

## Appendix 2: Needs Assessment for the Library Service

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## Introduction

The Council is under a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. This includes books and access to digital resources, quiet spaces for study and reflection, access to support groups and social activities for all ages, health and wellbeing support, makerspaces, training and employment advice. In light of the Council's funding pressures, the Council needs to consider whether our library service can be delivered in a more efficient way, while ensuring that it continues to meet people's needs and is comprehensive.

Officers review our library service each year to find ways to drive best value. This includes finding new contracts to deliver such as visa verification, pro-actively renting out our spaces to partners and groups, being part of a stock buying and sharing consortium and seeking funding such as S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

This review recommends a new approach that intends to deliver a comprehensive library service for all those who live, work and study in the area at a reduced cost to the Council.

Although officers are recommending closing 7 library buildings, officers believe the Council can improve and enhance the offer in the remaining library buildings, while making more efficient use of our civic buildings and contributing towards organisational savings.

Officers have undertaken a detailed review of our 16 public libraries in the borough,<sup>1</sup> which can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. From this analysis, officers have produced a series of recommendations. The review includes the following recommendation for each library building:

- Closure of the library building.
- Declassifying the library as a public library.
- Keeping the library building in its existing configuration and improving and enhancing the library service.

Officers have recommended to retain 9 of the libraries which represent 89% of visits in 2023/24, 84% of ICT minutes used in 2023/24 and were used by 83% of active users in 2023/24. This shows that they are well used by the communities they serve. These 9 libraries will be collectively open for 454.5 hours per week. This is a net increase in their weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week.

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<sup>1</sup> Enfield has 16 libraries which are open for the public to use. Angel Raynham is also classified as a public library, but it is staffed and managed by the primary school and is not open to public.

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

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

Officers have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment which has informed their recommendations.

## **Enfield libraries in context**

### **Relevance to Council Plan**

The Council Plan 2023-2026 sets out our vision and priorities to invest in Enfield to deliver positive outcomes for our communities. Our library service plays a critical part in enabling the Council to deliver on our priorities, in particular our priorities for strong, healthy and safe communities; thriving children and young people; and an economy that works for everyone. Our Council Plan also includes principles for how the Council will deliver positive outcomes for all, by creating a fairer Enfield, through collaboration and early help, and by ensuring financial resilience for the Council – these principles have underpinned our approach in developing our recommendations and the new library strategy.

### **Current library estate**

Enfield has 16 public libraries in the borough, including four large flagship libraries and 12 smaller libraries.<sup>2</sup> The average number of libraries for a London borough is 12; the highest being 17 (Barnet<sup>3</sup>) and the lowest being six (Brent<sup>4</sup>, Harrow<sup>5</sup>, Hammersmith and Fulham<sup>6</sup> and Kensington and Chelsea<sup>7</sup>). The table below shows that Enfield has

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<sup>2</sup> Angel Raynham is also classified as a public library, but it is staffed and managed by the primary school and is not open to public.

<sup>3</sup> Population: 389,300 (Census 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Population: 339,800 (Census 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Population: 261,300 (Census 2021)

<sup>6</sup> Population: 183,200 (Census 2021)

<sup>7</sup> Population: 143,400 (Census 2021)

one library per 20,625 people, whereas Haringey for example has one library per 29,355.

The table below compares the library service in Enfield, compared to our nearest neighbours.<sup>8</sup>

Borough <sup>9</sup>	Enfield	Barnet	Haringey	Waltham Forest	Croydon	Brent	Ealing
Number of Libraries	16	17	9	9	13	6	13
Population	327,924	389,300	264,200	278,400	390,800	338,918	338,400
Population divided by number of libraries	20,495 <sup>10</sup>	22,900	29,355	30,933	30,061	56,486	26,031
Area (hectare)**	8,220.01	8,674.81	2,959.85	3,880.82	8,649.68	4,323.3	5,554.45
Area (km2)	82.20	86.74	29.59	38.80	86.49	43.32	55.56
Area (km2) divided by number of libraries	5.14 <sup>11</sup>	5.10	3.28	4.31	6.65	7.22	4.27
Total Expenditure on libraries 2023/24 (£000)	3,562	6,342	4,832	4,632	3,181	4,083	3,766
Net current Expenditure on libraries 2023/24 (£000)	1,999	6,117	4,557	4,095	4,076	3,942	3,503

The gross expenditure for our library service was £3.6 million in 2023/24, which includes property costs. The net library budget is £2.9 million. Enfield library service has the seventh lowest net expenditure for the whole of London.

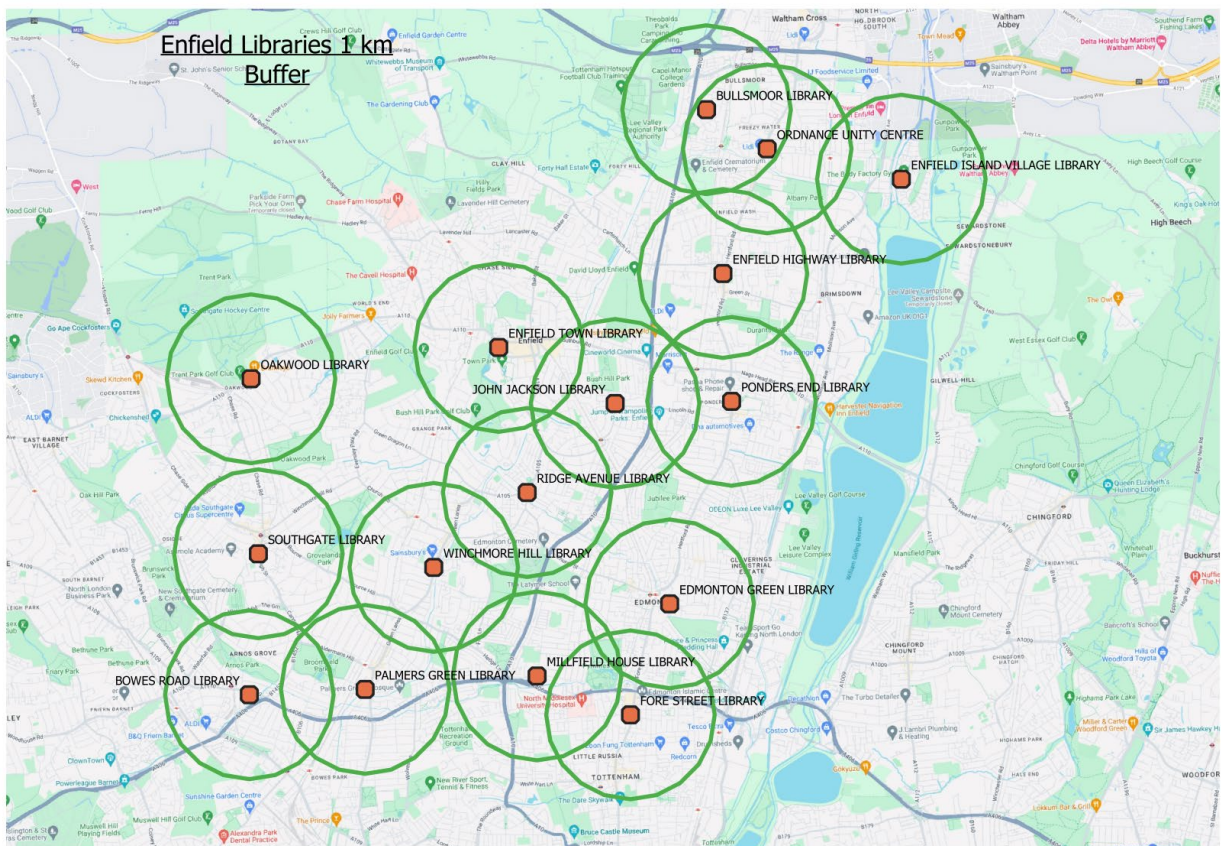
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cipfa.org/services/cipfastats/nearest-neighbour-model>

<sup>9</sup> These boroughs are provided for comparison as they are identified as comparable by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and are neighbouring boroughs or have similar population size or demographics to Enfield.

<sup>10</sup> Based on our proposed model, this figure would be 36,436.

<sup>11</sup> Based on our proposed model, this figure would be 9.13.

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



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

### **Library Usage**

The way people use our library service is changing. There has been a decrease in library visits by 379,974 when comparing 2023/24 visitor levels to 2018/19.

Furthermore, there was a decrease in the annual number of issues and renewals across all libraries by 181,897 when comparing 2018/19 to 2023/24.

However, people are increasingly using our digital service to access e-newspapers, e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines. The number of e-newspapers, e-books, e-

audiobooks and e-magazines accessed annually through the digital library service increased by 2,046,200 when comparing 2019/20 to 2023/24.<sup>12</sup>

In 2021, our community hubs service opened at Enfield Town and Edmonton Green libraries. In 2023/24 over 3,900 people received in-depth support for money, employment and skills, housing, health and wellbeing.

## **Library Strategy**

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

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

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

Our priorities are to:

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

Furthermore, to design a sustainable future library service that enables the Council to deliver on our five priorities, there are three underlying principles which have informed the recommended changes to our library estate:

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

- **Focusing resources in areas of greatest need**

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<sup>12</sup> The Council began recording performance data on the usage of the Digital Library Service in 2019.



As part of the development of the new library strategy officers have looked at a series of indicators of need at ward level for each library, to determine the different levels of need in the populations living closest to each library.

These indicators are population demographics, community safety, health, deprivation, educational attainment, broadband coverage.

- **Ensuring an accessible library service for everyone**

Our new model will ensure that:

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

The libraries which the Council will retain represent 89% of visits in 2023/24, 84% of ICT minutes used in 2023/24 and were used by 83% of active users in 2023/24. These 9 libraries will be collectively open for 454.5 hours per week. This is a net increase in their weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week.

For those who would prefer to access the library service online, the Council has a digital library service, which enables library users to access free e-resources on their digital devices at their convenience.

If a resident has a mobility, disability or caring responsibility that would make it difficult to visit a library or access our library service, the Royal Voluntary Service can deliver services on our behalf to their home.

- **Delivering a financially resilient library service**

Officers have undertaken a review of the Council's current library offer and developed an approach that intends to deliver a comprehensive library service for all those who live, work and study in the area, with reduced costs, by reducing the number of library buildings.

It is estimated that the closure of 7 buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.5 to £0.56 million once fully implemented. These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that are recommended to close. Additionally, the buildings also require maintenance work and by delivering the library service from fewer buildings, the Council will also be saving an estimated £4.8 million in



future upkeep and maintenance costs over 10 years. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £3 million and £3.85 million.

## **Overview of Phase One Engagement and Phase Two Consultation**

### **Phase One Engagement: key findings**

The Council ran a phase one engagement between 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. In this engagement, the Council wanted to hear from stakeholders about our current library service. The Council wanted to understand whether they used our library service, their experience of our libraries and their ideas on how the Council could deliver our library service more efficiently.

The phase one engagement consisted of a questionnaire for all stakeholders. The questionnaire was available in an easy read format and stakeholders could request a translation of the questionnaire.

To encourage all stakeholders to have their say, and to ensure all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 were informed and encouraged to respond, officers used the following methods of engagement:

- Publication on the 'Have your say' webpage on the Council's website
- Letters sent to Members of Parliament representing constituencies in Enfield
- 'Drop-in sessions' facilitated by Council staff at each of Enfield's 16 public libraries
- Promotion of the engagement with all voluntary and community sector groups
- Specific direct engagement with voluntary and community sector organisations and partnership boards who represent different protected groups in Enfield
- Promotion of the engagement at Headteacher's briefing

In total, there were over 1,000 responses to the phase one engagement. This included 912 responses to the questionnaire, 79 responses to the easy read questionnaire, 9

emails and two feedback sessions. Overall, 1,000 respondents equates to 2.3% of active library users between 2022-2024 and 0.3% of the borough population.

This section summarises the key findings from the phase one engagement, analysis on the feedback on each individual library is included in Appendix 1.

### **Easy read questionnaire and responses:**

The easy read version of the questionnaire asked a reduced number of questions in an accessible, easy to understand format. Therefore, the responses to closed questions on the easy read version have been reported separately.

92% of the easy read respondents live in Enfield<sup>13</sup> and 93% had used Enfield library service in the last 2 years.<sup>14</sup> Of the 56 respondents who said why they go to the library, the majority of respondents used Enfield libraries to borrow books (77%), followed by using computers (48%), to read, study or work (45%), print a document (38%) and to get help and advice (32%).

The libraries most visited by easy read respondents in the last two years were Enfield Town (39%), Edmonton Green (28%), Oakwood (18%) and Ponders End (18%).<sup>15</sup> In addition, 44% had library books delivered to their home. Of the 52 respondents who said how they travel to libraries, the most common mode of travel is to walk (50%), followed by bus (31%) and car (18%).

### **General questionnaire responses:**

90% of respondents live in Enfield<sup>16</sup> and 93% of respondents had used Enfield library service in the last two years.<sup>17</sup> Of the 797 respondents who said what they use our library service for, the majority used Enfield libraries to borrow books (84%), followed by reading, studying or working (40%), printing documents (33%), and computer use (32%).

The libraries most used or visited in the last two years were Enfield Town (68%), Palmers Green (32%), Ridge Avenue (26%), and Edmonton Green (21%).<sup>18</sup> The libraries least used in the last two years were Millfield Theatre (3%), Bullsmoor (3%), Bowes Road (5%) and Enfield Island Village (5%).<sup>19</sup> Respondents most commonly use or visit libraries either less frequently than every other month (32%) or weekly (20%). Of the 741 respondents who said how they travel to libraries, the most common mode of

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<sup>13</sup> Base: 74 responses

<sup>14</sup> Base: 74 responses

<sup>15</sup> Base: 57 responses

<sup>16</sup> Base: 896 responses

<sup>17</sup> Base: 864 responses

<sup>18</sup> Base: 797 responses

<sup>19</sup> Base: 798 responses

travel is to walk (38%), followed by bus (29%) and car (23%), and most respondents used their selected libraries because they were close to home (41%).

Respondents were then asked to rate the Enfield Library Service and its facilities. Of the 857 responses to this question, 50% rated Enfield library Service and facilities as 'very good', and 36% as 'good'. The majority of respondents agreed that the libraries they visit make them feel welcome and included,<sup>20</sup> give them access to books and resources that are relevant to them,<sup>21</sup> and have helpful staff who can answer their questions.<sup>22</sup>

### **Combined responses:**

The summary below combines responses from open ended questions on the questionnaire, easy read questionnaire, and further feedback received by email.

The consultation asked how the Council could improve the library service and facilities or make our libraries better and noted the themes across the 643 responses received. The most common themes are reported below:

- *Suggestions for improving infrastructure or layout of the library (26%).* For example, more work and study spaces, more quiet spaces, more seating, and improved toilets and parking facilities. Responses also mention that libraries should be separate from council services, such as emergency housing support.
- *Enhanced community engagement activities and services (25%).* This included more activities and groups for children and adults, more community/voluntary activities and events to engage and bring people together, and greater promotion of the activities and services on offer in our libraries.
- *Accessibility and diversity (25%).* This included offering a greater selection of books, more copies of popular books and extended opening hours.

Respondents were then asked to share their ideas on what the Council could do differently to deliver our library service more efficiently and make savings to our library budget. Officers noted the themes across the 584 responses and reported the most common themes below:

- *Increasing commercial income (29%).* For example, through allowing libraries to be used for venue hire, renting library space to businesses and clubs, charging for special events and printing, selling books and stationery or opening a café.

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<sup>20</sup> 53% strongly agree, 31% tend to agree (Base: 844 responses).

<sup>21</sup> Access to physical resources (61% strongly agree, 28% tend to agree, base: 841). Access to digital resources (35% strongly agree, 28% tend to agree, base: 836 responses).

<sup>22</sup> 55% strongly agree, 30% tend to agree (Base: 847 responses).

- *Reducing opening hours and premises costs* (19%). This included reduced opening hours and taking steps to reduce operating costs. For example, energy saving measures for heating and lighting and limiting free printing.
- *Increase volunteering, charitable donations, applying for grant funding and lobbying central government* (14%). For example, increased community engagement to encourage more volunteers and formation of friends of libraries groups, holding fundraising events, accepting charitable donations and applying for grant funding.

Overall, 20% of responses felt that the library budget should not be reduced. Respondents were asked to give further comments or feedback about our library services. Of the 334 responses received, 41% praised the existing library service and staff.

### **Responses from representatives and organisations:**

Within the questionnaire responses reported above, 4% (41 respondents) were from representatives and organisations. The libraries most visited among this group were Enfield Town (56%), Edmonton Green (46%) and Palmers Green (21%).<sup>23</sup> The representatives of organisations who responded most commonly used libraries for visits with their organisation or group to use general library facilities (48%) or to deliver support or training to users of their organisation or group or hold meetings (38%).

### **Phase Two Consultation: key findings**

In the consultation, the Council wanted to gather feedback from stakeholders to further develop and improve our draft proposals. The phase two consultation also helped officers raise awareness of the draft library strategy among stakeholders and explain the Council's rationale for the proposed changes, developments and opportunities arising out of the draft strategy. From the consultation, the Council wanted to understand how the proposals will impact respondents and their suggestions on how the Council can mitigate this impact and establish whether stakeholders had any alternative suggestions which made the same or similar levels of savings for the library service. The phase two consultation launched on 22nd August 2024 and ran for 12 weeks, ending 14th November 2024.

The phase two consultation consisted of a questionnaire for all stakeholders. The questionnaire was available in an easy read format and stakeholders could request a translation of the questionnaire. Officers also commissioned MEL Research, a social research agency, to undertake face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of residents.

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<sup>23</sup> Base: 41 responses

In total, there were over 2,446 responses to the phase two consultation. This included 1,715 responses to the questionnaire, 133 responses to the easy read questionnaire, 522 face-to-face interviews and 76 emails and letters. Overall, 2,446 respondents equates to 5.7% of active library users between 2022-2024 and 0.7% of the borough population.

The Council also received 1,300 signatures to two petitions objecting to the proposed library closures registered with the Council.

The key findings from this consultation have been used to inform our final proposals. The findings of the phase two consultation are attached as Appendix 5 of this report.

### **Easy read questionnaire and responses:**

The easy read version of the questionnaire asked a reduced number of questions in an accessible, easy to understand format. Therefore, the responses to closed questions on the easy read version have been reported separately.

#### *Respondents*

94% of respondents were responding as a local resident<sup>24</sup> and 96% of respondents had used an Enfield library in the past two years.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Potential impact of proposed closures*

The most common impacts identified by those responding to the easy read questionnaire were that they will lose access to the library service (36%), and it will have a negative impact on the community (30%).<sup>26</sup>

When asked how the Council could support easy read respondents to still use the library service in Enfield, if the proposed closures impacted them, over half of respondents (58%) used this as an opportunity to state their desires to keep all libraries open and almost a quarter said that the Council should reduce the number of libraries proposed to close (23%).<sup>27</sup> Some respondents stated mitigations such as improving the library service with more study space, changes in opening times and the extension of council services to the smaller local libraries.

#### *Proposed changes to opening hours*

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<sup>24</sup> Base: 128 responses

<sup>25</sup> Base: 129 responses

<sup>26</sup> Base: 84 responses

<sup>27</sup> Base: 101 responses.

47% of easy read respondents said that the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them.<sup>28</sup> This decreased to 42% for respondents who used a library proposed to close. Of those who said that the proposed extensions in opening hours did not work for them, 67% used this as an opportunity to state their desire to keep libraries open.<sup>29</sup>

### **General questionnaire responses:**

#### *Respondents*

94% of respondents live in Enfield,<sup>30</sup> of which 44% live in the Southwest of the borough.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Vision and Priorities*

77% of respondents agree with our vision 'that all Enfield libraries will be hubs for learning, creativity, information, health and wellbeing, welcoming everyone who lives, works or studies in Enfield'.<sup>32</sup> 197 respondents suggested an alternative vision, of which 84% used this as an opportunity to state their desire to keep library services as is. These respondents stated that libraries should be within walking distance and suggested to retain specific libraries, due to their importance to the community.

The majority of respondents agree with the proposed priorities in the draft library strategy. Respondents were more likely to agree with our first priority to 'support lifelong reading and literacy for all' (96%).<sup>33</sup> Respondents were least likely to agree with our priority that libraries should 'support good health and wellbeing' (78%).<sup>34</sup> 493 respondents suggested alternative priorities of which 55% used this as an opportunity to state their desire to keep library services as is.

#### *Potential impact of proposed closures on households*

The majority of respondents stated that the closures of John Jackson (50%),<sup>35</sup> Bowes Road (52%),<sup>36</sup> Enfield Island Village (56%),<sup>37</sup> Enfield Highway (55%)<sup>38</sup> and Bullsmoor (59%)<sup>39</sup> will have mostly a neutral impact on respondents' households.

