all fall within the 30% most deprived LSOAs in United Kingdom (LSOAs recording a score of over 31 are in the 30% most deprived LSOAs nationally).

## Deprivation in Barnet



Libraries were matched to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation ranking for the area in which the site stands. The libraries in the areas of highest deprivation were Burnt Oak and Grahame Park, which are in the top 20% of deprived areas nationally. The Colindale replacement site for the Grahame Park library is also currently in the top 20% of deprived areas although regeneration plans mean this is likely to change. Hendon and East Barnet are both in the top 50% of deprived areas nationally. All other libraries are in the lowest 50-70% though Childs Hill, Osidge and South Friern are all close to areas which are in the most deprived 30% nationally and East Finchley is near two areas in the most deprived 20%.

## **5. Making the service more comprehensive**

The data shows that current provision is broad, includes a range of popular services and activities, and offers high satisfaction to users. 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 (the latter is likely to be due in part to the quality of the equipment and the current IT transformation programme is addressing this). 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, 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 emerged from consultation in 2013 (Barnet, 2013) that libraries could widen their offer. 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 and transgender residents, will need to continue accessing appropriate 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.

## **6. Distribution of resources**

The CIPFA data benchmarks the service's use of resources against comparator local authorities using a figure for the revenue cost per 1,000 population. Barnet is in the middle of the comparator group. Most of the cheaper library services occupy far

fewer physical buildings – only one is similar to Barnet in scale. This is the Redbridge library service, which is managed by a trust and run with a high proportion of provision by volunteers.

Barnet's spend patterns (based on 2012-13 data) can also be compared to the average for local authorities in the comparator group. The proportion of revenue spent on employees and premises was marginally higher, while the amount spent on support service costs was nearly 7% higher than the average. The proportion spent on stock and other materials was slightly lower than the average. However, in this year the budget available for stock purchase was set at an unusually low level and in previous and subsequent years has been around 30% higher than in 2012-13. This would bring Barnet closer to the average for the proportion of revenue spent on materials, and substantially below the average for the proportion of revenue spent on staff. The service would remain substantially above average for support service costs.

	Barnet	Average
	% of total spend	% of total spend
Employees	53.31%	52.58%
Premises	13.32%	12.19%
Total materials	7.40%	9.26%
Computing costs	<i>Not reported</i>	4.14%
Other supplies and services	2.13%	3.73%
Transport	0.18%	0.50%
Third party payments	1.17%	1.93%
Support service costs	22.49%	15.68%

(All spend figures CIPFA 2013-13).

The average cost per transaction across the service is £1.69. The library with the highest transaction cost is Grahame Park (£3.06), followed by South Friern (£2.35), Burnt Oak (£1.88), and Osidge (£1.88). These four libraries are relatively small in size but all have low levels of transactions and activity. The fifth and sixth highest transaction costs are at Hendon (£1.77) and Chipping Barnet (£1.62), the two largest libraries. These costs are both around the average level for the service. The lowest transaction costs are at Childs Hill (£1.27) and East Finchley (£1.26).

The average cost per visitor across the service is £2.39. The library with the highest cost per visitor is Childs Hill at £3.84, followed by Osidge (£3.27), Grahame Park (£3.14), Mill Hill (£2.60), South Friern (£2.52) and Burnt Oak (£2.48). Again, these are libraries with relatively low footfall. The library with the seventh highest cost per visitor is Hendon (£2.24), which is just below the average for the service overall. The lowest costs per visitor are at Edgware (£1.90), East Barnet (£1.89) and Church End (£1.50). (All figures Barnet Library Data, 2013-14.)

CIPFA have benchmarked the 2012-13 year's cost per visitor (£2.97) against Barnet's comparator group and found it slightly below the average of £3.19, sixth lowest for the group. However, the cost per book (£6.34) is slightly above average at £6.47, sixth highest for the group (CIPFA, 2013-14).