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<sup>28</sup> Base: 124 responses

<sup>29</sup> Base: 46 responses

<sup>30</sup> Base: 1,715 responses

<sup>31</sup> Base: 1,588 responses

<sup>32</sup> Base: 1,708 responses

<sup>33</sup> Base: 1,712 responses

<sup>34</sup> Base: 1,711 responses

<sup>35</sup> Base: 901 responses

<sup>36</sup> Base: 886 responses

<sup>37</sup> Base: 861 responses

<sup>38</sup> Base: 851 responses

<sup>39</sup> Base: 836 responses

While for Southgate (55%),<sup>40</sup> Oakwood (60%),<sup>41</sup> and Winchmore Hill (62%)<sup>42</sup> libraries, the majority of respondents said that the closures would have a negative impact on their households.

Those who use a library which is proposed to close were more likely to state that the proposed closure of a library will have a negative impact on their household, than respondents who do not use a library proposed to close. This was significantly higher for Winchmore Hill Library (68%),<sup>43</sup> Oakwood Library (67%)<sup>44</sup> and Southgate Library (61%)<sup>45</sup>, compared to library users who do not use a library proposed to close (32%,<sup>46</sup> 27%<sup>47</sup> and 26%<sup>48</sup> respectively).

Negative Impact of library closing on household		
	Uses a library / libraries proposed to remain open and does not use a library / libraries proposed to close	Uses a library / libraries proposed to close
Bullsmoor	19%	22%
Enfield Highway	24%	28%
Enfield Island Village	21%	26%
Bowes Road	22%	32%
Winchmore Hill	32%	68%
Southgate	26%	61%
Oakwood	27%	67%
John Jackson	20%	34%

Of those that feel negatively about the proposed closures, their main concerns were about losing access to the library services and a negative impact on the community by reducing spaces and resources for younger and older residents.

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<sup>40</sup> Base: 1,136 responses

<sup>41</sup> Base: 1,181 responses

<sup>42</sup> Base: 1,154 responses

<sup>43</sup> Base: 920 responses

<sup>44</sup> Base: 949 responses

<sup>45</sup> Base: 901 responses

<sup>46</sup> Base: 186 responses

<sup>47</sup> Base: 183 responses

<sup>48</sup> Base: 184 responses



The most common mitigation for individual respondents is visiting an alternative library in Enfield. Enfield Town is the most popular alternative library (62%) for respondents.<sup>49</sup> However, the majority of individual respondents said there could be no mitigation for the impact of closing the libraries on their household.

Mitigations for negative impact of proposed library closure		
	Mitigations Identified	No mitigations identified
Bullsmoor <sup>50</sup>	46%	60%
Enfield Highway <sup>51</sup>	40%	50%
Enfield Island Village <sup>52</sup>	37%	53%
Bowes Road <sup>53</sup>	32%	56%
Winchmore Hill <sup>54</sup>	37%	58%
Southgate <sup>55</sup>	42%	54%
Oakwood <sup>56</sup>	41%	58%
John Jackson <sup>57</sup>	32%	59%

### *Potential impact of proposed closures on organisations*

According to representatives of schools, businesses, community groups and organisations, the most significant impact will be their members and service users losing access to the library service (74%).<sup>58</sup>

Representatives also expressed concerns about the accessibility of alternative libraries and stated the importance of libraries as community hubs, especially for older people, children and vulnerable groups. The Council then asked representatives how it can mitigate the negative impacts of closing the 8 libraries on their organisation's service users and members. Most representatives used this question as an opportunity to

<sup>49</sup> Base: 335 responses

<sup>50</sup> Base: 201 responses

<sup>51</sup> Base: 244 responses

<sup>52</sup> Base: 234 responses

<sup>53</sup> Base: 286 responses

<sup>54</sup> Base: 730 responses

<sup>55</sup> Base: 638 responses

<sup>56</sup> Base: 728 responses

<sup>57</sup> Base: 294 responses

<sup>58</sup> Base: 48 responses

reiterate their desire to keep libraries open (59%) and some stated that there were no mitigations for the proposed closures (18%).<sup>59</sup> Some representatives raised the importance of strengthening relationships with the community sector to ensure more people use the remaining libraries and that space is provided in these libraries for community activities (8%).

If an organisation used a library which is proposed to close, Officers asked representatives how the Council could support their organisation to deliver its service from an alternative library in Enfield. Most representatives used this question as an opportunity to reiterate their desire to keep libraries open (45%).<sup>60</sup> 15% of respondents said that funding for transport costs would support their organisation to deliver its services from an alternative library.

### *Proposed changes to opening hours*

The proposed extension in opening hours of the remaining libraries were received well by many, with a substantial proportion of respondents stating the proposal works for them (46%).<sup>61</sup> However, those who use a library proposed to close were less likely to say that the proposed extension worked for them. 42% of respondents who used a library proposed to close said the proposed extensions did not work for them.<sup>62</sup>

Respondents were then asked if the proposed extensions in opening hours would make them more likely to visit the remaining libraries. 40% of respondents said the proposed extension in opening hours would make them more likely to use the libraries,<sup>63</sup> with Enfield Town being the most popular library selected to visit (57%).<sup>64</sup> However, those who use a library proposed to close were less likely to say the proposed extension in opening hours worked for them, with 53% saying the proposed extension would not make them more likely to visit the remaining libraries.<sup>65</sup>

### *Feedback on proposed changes and alternative suggestions*

Overall, 54% of respondents would like the Council to keep the library service as it is,<sup>66</sup> this increases to 63% for those who use the libraries proposed to close.<sup>67</sup> 12% of respondents would like the Council to implement all the proposed changes, 21% would

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<sup>59</sup> Base: 39 responses

<sup>60</sup> Base: 20 responses

<sup>61</sup> Base: 1,633 responses

<sup>62</sup> Base: 1,280 responses

<sup>63</sup> Base: 1,651 responses

<sup>64</sup> Base: 663 responses

<sup>65</sup> Base: 1,296 responses

<sup>66</sup> Base: 1,633 responses

<sup>67</sup> Base: 1,278 responses

like the Council to implement some of the proposed changes, 6% would like the Council to do something else with the library service and 6% didn't know / were not sure.

Of those who said they would like the Council to implement some of the proposed changes, 59% said they would like the Council to reduce the number of libraries proposed to close.<sup>68</sup> This increased to 70% for those respondents who use a library proposed to close.<sup>69</sup>

### **Combined responses:**

#### *Library Usage*

95% of respondents had used the Enfield library service in the past two years.<sup>70</sup> Almost half of respondents had used / visited Enfield Town library in the last two years (49%).<sup>71</sup> This was followed by Oakwood (34%) and Winchmore Hill (32%).

#### *Feedback on proposed changes and alternative suggestions*

When asked for suggestions from respondents on what the Council could do differently to deliver our library service more efficiently and make savings to our library budget. Officers noted the themes across the 847 responses and reported the most common themes below:

- Keep libraries open / keep libraries as is (72%): Majority of respondents used this question as an opportunity to reiterate their desire to keep the library service as is and reduce the number of libraries proposed to close.
- Alternative uses and revenue generation (16%): Respondents proposed that the Council use library spaces for other community services to share operating costs or to rent spaces in libraries to local businesses, community organisations or for individual hire to increase income without closing libraries.
- Cost-saving measures (14%): Several suggestions focused on ways to save money without closing libraries. These include stopping free printing services, reducing opening hours, increasing library charges, and employing more volunteers to reduce staff salary costs.
- Libraries are essential for children, students, and the next generation (12%): Respondents emphasised the importance of retaining libraries due to their importance for children and students. Respondents emphasised the importance of libraries as safe spaces and study spaces for students and expressed concerns about the impact of closures on educational attainment and literacy.

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<sup>68</sup> Base: 314 responses

<sup>69</sup> Base: 237 responses

<sup>70</sup> Base: 1,647 responses

<sup>71</sup> Base: 1,743 responses

- Spaces are needed for older people and the community (9%): Respondents emphasised the importance of libraries for older people and vulnerable groups as warm spaces and opportunities for social connection and digital support.

### **Face-to-face interviews:**

#### *Respondents*

522 Enfield residents were surveyed and to ensure that the data was representative, quotas were set by age, gender and ward of the local authority. Over a third of participants (36%) said that they used the Enfield libraries in the last two years,<sup>72</sup> of which 40% said they had visited Enfield Town Library.<sup>73</sup>

#### *Potential impact of library closures*

Overall, the majority of participants felt somewhat indifferent about the potential library closures. More participants were likely to say that the closure of Winchmore Hill Library and Enfield Highway Library would have a negative impact on them (22%<sup>74</sup> and 17% respectively<sup>75</sup>). Visiting an alternative library and using the digital library service are the most popular alternatives for participants in light of library closures. Enfield Town Library is the most popular alternative venue for those who said that they would visit an alternative library (50%).<sup>76</sup>

#### *Proposed changes to opening hours*

Proposed extension of hours was well received by most participants (69%),<sup>77</sup> with a similar proportion (70%) stating that the proposed extension would make them more likely to use the remaining libraries.<sup>78</sup> Those most positive about this change are likely to live in within wards with lower deprivation levels. Older participants (65+) are notably more likely to say that the proposed extended hours would not work well for them (29%).

#### *Feedback on proposed changes and alternative suggestions*

There are mixed feelings regarding the proposed changes to Enfield's library services. Over a third of participants (38%) would like library services to stay the same, a quarter (26%) would like to see all the changes proposed implemented and 18% would like to

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<sup>72</sup> Base: 522 responses

<sup>73</sup> Base: 188 responses

<sup>74</sup> Base: 223 responses

<sup>75</sup> Base: 225 responses

<sup>76</sup> Base: 66 responses

<sup>77</sup> Base: 522 responses

<sup>78</sup> Base: 522 responses

see just some of these changes implemented.<sup>79</sup> However, when probed further participants stated that perhaps fewer libraries should be closed instead of all of the 8 venues, with mentions of tailored or further support for residents around library closures.<sup>80</sup>

When asked about any further suggestions around the proposed changes, many participants used the opportunity to reiterate their desire to keep all libraries open.<sup>81</sup> Comments regarding the potential negative impact that closures may have to the community remain prominent for those concerned, suggesting that communication and actions that prioritises community support and access to resources such as books and the internet would be well received by residents. There may also be a suggestion here to communicate what the spaces may be used for and any plans for further investment into the borough.

### **Letters, Emails and Petitions**

During the consultation, the Council received 76 emails and letters from stakeholders. Of which, 74 (97%) were in objection to the proposed closures. In these letters respondents expressed concerns about the negative impact of the proposed closures on the local community, especially for older and younger people. Many respondents also expressed concerns about the impacts of the proposed closures on their households, as they are regular users, the library is close to their home, or their family use it.

Of the letters and emails received, 6 suggested alternative ideas to the proposed closures. This included ideas around cost saving measures, that library spaces are used for other community services to reduce operating costs or rented out to increase revenue generation.

The Council received 1,300 signatures to two petitions objecting to the proposed library closures registered with the Council.

## **Post consultation strategy amendments**

Following the phase two consultation, officers have made the following changes to our initial recommendations based on feedback received during the consultation:

### **Recommend that Oakwood Library remains open**

During the second phase consultation, the Council received a high level of responses raising concerns about the impact of the proposed closures and the accessibility of

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<sup>79</sup> Base: 522 responses

<sup>80</sup> Base: 36 responses

<sup>81</sup> Base: 200 responses

alternative libraries in the Northwest of the borough. Some respondents raised concerns about not being able to use the tube to access a library in the borough, having previously been able to do so to access Bowes Road, Southgate and Oakwood libraries and about the accessibility of parking at alternative libraries.

On the basis of this feedback from the consultation, officers recommend that one of the libraries in the Northwest of the borough that was previously proposed to close should remain open. Of the three libraries in the area (Bowes Road, Southgate and Oakwood), officers are recommending keeping Oakwood library open. This is because it has the highest usage of the three, is fully accessible, is near transport links, requires the least maintenance work and is the furthest distance from an alternative library.

### **Work with community groups to provide community library provision in Enfield Island Village**

It was proposed that Enfield Island Village be closed, in part due to its proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre. However, during the second phase consultation, stakeholders expressed concerns about the accessibility of travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre through active travel and public transport from Enfield Island Village. Having considered this feedback, it remains officers' recommendation that Enfield Island Village Library should be closed. This is because it had the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (40%) in 2023/24, the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (2.9) in 2023/24 and the third lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (17%). This low usage means it would not be efficient to continue to provide public library provision at the Enfield Island Village Library.

In light of the feedback, officers intend to explore whether the Council can work with community groups to provide pop-up library provision in their community spaces in the Enfield Island Village area, in addition to the statutory service in the nine libraries.

### **Explore providing surplus books to schools and early years settings impacted by library closures**

During the second phase consultation, the Council received a high level of responses raising concerns about the impact of the proposed closures on schools and early years settings, and the impact on children's literacy levels. The potential impact of the proposals on children and young people and the mitigations and justifications for this is considered in detail in the Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix 3. Nevertheless, in light of this feedback, the Council will ask schools and early years settings who are located near libraries recommended to close if they would like surplus books to create their own school library service to further mitigate any negative impact.

## **Review of proposed extensions in opening hours**

While the proposed extensions in opening hours were well received by many respondents, the significant majority of respondents stated that they wanted a reduction in the number of libraries proposed to close. In light of this, as stated above, officers are recommending that Oakwood Library should remain open, meaning that the total number of libraries closing will be reduced. As a result of the additional costs associated with this, officers have reviewed our proposed extensions in opening hours to enable the Council to keep Oakwood Library open, while still making the desired savings from the library service.

Following this review, officers are now recommending that:

- The 4 large libraries (Enfield Town, Edmonton Green, Palmers Green and Ordnance Unity Centre) remain as proposed in the consultation. These libraries were popular alternatives for those impacted by the proposed closures and have the highest usage levels.
- The opening hours at the 4 smaller libraries (Ridge Avenue, Fore Street and Ponders End) remain as they currently are rather than being extended as was originally proposed in the consultation.
- The opening hours at Oakwood Library and Millfield House Library will remain as they currently are.

In accordance with this recommendation, the 9 remaining libraries will be open for a total of 454.5 hours per week. This would mean that the opening hours at the 9 libraries will have a net increase in their weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week. Officers consider that this revised proposal will enable the Council to have a geographical spread of 9 libraries with suitable opening hours in fit for purpose buildings.

Once the new operating model has been implemented, officers intend to annually review our opening hours to ensure they are at optimal times for communities.

## **Criteria applied to each library**

For each library, the following criteria has been applied to make a recommendation regarding the future of the library and whether the Council should continue to provide a service from the current site, or whether the Council should close the library building.

### **Local need**

This criterion is a key principle in our library strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for accessible and responsive services. This is based on demographic data for the ward that the library is located in. The ranking includes:



- Population demographics - This includes the number of younger people, older people, the percentage of households where English is no-one's first language and population density.<sup>82</sup>
- Community safety - This includes the number of recorded criminal offences between April 2023 – March 2024.<sup>83</sup>
- Health and disability - This includes the percentage of residents in good health and the percentage of residents with a disability.<sup>84</sup>
- Deprivation - This includes the percentage of children in low-income families, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals, the percentage of adults on unemployment benefits and universal credit, the percentage of households in fuel poverty and indices of deprivation.<sup>85</sup>
- Educational attainment - This includes the percentage of children achieving expected literacy and reading standards, the percentage of children achieving grade 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths, and the percentage of adults with no qualifications.<sup>86</sup>
- Broadband coverage - The percentage of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s.<sup>87</sup>

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

	Population Demographics	Community Safety	Health and Disability	Deprivation	Educational Attainment	Broadband Coverage	Total
Edmonton Green	22	25	24	25	25	25	145
Carterhatch	20	19	23	20	24	22	128
Upper Edmonton	23	24	16	24	18	19	123
Ponders End	17	22	19	20	21	20	119
Brimmsdown	7	23	21	22	23	21	117
Lower Edmonton	24	17	17	23	20	11	112

<sup>82</sup> The higher the number, the higher the number of younger people and older people, the higher the percentage of households where English is no-one's first language and the higher the population density.

<sup>83</sup> The higher the number, the higher the number of recorded criminal offences.

<sup>84</sup> The higher the number, the greater the level of ill health and disability.

<sup>85</sup> The higher the number, the greater the level of deprivation.

<sup>86</sup> The higher the number, the lower the percentage of children achieving expected literacy and reading standards, the lower the percentage of children achieving grade 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths, and the higher the percentage of adults with no qualifications.

<sup>87</sup> The higher the number, the lower the number of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s (so greatest level of 'digital need').

Haselbury	25	19	16	20	17	1	98
Bullsmoor	13	12	25	17	22	7	96
Jubilee	11	15	12	21	19	15	93
Enfield Lock	11	20	20	16	16	9	92
Southbury	17	16	19	12	14	13	91
Whitewebbs	2	13	22	11	10	25	83
Bowes	21	8	8	15	15	5	72
Southgate	17	10	5	10	7	18	67
New Southgate	19	7	10	13	13	2	64
Palmers Green	18	14	6	8	9	8	63
Town	14	21	7	7	9	4	62
Cockfosters	4	6	14	9	11	16	60
Ridgeway	7	11	13	5	6	17	59
Highfield	13	5	10	14	12	3	57
Bush Hill Park	2	9	11	3	6	14	45
Arnos Grove	9	3	4	6	4	10	36
Grange Park	4	1	1	1	1	23	31
Winchmore Hill	7	4	1	4	2	12	31
Oakwood	9	2	4	2	3	6	26

This assessment has allowed officers to understand the role of the library in meeting local need, the requirement of the local library service in helping to tackle poverty and deprivation, and the equality impact of any change to the library service.

Officers acknowledge that the level of local need must be fairly evaluated for wards currently without libraries and how changes in the library service will affect these wards. There are currently 10 wards without a library, however, neighbouring wards provide an accessible library service for the residents of these wards. Currently there are no alternative assets in these wards which would be suitable for a library and because of the council's financial position, officers do not believe it would be reasonable to purchase a new asset or re-purpose an existing asset.

The Council must provide a comprehensive library service for everyone, not only those considered in highest level of need. Level of need has therefore been considered alongside the other criteria set out below.

### **Distance to closest library**

This criterion is a key principle in our library strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for accessible and responsive services. This includes an assessment of the

time taken by the average person to walk or cycle to their nearest alternative library; and for those unable to walk or cycle, time taken to travel by car or by public transport.

This was calculated by using Google Maps to work out travel times at 10am on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, which is based on a Department for Transport guideline for the statutory accessibility indicators from 2012.

Officers have also reviewed feedback from the phase one engagement and examined the proximity reasons for why people use specific libraries in Enfield and what alternative libraries they use.

### **Current level of usage**

Officers have included for information the visitor levels for libraries for each financial year from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

Officers have compared the usage for libraries during 2023/24. This is based on number of visits, issues and renewals, ICT hours used per hour open and active users per quarter in each library. By using these measures, officers can get a broad overview of how each library is currently being used and the current demand for the service being offered from the building.

Issues and renewals track books being taken out or renewed. This does not include people who are accessing books or other resources in the library but who are not borrowing the books to take away.

Visits record the number of times there has been a visit to the library building. This includes anyone coming into the library building, including those who don't take out books or use the ICT equipment, but may be accessing activities like reading clubs, getting help and advice, or using the free Wi-Fi.

ICT hours used is a record of the number of hours where ICT equipment has been used in the libraries. Although this does not pick up users visiting the library with their own device, it helps to show users who rely on these facilities and who may not have access to a digital device at home.

Active users per quarter tells us the number of people with a library card registered at that library who are using it, but it does not pick up usage of other library buildings.

New users per year tells us the number of people who have registered at that library. This tells us whether new people are engaging with this library.

Officers have also reviewed the feedback from the phase one engagement about how often respondents used each library, whether they used multiple libraries, and what times and days they visited.

This enabled officers to understand the usage of each library based on quantitative and qualitative data.

## **Phase two consultation**

For each library proposed to close in the phase two consultation, officers have included a short summary of feedback received during the second phase consultation. This is split into feedback received in the standard questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, easy read questionnaire and via emails and letters.

For each library, officers have included the number of respondents who used the library in the past two years, and where they are responding as a representative, officers have included the name of the organisation if stated.

For individual respondents, officers have included the percentages of respondents who said that the proposed closure would have a positive, neutral or negative impact on their household. If the proposed closure has a negative impact on the respondent's household, officers have included a summary of the most common impacts. Officers also included any mitigations identified by the respondents.

For representatives, officers have included what the negative impact on their organisation would be and any mitigations identified.

Officers also included a summary of letters and emails received during the consultation regarding opposition to proposed closures of libraries and the key themes in each letter.

This enables officers to understand the impact of the proposals on respondents and their suggestions on how the Council can mitigate this impact. This has then been used to inform our final recommendations.

## **Facilities and resources**

Officers have reviewed the facilities available at each library including the stock levels, number of toilets, number of computers, number of community rooms, number of car parking spaces, whether the library has step free access and distance to the nearest bus stop. Officers have also considered the number of activities and full-time equivalent staff at each library. Furthermore, officers have reviewed the feedback from the phase one engagement as to what this sample of library users use their local library for specifically. This enabled officers to understand the resources available at each library and how they are used.

## **Equalities**

This includes a review of the protected characteristics of the local population (potential future users of the library service) and the existing library users (where data exists on their protected characteristics). Officers have also included the protected characteristics of respondents from the phase two consultation, (where data is available).