Employee expenditure as a percentage of revenue expenditure in 2012-13 was average for the comparator group at 53%. Material expenditure as a percentage of revenue expenditure was below average (7% against a 9% average) and is the third lowest for the group. Support service costs were relatively high – 22% against an average of 16% and the fourth highest for the group. CIPFA also benchmarked the relative proportions of the estimated revenue expenditure for 2013-14. Here, employee expenditure is the highest percentage of revenue expenditure in the comparator group, at 74% against the group average of 53%.

Barnet's libraries have low scores in contrast with the comparator group across most indicators relating to volunteering. The number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours and number of hours per volunteer place Barnet in the lowest four libraries in the group for each. The proportion of hours worked by volunteers is 0.6% against a group average of 5.3%. Trends show that in 2008-9 Barnet was not far below the average for volunteers (with 38 volunteers against the average of 41) but the gap has widened substantially to 83 Barnet volunteers against an average of 193 for the group. Edgware, Chipping Barnet and Hendon see the highest number of volunteer applications for adults; Chipping Barnet, North Finchley, East Finchley and Mill Hill have the most applications from children. Osidge and South Friern see very low levels of applications from either group.

## **7. The library estate**

### **7.1 The condition of the estate**

The library estate is in need of significant capital investment. As well as internal and external maintenance, all libraries apart from Hendon, Burnt Oak and South Friern require large-scale works to ensure they are fully accessible to disabled users and other people with restricted mobility (elderly people, parents with young children).

In 2011, face-to-face consultation identified the current 'look, feel and ambience' of a library as a significant block to greater use. Respondents wanted a mixture of relaxation areas where chatting was permitted, refreshments, quiet study areas and 'brighter, more modern, less stale environments' (Barnet, 2011).

### **7.2 Location: population trends, access and transport**

#### **7.2.1 Significant population trends**

The Greater London Authority (GLA) issues annual ward level population projections which use the 2011 Census as a baseline and project Barnet's population all the way to 2041. The 2013 projections show the following significant trends:

Colindale is Barnet's most populous ward in 2014 and is also predicted to experience the greatest change in population between 2014 and 2021 (over 50%). The existing Grahame Park library is in Colindale and the new facility with which it is being replaced will serve that population.

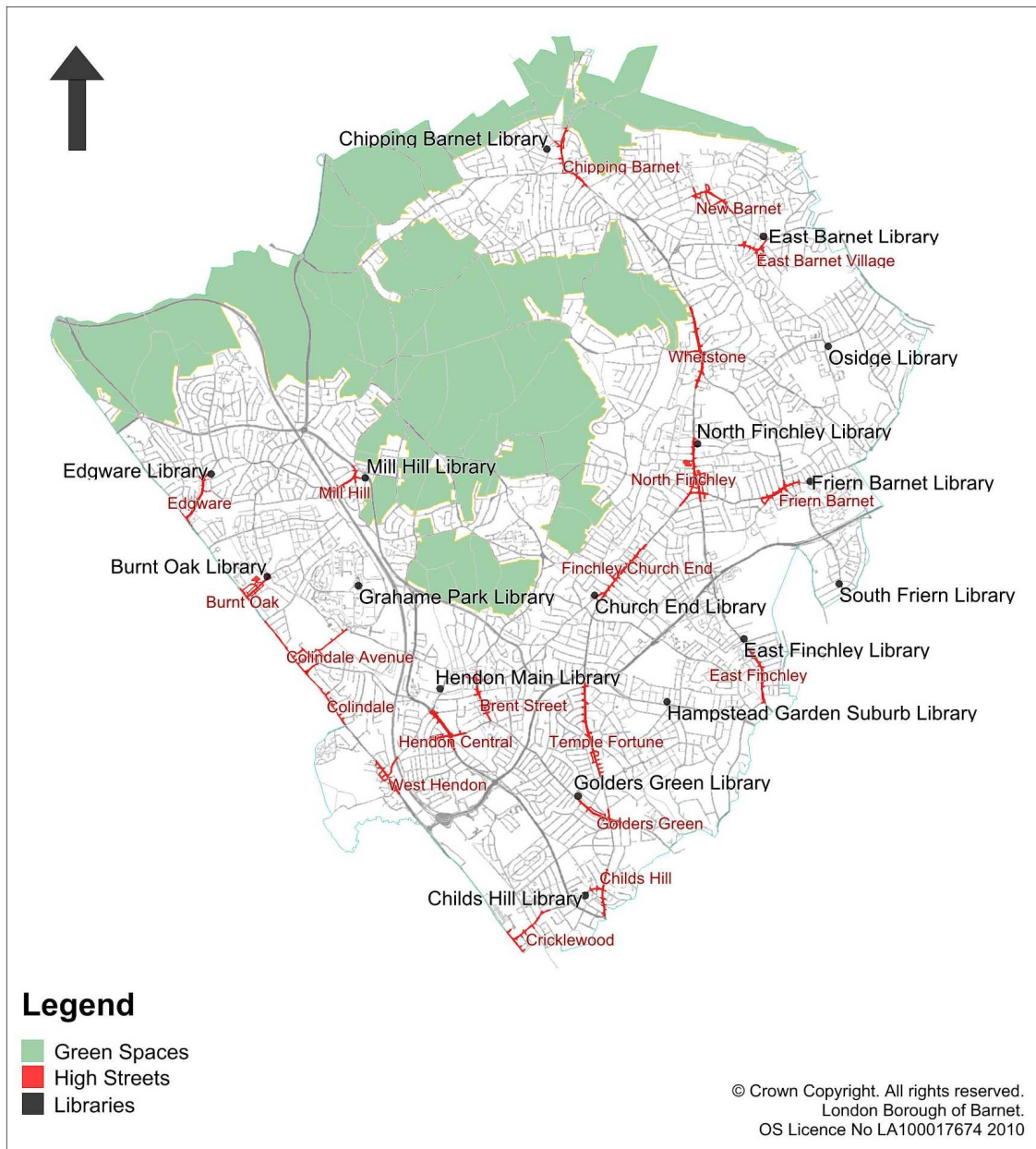
Golders Green currently has the highest proportion of children aged 0-15 (more than 1 in 4 residents) and the highest population of children compared to all other wards. Its population is predicted to grow by almost 30% to 2021.