A detailed equality impact assessment has been undertaken to inform our recommendations.

## **Further considerations**

Officers have considered the individual context for each library, including plans for regeneration in the area (this list is not exhaustive and is specific to each individual library).

## **Operating costs**

After applying the above criteria, officers have considered the operating costs of each library building. These operating costs include staffing, premises (including rates and utilities), resources (including books, digital services, furniture, stationery, and transportation), and the income currently generated by the library. This criterion is a key principle in our library strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for a financially resilient council.

Officers have compared the operating cost of each large library and small library<sup>88</sup> to the median average to identify areas of higher-than-average and lower-than-average net expenditure. This has also enabled officers to identify what savings could be generated by closing the library building.

## **Property implications**

Officers have included the maintenance cost estimates for each building and a summary of maintenance work that is required. This criterion is a key principle in our library strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for a financially resilient council.

## **Summary of recommendations**

### **Closure of library buildings**

Based on the analysis set out in this report and the other appendixes, officers are recommending the closure of the following 7 library buildings that form currently part of the statutory library service. This is a net reduction in weekly opening hours of 209.5 hours per week.

It is estimated that the closure of 7 buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.5 million to £0.56 million once fully implemented.<sup>89</sup> These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that will close.

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<sup>88</sup> The 4 large flagship libraries are Ordnance Unity Centre, Edmonton Green, Palmers Green and Enfield Town. The 12 smaller libraries are: Bullsmoor, Enfield Highway, Enfield Island Village, Ponders End, Millfield House, Fore Street, Bowes Road, Winchmore Hill, Southgate, Oakwood, Ridge Avenue and John Jackson.

<sup>89</sup> When producing this estimated range of savings, officers have considered that the remaining 9 libraries will require a transfer of resources to support the increased opening hours and potential increases in usage.

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

It is acknowledged that the majority of respondents to the consultation and engagement did not support the proposed closures of libraries. However, officers consider that the draft library strategy will deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service for Enfield. The changes are justified by the need to improve and enhance the library service at the retained 9 libraries, and the need to deliver the library service in a more efficient manner to make it financially sustainable. The draft library strategy will also make a contribution towards the legitimate aim of balancing the Council's budget by making savings which will contribute towards closing the funding gap in the Council's budget.

### **Northeast Area:**

- Bullsmoor (Bullsmoor)

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

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

- Enfield Highway (Brimmsdown)

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

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

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

- Enfield Island Village (Enfield Lock)

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

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

However, the usage of Enfield Island Village is below average in comparison to the other council run libraries, it has the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (2.9) and the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (40%). This is supported by the phase one engagement, whereby most respondents who live, work or study in Enfield used the library less frequently than every other month (38%). This low usage means it would not be efficient to continue to provide public library provision at the Enfield Island Village Library. Therefore, officers intend to explore whether the Council can work with community groups to provide pop-up library provision in their community spaces in the Enfield Island Village area, in addition to the statutory service in the nine libraries.

### **Southwest Area:**

- Bowes Road (New Southgate)

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

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

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



- Winchmore Hill (Winchmore Hill)

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

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

Palmers Green is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 25 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue Library is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 6 minutes to drive or 8 minutes by public transport.

- Southgate (Southgate)

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

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

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

### **Northeast Hub Area:**

- John Jackson (Southbury)

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

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

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

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

Angel Raynham, though currently classed as one of our 17 libraries, is part of a primary school and is not accessible to the general public. It was historically used as a library as part of a Children's Centre in the building but is now only used as a school library. Taking this into consideration, along with the proximity to alternative library provision, officers are recommending giving this library permanently to the school and permanently closing the public library.

### **Continue to deliver service in existing library buildings**

Officers are recommending that the Council keeps the following buildings open, with the potential to stretch assets further through new income generation and delivery of hub models:

- Ordnance Unity Centre
- Edmonton Green
- Ponders End
- Fore Street
- Millfield House
- Palmers Green
- Oakwood
- Enfield Town
- Ridge Avenue

Officers have reviewed staffing levels at each remaining library to support any increase in usage because of the closure of nearby smaller libraries and reviewed opening hours to ensure there is parity.

The 9 libraries which the Council will retain as part of the statutory service represent 89% of visits in 2023/24, 84% of ICT minutes used in 2023/24 and were used by 83% of active users in 2023/24. This shows that they are well used by the communities they

serve. These 9 libraries will be collectively open for 454.5 hours per week. This is a net increase in the weekly opening hours of 18 hours per week when compared to existing opening hours at the 9 libraries.

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

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

## **Other options considered**

During the consultation, the Council welcomed any ideas from stakeholders which could achieve the same level of savings for the library service as our proposals.

In this section, officers have outlined some of the options they have considered from feedback in the phase one engagement and phase two consultation when developing our final recommendations.

### **Keep the library service as is**

In the phase one engagement and phase two consultation, respondents requested that the Council does not make any changes to the library service offer and should seek to make savings elsewhere.

The Council faces budget challenges due to over a decade of government underfunding, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, historic inflation and interest rate rises, and the ongoing cost of living crisis resulting in more residents needing our support. Therefore, the Council is having to make significant budget savings across all services, including by delivering services in a more efficient manner. In light of the need for a fair allocation of resources, it is not considered that the library service should be excluded from this exercise.

### **Reduction in opening hours**

In the engagement and consultation, respondents suggested reducing opening hours to make savings to the library revenue budget. To make the same revenue levels of savings the Council would need to significantly reduce opening hours. This was not considered viable because it would be an inefficient use of 16 buildings and would still need investment for the maintenance work required in each building. Officers do not believe such a model would meet the Council's statutory obligations in delivering a comprehensive and efficient library service.

## Replacing library staff with volunteers

In the engagement and consultation, respondents suggested that the Council increase the number of volunteers to reduce salary costs for the library service and therefore avoid the closure of libraries.

Volunteers provide a valuable contribution to our library service in addition to paid library staff, providing over 10,000 hours of support per year. The roles of volunteers include delivering our home library service, being ICT buddies and supporting baby and toddler rhyme times. As part of the library strategy, the Council wants to continue to promote our volunteer offer at our libraries to increase participation and complement the service delivered by our library workforce.

While it is recognised that the desired revenue savings could be achieved through replacing staff with volunteers, this approach was not recommended by officers as a comprehensive and efficient library service could not be guaranteed. It is considered that the Council would not be able to guarantee the formal opening hours required for a consistent library service or to meet community need.

Officers also believe that having a trained and knowledgeable workforce is crucial for delivering the universal library offers and ensuring that key council priorities are consistently delivered through our libraries.

Furthermore, Council would still need to fund the operating and maintenance costs of the buildings and undertake the necessary repairs and maintenance work over 10 years (£8.3 million).

## Community managed libraries and outsourcing

In the second phase consultation, the Council welcomed expressions of interest from organisations, such as community groups and/or voluntary association or charities or similar, that felt they had the capability and funds necessary to operate and maintain and repair a library. No organisation submitted a completed business case to the Council, during the consultation period. The responses received were expressions of interest in the use of the buildings, if they were declared surplus to the library estate and did not state their interest in operating a community managed library, as per the criteria outlined in the consultation.

Proposal	Outcome
Voluntary sector organisations and a local business asked to lease the library buildings if the libraries closed for private use.	This was a not a proposal to run a public library.
A private developer enquired about the purchase of a library building.	This was a not a proposal to run a public library.

<p>A local enterprise wanted to lease a library building and depending on the commercial viability of its operations, conditionally offered to let the Council manage and fund a library from the site.</p>	<p>No business case was submitted and this proposal would of required the Council to fund ongoing revenue and capital costs for the service.</p>
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### **Alternative uses and income generation**

In the consultation, respondents suggested that the Council use library spaces for other community services or rent them out to local businesses, to increase revenue generation.

Officers review our library service each year to find ways to drive best value such as finding new contracts to deliver such as visa verification, pro-actively renting out our spaces to partners and groups, being part of a stock buying and sharing consortium and seeking funding such as S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Officers consider that it would not be possible to further maximise the income from our libraries to sufficiently cover the maintenance work required for the 16 buildings and the operating costs for the 7 libraries proposed to close. Many of our libraries do not have sufficient square footage to support the permanent co-location of services or businesses, which would be required to generate this income.

### **Replacement of branch libraries with a mobile library**

In the consultation, respondents suggested that if libraries were to close, they should be replaced by a mobile library. The capital cost of purchasing a van is estimated to be £200,000 and there would ongoing revenue expenditure to staff the vehicle,<sup>90</sup> which is estimated to cost £50,000.<sup>91</sup>

Officers consider that the revised draft Library Strategy provides a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons living, working or undergoing full-time education within the local authority area, for the purposes of section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Officers do not believe that a mobile library would be necessary for the library service to meet this duty, due to the geographical spread of 9 libraries in the borough. If a resident faces significant difficulties in visiting an alternative library, the Home and Digital Library Services can provide books and resources to these residents.

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<sup>90</sup> The estimate is based the capital expenditure invested by over local authorities in a Mobile Library.

<sup>91</sup> This estimate is based a Mobile Library Manager post with oncosts.

## **Open+ Model**

In the consultation, respondents suggested that the Council operate an Open+ model to reduce salary costs for the library service. The Open+ model would enable library users to access the library service and self-serve using their library card, without staff being present in the building.

The set up and ongoing operational costs of an Open+ model means that this is unlikely to deliver the desired savings as it would require costly new technology. Officers estimate that it would cost over £700,000 in capital expenditure<sup>92</sup> to install the technology and the Council would still need to fund the necessary repairs and maintenance work in all 16 buildings over 10 years (£8.3 million). Furthermore, the Council would also need officers to monitor the CCTV cameras in all the libraries, when staff are not present in the building, to ensure site and visitor safety and safeguarding.

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<sup>92</sup> This estimate is based the capital expenditure invested by over local authorities in an Open+ Model.

## Appendix 1: Library by Library Analysis

### Northeast Area

#### Ordnance Unity Centre (Enfield Lock)

##### Local need:

Enfield Lock is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 25 wards for level of local need. Enfield Lock has the third highest percentage of children aged 0-15 years old (26%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact children aged 0-15. Enfield Lock has the second lowest percentage of residents aged 65+ (9%).

The percentage of those children in relative and absolute low-income families sits at 32%, which is above the borough average (25%). The percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) is significantly higher than the average (31%). The percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (26%) is higher than the borough average (22%).

##### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Carterhatch***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre Library.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and in relative and absolute (32%) low-income families. It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward which has Ponders End Library, which is not recommended for closure.

##### **Distance to nearest library:**

The nearest library is Bullsmoor, which is 1.5km away. This would take the average person 20 minutes to walk or a 6-minute cycle. For those unable to walk this is a 4-minute car journey or 20-minute public transport journey. Alternatively, this library is 1.9km from Enfield Island Library, which is a 25-minute walk for an average person or a 6-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 6-minute drive or a 11-minute public transport journey. Officers are recommending to close both libraries.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. 104 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they use the Ordnance Unity Centre Library. Of the respondents who stated how they get to the library 51% walk, 38% travel by car, 30% get the bus, 6% cycle, and 2%



get the train.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, the Council also asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 7 respondents who use Ordnance Unity Centre, 86% walk, 29% get the bus and 14% travel by car.

The Council also asked respondents to the phase one questionnaire why they used Ordnance Unity Centre library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (70%), because it is close to public transport links (25%) and because it is close to the shops (19%).<sup>94</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (69%), Edmonton Green (43%), and Enfield Highway (39%).<sup>95</sup>

In the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the respondents who said which libraries they go to, 12% said Ordnance Unity Centre.<sup>96</sup> Of the easy read respondents who visit Ordnance Unity Centre, 43% only visit this library. The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Enfield Town (57%), Edmonton Green (43%), and Ponders End (43%).<sup>97</sup>

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Ordnance Unity Centre (OUC) from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
165,246	165,246	142,121	65,709	65,709	100,755	114,467

This library is co-located with a health centre. In August 2023, a makerspace opened at the library which provides a creative space where people in the local community can gather to co-create, share resources and knowledge, work on projects and network.

Officers have compared the usage of OUC to other large libraries in Enfield. The usage of OUC is below average when compared to the other large libraries in Enfield. OUC has the lowest proportion of active users per quarter out of the large libraries (40%), the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (17). OUC has the second lowest visits per hour open (48.2) and the second lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (13%)

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
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<sup>93</sup> 106 responses

<sup>94</sup> Base: 99 responses

<sup>95</sup> Base: 104 responses

<sup>96</sup> Base: 57responses

<sup>97</sup> Base: 7 responses

49.5	48.2	17	13%	40%	926
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The Council is increasing the opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre by 4.5 hours per week. The library will now be open on a Wednesday, which will increase the opening hours. The library’s opening hours will also be reduced on a Friday. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users.

There are 10 partners operating from Ordnance Unity Centre. These partners hold events such as tutoring, counselling, advice and information sessions and health clinics. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Ordnance Unity Centre by our partners to respond to local need.

In 2023/24, the library was visited by the following schools: Chesterfield, Freezywater, Kingfisher, Ark John Keats, and St James. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

Most respondents to the phase one engagement said they used the library weekly (25%), followed by less frequently than every other month (22%) or monthly (19%).<sup>98</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (47%), Thursday (47%) or Saturday (45%).<sup>99</sup> A higher proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (60%) or afternoon (62%).<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, 5 representatives (12%) said their organisation had used Ordnance Unity Centre Library in the past two years.<sup>101</sup>

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Ordnance Unity Centre said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (78%), use the space to read, study or work (53%), and use the computers (52%).<sup>102</sup>

OUC has the lowest stock levels when compared to the other large libraries in Enfield, (29,160 compared to the average of 40,536). Furthermore, OUC has a below average number of computers (20 compared to 44) and a slightly below average number of regular activities (9 compared to 10), when compared to the other large libraries. OUC

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<sup>98</sup> Base: 107 responses  
<sup>99</sup> Base: 102 responses  
<sup>100</sup> Base: 103 responses  
<sup>101</sup> Base: 41 responses  
<sup>102</sup> Base: 103 responses

has the lowest number of full-time equivalent staff of all the large libraries (4.07) and its nearest bus stop is 43 metres away.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
29,160	4	20	1	4.07	9	9	Yes	43 metres

### **Equalities:**

**Age**<sup>103</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 0-19 years old (40%), which is higher than the percentage of 0-19-year-olds living in the ward (32%).

In the phase two consultation, 116 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre Library declared their age. The highest proportion were aged 50-59 (22%) which is significantly higher when compared to ward population or active library users in this age group (13% and 10% respectively).

**Ethnicity**<sup>104</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from Black ethnic backgrounds (39%). This is significantly higher compared to the ward population (30%). Similarly, the proportion of active users who declared they were from an Asian ethnic background (11%) is higher compared to the ward population (7%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ordnance Unity Centre library and declared their ethnicity, 39% were from a White British ethnic background which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users (26% and 22% respectively).<sup>105</sup> The percentage of respondents from a Black ethnic background is relatively in line with the ward profile (28% compared to 30%). However, it is significantly lower than the percentage of library users from a Black ethnic background (39%).

**Disability**<sup>106</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (14%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ordnance Unity Centre and declared their protected characteristics, 32% declared they had a disability. This is

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<sup>103</sup> Base: 3,817 active users, 17,709 census

<sup>104</sup> Base: 1,789 active users, 17,820 census

<sup>105</sup> Base: 111 responses

<sup>106</sup> Base: 3,817 active users, 17,709 census

significantly higher than the ward profile and the percentage of library users (14% and 2%)

Gender<sup>107</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (60% compared to 40%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 70% of respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre Library were female and 30% were male.<sup>108</sup> The percentage of female respondents is significantly higher than the ward population and the active library users (53% and 60%).

Religion<sup>109</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportions of library users who are Muslim and Buddhist is significantly higher (25% and 2% respectively) when compared to the proportions of the ward population (20% and 0.4% respectively). Active library users who declared having no religion is significantly lower at Ordnance Unity Centre when compared to the ward population (13% compared to 21%).

In the phase two consultation, 93 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

### **Operating Costs:**

Ordnance Unity has a net expenditure of £503,868.57, which is the second lowest out of the four large libraries in Enfield. Its operating costs are below average apart from cost per visit (£4.40 compared to £3.46), which makes it second highest for cost per visit out of the four large libraries. The cost for premises for Ordnance Unity (£111,912) is significantly lower than the average for the large libraries (£182,151.82). Furthermore, the cost per hour (£195.75) is the second lowest out of the four large libraries and is lower than the average (£204.56). Out of the four large libraries in Enfield, Ordnance Unity Centre has the lowest income (£43,442).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£360,832	£74,566	£111,912	£43,442	£503,868.57	£195.75	£4.40

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<sup>107</sup> Base: 3,772 active users, 17,709 census

<sup>108</sup> Base: 113 responses

<sup>109</sup> Base: 482 active users, 16,587 census

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold property. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £416,937 in maintenance works is required at Ordnance Unity Centre Library. This includes replacement of fluorescent lighting, replacing furnishing and decorations, installation of drainage systems and new sanitary appliances.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that blinds or frosting are applied to ground floor windows, inset tables are installed, and a stair lift or evac-chair are provided. It is estimated this will cost less than £25,000.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that this library remains open. Enfield Lock has a lower than average level of local need (10<sup>th</sup> of the 25 wards in Enfield).

Co-located with Ordnance Unity Health Care Centre, it is a well-connected library offering a wide variety of services, facilities and activities. This should help to mitigate the impact of the closure of alternative libraries in the borough. Ordnance Unity Centre has a strong offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid-for cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to stay independent and socially active and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and resilience. The library also has a good health offer with health-related activities and support groups. The library has a community room that can be hired. The new makerspace in the library is popular and it is recommended that this offer is expanded to other libraries.

The library has a large floorspace which is sufficient to support an increase in usage because of the closure of nearby smaller libraries. Given that the library has the second lowest net expenditure of all the large libraries, Ordnance Unity Centre represents a cost effective and efficient library which can be developed to deliver an enhanced offer to Enfield residents.

The Council is increasing the opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre by 4.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users, as well as ensuring the offer is consistent with Palmers Green Library.

### **Bullsmoor (Bullsmoor)**

#### **Local need:**

Bullsmoor ward is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> for level of need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. Bullsmoor ward has the highest proportion of residents with a declared disability (17%) and has the lowest percentage of residents in very good or good health (80%). Therefore, any

change to the library service should consider the impact on disabled residents and those in poorer health.

Bullsmoor ward is in the 20% most deprived wards in the country. The percentage of children in relative and absolute (34%) low-income families is significantly higher than the borough average (25%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact those experiencing high levels of deprivation.

In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications is significantly higher than the borough average (28% compared to 22%). Therefore, it should be considered how the library service can effectively engage Bullsmoor residents to support life-long learning.

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Whitewebbs and Carterhatch***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Bullsmoor Library.

Whitewebbs is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Whitewebbs has the second highest proportion of residents with a declared disability (16%) and the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield. It has the lowest population density out of the wards in Enfield, (1,332 p\sq. km), and a low percentage of households where English is no one's first language. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and in relative and absolute (32%) low-income families. It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward and Enfield Lock ward, which have Ponders End and Ordnance Unity Centre Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

### **Distance to nearest library:**

The nearest library is Ordnance Unity Centre, which is 1.5km away. This would take the average person 19 minutes to walk or 5 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk this is a 4-minute car journey or 11-minute public transport journey.

In the phase one engagement 26 respondents said that they used Bullsmoor library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of those who live, work or study in Enfield, 42% drive, 38% walk, 25% get the bus and 8% cycle<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>110</sup> Base: 24 responses

The most frequent responses about why respondents used Bullsmoor Library were because it was close to home (50%), because it is close to public transport links (18%) and because it has parking facilities (18%).<sup>111</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Highway (69%), Ordnance Unity Centre (65%), or Enfield Town (58%).<sup>112</sup>

Given the high levels of deprivation in the area, the cost attached to taking public transport to visit Ordnance Unity Centre could be a barrier to some residents who usually visit Bullsmoor Library. However, given Bullsmoor Library’s very limited opening hours and low visitor numbers, it could be assumed that many residents local to Bullsmoor Library are already travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre or other alternative libraries to access their broader offers of services and activities.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Bullsmoor Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
7,948	8,277	8,525	0	4,350	5,414	4,877

Officers have compared the usage of Bullsmoor Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. Bullsmoor Library has the second lowest number of opening hours per week (23). It has the lowest visits per hour open (4.4) and percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (6%) of all council run smaller libraries in Enfield. It has the second lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (4.6) and a relatively low percentage of active users per quarter (44%).

Officers will ensure that services currently offered at Bullsmoor Library are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
23	4.4	4.6	6%	44%	197

In 2023/24, the library was used by Honilands Primary School. Pupils at this school will be disproportionately impacted by the closure of this library. The nearest alternative

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<sup>111</sup> Base: 22 responses

<sup>112</sup> Base: 26 responses

library is Ordnance Unity Centre, which is a 23-minute walk or 14-minute bus journey. This may not be considered a reasonable distance for the school to travel.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

Most respondents to phase one engagement used Bullsmoor Library less frequently than every other month (50%).<sup>113</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (65%) or Thursday (43%).<sup>114</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (58%).<sup>115</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

In the phase one engagement, 3 representatives (6%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Bullsmoor Library in the last two years. Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

Overall, the low levels of usage and frequency of use suggests that Ordnance Unity Centre, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage because of the closure of Bullsmoor.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Bullsmoor Library said they used the library service for were to print a document (73%), borrow a book, (62%), and use the computers (62%)<sup>116</sup>.