Burnt Oak is the Borough's most densely populated ward, with 8,586 residents per square km; it also has a high proportion of children (approximately 1 in 4 residents). However, its population is not expected to change significantly to 2021.

#### **7.2.2 Access**

The diagram below maps libraries against roadways which have shops along them and which therefore attract passing footfall. For reference, it includes the two community libraries. Of the libraries which are still part of the Council's statutory network, only Osidge and South Friern are more than 250m from any of Barnet's high streets.

# Barnet Libraries and Streets with Shop Frontage



While libraries in Barnet are predominantly placed close to town centres or shopping streets, some consultation has suggested that they could be better located within those areas to attract more footfall and spontaneous visits. Suggested locations included shopping centres (Barnet, 2011).

## 7.2.3 Transport

Barnet has high car ownership in comparison to other London Boroughs (6<sup>th</sup> of 32). 71.3% of Barnet's households own a car or van (Census 2011). However, this is still low in comparison to the rest of England and Wales (Barnet is 300<sup>th</sup> of 348 local authorities). Maintaining access to libraries by public transport is therefore important to ensure all who need to use the service are able to do so.



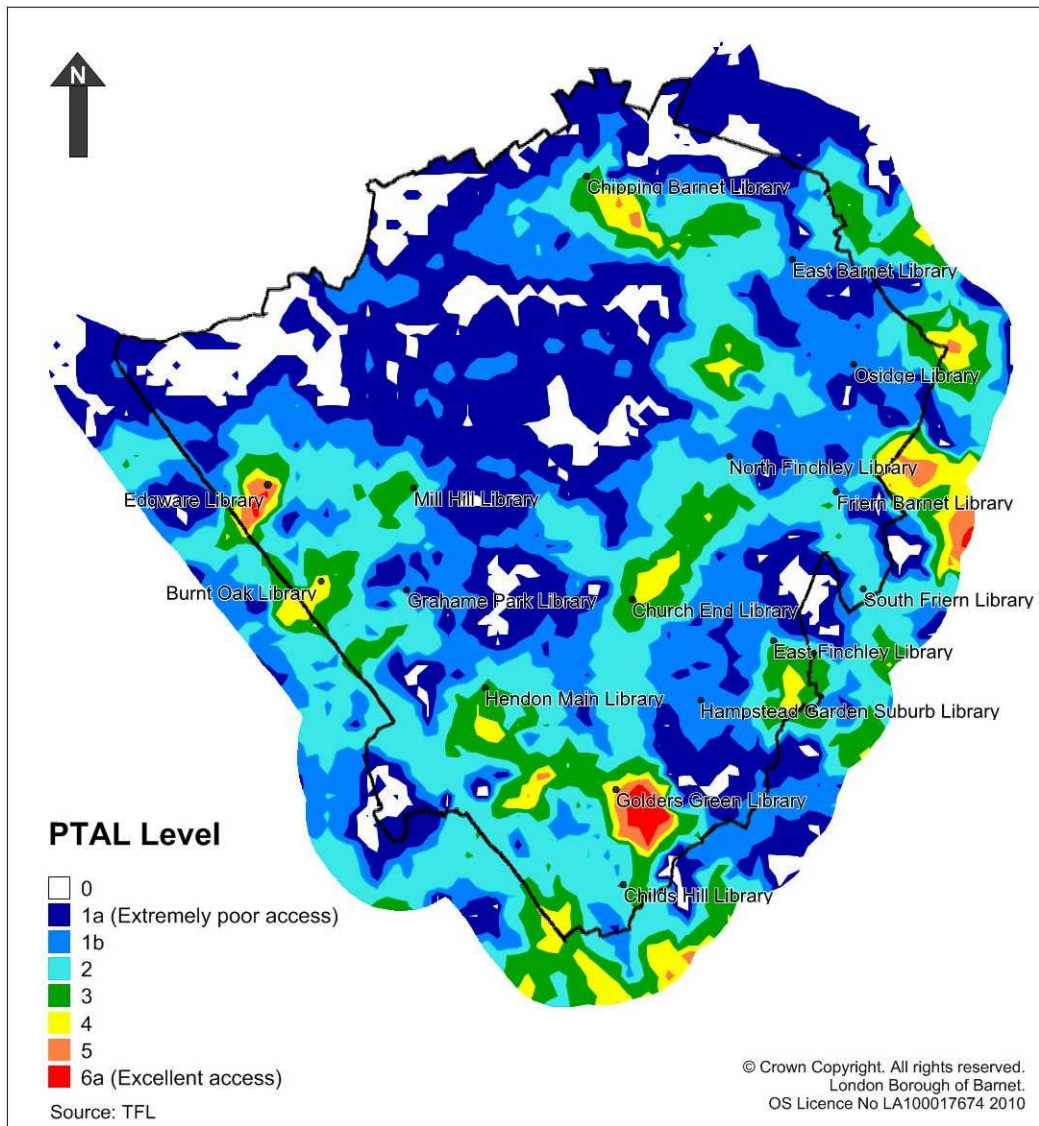
Participants in the 2014 consultation felt that the existing libraries are well served by public transport; Transport for London provides free or discounted travel for key groups who are also likely to need to access libraries (children, young people and students; people in search of employment, older people, people with disabilities).

The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of an area indicates its proximity to regular transport routes which provide access to numerous destinations. The ratings run from 0 through 1a (extremely poor access) up to 6a (excellent access).

Barnet's best located libraries are Edgware and Golders Green. The next most accessible libraries are Chipping Barnet, Burnt Oak and the current library site at Church End. Hendon and Mill Hill fall in the middle of the scale while East Finchley, Childs Hill and South Friern are lower. In the east of the Borough, Osidge, East Barnet and North Finchley are all difficult to access. The current library in Grahame Park has very poor public transport links but its new site in Colindale will be more accessible.

The diagram below shows the PTAL ratings for each site, including the two community libraries.

## PTAL Rating for Barnet



### 7.3 Use of library space for other purposes

Use of libraries by other groups is variable. Chipping Barnet hosted the largest number of non-library-led events in 2013-14 (23), followed by Edgware (20) and Mill Hill (14), as well as regular use by other groups to provide activities in the library space. Church End (6), Childs Hill (6), Osidge (5) and Golders Green (4) held the lowest numbers of events. Burnt Oak held only one event in that year but additional space in the building is used in an alternative way by Barnet's Customer Services.