When compared to other smaller libraries, Bullsmoor Library has below average stock levels (8,755 compared to 11,549), below average number of computers (5 compared to 7), and a below average number of full-time staff (1.1 compared to 2). Bullsmoor is also the furthest library from the nearest bus stop (148 metres).

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,755	1	5	0	1.1	Approx. 3	0	Yes	148 metres

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<sup>113</sup> Base: 34 responses

<sup>114</sup> Base: 23 responses

<sup>115</sup> Base: 24 responses

<sup>116</sup> Base: 26 responses



## **Phase Two Consultation**

### *Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 51 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Bullsmoor Library in the past two years. Of these respondents, 48 were residents and one was a representative of a community organisation.

1% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Bullsmoor Library would have a positive impact on their household, 59% of individual respondents said it would have a neutral impact on their household and 21% of individual respondents said it would have a negative impact on their household.<sup>117</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Bullsmoor Library on their household was.<sup>118</sup> The most common impacts identified were: negative impact on the community (57%), the respondent would lose access to the library service (33%) and the closure would have a negative impact on their / the children (12%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>119</sup> Of which:

- 13% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 5% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 2% said they use the home library service.
- 2% said they would use the digital library service.
- 7% proposed alternative mitigations.
- 16% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 60% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (50%).<sup>120</sup>

The representative of the organisation who used Bullsmoor Library stated that that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Bullsmoor

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<sup>117</sup> Base: 836 responses

<sup>118</sup> Base: 138 responses

<sup>119</sup> Base: 214 responses

<sup>120</sup> Base: 34 responses

Library in the past two years,<sup>121</sup> 42% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them and 33% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if the proposed extensions made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>122</sup> 38% said it did and 40% said it did not. The library that respondents were most likely to visit, because of the proposed extension in hours, was Enfield Town (68%).<sup>123</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, none had used Bullsmoor Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>124</sup> 87% of participants said the proposed closure of Bullsmoor Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 10% said it would have a negative impact and 4% said that it would have a positive impact.

Of the participants who said that the closure of Bullsmoor Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>125</sup> In response, 77% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 33% said they would use the digital service, 29% said they would use the home library service and 5% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 5 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Bullsmoor Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Bullsmoor Library will impact them. Of respondents that used Bullsmoor library, 40% said that the closure will have a negative impact on the community.<sup>126</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 50% of respondents who used Bullsmoor Library mentioned extending opening hours and more study space in alternative libraries.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Base: 48 responses

<sup>122</sup> Base: 50 responses

<sup>123</sup> Base: 71 responses

<sup>124</sup> Base: 204 responses

<sup>125</sup> Base: 20 responses

<sup>126</sup> Base: 5 responses

<sup>127</sup> Base: 4 responses

The Council asked respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Bullsmoor Library in past two years,<sup>128</sup> 100% said the proposed extensions worked for them.

### *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received a letter from Feryal Clarke MP expressing her concern about the impact of the proposed closure of Bullsmoor Library on the community, especially children and young people, and her opposition to the proposed closure.

### **Equalities:**

**Age**<sup>129</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 0-19 years old (49%), which is significantly higher than the proportion of 0–19-year-olds in the ward population (29%).

In the phase two consultation, 49 respondents who used Bullsmoor Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Ethnicity**<sup>130</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 33% of residents in Bullsmoor ward are White British, 26% are from White Other ethnic backgrounds and 23% are from Black ethnic backgrounds.

Overall, 90 active users and 42 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Bullsmoor Library declared their ethnicity. These are small samples which would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population.

**Disability**<sup>131</sup>: Bullsmoor has the highest disability levels of the wards in the borough (17%). However, Bullsmoor library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (1%) in comparison to other libraries in Enfield.

In the phase two consultation, 43 respondents who used Bullsmoor library declared whether they had a disability. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

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<sup>128</sup> Base: 3 responses

<sup>129</sup> Base: 222 active users, 11,414 census

<sup>130</sup> Base: 11,454 census

<sup>131</sup> Base: 222 active users, 11,454 census

Gender<sup>132</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (57% compared to 43%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 44 respondents who used Bullsmoor Library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Religion<sup>133</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 50% of residents in Bullsmoor ward are Christian, 21% are non-religious and 20% are Muslim.

Overall, one active library user and 38 respondents the phase two consultation who used Bullsmoor Library have declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

### **Operating costs:**

Bullsmoor's net expenditure is £72,763.79, which is the lowest of all council run libraries in Enfield. The library's premises cost is also the lowest of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£23,769). The library's operating costs are below the average of all the council run smaller libraries in Enfield apart from cost per visit (£14.92 compared to £6.80). Staffing costs (£45,104), library resources (£9,321) and income (£5,430) are among the lowest of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield. Bullsmoor's cost per hour is also lower than the average for the council run smaller libraries (£60.84 compared to £67.76), this can be explained by the limited opening hours (3 days per week).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£45,104	£9,321	£23,769	£5,430	£72,763.79	£60.84	£14.92

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £897,318 in maintenance works is required at Bullsmoor Library. This includes replacement of fluorescent lighting, replacing furnishing and decorations, installation of drainage systems and new sanitary appliances.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 it is recommended that a parking bay is allocated for disabled parking. This is estimated to cost less than £8,000.

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<sup>132</sup> Base: 218 active users, 11,414 census

<sup>133</sup> Base: 11,454 census

## **Recommendations:**

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

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

The large floor space at Ordnance Unity Centre Library means that it is sufficient to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of Bullsmoor Library. It has a strong offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid-for cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to stay independent and socially active and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and resilience. The library also has a good health offer, with health-related activities and support groups.

## **Enfield Highway (Brimsdown)**

### **Local need:**

Brimsdown is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> for level of local need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. The percentage of children in relative and absolute (32%) low-income families is significantly higher than the borough average (25%). The percentage of households receiving universal credit (44%) is significantly higher than the borough average (31%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact those experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The percentage of residents aged 65+ (11%) is lower than the borough average (15%). The population density of people p/sq. km is significantly lower (3,565) than the average (5,506).

In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications is significantly higher than the borough average (29% compared to 22%). Therefore, it should be considered how the library service can effectively engage Brimsdown residents to support life-long learning.

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Carterhatch ward***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Enfield Highway Library.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and the second highest percentage of relative and absolute (32%) low-income families. It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward and Enfield Lock ward, which have Ponders End and Ordnance Unity Centre Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

### **Distance to nearest library:**

The nearest library is Ponders End, which is 1.5km away. This would take the average person around 21 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 6-minute drive or a 10-minute public transport journey bus journey. Alternatively, this library is 1.6km from Ordnance Unity Centre, which is a 23-minute walk for an average person or a 10-minute cycle.

In the phase one engagement, 63 respondents said that they used Enfield Highway Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and 38% get the bus, 36% walk, 33% travel by car, 13% cycle, and 5% get the train.<sup>134</sup> The Council also asked respondents the same question in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the four respondents who use Enfield Highway, 25% walk, 25% travel by car and 75% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used Enfield Highway Library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (58%), because it is close to the shops (32%) and because it is close to public transport links (24%).<sup>135</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (76%), Ordnance Unity Centre (65%), and Edmonton Green (56%).<sup>136</sup> Similarly, the most common alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read questionnaire were Enfield Town (75%), Edmonton Green (75%) and Ponders End (50%).<sup>137</sup>

Given the high levels of deprivation in the area, the costs attached to taking public transport to visit Ordnance Unity Centre or Ponders End could be barrier for some people who would usually use Enfield Highway. However, given Enfield Highway Library's low visitor numbers, it could be assumed that many residents local to Enfield

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<sup>134</sup> Base: 61 responses

<sup>135</sup> Base: 59 responses

<sup>136</sup> Base: 63 responses

<sup>137</sup> Base: 4 responses

Highway Library are already travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre or other alternative libraries to access their broader offers of services and activities.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Enfield Highway Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
7,204	22,889	26,699	0	12,801	16,867	19,413

Officers have compared the usage of Enfield Highway Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. Overall, Enfield Highway has below average usage compared to the other council run smaller libraries in Enfield, apart from the percentage of ICT hours used per hour open, which is reflective of the average of the other council run smaller libraries (20%). Enfield Highway has the third lowest percentage of active users per quarter (41%), visits per hour open (11.2) and number of issues and renewals per hour open (5.1) out of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield.

Officers will ensure that services currently offered at Enfield Highway are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
36	11.2	5.1	20%	41%	327

There are two partners (Cancer UK and the Eden Jar) which regularly use Enfield Highway Library. Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

In 2023/24, the library was used by St James Primary School. Pupils at this school will be disproportionately impacted by the closure of this library. St James Primary School also used the Ordnance Unity Centre Library which is a mitigating impact against the closure of Enfield Highway Library on this school.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

Most respondents to the phase one engagement questionnaire used the library less frequently than every other month (46%), weekly (21%) or monthly (17%).<sup>138</sup> This relatively low frequency of use suggests that Ordnance Unity Centre, due to its wide

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<sup>138</sup> Base: 71 responses

range of facilities and resources would be able to support any increase in usage because of the closure of Enfield Highway Library.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (52%), Monday (50%), or Tuesday (47%).<sup>139</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (44%).<sup>140</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

In the phase one engagement, 8 representatives (17%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Enfield Highway Library in the past two years. This included Enfield Job Club, Over 50s Forum, Enfield Safer Neighbourhood Board and African French Speaking Organisation. Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

One representative of a nursery also said in the phase one engagement that they had used the library in the past two years. Therefore, although officers know that the nursery will be impacted by the closure of Enfield Highway, officers are not able to calculate its travel time to alternative provision.

Overall, the low levels of usage and frequency of use suggests that Ordnance Unity Centre, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage because of the closure of Enfield Highway.

### **Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top four facilities users of Enfield Highway said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (72%), use the computers (64%), print a document (61%), and use the space to read, study or work (61%).<sup>141</sup>

When compared to other smaller libraries, Enfield Highway Library has below average stock levels (7,558 compared to 11,549) and a below average number of full-time staff (1.7 compared to 2). Enfield Highway Library has a slightly higher-than-average number of computers (8 compared to 7) and no regular activities. Enfield Highway is also the closest library to the nearest bus stop (32 metres). The lift at the library is at the end of usable life and is regularly out of service, therefore there is no guaranteed step free access to the library on the first floor.

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<sup>139</sup> Base: 58 responses

<sup>140</sup> Base: 63 responses

<sup>141</sup> Base: 61 responses



Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
7,558	2	8	1	1.7	2	0	No	32 metres

## **Phase Two Consultation**

### *Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 95 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Enfield Highway Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 86 were residents.
- 5 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here.
- 2 were representatives of a primary school (Vita Et Pax).
- 1 was a representative of a community organisation.
- 1 was other.

55% of individual respondents said the proposed closure of Enfield Highway Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 27% said it would have a negative impact and 4% a positive impact.<sup>142</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Enfield Highway Library on their household was.<sup>143</sup> The most common impacts identified were: negative impact on the community (51%), the respondent would lose access to the library service (36%) and the library was close to their home (9%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>144</sup> Of which:

- 23% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 8% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 5% said they use the home library service.
- 5% said they would use the digital library service.
- 7% proposed alternative mitigations.

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<sup>142</sup> Base: 851 responses

<sup>143</sup> Base: 170 responses

<sup>144</sup> Base: 214 responses

- 32% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 50% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (58%).<sup>145</sup>

The two representatives of primary schools who used Enfield Highway Library said that the closure would have a negative impact on the school and their pupils and stated that there were no mitigations. The representative of the organisation who used Enfield Highway Library stated that that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Enfield Highway Library in past two years,<sup>146</sup> 52% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them and 29% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>147</sup> 54% said it did and 38% said it did not. The library respondents were most likely to visit because of the proposed extension in hours was Enfield Town (70%).<sup>148</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 2% had used Enfield Highway Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>149</sup> 80% of participants said that the proposed closure of Enfield Highway Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 17% said it would have a negative impact and 2% said it would have a positive impact.

Participants were subsequently asked what the negative impact of closing Enfield Highway Library on their household was.<sup>150</sup> The most common impacts identified by respondents were: it is close to their home (34%), the proposed closure would have a negative impact on their / the children (24%) and the proposed closure would have a negative impact on the community (23%).

Of the participants who said that the closure of Enfield Highway Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>151</sup> In response, 43% said they would use the digital service, 42% said they

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<sup>145</sup> Base: 69 responses

<sup>146</sup> Base: 86 responses

<sup>147</sup> Base: 92 responses

<sup>148</sup> Base: 107 responses

<sup>149</sup> Base: 225 responses

<sup>150</sup> Base: 41 responses

<sup>151</sup> Base: 41 responses

would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 39% said they would use the home library service and 12% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 13 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Enfield Highway Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Enfield Highway Library will impact them. Of respondents that used Enfield Highway Library, 20% stated that the closure will have a negative impact on the community, that they will lose access to the library services, that their children and relatives use the library, and that the library is in a convenient location and can be easily accessed through public transport / driving.<sup>152</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 42% used this question as an opportunity to say that the Council should keep the libraries open.<sup>153</sup>

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Enfield Highway Library in past two years,<sup>154</sup> 50% said the proposed extension worked for them and 50% said it did not.

### *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received three letters opposing the proposed closure of Enfield Highway Library, including a letter from Feryal Clarke MP. In these letters, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure on the community, especially children and young people. Two residents raised the negative impact of closing a local library, which they regularly use.

### **Equalities:**

**Age**<sup>155</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 0-19-years-old (26%), which is lower than the percentage of 0-19-year-olds in the ward population (31%).

In the phase two consultation, 86 respondents who used Enfield Highway Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

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<sup>152</sup> Base: 10 responses

<sup>153</sup> Base: 12 responses

<sup>154</sup> Base: 12 responses

<sup>155</sup> Base: 1,069 active users, 16,397 census

**Ethnicity**<sup>156</sup>: The proportion of active users from Black ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population who are from Black ethnic backgrounds (24%). Users from White British (19%) and White Other (20%) ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented when compared to the ward population (26% and 29% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 80 respondents who used Enfield Highway Library declared their ethnicity. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Disability**<sup>157</sup>: The ward has relatively high levels of disability (15%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%).

In the phase two consultation, 82 respondents who used Enfield Highway Library declared whether they had a disability. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Gender**<sup>158</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (60% compared to 40%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% and 48% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 78 respondents who used Enfield Highway library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Religion**<sup>159</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportion of library users who are Christian and Buddhist (54% and 3% respectively) is higher when compared to the ward population (48% and 0.5% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 71 respondents who used Enfield Highway Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

### **Operating costs:**

Enfield Highway has a net expenditure of £118,590.50, which is lower than the average of the council run libraries in Enfield (£132,529.46). Enfield Highway is below average for operating costs apart from premises cost (£45,099 compared to £42,694). The library is among the lowest for income (£8,145) out of the council run libraries.

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<sup>156</sup> Base: 579 active users, 16,245 census

<sup>157</sup> Base: 1,069 active users, 16,249 census

<sup>158</sup> Base: 1,055 active users, 16,397 census

<sup>159</sup> Base: 142 active users, 15,140 census

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£67,656	£13,981	£45,099	£8,145	£118,590.50	£63.35	£6.11

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £24,947 in maintenance works is required at Enfield Highway Library. This includes replacing the carpet and upkeeping decorations.

### **Recommendations:**

Officers are recommending the closure of Enfield Highway Library given its proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre and Ponders End as alternative provisions. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring the Council provides a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Whilst Brimsdown has a high level of local need, it is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> for level of local need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. Enfield Highway has below average usage compared to other council run smaller libraries in Enfield. It has the third lowest percentage of active users per quarter, visits per hour open and number of issues and renewals per hour open out of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield. This is supported by the phase one engagement, whereby most respondents who stated they live, work or study in Enfield used the library less frequently than every other month (46%).

The library is in close proximity to alternative provision at proximity to Ponders End (1.5km) and Ordnance Unity Centre (1.6 km), both of which are fully accessible. The journey to Ponders End would take the average person around 21 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 6-minute drive or a 10-minute public transport journey bus journey. Alternatively, Ordnance Unity Centre is a 23-minute walk for an average person or a 10-minute cycle.

Ordnance Unity Centre is a well-connected library offering a wide variety of services, facilities and activities. It has a strong offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid-for cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to stay independent and socially active and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and resilience. The library also has a good health offer, with health-related activities and support groups. Furthermore, Ponders End Library has good transport connections, good facilities and potential further to maximise its community offer.

## **Enfield Island Village (Enfield Lock)**

### **Local need:**

Enfield Lock is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 25 wards for level of local need. Enfield Lock has the third highest percentage of children aged 0-15 years old (26%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact children aged 0-15. Enfield Lock has the second lowest percentage of residents aged 65+ (9%).

The percentage of those children in relative and absolute low-income families sits at 32%, which is above the borough average (25%). The percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) is significantly higher than the borough average (31%). The percentage of adults aged 16 and above with no qualifications (26%) is higher than the borough average (22%).

Enfield Lock ward also has Ordnance Unity Centre Library which is not recommended for closure.

### **Distance to nearest library:**

This library is 1.8km from Ordnance Unity Centre which is a 25-minute walk for an average person, or a 7-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 7-minute drive or a 13-minute public transport journey.

In the phase one engagement, 38 respondents said that they used Enfield Island Village Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of those that use Enfield Island Village Library, 44% walk, 38% travel by car, 35% get the bus, 15% cycle, and 9% get the train.<sup>160</sup>

The Council also asked respondents why they used Enfield Island Village Library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (59%), because it is close to public transport links (29%) and because it is close to the shops (21%).<sup>161</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (71%), Ordnance Unity Centre (66%), and Enfield Highway (61%).<sup>162</sup>

Given the high levels of deprivation in the area, the costs attached to taking public transport to visit Ordnance Unity Centre could be a barrier for some people who would usually use Enfield Island Village. However, given Enfield Island Village Library's low visitor numbers and limited opening hours, it could be assumed that many residents local to Enfield Island Village Library are already travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre or other alternative libraries to access their broader offers of services and activities.

### **Usage:**

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<sup>160</sup> Base: 34 responses

<sup>161</sup> Base: 34 responses

<sup>162</sup> Base: 38 responses

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Enfield Island Village Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
7,367	8,011	8,352	0	3,627	6,096	7,022

Officers have compared the usage of Enfield Island Village Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. Enfield Island Village Library had the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (40%). It has the lowest opening hours per week out of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (20). The visits per hour open at Enfield Island Village are above average compared to the council run smaller libraries (14.6 compared to 14.1). This library has the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open of the other libraries (2.9) and the third lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (17%).

Officers will ensure that services currently offered at Enfield Island Village are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
20	14.6	2.9	17%	40%	216

In 2023/24, the library was visited by Fresh Steps Independent and SEMH school. The nearest alternative library is Ordnance Unity Centre, which is a 23-minute walk or 15-minute public transport journey. This may not be considered a reasonable distance for the school to travel.

#### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

Most respondents to the phase one engagement questionnaire used the library less frequently than every other month (38%), weekly (18%) or monthly (16%).<sup>163</sup> Overall, the low levels of use and frequency of use suggests that Ordnance Unity Centre, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increases in usage as a result of the closure of Enfield Island Village.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (59%), Monday (54%), or Saturday (54%).<sup>164</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (53%).<sup>165</sup> Officers

<sup>163</sup> Base: 45 responses

<sup>164</sup> Base: 37 responses

<sup>165</sup> Base: 366 responses

have reviewed opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

In the phase one engagement, one representative of a community group (Over 50s Forum) and one representative of secondary school / further education college said their organisation used the library in the past two years. The library is also used by ENACT (a voluntary sector organisation). Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

Overall, the low levels of usage and frequency of use suggests that Ordnance Unity Centre, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage because of the closure of Enfield Island Village.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Enfield Island Village Library said they used the library service for were to use the space to read, study or work (68%), borrow a book, (63%), and use the computers (63%).<sup>166</sup>

Enfield Island Village has the second lowest stock levels of any library in Enfield (3,819). The library has a below average number of computers (5 compared to 7), below average number of full-time equivalent staff (1.1 compared to 2) and no regular activities. The library does not have any car parking spaces and is further than the average distance from the nearest bus stop (80 metres compared to 57 metres).

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
3,819	1	5	0	1.1	0	0	Yes	80 metres

**Phase Two Consultation:**

*Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 72 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Enfield Island Village Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 64 were residents.
- 3 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here.

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<sup>166</sup> Base: 38 responses



- 2 were representatives of a secondary school.
- 2 were representatives of a primary school (Vita Et Pax and Prince of Wales).
- 1 was a representative of a community organisation.

56% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Enfield Island Village Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 25% said it would have a negative impact and 3% said it would have a positive impact.<sup>167</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Enfield Island Village on their household was.<sup>168</sup> The most common impacts identified were: negative impact on the community (57%), the respondent would lose access to the library service (30%) and the library was close to their home (11%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>169</sup> Of which:

- 17% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 8% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 6% said they would use the home library service.
- 6% said they would use the digital library service.
- 6% proposed alternative mitigations.
- 15% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 53% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (56%).<sup>170</sup>

The two representatives of primary schools who used Enfield Island Village said that the closure would have a negative impact on the school and their pupils. One primary school stated that there were no mitigations and the other stated that to mitigate the impact the library service could deliver books to the school.

The two representatives of secondary schools did not state what the impact would be or how this could be mitigated.

The representative of the organisation who used Enfield Island Village Library stated that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

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<sup>167</sup> Base: 861 responses

<sup>168</sup> Base: 166 responses

<sup>169</sup> Base: 234 responses

<sup>170</sup> Base: 55 responses

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Enfield Island Village Library in past two years,<sup>171</sup> 50% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them and 31% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>172</sup> 40% said it did and 34% said it did not. The library that respondents were most likely to visit, because of the proposed extension in hours, was Enfield Town (66%).<sup>173</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, none had used Enfield Island Village Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>174</sup> 88% of participants said that the proposed closure of Enfield Island Village Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 10% said it would have a negative impact and 2% said it would have a positive impact.

Of the participants who said that the closure of Enfield Island Village Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>175</sup> In response, 59% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 41% said they would use the digital service, 42% said they would use the home library service and 5% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 4 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Enfield Island Village Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Enfield Island Village Library will impact them. In response, 50% stated that their children and relatives use the library.<sup>176</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 33% used this question as an opportunity to say that the Council should keep the libraries open and 33% also said to reduce the number of libraries proposed to close.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Base: 64 responses

<sup>172</sup> Base: 67 responses

<sup>173</sup> Base: 90 responses

<sup>174</sup> Base: 210 responses

<sup>175</sup> Base: 21 responses

<sup>176</sup> Base: 4 responses

<sup>177</sup> Base: 3 responses

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Enfield Island Village Library in past two years,<sup>178</sup> 100% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them.

### *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Feryal Clarke MP, Fresh Steps Independent and SEMH School and ENACT regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of Enfield Island Village Library. In each response, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure of Enfield Island Village Library on the community, especially children and young people. The library is used regularly by both Fresh Steps SEN School and ENACT.

### **Equalities:**

**Age**<sup>179</sup>: At Enfield Island Village Library, 38% of its active users are aged between 0-19 years old, which is higher than the ward population (32%).

The library has a lower proportion of active users aged 70+ when compared to the ward population (1% compared to 6%).

In the phase two consultation, 63 respondents who used Enfield Island Village Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Ethnicity**<sup>180</sup>: People from Black ethnic backgrounds make up the highest proportion of active library users (39%). The proportion of active users from Black ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population who are from Black ethnic backgrounds (30%). The proportion of active library users from White British and White Other ethnic backgrounds is lower when compared to the ward population (20% and 21% compared to 26% and 26% respectively). The proportion of active users from Asian ethnic backgrounds was slightly higher when compared to the ward population (9% compared to 7%).

In the phase two consultation, 58 respondents who used Enfield Island Village Library declared their ethnicity. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

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<sup>178</sup> Base: 3 responses

<sup>179</sup> Base: 362 active users, 17,709 census

<sup>180</sup> Base: 163 active users, 17,820 census

**Disability<sup>181</sup>:** The ward has average levels of disability (14%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (0.3%).

In the phase two consultation, 60 respondents who used Enfield Island Village Library declared whether they had a disability. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Gender<sup>182</sup>:** The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (65% compared to 35%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population, (53% and 47%, respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 60 respondents who used Enfield Island Village Library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

**Religion<sup>183</sup>:** Using the 2021 Census, 51% of residents in Enfield Lock ward are Christian, 21% are non-religious and 20% are Muslim. Overall, 18 active library users and 52 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Enfield Island Village declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

### **Operating Costs:**

Enfield Island Village is the only leasehold smaller library in Enfield and has a net expenditure of £85,146.14. Regarding staffing (£45,104) and library resources (£9,321), the library's operating costs are below average and among the lowest out of the council run smaller libraries. However, the cost per hour (£81.87) and cost per visit (£12.13) are high, with cost per visit being second highest and cost per hour being the third highest of the council run smaller libraries. The income of the library is among the lowest of the council run smaller libraries (£5,430).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£45,104	£9,321	£36,152	£5,430	£85,146.14	£81.87	£12.13

### **Property considerations:**

This property is a leasehold building, which is not owned by the Council.

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<sup>181</sup> Base: 362 active users, 17,709 census

<sup>182</sup> Base: 335 active users, 17,709 census

<sup>183</sup> Base: 17,805 census

A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £90,299 in maintenance works is required at Enfield Island Village. This includes replacement of the electric mains and sub-mains distribution systems, replacing doors, and upkeeping decorations.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that frosted glazing or new blinds and insert tables are installed. This is estimated to cost less than £14,000.

### **Recommendations:**

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

As explained above, during the second phase consultation, concerns were raised by stakeholders about the accessibility of travelling to Ordnance Unity Centre through active travel and public transport from Enfield Island Village.

Having considered this feedback, it remains officers' recommendation that Enfield Island Village Library should be closed. This is because it had the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (40%) in 2023/24, the lowest number of issues and renewals per hour open (2.9) in 2023/24 and the third lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (17%). This low usage means it would not be efficient to continue to provide public library provision at the Enfield Island Village Library. Therefore, officers intend to explore whether the Council can work with community groups to provide pop-up library provision in their community spaces in the Enfield Island Village area, in addition to the statutory service in the nine libraries.

## **Southeast Area**

### **Edmonton Green (Edmonton Green)**

#### **Local need:**

Edmonton Green is one of four wards in Enfield that is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country. It is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

It has the highest percentage of children in relative and absolute (49%) low-income families out of all the wards in Enfield. The ward also has the highest proportion of adults on unemployment benefits (10%) and adults with no qualifications (30%). Edmonton Green also has a high percentage of households in fuel poverty (14%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact those experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The percentage of residents in very good or good health (81%) is the second lowest in the borough. The ward also has a slightly higher proportion of disabled residents (15%) when compared to the borough average (14%).

Edmonton Green has very high levels of crime, with the highest criminal offence count out of the wards in Enfield (2,650) between April 2023 and March 2024.

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Lower Edmonton***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Edmonton Green Library.

Lower Edmonton is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

It has the second highest percentage of children in relative and absolute (43%) low-income families, adults on unemployment benefits (10%) and households receiving universal credit (49%). Lower Edmonton also has the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (17%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Haselbury ward, which has Millfield House Library, which is not recommended for closure.

### **Distance to the nearest library:**

The library is 1.6km from Fore Street Library. This would take the average person 21 minutes to walk or 5 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be a 7-minute drive or a 12-minute public transport journey.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 169 respondents who live work or study in Enfield have used Edmonton Green Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of these respondents, 48% get the bus, 37% walk, 26% travel by car, 9% get the train, and 9% cycle.<sup>184</sup> The Council also asked the same question in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the 16 respondents who use Edmonton Green Library, 75% walk, 13% travel by car, 63% get the bus and 6% get the train.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (43%), because it is close to public transport links (40%) and because it is close to the shops (37%).<sup>185</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents to the questionnaire were Enfield Town (78%), Palmers Green (47%), and Ridge Avenue (41%).<sup>186</sup> Most common alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read version of the questionnaire were

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<sup>184</sup> Base: 163 responses

<sup>185</sup> Base: 154 responses

<sup>186</sup> Base: 169 responses

Fore Street (58%), Ponders End (58%) and Enfield Town (42%).<sup>187</sup> Four respondents to the easy read questionnaire said they had only used Edmonton Green Library in the past two years.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Edmonton Green from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
223,980	461,400	429,255	60,639	198,742	288,853	367,260

Officers have compared the usage of Edmonton Green Library during 2023/24 to other large libraries in Enfield. During 2023/24, Edmonton Green had 367,260 visits. This was the highest number of overall visitors of any library. However, Edmonton Green has the second lowest percentage of active users per quarter (41%) compared to the other large libraries and, alongside Palmers Green, has the lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (11%). The library has the highest number of visitors per hour open (135.4) and the second highest number of issues and renewals per hour open (22.8) out of the four large libraries, although this was significantly lower than Enfield Town Library (49.7).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
56.5	135.4	22.8	11%	41%	1791

Furthermore, the Council is increasing the opening hours at Edmonton Green library by 7.5 hours per week. This will mean that the library’s opening hours will be increased Monday to Friday. The library will also now be open on a Sunday. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users.

There are 25 partners that operate from Edmonton Green Library. These partners run events such as tutoring and advice and information sessions. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Edmonton Green by our partners to respond to local need.

The library is well-used by local primary schools, with class visits arranged throughout the year. In 2023/24 the library was visited by the following schools: Eldon, Galliard, Southbury, Brettenham, Fleecefield, Edmonton County, Latymer, Churchfield, Aylward,

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<sup>187</sup> Base: 12 respondents

Hazelbury, Houndsfield, and WREN. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents said used the library less frequently than every other month (33%), weekly (18%) or monthly (18%).<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (43%), Thursday (43%), or Wednesday (42%)<sup>189</sup>. Respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (61%) or afternoon (61%).<sup>190</sup>

Overall, 22 representatives (47%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Edmonton Green Library in the past two years. This included 15 representatives of VCS organisations, three other respondents, one representative of a primary school, one representative of an early years’ provider, one representative of a secondary school or college, and one representative of a healthcare provider.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Edmonton Green said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (80%), use the computers (57%) and print a document (53%)<sup>191</sup>.

Edmonton Green Library has the highest number of computers of any library in Enfield (100). When compared to other large libraries, it has higher-than-average stock levels (42,816 compared to 40,536). The library has a below average number of regular activities compared to the other larger libraries in Enfield (6 compared to 10). The library also does not have any car parking spaces but is 68 metres away from the nearest bus stop.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
42,816	4	100	1	4.89	0	6	Yes	68 metres

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<sup>188</sup> Base: 175 responses

<sup>189</sup> Base: 156 responses

<sup>190</sup> Base: 163 responses

<sup>191</sup> Base: 168 responses



The library incorporates the Business and Information Centre, which facilitates inclusive growth in the borough by providing information to support businesses to grow. Officers will also seek to increase commercial income by providing affordable co-working spaces in the library for rent to be used by start-ups using the Business Centre.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>192</sup>: The ward has a higher population of children and young adults when compared to the borough population. However, children aged 0-19 are underrepresented as active library users at Edmonton Green when compared to the ward population (31% compared to 27%). The highest proportion of active library users are aged between 30–39 (19%), this is higher than the ward population in this age range (14%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their age,<sup>193</sup> the highest proportion (22%) were aged 40-49 which is significantly higher than the proportion of ward population or active library users in this age group (14% and 18% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>194</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from Black ethnic backgrounds, (50%), this is significantly higher when compared to the ward population (34%). The proportion of active library users from White British (12%) and White Other (15%) ethnic backgrounds was lower than the proportions of the ward population (16% and 27% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>195</sup> the highest proportion (43%) were White British. This is significantly higher when compared to proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British. The proportion of respondents who were from Black ethnic backgrounds (20%) is lower when compared to the proportion of the ward population and active library users.

Disability<sup>196</sup>: The ward has relatively high levels of disability (15%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their protected characteristics,<sup>197</sup> 36% declared they had a disability. This

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<sup>192</sup> Base: 8,068 active users, 16,782 census

<sup>193</sup> Base: 176 responses

<sup>194</sup> Base: 3,474 active users, 17,136 census

<sup>195</sup> Base: 164 respondents

<sup>196</sup> Base: 8,068 active users, 16,728 census

<sup>197</sup> Base: 169 respondents

is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

**Gender**<sup>198</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (59% compared to 41%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their gender, <sup>199</sup> 71% said they were female and 29% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

**Religion**<sup>200</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportions of active library users who are Christian and Buddhist is higher (49% and 2% respectively), when compared to the proportions of the ward population (44% and 0.4% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 58% of respondents who used Edmonton Green Library declared their religion or belief as Christian.<sup>201</sup> This is higher than both the ward population (44%) and active library users (49%). Those who declared having no religion (26%) in the phase two consultation was significantly higher than the ward and the library users (14% and 8% respectively).

**Operating costs:**

Edmonton Green’s net expenditure is £665,483.85, which is the highest out of the four large libraries, it also has the highest cost per hour open (£226.51). Edmonton Green’s operating costs are higher than the average of the four large libraries apart from cost per visit (£1.81) which is below the average of £3.46. Edmonton Green is joint highest for staffing costs (£383,384) and library resources (£79,226). The library’s income (£46,157) is below the average of the four large libraries in Enfield (£53,097.46).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£383,384	£79,226	£249,030	£46,157	£665,483.85	£226.51	£1.81

**Property considerations:**

Edmonton Green Library is both a freehold and a leasehold property. The Council owns the freehold of the shopping centre, leases the entire centre to the shopping centre

<sup>198</sup> Base: 7,932 active users, 16,728 census

<sup>199</sup> Base: 173 respondents

<sup>200</sup> Base: 494 active users, 16,078 census

<sup>201</sup> Base: 148 responses

provider, and leases back some operational buildings, including the library. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £752,834 in maintenance works is required at Edmonton Green Library. This includes replacing the metal house containing the heating plant, replacing furnishings and decorations, and replacing roof coverings.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 it is recommended that hazard markings are installed at the emergency exit and an evacu-chair is installed. It is estimated this will cost less than £14,000.

### **Recommendations:**

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

Edmonton Green is a transport hub and main shopping and leisure area, and residents who visit smaller libraries are likely to already travel to Edmonton Green for other reasons, as well as to visit the library. Edmonton Green's large floorspace and extensive range of activities means that library users who use nearby libraries are already likely to be travelling to also use Edmonton Green Library. The library has strong early years offer for young children and parents, activities for children and young people, and a range of activities for adults and older people, including activities to keep older people socially connected and independent. This should help to mitigate the impact of the closure of alternative libraries in the borough.

Furthermore, the Council is increasing the opening hours at Edmonton Green library by 7.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users, as well as ensuring the offer is consistent with Enfield Town Library.

### **Ponders End (Ponders End)**

#### **Local need:**

Ponders End is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

The ward has the highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (25%) and the lowest percentage of residents aged 65+ (9%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact children aged 0-15.

Ponders End has the second highest percentage of adults receiving universal credit (46%), which is significantly higher than the borough population overall of 28%. The ward also has high levels of fuel poverty (18%) and adults with no qualifications (29%).

Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact those experiencing high levels of deprivation.

***Nearby wards without libraries: Jubilee and Carterhatch ward***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Ponders End Library.

Jubilee is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Jubilee has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (34%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). Similarly, the ward has a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (42%) compared the borough average (31%). Jubilee also has the second highest percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Haselbury and Bush Hill Park wards which have Millfield House and Ridge Avenue Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and in relative and absolute (32%) low-income families. It should be noted that this ward also borders Enfield Lock ward, which has Ordnance Unity Centre Library which is not recommended for closure.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Ordnance Unity Centre, which is 3.1km away. This would take the average person around 43 minutes to walk or 14 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 10-minute drive or 14 minutes by public transport. Of the areas of the highest deprivation and need in Enfield, Ponders End is the furthest from a large library. It is also important to consider the needs of neighbouring wards without a library, such as Jubilee and Carterhatch, whose residents may access Ponders End as their closest library provision.

In the phase one engagement, 61 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield use Ponders End Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of those who use Ponders End Library, 60% walk, 35% get the bus, 19% travel by car, 8% cycle and 6% get the train.<sup>202</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the 10 respondents who use Ponders End Library, 80% walk, 50% get the bus and 10% travel by car.

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<sup>202</sup> Base: 52 responses

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (70%), because it is close to public transport links (22%) and because it is close to the shops (20%).<sup>203</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (84%), Edmonton Green (56%), and Enfield Highway (36%).<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, the most common alternative libraries for respondents were Edmonton Green (78%), Enfield Town (44%), Fore Street (33%) and Ordnance Unity Centre (33%).<sup>205</sup> Only one easy read respondent said that they used Ponders End Library only in the last two years.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Ponders End Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
43,463	23,152	11,120	0	12,106	18,658	27,024

Officers have compared the usage of Ponders End Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. The percentage of active users per quarter (50%) and the percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (21%) is above the average of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (46% and 20% respectively). For both visits per hour open (13.1) and issues and renewals per hour open (7.2), Ponders End is below the average of the council-run smaller libraries (14.1 and 11.2 respectively).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
43	13.1	7.2	21%	50%	554

In 2023/24, the library was used by Southbury, Alma and Delta primary schools for class visits. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

<sup>203</sup> Base: 54 responses

<sup>204</sup> Base: 61 responses

<sup>205</sup> Base: 17 responses

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (45%), weekly (20%) or every other month (11%).<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Wednesday (54%), Friday (50%), or Monday (44%).<sup>207</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (62%) or afternoon (58%).<sup>208</sup>

Overall, 4 representatives (9%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Ponders End Library in the past two years.<sup>209</sup> Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Ponders End Library by our partners to respond to local need.

### **Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Ponders End Library said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (80%), print a document (74%) and use the computers (69%).<sup>210</sup>

Ponders End Library has a below average number of computers (7), a below average level of stock (9,246 compared to 11,549), and a higher-than-average number of full-time-equivalent staff (2.2 compared to 2), when compared to other smaller libraries. The library does not currently have any regular activities.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
9,246	1	7	0	2.2	0	0	Yes	52 metres

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>211</sup>: Ponders End ward has the highest percentage of children and young people aged 0-15 in the borough. The highest percentage of active users at Ponders End Library are 0-19 years old (32%) which is broadly the same as the ward population in this age group (33%). There is a relatively low percentage of active users aged 60+ (11%), which is slightly lower than the ward population aged 60+ (13%).

<sup>206</sup> Base: 64 responses

<sup>207</sup> Base: 54 responses

<sup>208</sup> Base: 55 responses

<sup>209</sup> Base: 47 responses

<sup>210</sup> Base: 61 responses

<sup>211</sup> Base: 1,367 active users, 13,766 census

Only 73 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ponders End Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or active library users.

Ethnicity<sup>212</sup>: At Ponders End Library, the highest proportion of active users are from Black ethnic backgrounds (40%), which is higher than the ward population (34%). Furthermore, there is a significantly higher proportion of active library users who declared they are from an Asian ethnic background (33%), compared to the ward population (18%).

Only 64 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ponders End Library declared their ethnicity. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or active library users.

Disability<sup>213</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%). Only 71 respondents to the phase two consultation who use Ponders End Library declared a disability. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or active library users.

Gender<sup>214</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (57% compared to 43%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47%, respectively).

Only 70 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ponders End Library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or active library users.

Religion<sup>215</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users are Muslim (53%), this is higher than the proportion of the ward population (39%). There are also a higher proportion of active library users who are Buddhist (5%) compared to the ward population (0.2%). Furthermore, there are a lower proportion of active library users who are Christian (31%) compared to the ward population (41%).

Only 61 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Ponders End Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or active library users.

### **Operating costs:**

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<sup>212</sup> Base: 687 active users, 13,672 census

<sup>213</sup> Base: 1,367, active users 13,766 census

<sup>214</sup> Base: 1,359 active users, 13,766 census

<sup>215</sup> Base: 152 active users, 12,848 census

Ponders End Library has a net expenditure of £129,832.22, which is lower than the average of the council run smaller libraries (£132,529.46). The library's staffing cost (£90,208) and library resources costs (£18,642) are slightly above the average cost for the council run smaller libraries in Enfield, (£84,057 and £17,370.50 respectively). The cost per hour (£58.06) and cost per visit (£4.80) are just below the average for the council run smaller libraries (£67.76 and £6.80 respectively). The income of Ponders End Library (£10,860) is below the average of the council run smaller libraries (£11,592.62).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£90,208	£18,642	£31,843	£10,860	£129,832.22	£58.06	£4.80

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £4,590 in maintenance works is required at Ponders End Library. This work is required to investigate the cause of damp in the bathroom.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended this library remains open with no change to the proposed opening hours. Ponders End is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has the highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (27%) and the second highest percentage of adults receiving universal credit (49%). The ward also has the third highest percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%). Of the areas of the highest deprivation and need in Enfield, Ponders End is the furthest from a large library.

### **Millfield House (Haselbury)**

#### **Local need:**

Haselbury is within the top 20% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. The ward has the second highest population density (8,960 people p/sq. km).

The ward also has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (36%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). The ward has a high percentage of households receiving unemployment benefits (8%) and universal credit (46%). The ward also has the second highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (17%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households, who may require a warm public space in winter.

There is also a significantly higher percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (28%) compared to the borough average (22%). Therefore, it should be considered how



the library service can effectively engage Haselbury residents to support life-long learning.

***Nearby wards without libraries: Jubilee, Highfield and Lower Edmonton***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Millfield House Library.