Responses to consultation suggested that residents would like to see the library offer widened and that they felt libraries could do more, either by making more of their role as community spaces and events or by incorporating other services into libraries (Barnet, 2013).

## **8. Other opportunities**

### **8.1 Sharing costs with partners or other local authorities.**

A feasibility study has been carried out on the potential for commissioning a shared service with a neighbouring borough. The study determined that there were limited opportunities for economies of scale. Barnet is part of a stock purchase consortium and therefore already realises some of these opportunities. The distribution of Barnet's libraries – spread around the edges of the Borough – would make it difficult to rationalise the estate across borders and maintain provision in the centre of the Borough.

Some libraries have functioned as phase 3 children's centres in the past and potential opportunities have been identified to co-locate children's centres and other services into libraries. So far there have been limited suitable opportunities identified to relocate libraries within operational buildings used by other services.

### **8.2 More use of digital channels**

Use of the library's digital resources is growing but e-books and e-audio still make up less than one per cent of stock overall (0.81%; 0.56% of all book stock and 3.6% of all AV stock). Market developments (for example, Kindle book sales overtaking those of printed books from Amazon) suggest that the appetite for digital media has expanded significantly over the last three years. While library use and provision of digital media has increased substantially, it is nowhere near that of traditional media.

## **9. Making the service more efficient**

Data and feedback suggests that the following options may provide opportunities to increase the efficiency of the service:

### **11.1 Greater use of digital resources.**

Digital resources have the potential to allow libraries to deliver access to the wider world of knowledge and information to people currently unable or unwilling to access the physical sites, in an efficient manner. There are some restrictions on the range of stock available due to publishing and licensing issues, but many current library users are interested in online resources and unaware of the scale of what is available now. The online 'reserve and collect' service, now to be made more easily available alongside other Council services on the Barnet website, will also make access to physical library stock easier and more flexible, and the rollout of a new Library Management System will enable reservations using this service to be processed more quickly and efficiently by library staff.

### **11.2 Increase the proportion of hours which are worked by volunteers.**

Of local authorities with lower revenue spend per 1,000 population in Barnet's peer group, most have much smaller physical networks. The exception is Redbridge who instead achieve efficiencies through high levels of volunteer involvement. 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. 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.

Non-users and young people have welcomed the idea of more volunteer involvement, assuming service quality is not diluted (Barnet, 2011). 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 service quality offered can remain strong.

### **9.3 Make more efficient use of space within existing libraries and realise opportunities to generate revenue.**

The use of library space for non-library events or activities varies across the network. A review of local partnerships in 2013 identified a number of opportunities to increase the links between local libraries and local groups. Where space is available for community groups and events it allows a broader range of activity provision and use of the buildings than is possible for library staff to provide as well as generating what in some cases (such as Chipping Barnet) is a significant income stream. In the 2011 consultation, non-users of the library service were more likely to want increased community space than users were. Increasing the use of community space could therefore potentially also broaden the library user base.

#### **9.4 Better library buildings in better places.**

The current library estate requires significant capital investment running into millions of pounds. The largest area of cost is to make Barnet's older buildings Disability Discrimination Act compliant and therefore fit for purpose for all users under the Equality Act 2010. Some groups (elderly people in the 2011 consultation, for example) have highlighted the need for improved parking and disabled access to the library buildings, but the current estate makes it extremely difficult to achieve these aims. Consultation has identified a desire for brighter, more modern library buildings able to accommodate a variety of uses, including both quiet study space and places to meet and interact, without these interfering with one another. This is not always possible in the current library buildings.

The current network is not inaccessible using public transport but only 50% of the library sites are in the upper half of the Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) scale. Libraries are not far from Barnet's high streets but the location of many of the current buildings limits their appeal for alternative uses and the footfall they can attract.

There may be opportunities to create a more efficient service by prioritising the newer library buildings from the current estate and exploring opportunities to relocate libraries to new, more effective sites. This would also be likely to create a more comprehensive service as it would enable the network to better meet the needs of key groups with access issues, such as older adults, disabled people and parents with young children.