Jubilee is ranked 9th out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Jubilee has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (34%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). Similarly, the ward has a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (42%) compared to the borough average (31%). Jubilee also has the second highest percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End and Bush Hill Park wards which have Ponders End and Ridge Avenue Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Highfield is ranked 20th out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough overall. It should be noted that this ward also borders Upper Edmonton, Palmers Green and Bush Hill Park wards which have Fore Street, Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Lower Edmonton is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children in relative and absolute (43%) low-income families, adults on unemployment benefits (10%) and households receiving universal credit (49%). Lower Edmonton also has the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (17%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Edmonton Green ward, which has Edmonton Green Library, which is not recommended for closure.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Edmonton Green is 2.6km away. This would take the average person 32 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be an 8-minute drive or a 13-minute public transport journey.

This library is 1.5km from Fore Street Living Room Library which is a 20-minute walk or 7-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it would take 6 minutes to travel by car or 11 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 24 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they have used Millfield House Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of those who said how they travel to Millfield

House Library, 38% said that they travel by car, 33% get the bus, 19% walk, and 19% cycle.<sup>216</sup>

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (48%), because it has parking facilities (29%) and because it is close to work (19%).<sup>217</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (83%), Edmonton Green (71%), and Palmers Green (54%).<sup>218</sup>

### **Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Millfield House Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
5,593	7,121	61,098	0	0	15,521	2,160

Millfield House is managed by Platinum Performing Arts School. The library is self-service with the Council responsible for providing books and resources. It is located within Millfield House as part of the Millfield Arts Centre. Therefore, its usage should not be compared to other council run libraries. It is important to note that Millfield House total visits factor in Millfield Staff using this area as a reception/customer service space and not simply for people visiting the library space.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and Renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active Users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
35	1.3	0.07	2%	49%	234

### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, most respondents used Millfield House Library less frequently than every other month (63%), fortnightly (13%), every other month (10%) or weekly (10%).<sup>219</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Monday (38%), Wednesday (38%), or Tuesday (33%).<sup>220</sup> The highest

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<sup>216</sup> Base: 21 responses

<sup>217</sup> Base: 21 responses

<sup>218</sup> Base: 24 responses

<sup>219</sup> Base: 30 responses

<sup>220</sup> Base: 24 responses

proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (61%) or morning (39%).<sup>221</sup>

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Millfield House said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (92%), use the space to read, study or work (71%) and to print a document (63%).<sup>222</sup>

Millfield House Library has the lowest stock levels of any library in Enfield (958) and has a below average number of computers when compared to other smaller libraries (4 compared to 7). As the library is self-service, it would not be proportionate to compare the number of regular activities or staffing levels to other smaller libraries.

Millfield House Library does not have any public toilets.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
958	0	4	0	0	Approx. 20	0	Yes	52 metres

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>223</sup>: The ward has a slightly higher proportion of children and young people aged 0-19 (29%) compared to the borough population overall (27%). Furthermore, 17% of the ward are aged over 60, which is relatively lower than the borough population overall (19%)

Overall, 36 active library users and 56 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Millfield House Library declared their age. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Ethnicity<sup>224</sup>: The highest proportion of residents in Haselbury are from White Other ethnic backgrounds (33%) and the second highest proportion are residents from Black ethnic backgrounds (26%). Overall, 14 active library users and 49 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Millfield House Library declared their ethnicity. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

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<sup>221</sup> Base: 23 responses

<sup>222</sup> Base: 24 responses

<sup>223</sup> Base: 17,919 census

<sup>224</sup> Base: 18,110 census

Disability<sup>225</sup>: Haselbury has average levels of disability (13%), when compared to other wards. Overall, 36 active library users and 55 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Millfield House Library declared whether they had a disability. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Gender<sup>226</sup>: In Haselbury, 52% of the ward population are female and 48% are male. Overall, 34 active library users and 54 respondents to the phase two consultation who used Millfield House Library declared their gender. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Religion<sup>227</sup>: In Haselbury, 50% of residents are Christian, 27% are Muslim and 13% are non-religious. Of the active library users, none have yet declared their religion or belief and therefore officers are unable to compare this to the ward population. In the phase two consultation, 44 respondents who visited Millfield House Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

**Operating Costs:**

Millfield House Library is part of Millfield Theatre, which is due to be leased to Platinum Performing Arts School and is a self-serve library. Therefore, its operating costs are not comparable to other council-managed library buildings.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour	Cost per visit
£0	£0	£0	£0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

**Property considerations:**

The building will be leased to Platinum Performing Arts. As part of their lease of the building, Platinum Performing Arts will be required to operate the library on behalf of the Council. Therefore, despite this self-serve library having a low level of usage, it has very low running costs.

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<sup>225</sup> Base: 17,919 census

<sup>226</sup> Base: 17,919 census

<sup>227</sup> Base: 16,870 census

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that a wheelchair access path is installed in the car park and pedestrian access is widened. It is estimated this will cost less than £30,000.

### **Recommendations:**

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

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

### **Fore Street (Upper Edmonton)**

#### **Local need:**

Upper Edmonton is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

The ward has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and a low percentage of residents aged 65+ (10%). The ward has a high percentage of children aged 0-19 in relative and absolute (43%) low-income families. There are also high percentages of adults on unemployment benefits (8%), high percentages of households receiving universal credit (44%) and high percentages of households in fuel poverty (16%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact those experiencing high levels of deprivation.

Furthermore, the ward has a high percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (29%). Therefore, it should be considered how the library service can effectively engage Upper Edmonton residents to support life-long learning.

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Bowes and Highfield***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Fore Street Library.

Bowes is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the third largest population density (8,238 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (35%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). The ward also has the highest percentage of households where English is no-one's first language (23%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households. It

should be noted that this ward also borders Palmers Green ward which has Palmers Green Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Highfield is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough overall. It should be noted that this ward also borders Haselbury, Palmers Green and Bush Hill Park wards which have Haselbury, Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The library is 1.6km from Edmonton Green Library. This would take the average person 21 minutes to walk or 5 minutes t- cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be a 6-minute drive or a 11-minute public transport journey. Alternatively, this library is 1.5km from Millfield House which is a 20-minute walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, it would take 6 minutes to travel by car or 10 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 46 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield were asked how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Fore Street Library, 50% get the bus, 41% walk, 20% travel by car, 13% get the train and 11% cycle.<sup>228</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the 6 respondents who use Fore Street, 100% walk, 17% travel by car and 67% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (52%), because it is close to the shops (40%) and because it is close to public transport links (33%).<sup>229</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Edmonton Green (76%), Enfield Town (72%), and Palmers Green (48%).<sup>230</sup> Similarly, the most common alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read questionnaire were Edmonton Green (100%), Ponders End (43%), Enfield Town (29%) and Ridge Avenue (29%).<sup>231</sup>

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Fore Street Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
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<sup>228</sup> Base: 46 responses

<sup>229</sup> Base: 42 responses

<sup>230</sup> Base: 46 responses

<sup>231</sup> Base: 14 responses

89,887	63,127	55,661	0	22,812	19,535	39,571
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Officers have compared the usage of Fore Street Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. Fore Street had the lowest percentage of active users per quarter of the council run smaller libraries (37%). Fore Street had a low number of issues and renewals per hour open when compared to the other libraries (7.4 compared to 11.2). The number of visits per hour open is second highest of the council run smaller libraries (20.6) and the percentage of ICT hours used per hour open is higher than the average of the council run smaller libraries (23% compared to 20%).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
38	20.6	7.4	23%	37%	452

There are 12 partners that operate from Fore Street Library. These partners run events such as health clinics, cultural events and advice and information sessions. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Fore Street Library by our partners to respond to local need.

In 2023/24, the library was used by St John and St James and Brook House Primary Schools and Angel Place Nursery for class visits. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

#### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used Fore Street less frequently than every other month (44%), fortnightly (16%) or weekly (16%).<sup>232</sup>

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Friday (54%), Wednesday (49%), or Tuesday (44%).<sup>233</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (43%) or morning (55%).<sup>234</sup>

Furthermore, 6 representatives (13%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Fore Street Library in the past two years.<sup>235</sup> This includes

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<sup>232</sup> Base: 50 responses

<sup>233</sup> Base: 41 responses

<sup>234</sup> Base: 42 responses

<sup>235</sup> Base: 47 responses

four representatives of VCS groups, one representative of a primary school and one other respondent.

**Facilities and resources:**

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

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Fore Street said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (76%), use the computers (67%) and print a document (56%).<sup>236</sup>

Fore Street Library has a higher-than-average stock levels (14,841 compared to 11,549), higher-than-average number of computers (13 compared to 7) and a higher number of full-time equivalent staff (3.3 compared to 2), when compared to other smaller libraries. The library has the highest number of regular activities out of the smaller libraries in the borough (6). Fore Street Library has no car parking but is 36 metres from the nearest bus stop.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
14,841	1	13	0	3.3	0	6	Yes	36 metres

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>237</sup>: The highest percentage of users at Fore Street Library are aged 0-19-year-olds (29%), which is broadly representative of the ward population in this age group (30%).

In the phase two consultation, 66 respondents who used Fore Street Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

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<sup>236</sup> Base: 89 responses

<sup>237</sup> Base: 1,581 active users, 16,306 census



Ethnicity<sup>238</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users are from Black ethnic backgrounds (44%) which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (32%). The proportion of active library users from White Other ethnic backgrounds (19%) is significantly lower than the proportion of the ward population who are from White Other ethnic backgrounds (29%).

In the phase two consultation, 55 respondents who used Fore Street Library declared their ethnicity. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Disability<sup>239</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%).

In the phase two consultation, 61 respondents who used Fore Street Library declared whether they had a disability. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Gender<sup>240</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (57% compared to 43%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% compared to 48%).

In the phase two consultation, 61 respondents who used Fore Street Library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Religion<sup>241</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportion of library users who are Christian is slightly lower (41%) than the proportion of the ward population (44%). The proportion of library users who are Muslim is slightly higher (36%) than the proportion of the ward population (32%). Furthermore, the proportion of active library users who are Buddhist is significantly higher when compared to the proportion of the ward population (7% compared to 1%).

In the phase two consultation, 50 respondents who used Fore Street Library declared their religion. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

### **Future considerations and opportunities:**

***Meridian Water:*** This is a flagship regeneration project which includes the development of 10,000 new homes and creation of 6,000 jobs over 20 years. This increase in

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<sup>238</sup> Base: 675 active users, 16,732 census

<sup>239</sup> Base: 1,581 active users, 16,306 census

<sup>240</sup> Base: 1,541 active users, 16,306 census

<sup>241</sup> Base: 107 active users, 15,535 census

housing will lead to significant population growth in the ward. This future population growth means that it should be considered if the size of the floor space at the library is sufficient or whether there is provision for a new library at Meridian Water. It should also be considered whether skills and employment support should be based in the library to support residents in Upper Edmonton to access new employment opportunities at Meridian Water.

**Joyce and Snells:** The redevelopment of the twin Joyce and Snells estates will include the creation of 2,000 new homes, a net increase of 1,205. Alongside these homes the project will deliver a new civic hub, where the library will be relocated alongside a community centre, a nursery and a flexible community space.

**Operating Costs:**

Fore Street’s net expenditure is £196,884.96, which is the third highest out of the council run smaller libraries. All the library’s operating costs are higher-than-average for all the council run smaller libraries apart from its cost per visit (£4.98), which is below the average (£6.80). The cost per hour open (£94.66) is the highest of all the council run smaller libraries. Furthermore, the staffing costs are high (£135,312) compared to the average (£84,057) and are among the highest out of the council run smaller libraries. The library’s income is among the highest of the smaller council run libraries (£16,291).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£135,312	£27,962	£49,901	£16,291	£196,884.96	£94.66	£4.98

**Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £84,188 in maintenance works is required at Fore Street. This includes replacing the electric mains and sub-mains distribution systems and upkeeping decorations.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended this library remains open. Fore Street Library is in Upper Edmonton which is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

Fore Street Library reopened in July 2022 and its refurbishment was supported by the Good Growth Fund. The ‘Living Room’ Library creates an open shop window space in the front of the library for exhibiting drawings and models, as well as hosting talks, presentations and advice surgeries. It is recommended that this multipurpose space is

used as a flagship model for how our other libraries could be redesigned to ensure they are hubs of activities for communities, subject to available funding.

The library is near Meridian Water, which is the Council's flagship development of 10,000 new homes and creation of 6,000 jobs over 20 years. It should be considered whether skills and employment support should be based in the library to support residents in Upper Edmonton to access new employment opportunities at Meridian Water or whether support based at Edmonton Green Library is sufficient.

The library will be eventually relocated into a new civic hub as part of the regeneration of the Joyce and Snells estates. The design of this hub should result in sufficient floor space to support the population growth from the regeneration in the ward.

## **Southwest Area**

### **Palmers Green (Palmers Green)**

#### **Local need:**

Palmers Green is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the second lowest proportion of disabled residents (12%), and a low percentage of children aged 0-15 (18%). Palmers Green ward's deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough averages.

The population density of people p/sq. km is significantly higher (7,151) than the average (5,506). The ward also has a relatively high percentage of households where English is no-one's first language (18%) compared to the borough average (13%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Highfield, Bowes and Arnos Grove***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Palmers Green Library.

Highfield is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough overall. It should be noted that this ward also borders Upper Edmonton, Haselbury and Bush Hill Park wards which have Fore Street, Millfield House and Ridge Avenue libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Bowes is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the third largest population density (8,238 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (35%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). The ward also has the highest percentage of households where English is no-one's first language (23%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households. It should be noted that this ward also borders Upper Edmonton ward which has Fore Street Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough averages.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest library is Bowes Road, which is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 23 minutes to walk, 6 minutes to cycle, 14 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Winchmore Hill is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 24 minutes to walk, 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey it would take 13 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Officers are recommending to close both these libraries.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 259 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield used Palmers Green Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who used Palmers Green Library, 50% walk, 31% get the bus, 25% travel by car, 7% cycle and 4% get the train.<sup>242</sup> Similarly, of the six respondents to the easy read version of questionnaire who used Palmers Green Library, 83% walk, 33% travel by car and 50% get the bus.<sup>243</sup>

The Council also asked respondents why they used Palmers Green Library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (62%), because it is close to public transport links (25%), and because it is close to the shops (23%).<sup>244</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (61%), Winchmore Hill (44%), and Ridge Avenue (34%).<sup>245</sup> The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Oakwood (60%), Southgate (60%) and Winchmore Hill (40%).<sup>246</sup>

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Palmers Green from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
266,459	259,216	252,350	23,282	135,074	179,379	200,669

Officers have compared the usage of Palmers Green Library during 2023/24 to other large libraries in Enfield. It has the second highest number of issues and renewals per

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<sup>242</sup> Base: 252 responses

<sup>243</sup> Base: 10 responses

<sup>244</sup> Base: 248 responses

<sup>245</sup> Base: 259 responses

<sup>246</sup> Base: 8 responses

hour open (39.2) and has the second highest percentage of active users per quarter (47%) out of the four large libraries in Enfield. However, alongside Edmonton Green, it has a low proportion of ICT usage per hour open (11%) and the lowest number of visits per hour open (35.9) out of the four large libraries.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
49.5	35.9	39.2	11%	47%	1,089

The Council is increasing the opening hours at Palmers Green by 4.5 hours per week. This will mean that the library will now be open on a Wednesday, which will increase the opening hours. The library will also have its opening hours reduced on a Friday. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users.

The library is well-used by local primary schools, with class visits arranged throughout the year. In 2023/24 the library was visited by the following schools: Hazelwood, Merryhills, Bowes, Tottenhall, Highfield, Durants, West Lea and Our Lady of Lourdes. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are 15 partners that operate from Palmers Green Library. These partners run events such as Councillor ward surgeries, MP constituency surgeries, reading clubs, tutoring, health clinics and advice and support sessions. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Palmers Green by our partners to respond to local need.

### *Phase one engagement - usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (26%), weekly (23%) or monthly (21%).<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (46%), Monday (44%), or Tuesday (42%).<sup>248</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (63%) or morning (62%).<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Base: 259 responses

<sup>248</sup> Base: 250 responses

<sup>249</sup> Base: 247 responses

Overall, 9 representatives (19%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Palmers Green Library in the past two years.<sup>250</sup> This included three representatives of VCS groups, three representatives of primary schools, one representative of a local business, one representative of a secondary school or college and one other respondent.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Palmers Green said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (90%), use the space to read, study or work (43%) and use the computers (41%).<sup>251</sup>

Palmers Green Library, when compared to the other four large libraries, has lower-than-average stock levels (34,195 compared to 40,536), lower-than-average number of computers (20 compared to 44), and a lower-than-average number of full-time equivalent staff (4.3 compared to 6). The library has 6 regular activities, which is lower than the average of 10 for the larger libraries. When comparing to other four large libraries, Palmers Green Library is the furthest from the nearest bus stop (137 metres) but has the highest number of car parking spaces (15).

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
34,195	4	20	1	4.3	15	6	Yes	137 metres

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>252</sup>: The ward has a lower proportion of residents aged 0-19 (22%) compared to the overall borough population (27%). However, there is a high level of library usage among 0-19-year-olds (34%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Palmers Green Library and declared their age,<sup>253</sup> the highest proportion (28%) were aged 40-49. This is significantly higher when compared to ward population or active library users (16% for both respectively).

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<sup>250</sup> Base: 47 responses

<sup>251</sup> Base: 259 responses

<sup>252</sup> Base: 5,052 active users, 10,727 census

<sup>253</sup> Base: 411 respondents

Ethnicity<sup>254</sup>: A high proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (35%), which is representative of the ward population (35%).

A high proportion of active library users declared they are from a White Other ethnic background (23%); however, this is considerably lower than the proportion of the ward population (38%). The proportion of active library users from Asian (18%) and Black (13%) ethnic backgrounds is considerably higher than ward population (9% and 8% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Palmers Green Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>255</sup> 49% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>256</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (12%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (4%). However, this is representative of the average for libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 22% of respondents who used Palmers Green Library declared they had a disability.<sup>257</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>258</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (60% compared to 40%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population, (51% and 49% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 70% of respondents who used Palmers Green Library were female and 30% were male.<sup>259</sup> This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>260</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the highest percentage were Christian (41%), however this is lower than the percentage of the ward population (53%). Furthermore, the percentage of active library users who are Muslim (20%) is significantly higher than the ward population (12%). The percentage of active library users who declared themselves as having no religion (24%) is lower than the percentage of the ward population (29%).

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<sup>254</sup> Base: 2,128 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>255</sup> Base: 377 responses

<sup>256</sup> Base: 5,052 active users, 10,727 census

<sup>257</sup> Base: 387 responses

<sup>258</sup> Base: 4,992 active users, 10,727 census

<sup>259</sup> Base: 405 responses

<sup>260</sup> Base: 289 active users, 10,174 census

In the phase two consultation, 45% of respondents who used Palmers Green Library were Christian.<sup>261</sup> This is lower than the proportion of ward population who are Christian but is higher than the proportion of active library users who are Christian (53% and 41% respectively). The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (38%) and Muslim (8%) was disproportionate compared to the ward population and active library users (29% and 24% and 12% and 20% respectively).

**Operating costs:**

Palmers Green has a net expenditure of £489,050.84, which is the lowest for the four large libraries (£571,355.53). It has the lowest cost for staffing (£338,280), library resources (£69,906) and cost per hour open (£190.00) of the four large libraries. However, it has the highest cost per visit (£5.73) out of the four large libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit	New Users 2023/24
£338,280	£69,906	£157,500	£76,635	£489,050.84	£190.00	£5.73	1,089

**Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £88,390 in maintenance works is required at Palmers Green. This includes replacing the electric mains and sub-mains distribution systems, replacing the water distribution systems, and replacing the fencing and rails.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended this library remains open. While Palmers Green has relatively low levels of local need (ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need), Palmers Green is a large library which is in a convenient location for residents in neighbouring wards to use, and its size means it can support an increase in usage as result of closure of nearby libraries.

Palmers Green library has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. Palmers Green has an extensive offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid-for cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to access support to stay independent and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy

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<sup>261</sup> Base: 332 responses



skills and reliance. The library also has a community room that can be hired. This should help to mitigate the impact of the closure of alternative libraries in the borough.

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

### **Bowes Road (New Southgate)**

#### **Local need:**

New Southgate ranks 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 Enfield wards for level of local need and has the highest population density in Enfield (10,769 people p/sq. km). It has lower levels of children aged 0-15 (19%) and older people aged 65+ (11%) compared to the borough population overall (21% and 15% respectively).

Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (5%) and receiving universal credit (28%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%). The ward has a slightly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families compared to the borough averages (25%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Bowes and Arnos Grove wards***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Bowes Road Library.

Bowes is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the third largest population density (8,238 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (35%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). The ward also has the highest percentage of households where English is no-one's first language (23%), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households. It should be noted that this ward also borders Upper Edmonton and Palmers Green wards which have Fore Street and Palmers Green libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Arnos Grove ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough averages. It should be noted that this ward also borders Palmers Green ward which has Palmers Green Library, which is not recommended for closure.

#### **Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Palmers Green, which is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 23-minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk, this would be a 6-minute drive or 16 minutes by public transport. This library is 5km from Oakwood Library which is 14 minutes to travel by car or 18 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 40 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they used Bowes Road Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who said how they travel to Bowes Road Library, 46% walk, 28% get the bus, 28% travel by car, 13% get the train and 8% cycle<sup>262</sup>. Similarly, of the two respondents to the easy read questionnaire who use Bowes Road, 50% walk, 50% get the bus and 50% get the train.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (59%), because it is close to public transport links (27%) and because it has parking facilities (22%).<sup>263</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Palmers Green (85%), Enfield Town (65%), and Winchmore Hill (58%).<sup>264</sup>

Given the low levels of need for this area, this is considered a reasonable distance to travel to an alternative library provision. Palmers Green and Oakwood libraries offer a wide range of services which could be further enhanced through focusing resources on these libraries.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Bowes Road Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
7,405	8,120	9,981	0	3,455	6,679	7,076

Officers have compared the usage of Bowes Road Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. The number of visits per hour is the second lowest of the council run smaller libraries (6.1), but this can be attributed to its low opening hours per week (24). However, it had a moderately high number of issues and renewals per hour open (7.8) compared to Enfield Island Village and Bullsmoor (2.9 and 4.6 respectively), who have similar number of opening hours per week. Bowes Road Library has a moderately high percentage of active users per quarter compared to the average of the

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<sup>262</sup> Base: 39 responses

<sup>263</sup> Base: 37 responses

<sup>264</sup> Base: 40 responses

council run smaller libraries in Enfield (50% compared to 46%). Considering its low number of visits, Bowes Road has the highest usage of ICT hours per hour open (31%) of all the council run smaller libraries, which can be attributed to the library only having one computer.

Officers will ensure that services currently offered at Bowes Road Library are transferred to Palmers Green Library.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New Users 2023/24
24	6.1	7.8	31%	50%	307

### *Phase one engagement - usage*

The majority of respondents in the phase one engagement used the library less frequently than every other month (38%), weekly (23%), or every other month (18%).<sup>265</sup> Overall, the relatively low levels of usage and frequency of use suggests that Palmers Green, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of Bowes Road.

In the phase one engagement, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (50%), Tuesday (47%), or Friday (29%).<sup>266</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (76%) or morning (45%).<sup>267</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

Furthermore, 4 representatives (9%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Bowes Road Library in the past two years.<sup>268</sup> This included two community groups (Over 50s Forum and AB Promotions Health Consultancy), one local business and an educational trust representing 7 schools. Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

### **Facilities and resources:**

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<sup>265</sup> Base: 40 responses

<sup>266</sup> Base: 38 responses

<sup>267</sup> Base: 38 responses

<sup>268</sup> Base: 47 responses

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Bowes Road said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (85%), print a document (63%), and use the computers (58%).<sup>269</sup>

Bowes Road does not have a public toilet, a community room or step free access. The library only has one computer and has lower-than-average stock levels (8,738 compared to 11,549) and full-time equivalent staff (1.1 compared to 2), when compared to other smaller libraries. The library currently has one regular activity running from it.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,738	0	1	0	1.1	Approx. 5	1	No	42 metres

### **Phase Two Consultation:**

#### *Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 101 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Bowes Road Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 93 were residents.
- 4 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here.
- 2 were representatives of a community organisation (Palmer's Green and Southgate U3A).
- 1 was a representative of a primary school.
- 1 was other.

3% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Bowes Road Library would have a positive impact on their household, 52% of individual respondents said it would have a neutral impact on their household and 29% of individual respondents said it would have a negative impact on their household.<sup>270</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Bowes Road Library on their household was.<sup>271</sup> The most common impacts identified were:

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<sup>269</sup> Base: 40 responses

<sup>270</sup> Base: 886 responses

<sup>271</sup> Base: 207 responses

negative impact on the community (47%), the respondent would lose access to the library service (32%) and the respondent's children and relatives use it (14%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>272</sup> Of which:

- 17% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 8% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 5% said they would use the digital library service.
- 3% said they use the home library service.
- 16% proposed alternative mitigations.
- 14% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 56% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Palmers Green (69%).<sup>273</sup>

The representative of a primary school who used Bowes Road Library said that the closure would have a negative impact their pupils but did not state how the Council can mitigate this.

The representative of Palmers Green and Southgate U3A said they use the library for their interest groups and there was no alternative library which could serve their membership based in the Northwest of the borough, if the proposed libraries were to close.

One representative of an organisation who used Bowes Road stated that that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Bowes Road Library in past two years,<sup>274</sup> 38% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them and 37% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>275</sup> 36% said it did and 45% said it did not. The library that respondents were most likely to visit, because of the proposed extension in hours, was Palmers Green (63%).<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Base: 286 responses

<sup>273</sup> Base: 55 responses

<sup>274</sup> Base: 97 responses

<sup>275</sup> Base: 97 responses

<sup>276</sup> Base: 107 responses

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 3% had used Bowes Road Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>277</sup> 88% of participants said that the proposed closure of Bowes Road Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 9% of said it would have a negative impact, and 3% said it would have a positive impact.

Of the participants who said that the closure of Bowes Road Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>278</sup> In response, 53% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 49% said they would use the digital service, 39% said they would use the home library service and 13% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium. The library that respondents were most likely to visit, because of the proposed extension in hours, was Enfield Town (66%).<sup>279</sup>

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 3 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Bowes Road Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Bowes Road Library will impact them. In response, 50% stated that it is the library that they use the most, while 25% stated that the closure would have a negative impact on the community or that they will lose access to the library services.<sup>280</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 67% used this question as an opportunity to say that the Council should keep the libraries open.<sup>281</sup>

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Bowes Road Library in past two years,<sup>282</sup> 67% said the proposed extensions in opening hours did not work for them, while 33% said that they did.

### *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Bambos Charalambous MP and two residents regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of Bowes Road Library. In each response, concerns were raised about the negative

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<sup>277</sup> Base: 204 responses

<sup>278</sup> Base: 19 responses

<sup>279</sup> Base: 90 responses

<sup>280</sup> Base: 3 responses

<sup>281</sup> Base: 3 responses

<sup>282</sup> Base: 3 responses

impact of the proposed closure of Bowes Road Library on the community, especially children and young people.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>283</sup>: The highest proportion of active users are aged 0-19 years old (29%), which is higher than the proportion of the ward population in this age group (23%).

In the phase two consultation, 89 respondents who used Bowes Road Library declared their age. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Ethnicity<sup>284</sup>: People from White British ethnic backgrounds make up the highest proportion of active library users (39%).

New Southgate ward has a high proportion of residents from White Other ethnic backgrounds (33%), which is higher than the proportion of active library users (22%). People from Other ethnic backgrounds are significantly underrepresented in the proportion of active library users (0.4%) when compared to the ward population (4%). The proportion of library users from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (19%) is higher than the proportion of the ward population (6%).

In the phase two consultation, 83 respondents who used Bowes Road Library declared their ethnicity. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Disability<sup>285</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (4%). However, this is representative of the average for libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 89 respondents who used Bowes Road Library declared whether they had a disability. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Gender<sup>286</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (58% compared to 42%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% compared to 48%).

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<sup>283</sup> Base: 587 active users, 11,846 census

<sup>284</sup> Base: 242 active users, 11,910 census

<sup>285</sup> Base: 587 active users, 11,846 census

<sup>286</sup> Base: 575 active users, 11,846 census

In the phase two consultation, 89 respondents who used Bowes Road Library declared their gender. This is a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

Religion<sup>287</sup>: In New Southgate of those residents who declared their religion, 47% are Christian, 31% declared to have no religion and 14% declared they were Muslim. Overall, 42 active library users and 71 respondents in the phase two consultation who used Bowes Road library declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not enable meaningful comparison to the ward population.

### **Operating costs:**

Bowes Road has a net expenditure of £79,933.92, which is the second lowest of all the council run smaller libraries. The cost per hour open for Bowes Road is £11.30, which is high compared to the average of £6.80. The income of the library (£5,430), staffing cost (£45,104) and library resources (£9,321) is lower when compared to other smaller council run libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£45,104	£9,321	£30,939	£5,430	£79,933.92	£64.05	£11.30

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £2,050,928 in maintenance works is required at Bowes Road. This includes replacing the lighting systems, the boiler systems, pipes and the power systems.

To ensure the building is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the building needs the car park retarmacking, new stair nosing treads, new window blinds, further soft furnishings to dampen sounds, an evacu-chair and provision of public toilets. This is estimated to cost up to £75,000.

Bowes Road is a listed building. The building is connected to the Arnos Pool and any future changes to the usage of the building would need to be looked at in conjunction with this. The building's listed status is likely to be a significant challenge to undertaking any work to make the building Equality Act compliant.

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<sup>287</sup> Base: 10,926 census



This building currently houses the library resources unit, which is independent of the library, and will be relocated if the decision is taken to close the library building.

### **Recommendations:**

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

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

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

Palmers Green Library is a fully accessible building, has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities which could be further enhanced by transferring services at Bowes Road Library into the library. Palmers Green has an extensive offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid-for cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to access support to stay independent and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and reliance. Furthermore, Oakwood Library has good transport connections, good facilities and potential to further maximise its community offer through its community room.

### **Winchmore Hill (Winchmore Hill)**

#### **Local need:**

Winchmore Hill is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has a higher percentage of older residents aged 65+ (18%) compared to the borough population overall (14%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older residents.

Winchmore Hill has low levels of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (15%). Similarly, the percentage of children in relative and absolute (14%) low-income families is low in comparison to the borough average (25%).

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Highfield and Grange Park***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Winchmore Hill Library.

Highfield is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough overall. It should be noted that this ward also borders Haselbury, Upper Edmonton, Palmers Green and Bush Hill Park wards which has Millfield House, Fore Street, Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Grange Park ward is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (22%) in the borough, so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older people. The ward has the lowest percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2%) and households receiving universal credit (12%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Town and Bush Hill Park wards, which have Enfield Town and Ridge Avenue Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

### **Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Palmers Green which is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 25 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue Library is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 6 minutes to drive or 8 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 163 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they have used Winchmore Hill Library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who said how they travel to Winchmore Hill Library, 49% walk, 35% travel by car, 30% get the bus, 9% cycle and 2% get the train.<sup>288</sup> Similarly, of the four easy read respondents who used Winchmore Hill, 75% walk, 50% travel by car and 25% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (59%), because it is close to shops (34%) and because it is close to public transport links (26%).<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Base: 164 responses

<sup>289</sup> Base: 162 responses

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (69%), Palmers Green (68%) and Ridge Avenue (49%).<sup>290</sup> The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Oakwood (75%), Enfield Town (75%) and Palmers Green (50%).<sup>291</sup>

Given the low levels of need for this area, this is considered a reasonable distance to travel to an alternative library provision. Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue libraries offer a wide range of services, including support for older residents to stay well and independent, which could be further enhanced through focusing resources on these libraries.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Winchmore Hill Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
38,904	35,292	37,208	0	18,227	32,498	35,239

Officers have compared the usage of Winchmore Hill Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. During 2023/24, Winchmore Hill Library has the second highest percentage of active users per quarter (51%). It has the third highest number of visits per hour open (20.1) and the second highest number of issues and renewals (20.9) per hour open out of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield. Winchmore Hill Library also has the second highest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (27%) in comparison to the other smaller libraries.

Officers will ensure that services currently offered at Winchmore Hill Library are transferred to Palmers Green Library.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
36.5	20.1	20.9	27%	51%	687

*Phase one engagement - usage*

Of the phase one engagement respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library, the majority used the library less frequently than every other month (36%), monthly (20%),

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<sup>290</sup> Base: 163 responses

<sup>291</sup> Base: 8 responses

or every other month (18%).<sup>292</sup> This low frequency of use suggests that Palmers Green, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of Winchmore Hill.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (47%), Wednesday (45%), or Tuesday (43%).<sup>293</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (65%) or morning (61%)<sup>294</sup>. Officers have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top facilities users of Winchmore Hill said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (89%), use the space to read, study or work (45%), print a document (42%) and use the computers (42%).<sup>295</sup>

Winchmore Hill Library, when compared to other smaller libraries, has a higher-than-average stock levels (15,291 compared to 11,549), higher-than-average number of computers (9 compared to 7), and a higher-than-average number of full-time equivalent full-time staff (2.2 compared to 2). The library does not currently have any regular activities.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
15,291	1	9	0	2.2	3	0	Yes	71 metres

**Phase Two Consultation:**

*Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 536 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Winchmore Hill Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 516 were residents.
- 5 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here.

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<sup>292</sup> Base: 173 responses

<sup>293</sup> Base: 159 responses

<sup>294</sup> Base: 159 responses

<sup>295</sup> Base: 163 responses

- 3 were representatives of local businesses (Fitness 21 Hub).
- 3 were representatives of secondary schools / further education colleges.
- 2 were representatives of a community organisation (Palmers Green and Southgate U3A).
- 2 were representatives of a primary school (Highfield and Vita Et Pax).
- 2 were representatives of community organisations.
- 2 were other.
- 1 was a person who studies in the borough but does not live here.
- 1 was a representative from an early years provider.
- 1 was a representative of a healthcare provider (BEH Mental Health Trust).

27% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 62% said it would have a negative impact and 3% said it would have a positive impact.<sup>296</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Winchmore Hill Library on their household was.<sup>297</sup> The most common impacts identified were that the respondent would lose access to the library service (31%), negative impact on the community (26%), the respondent's children or relatives use the library (25%), and the library is close to the respondent's home (25%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>298</sup> Of which:

- 21% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 7% said they would use the digital library service.
- 5% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 3% said they use the home library service.
- 4% proposed alternative mitigations.
- 13% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 58% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Palmers Green (57%).<sup>299</sup>

The two representatives of primary schools and one representative of a secondary school who used Winchmore Hill Library said that the closure would have a negative

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<sup>296</sup> Base: 1,154 responses

<sup>297</sup> Base: 628 responses

<sup>298</sup> Base: 730 responses

<sup>299</sup> Base: 184 responses

impact on the school and their pupils. The schools did not identify how this impact could be mitigated.

One representative of an early years provider said they would lose access to 6-month book boxes if Winchmore Hill closed, and to mitigate this the library service could still deliver books to them.

One ward Councillor (Cllr Maria Alexandrou) responded raising concerns about the impact of the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill library on the community and to state their opposition to the proposal.

The representative of Palmers Green and Southgate U3A said they use the library for their interest groups and there was no alternative library which could serve their membership based in the Northwest of the borough, if the proposed libraries were to close.

The representative of BEH Mental Trust raised concerns about service users accessing libraries if there were closures. Furthermore, a representative of an organisation who used Winchmore Hill Library stated that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council received two responses from representatives from Fitness Hub 21 about the impact of the closure of Winchmore Hill Library, where they are co-located, on their business. A representative of another local business responded stating that there was no impact on them.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Winchmore Hill Library in past two years,<sup>300</sup> 41% said the proposed extensions in opened worked for them and 38% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries;<sup>301</sup> 35% said it did and 51% said it did not. The library that respondents were most likely to visit, because of the proposed extension in hours, was Enfield Town (54%).<sup>302</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 8% had used Winchmore Hill Library in the past two years.

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<sup>300</sup> Base: 518 responses

<sup>301</sup> Base: 522 responses

<sup>302</sup> Base: 250 responses

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>303</sup> 77% of participants said that the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 22% said it would have a negative impact and 1% said it would have a positive impact.

Participants were subsequently asked respondents what the negative impact of closing Winchmore Hill Library on their household was.<sup>304</sup> The most common impacts identified by respondents were: the proposed closure would have a negative impact on the community (33%), the library is close to the respondent's house (23%), and it's the library the respondent uses the most (22%).

Of the participants who said that the closure of Winchmore Hill Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>305</sup> In response, 77% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 33% said they would use the digital service, 29% said they would use the home library service and 5% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 29 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Winchmore Hill Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill Library will impact them. In response, 34% stated that the closure would have a negative impact on the community, while 31% said that the library is close to their house or that they would lose access to the library service.<sup>306</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 56% used this question as an opportunity to say that they want the libraries to be kept open and 22% said a reduction in the number of libraries proposed to close could mitigate the negative impacts.<sup>307</sup>

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Winchmore Hill Library in past two years,<sup>308</sup> 50% said the proposed extensions in opening hours worked for them, while 50% said they do not.

### *Emails and Letters*

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<sup>303</sup> Base: 223 responses

<sup>304</sup> Base: 51 responses

<sup>305</sup> Base: 50 responses

<sup>306</sup> Base: 29 responses

<sup>307</sup> Base: 27 responses

<sup>308</sup> Base: 24 responses

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Kate Osamor MP, Winchmore Hill Residents Association, Bush Hill Park Residents Association and 10 residents regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill Library. In each response, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure of Winchmore Hill Library on the community, including children and young people. Residents also raised in their letters the negative impact of the proposed closures on their households, as they were regular users, it is close to their home, and their family use it.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>309</sup>: Winchmore Hill ward has a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 60+ compared to the overall borough population (24% compared to 19%). However, library usage is relatively low among residents aged 60+ (15%) compared to the ward population (24%).

There are fewer children and young adults aged 0-19 in the ward compared to the borough population overall (23% compared to 27%). However, there is a high level of library usage among 0-19-year-olds (38%).

In the phase two consultation, 35% of respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library and declared their age were 40-49,<sup>310</sup> this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users in these age groups (15% and 14% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>311</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (42%) which is lower than the percentage of the ward population who are from White British ethnic backgrounds (47%). However, the proportion of active library users from Black (10%), Asian (14%) and Mixed (8%) ethnic backgrounds is higher than the proportions of the ward population (5%, 9% and 7%).

In the phase two consultation, 50% of respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library were from a White British ethnic background,<sup>312</sup> which is higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>313</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (12%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (4%). However, this is representative of the average for libraries in Enfield (4%).

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<sup>309</sup> Base: 2,305 active users, 10,226 census

<sup>310</sup> Base: 493 responses

<sup>311</sup> Base: 903 active users, 10,393 census

<sup>312</sup> Base: 452 responses

<sup>313</sup> Base: 2305 active users, 10,226 census



In the phase two consultation, 18% of respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library declared they had a disability.<sup>314</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>315</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (64% compared to 36%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% and 48% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 74% of respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library were female and 26% were male.<sup>316</sup> This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>317</sup>: In the phase two consultation, 49% of respondents who used Winchmore Hill library were Christian which is disproportionate compared to the ward population (58%).<sup>318</sup> The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (37%) was disproportionate compared to the ward population, (26%).

Overall, 92 active library users who used Winchmore Hill Library have declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population and phase two consultation respondents.

### **Operating costs:**

Winchmore Hill has a net expenditure of £122,247.34, which is just below the average for the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£132,529.46). Its operating costs are above the average particularly for staffing (£90,208 compared to £84,057) and library resources (£18,642 compared to £17,370.50). The cost per hour for Winchmore Hill (£64.41) is below average for the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£67.76). Out of all the council run smaller libraries, Winchmore Hill has the lowest cost per visit (£3.47). However, the library has the highest income (£18,060) out of the smaller council run libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£90,208	£18,642	£31,458	£18,060	£122,247.34	£64.41	£3.47

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<sup>314</sup> Base: 457 responses

<sup>315</sup> Base: 2,291 active users, 10,226 census

<sup>316</sup> Base: 483 responses

<sup>317</sup> Base: 9,967 census

<sup>318</sup> Base: 388 responses

### **Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £584,157 in maintenance works is required at Winchmore Hill. This includes replacing the power systems, the mains and sub-mains distribution systems, the lighting and the fire systems, and upkeeping decorations.

Fitness 21 Hub currently lease a section of Winchmore Hill library, this lease is separate to the building's use as a public library.

### **Recommendations:**

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

Winchmore Hill is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need, with a relatively high proportion of residents aged over 65 (18%). It is considered that this group can use free public transport to travel to alternative library provision which is on existing bus routes at Palmers Green and Ridge Avenue, due to the good transport links.

Palmers Green is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 25 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue Library is 1.8km away. This would take the average person 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 6 minutes to drive or 8 minutes by public transport.

Palmers Green Library is a fully accessible building, has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. Palmers Green has an extensive offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursery and class visits and a range of free and paid cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to access support to stay independent and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and reliance. The library also has a community room that can be hired. Furthermore, Ridge Avenue Library has good transport connections, good facilities and potential further to maximise its community offer through its co-location with the archive service.

### **Southgate (Southgate)**

#### **Local need:**

Southgate is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

The demographics of the ward are broadly reflective of the borough averages. The ward has a slighter higher percentage of older people aged 65+ (17%) compared to the borough population overall (14%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older residents.

Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (4%) and receiving universal credit (18%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%).

***Nearby wards without libraries: Arnos Grove, Cockfosters Grange Park***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Southgate Library.

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Arnos Grove ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough averages. It should be noted that this ward also borders Palmers Green ward which has Palmers Green Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Cockfosters ranks 18<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Cockfosters has a higher percentage of older people aged 65+ compared to the borough average (19% compared to 15%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older residents. The ward has the lowest population density (1,094 people p/sq. km) out of the wards in Enfield. Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (2%) and receiving universal credit (18%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Oakwood ward which has Oakwood Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Grange Park ward is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (22%) in the borough. The ward has the lowest percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2%) and households receiving universal credit (12%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Town and Bush Hill Park wards, which have Enfield Town and Ridge Avenue libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

This library is 2.7km from Oakwood Library which is a 35-minute walk or 13-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it would take 8 minutes to travel by car or 10 minutes by public transport. The nearest large library is Palmers Green which is 2.9km away. This would take the average person 32 minutes to walk or 9 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by public transport or 8 minutes to drive. In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Given the low levels of deprivation, it would be

reasonable to assume that the majority of those visiting Southgate would be able to access Palmers Green and Oakwood as an alternative library provision.