The 2011 consultation suggests library users who make use of online library services are also relatively frequent visitors (50% of this group also visited a library at least once a week), suggesting that access to physical sites should be maintained. There is, however, potential for some greater efficiency of service provision in making physical sites smaller but ensuring that all stock continues to be available across the network.

#### **9.5 Examine variations in use across the network.**

There is substantial variation in usage levels from library to library. In many cases this is correlated with a higher transaction cost or cost per visitor. There is the potential to increase efficiency by rationalising the estate. Some groups (such as working age adults) are underrepresented among library users and there may be more efficient ways to meet their needs.

#### **9.6 Access at different times.**

Limits on opening hours were cited as a barrier to use across a number of groups in both the 2011 and 2014 consultations. Extending opening hours was a priority for most of the 2014 focus groups. Participants felt, variously, that opening times across the borough had been reduced so that libraries closed too early (although hours have not in fact reduced). The BME, mental health, unemployed and low

income/deprivation groups all cited this as an issue for people in full time employment. Young people in 2011 and 2014 also reported that opening times did not meet their needs. It is possible that by rethinking the times of day at which libraries are open the service could be provided in a more efficient way. It is important to users that opening times remain consistent from day to day (Barnet, 2011, 2014).

In 2011, non-user respondents to the consultation were significantly more dissatisfied than users with the current opening hours (1 in 4 against 1 in 7). This again emerged as a theme for non-users in the 2014 focus groups. It seems likely that rethinking or extending opening hours would also potentially result in a more comprehensive service, able to meet the needs of a greater range of users.

In 2014, respondents were asked when they would like to see libraries open: some asked for more Sunday opening but most argued for libraries to remain open later in the evenings.

### **9.7 Use of new technology: the 'open' library**

Scandinavian libraries have for some years operated on an 'unstaffed' model in which the library buildings are kept open outside staffed hours, accessed using a swipe card and PIN. The technology which enables this has only recently been introduced in UK public libraries though unstaffed access is the norm in universities.

The technology provides an opportunity to maintain or increase access to library buildings and core library services while reducing their running costs. It would also make a volunteer-led model more sustainable by reducing dependency on volunteers and making volunteer management less intensive.

Library users have been asked for their general views on self-service technology, including, potentially, an unstaffed library. Participants have been enthused by the idea of the extended opening hours this could permit, but wanted reassurance that support would be available if needed. They wanted reassurance that this solution would not result in a reduction in trained librarians, and that security considerations would be taken into account (Barnet, 2014).

Previous experience of rolling out self-service technology suggests that users accept such changes as a way of reducing costs but will be concerned about reduced contact with library staff (Barnet, 2011). 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, which would mitigate some of the concerns users have with self-service solutions

## **10. Demographic data sources and statistics**

### **10.1 Using public data and statistics**

The library service does not collect data on many of the demographic characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 (this would be considered disproportionate given the nature of the service) and in other cases data collected is partial.

So that the Council could use recent data to consider whether the service meets users' needs, transaction data from the financial year 2013-14 was matched to data at small area level from the 2011 Census and other sources. This was used to produce an overall profile of users of the book-borrowing service and compared to the overall demographic profile of the Borough.

The transaction data was aggregated to Lower Super Output Area level. The transactions were weighted according to the demographic profile of the Lower Super Output Area and aggregated to produce an overall profile of library users.

The profile of library users was compared against the Borough's population. The proportions of each demographic group using the library service, or a particular library, were put through a statistical test to assess whether they differed from the general population or from the overall profile of library users.

Where a change to the service was being assessed, the characteristics of the group of people affected by that change were similarly tested to see if that change had a disproportionate impact on a particular demographic group.

### **10.2 List of demographic data sets and statistics**

- ONS (Office for National Statistics) Census 2011 data on age, gender, disability, ethnicity, and religion
- DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) data on claimants of out of work benefits and JobSeekers' Allowance
- HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) data on child poverty
- DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) data on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation
- GIRES (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) data on the prevalence of gender dysphoria (gender identity)
- DTI (Department for Trade and Industry) data estimating the proportion of the population who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

## **11. Details of past consultation in Barnet**

The following consultation exercises were used to inform the development of these options. The key findings are summarised throughout this report.

### **11.1 Consultation for the Strategic Review of the London Borough of Barnet Library Service (January 2011)**

A consultation was taken to inform the 2011 strategic review. Initiated in 2010, its key objective was to establish how to modernise and develop libraries in the borough within a reduced budget. The consultation comprised three different strands:

- 6 group discussions in November 2010 convened by Alpha Research with people who live, work or study in the Borough. Each group formed a representative sample of people from across the Borough, with good spread by demographics and library usage. All discussions involved at least 8 respondents.
- Consultations from October to December 2010 with various community and voluntary organisations and their members, convened by CommUNITY Barnet. The consultations involved 27 different targeted groups with protected characteristics. Focus groups and ballot box presentations were the predominant methods used, with some short informal workshops also held.
- A general population online survey, designed and hosted by the London Borough of Barnet on their website, running from October to December 2010, received 1,670 responses (non-user responses supplemented by 60 telephone interviews conducted by Alpha Research). An additional online survey for young people, running from November to December 2010, received 58 responses.

### **11.3 Priorities and Spending Review Engagement (October - December 2013)**

In September 2013 the London Borough of Barnet commissioned OPM to consult with local residents, service users, and businesses to help inform the Priorities and Spending Review for 2015-2020.

The consultation involved 3 Citizens' Panel workshops (a total of 78 residents) and 16 focus groups (a total of 137 residents) that were held between October and December 2013. The workshops included a reflective sample of the local population while the focus groups were targeted at specific service users, businesses and some protected characteristic groups.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Understand residents' views at the formative stage of the Priorities and Spending Review.
- Communicate to participants the need for the council to conduct the Priorities and Spending Review set in the context of the Government's continued austerity programme and rising demand for council services.
- Gain an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' priorities and how they would want the council to approach the Priorities and Spending Review over the next five years.



While none of the groups discussed libraries in detail they were mentioned in all 3 Citizens' Panel workshops, most of the social care user groups, young people's group and BME group. There was a clear view across the groups that discussed libraries that they need to widen their offer.

A Barnet Challenge online Call for Evidence was conducted by OPM from March to June 2014 as part of the Priorities and Spending Review consultation. The aim of the survey was to hear the views of organisations, businesses and residents on the future of Barnet, how the council can ensure that public services best meet the needs of the borough, how the council can change and how organisations and individuals can play a part in meeting Barnet's challenges during this time.

Evidence was sought on two main topic areas:

- Ideas on the future of public services in Barnet, and how organisations and individuals can play a role in providing some of these services.
- Ideas on how the council could be more entrepreneurial and generate more income.

20 responses were received from individual residents, 7 from organisations.

#### **11.4 Consultation, research and engagement at the formative stage to inform the development of the Library Options Paper to be considered by the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee on 28 October 2014 (August - September 2014)**

As part of the evidence-led review of its library service, the Council commissioned OPM to conduct a series of focus groups to discuss the current library service and what residents expect from library services in the future. The work included:

- 11 focus groups were held during August (with 88 residents) and September 2014 - one-off 1.5 hour group discussions aiming to capture the views of users and non-users of library services.
- The focus groups were selected to ensure a representative sample across groups identified as having particular needs in the Charteris Review and groups with protected characteristics. Further details can be found below.

Recruitment ensured a representative range across the following criteria:

- Age.
- Gender.
- Households: single, couples and families.
- Ethnicity and religion.
- Socio-economic areas.
- Geographical areas.

Groups identified as having particular needs in the Charteris Review and with protected characteristics were also targeted in the individual focus groups as listed below:

- General population users.
- General population non-users.
- General population users and non-users (mixed group).
- Older people (over 65s).
- Range of BME residents.
- People with learning disabilities.
- People with disabilities.
- People with mental health issues.
- Unemployed people.
- Low income households/people living in areas of high deprivation.
- Young people.

In addition, four in-depth interviews were carried out with people with sensory impairments by an independent facilitator and added to the main report as a separate section.