In the phase one engagement, 118 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said they have used Southgate library. Of the respondents who told said how they travel to Southgate Library, 57% walk, 39% get the bus, 17% travel by car, 6% cycle and 5% get the train.<sup>319</sup> Similarly, of the 6 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who use Southgate, 67% walk, 17% travel by car and 50% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (59%), because it is close to public transport links (35%) and because it is close to shops (26%).<sup>320</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Palmers Green (66%), Enfield Town (59%), and Winchmore Hill (47%).<sup>321</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read questionnaire were Enfield Town (50%), Palmers Green (50%), Edmonton Green (33%) and Oakwood (33%).<sup>322</sup>

Given the low levels of need for this area, this is considered a reasonable distance to travel to an alternative library provision. Palmers Green, Enfield Town, and Ridge Avenue libraries offer a wide range of services, including support for older residents to stay well and independent, which could be further enhanced through focusing resources on these libraries.

### **Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Southgate Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
35,008	30,429	20,734	0	17,627	22,500	29,345

Officers have compared the usage of Southgate Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. It has the highest number of issues and renewals per hour open (21.5) and percentage of active users per quarter (52%) of all the council run smaller libraries. However, the library has a relatively low number of visits per hour open (13.2) compared to the average of the council run smaller libraries (14.1). Officers will ensure

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<sup>319</sup> Base: 119 responses

<sup>320</sup> Base: 118 responses

<sup>321</sup> Base: 118 responses

<sup>322</sup> Base: 10 responses

that services currently offered at Southgate Library are transferred to Palmers Green and Oakwood Library, if Southgate Library was to close.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
45	13.2	21.5	26%	52%	555

There are 3 partners which regularly use Southgate Library. These partners use Southgate Library for MP constituency surgeries, NHS healthy child clinics and tutoring. Officers will work with these partners as part of the implementation of the library strategy to transfer, where possible, their services to alternative libraries.

#### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

Most respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (29%), monthly (22%), or fortnightly (18%).<sup>323</sup> This low frequency of usage suggests that Palmers Green, due to its wide range of facilities and resources, would be able to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of Southgate.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (46%), Friday (41%) or Saturday (41%).<sup>324</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (70%) or afternoon (58%).<sup>325</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

#### **Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Southgate Library said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (88%), use the space to read, study or work (50%) and print a document (37%)<sup>326</sup>.

Whilst our libraries generally have good accessibility into and inside the building, Southgate is one of only two libraries without an accessible toilet and it also has no hearing loops.

The library has the second highest stock levels of all smaller libraries (17,425). When compared to other smaller libraries, Southgate Library has a higher-than-average number of computers (8 compared to 7) The library has a lower-than-average number

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<sup>323</sup> Base: 128 responses

<sup>324</sup> Base: 114 responses

<sup>325</sup> Base: 115 responses

<sup>326</sup> Base:118 responses

of full-time equivalent staff, (1.7 compared to 2). The library has two community rooms, one of which is used to deliver the Home Library Service. The library currently only has 1 regular activity, which is in line with the average number of regular activities in the smaller libraries.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
17,425	1	8	2	1.7	8	1	Yes	37 metres

### **Phase Two Consultation:**

#### *Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 372 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Southgate Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 351 were residents.
- 7 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here.
- 5 were representatives of a community organisation (Hope Respite Centre, Age UK Enfield, Palmers Green and Southgate U3A).
- 3 were representatives of secondary schools / further education colleges.
- 2 were representatives of a primary school (Vita Et Pax).
- 2 were representatives of community organisations.
- 2 were other.
- 1 was a person who studies in the borough but does not live here.
- 1 was a representative of a healthcare provider (BEH Mental Health Trust).

55% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Southgate Library would have a negative impact on their household, 33% said it would have a neutral impact and 3% said it would have a positive impact. <sup>327</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Southgate Library on their household was. <sup>328</sup> The most common impacts identified by were that the respondent would lose access to the library service (38%), the proposed

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<sup>327</sup> Base: 1,136 responses

<sup>328</sup> Base: 540 responses

closure would have a negative impact on the community (32%) and the library is close to the respondent's home (26%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>329</sup> Of which:

- 22% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield.
- 8% said they would use the digital library service.
- 7% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.
- 6% said they use the home library service.
- 4% proposed alternative mitigations.
- 14% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 54% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (62%).<sup>330</sup>

The two representatives of primary schools and one representative of a secondary school who used Southgate said that the closure would have a negative impact on the school and their pupils. The primary schools' representatives did not identify how this impact could be mitigated, and the representative of the secondary school said the impact could not be mitigated.

The representative of Palmers Green and Southgate U3A said they use the library for their interest groups and there was no alternative library which could serve their membership based in the Northwest of the borough, if the proposed libraries were to close. The representative of Hope Respite Centre raised concerns about the impact of the proposed closures on residents but said it did not impact them as an organisation as they do not use a library proposed to close. The representative of BEH Mental Trust raised concerns about service users accessing libraries if there were closures. A representative of an organisation who used Southgate Library stated that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Southgate Library in past two years,<sup>331</sup> 38% said the proposed extensions in opened worked for them and 43% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it

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<sup>329</sup> Base: 638 responses

<sup>330</sup> Base: 168 responses

<sup>331</sup> Base: 357 responses

made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>332</sup> 33% said it did and 52% said it did not. The library respondents were most likely to visit because of the proposed extension in hours was Enfield Town (59%).<sup>333</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 4% had used Southgate Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>334</sup> 83% of participants said that the proposed closure of Southgate Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 15% said it would have a negative impact and 2% of participants said it would have a positive impact.

Of the participants who said that the closure of Southgate Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>335</sup> In response, 61% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 37% said they would use the digital service, 27% said they would use the home library service and 11% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 27 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Southgate Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Southgate Library will impact them. In response, 42% said that they will lose access to the library services and 35% stated that the closure would have a negative impact on the community.<sup>336</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 50% used this question as an opportunity to say that they want the libraries to be kept open and 27% stated a reduction in the number of libraries proposed to close could mitigate the negative impacts.<sup>337</sup>

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Southgate Library in past two years,<sup>338</sup> 55% said the proposed extensions in opening hours work for them, while 45% said they do not work for them.

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<sup>332</sup> Base: 359 responses

<sup>333</sup> Base: 213 responses

<sup>334</sup> Base: 216 responses

<sup>335</sup> Base: 34 responses

<sup>336</sup> Base: 26 responses

<sup>337</sup> Base: 26 responses

<sup>338</sup> Base: 20 responses



## *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Bambos Charalambous MP, Southgate District Civic Voice, and four residents regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of Southgate Library. In each response, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure of Southgate Library on the community, especially children and young people. Residents also raised in their letters the negative impact of the proposed closures on their households, as it is close to their home and their family use it.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>339</sup>: Library usage is highest among users aged 0-19 (29%), which is higher than the ward population aged 0-19 (24%).

In the phase two consultation, 24% of respondents who used Southgate Library and declared their age were 40-49 and 21% were aged 30-39,<sup>340</sup> this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users in these age groups (16% and 15% and 14% and 13% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>341</sup>: The proportion of active users from a White British ethnic background (37%) is slightly higher than the proportion of the ward population who are White British (35%). The proportion of active library users from White Other ethnic backgrounds (23%) is lower compared to ward population (34%). While the proportion of active library users from Asian ethnic backgrounds was significantly higher than the ward population (22% compared to 15%).

In the phase two consultation, 50% of respondents who used Southgate Library were from a White British ethnic background,<sup>342</sup> which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>343</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (4%). However, this is representative of the average for libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 23% of respondents who used Southgate Library declared they had a disability.<sup>344</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

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<sup>339</sup> Base: 1,964 active users, 14,391 census

<sup>340</sup> Base: 334 responses

<sup>341</sup> Base: 728 active users, 14,499 census

<sup>342</sup> Base: 308 responses

<sup>343</sup> Base: 1,964 active users, 14,391 census

<sup>344</sup> Base: 311 responses

Gender<sup>345</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (63% compared to 37%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (51% and 49% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Southgate Library and declared their gender,<sup>346</sup> 65% said they were female and 35% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population.

Religion<sup>347</sup>: In the phase two consultation, 47% of respondents who used Southgate library were Christian which is proportionate compared to the ward population (49%). The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (32%) was higher when compared to the proportion of the ward population (26%).

Overall, 64 active library users who used Southgate Library have declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or phase two consultation respondents.

**Operating costs:**

The net expenditure of Southgate Library is £120,074.82, which is lower than the average for council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£132,529.46). The premises costs for Southgate library (£46,583) are higher-than-average compared to other smaller council run libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£67,656	£13,981	£46,583	£8,145	£120,074.82	£51.31	£4.09

**Property considerations:**

The property is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £898,180 in maintenance works is required at Southgate. This includes replacing the power installations, the single glazed windows, the roof coverings and the communications systems, and upkeeping decorations.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that access is reinstated to the car park, a disabled toilet is provided, a baby changing

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<sup>345</sup> Base: 1,944 active users, 14,391 census

<sup>346</sup> Base: 331 responses

<sup>347</sup> Base: 13,390 census

facility is installed and line markings in the car park are renewed. It is estimated this will cost less than £15,000.

This building currently houses the home library service, which is independent of the library, and will be relocated if the decision is taken to close the library building.

### **Recommendations:**

Officers are recommending the closure of Southgate Library given its relatively low level of need and its proximity to alternative provision at Palmers Green and Oakwood. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring the Council provides a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

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

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

Palmers Green Library has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. Palmers Green is a fully accessible building, has an extensive offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nurse and class visits and a range of free and paid cultural and entertainment activities. The library also holds employment and benefit support services. There is provision for older people and vulnerable people to access support to stay independent and there is also dedicated computer support to build digital literacy skills and reliance. The library also has a community room that can be hired. Furthermore, Oakwood Library has good transport connections, good facilities and potential further to maximise its community offer through its community room.

### **Oakwood (Oakwood)**

#### **Local need:**

Oakwood has the lowest level of local need, ranking 25<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards. The ward has a relatively high proportion of residents aged 65+ (18%) so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older people.

Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (3%) and receiving universal credit (14%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%). There is also a low percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (15%).

***Nearby wards without libraries: Cockfosters and Ridgeway***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Oakwood library.

Cockfosters ranks 18<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Cockfosters has a higher percentage of older people aged 65+ compared to the borough average (19% compared to 15%). Therefore, any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older residents. The ward has the lowest population density (1,094 people p/sq. km) out of the wards in Enfield. Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (2%) and receiving universal credit (18%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%).

Ridgeway is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Ridgeway has a high percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%). Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (4%) and receiving universal credit (17%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%). Ridgeway also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not recommended for closure.

#### **Distance from the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Enfield Town, which is 3.4km away. This would take the average person around 44 minutes to walk, and 12 minutes to cycle, or 9 minutes to drive or 14 minutes by public transport. This is the furthest distance to a hub library from a community library in Enfield.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 154 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said they have used Oakwood library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of those that said how they travel to Oakwood library, 45% travel by car, 36% walk, 32% get the bus, 5% cycle and 5% get the train.<sup>348</sup> Similarly, of the 10 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who used Oakwood Library, 60% walk, 60% travel by car and 30% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (55%), because it is close to public transport links (38%) and because it is close to shops (26%).<sup>349</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (77%), Palmers Green (45%) and Ridge Avenue (41%).<sup>350</sup> The most common alternative

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<sup>348</sup> Base: 146 responses

<sup>349</sup> Base: 145 responses

<sup>350</sup> Base: 145 responses

libraries for easy read respondents were Enfield Town (71%), Winchmore Hill (43%) and Southgate (29%).<sup>351</sup>

### **Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Oakwood Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
62,944	62,944	59,273	0	30,581	40,897	43,664

Officers have compared the usage of Oakwood Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. During 2023/24, the library had 43,664 visitors which was the second highest figure for any smaller library. It has a high number of visits per hour open (17), which is above the average for the council run smaller libraries (14.1). Oakwood has a high number of issues and renewals per hour open (18.9) and high percentage of active users per quarter (50%) compared to the average (11.2 and 46% respectively). The library also has a high percentage of ICT hours used per hour open compared to the average (22% compared to 20%). The high usage of this library could be attributed to it having the longest opening hours per week of the council run smaller libraries (53.5).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
53.5	17.0	18.9	22%	50%	703

### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (36%), monthly (19%), Fortnightly (15%) or every other month (15%).<sup>352</sup>

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (41%), or Wednesday, Thursday or Friday (38% respectively).<sup>353</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (67%) or afternoon

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<sup>351</sup> Base: 10 responses

<sup>352</sup> Base: 159 responses

<sup>353</sup> Base: 143 responses

(63%).<sup>354</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

In the phase one engagement 8 representatives (17%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Oakwood Library in the past two years.<sup>355</sup> This included five representatives of VCS groups (U3A, Chickenshed and Over 50s Forum), two representatives of primary schools and one further education college.

There are 9 partners that operate from Oakwood Library. These partners run events such as tutoring, health clinics, activities for retired residents and craft sessions. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Oakwood by our partners to respond to local need.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Oakwood said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (91%), use the space to read, study or work (44%) and print a document (35%).<sup>356</sup>

Oakwood Library, when compared to other smaller libraries, has higher-than-average stock levels (15,676 compared to 11,549) and the number of full-time equivalent staff (3.3 compared to 2). The library has a lower-than-average number of computers (5 compared to 7). Oakwood currently has no regular activities.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
15,676	1	5	1	3.3	0	0	Yes	44 metres

**Phase Two Consultation:**

*Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 559 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used Oakwood Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 539 were residents

<sup>354</sup> Base: 145 responses

<sup>355</sup> Base: 47 responses

<sup>356</sup> Base: 153 responses

- 6 were people who worked in the borough but did not live here
- 3 were representatives of secondary schools / further education colleges
- 3 were representatives of a community organisation (Palmers Green and Southgate U3A)
- 3 were ward Councillors
- 2 were representatives of a healthcare provider (LWTC Limited and North Middlesex University Teaching Hospital)
- 1 was a representative of a Special Educational Needs School
- 1 was a representative of a primary school (Vita Et Pax)
- 1 was other
- 1 was a person who studies in the borough but does not live here

60% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of Oakwood Library would have a negative impact on their household, 28% of said it would have a neutral impact and 3% said it would have a positive impact.<sup>357</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing Oakwood Library on their household was.<sup>358</sup> The most common impacts identified were that the respondent would lose access to the library service (41%), the proposed closure would have a negative impact on the community (29%) and the library is close to the respondent's home (28%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>359</sup> Of which:

- 20% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield
- 8% said they would use the digital library service
- 7% said they use the home library service
- 6% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium
- 5% proposed alternative mitigations
- 12% were unsure / didn't know

Overall, 58% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (68%).<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Base: 1,181 responses

<sup>358</sup> Base: 630 responses

<sup>359</sup> Base: 638 responses

<sup>360</sup> Base: 175 responses

One representative of a primary school and two representatives of a secondary school who used Oakwood Library said that the closure would have a negative impact on the school and their pupils. The primary schools' representative did not identify how this impact could be mitigated. One representative of the secondary school said the impact could not be mitigated and one representative of a secondary school said it could be mitigated by providing transport to an alternative library.

A representative of a Special Educational Needs school said the extra travel time meant that they could not take pupils to an alternative library and was concerned that pupils may find the bigger, busier environment of a large library difficult to manage.

Two representatives of healthcare providers (LWTC Limited and North Middlesex University Teaching Hospital) said that they deliver services from Oakwood Library, and they would have to find alternative locations to deliver services in this community, which may be difficult.

Two representatives of Palmers Green and Southgate U3A responded saying that they use the library for their interest groups and committee meeting, and there was no alternative library which could serve their membership based in the Northwest of the borough, if the proposed libraries were to close.

One representative of an organisation who used Oakwood Library stated that that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

Three councillors (Cllr Julian Sampson, Cllr Ruby Sampson and Cllr Tom O'Halloran) responded raising concerns about the impact of the proposed closure of Oakwood library on the community and to state their opposition to the proposed closure.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Oakwood Library in past two years,<sup>361</sup> 33% said the proposed extensions in opened worked for them and 46% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>362</sup> 28% said it did and 56% said it did not. The library respondents were most likely to visit because of the proposed extension in hours was Enfield Town (69%).<sup>363</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 7% had used Oakwood Library in the past two years.

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<sup>361</sup> Base: 540 responses

<sup>362</sup> Base: 545 responses

<sup>363</sup> Base: 217 responses



In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>364</sup> 83% of participants said that the proposed closure of Oakwood Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 15% said it would have a negative impact and 2% said it would have a positive impact.

Of the participants who said that the closure of Oakwood Library would have a negative impact on their household, the Council asked how it could mitigate this impact.<sup>365</sup> In response, 49% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 46% said they would use the digital service, 32% said they would use the home library service and 7% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 31 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who said that they used Oakwood Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of Oakwood Library closures will impact them. In response, 43% said that they will lose access to the library services, while 27% stated that the closure would have a negative impact on the community or that the library is close to their house<sup>366</sup>. When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 60% used this question as an opportunity to say that they want the libraries to be kept open and 17% said a reduction in the number of libraries proposed to close could mitigate the negative impacts<sup>367</sup>.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used Oakwood Library in past two years,<sup>368</sup> 57% said the proposed extensions in opening hours work for them and 43% said they do not work.

### *Emails and Letters*

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Bambos Charalambous MP and 22 residents regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of Oakwood Library. In the majority of responses, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure of Oakwood Library on the community, especially children and young people. Residents also raised in their letters the negative impact of the proposed closures on their households, as they were regular users, it is close to their home, and their family use it.

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<sup>364</sup> Base: 224 responses

<sup>365</sup> Base: 34 responses

<sup>366</sup> Base: 30 responses

<sup>367</sup> Base: 30 responses

<sup>368</sup> Base: 28 responses

## **Equalities:**

Age<sup>369</sup>: Library usage is highest among users aged 0-19 (37%), which is higher than the ward population aged 0-19 (25%). The library has a high level of users aged 80+ (5%) compared to the average for libraries in Enfield overall (2%).

In the phase two consultation, 23% of respondents who used Oakwood Library and declared their age were 40-49 and 20% were aged 30-39,<sup>370</sup> this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users in these age groups (15% and 12% and 13% and 12% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>371</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (43%) which is higher than that of the ward population (37%). The proportion of active library users from Asian ethnic backgrounds (21%) is higher than the ward population (17%).

In the phase two consultation, 50% of respondents who used Oakwood Library were from a White British ethnic background,<sup>372</sup> which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>373</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (12%), but the library has a low level of active users with a declared disability (5%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 23% of respondents who used Oakwood Library declared they had a disability.<sup>374</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>375</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (60.5% compared to 39.5%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population, (52% and 48% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used Oakwood Library and declared their gender,<sup>376</sup> 67% said they were female and 33% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population.

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<sup>369</sup> Base: 2,408 active users, 8,756 census

<sup>370</sup> Base: 501 responses

<sup>371</sup> Base: 758 active users, 8,748 census

<sup>372</sup> Base: 439 responses

<sup>373</sup> Base: 2,408 active users, 8,702 census

<sup>374</sup> Base: 464 responses

<sup>375</sup> Base: 2,392 active users, 8,702 census

<sup>376</sup> Base: 496 responses

Religion<sup>377</sup>: In the phase two consultation, 44% of respondents who used Oakwood library were Christian which is lower than the proportion of the ward population who are Christian (50%).<sup>378</sup> The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (31%) was higher than the proportion of the ward population who were non-religious (21%).

Overall, 98 active library users who used Oakwood Library have declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or phase two consultation respondents.

**Operating costs:**

The net expenditure of Oakwood Library is £201,130.44, which is the second highest of all the council run smaller libraries in Enfield. The cost per visit (£4.61) is the lower than the average for council run smaller libraries. Staffing costs (£135,312) and library resources costs (£27,962) for Oakwood Library are among the highest for council run smaller libraries. The premises cost for Oakwood Library is the second highest (£54,147) amongst council run smaller libraries. The cost per hour is also higher than the average for council run smaller libraries (£72.30 compared to £67.76).

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£135,312	£27,962	£54,147	£16,291	£201,130.44	£72.30	£4.61

**Property considerations:**

This building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £542,114 in maintenance works is required at Oakwood Library. This includes replacing the power installations, the lighting, the communications systems, and the electrical mains and sub-mains distribution systems, and upkeeping decorations.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Oakwood Library remain open.

In the second phase consultation, the Council consulted on the closure of this library as, while the library is well used, Oakwood ward has the lowest level of local need. It was initially considered that it would have been reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Enfield Town and that this was an opportunity to reduce library

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<sup>377</sup> Base: 8,119 census

<sup>378</sup> Base: 373 responses

costs whilst ensuring the Council provides a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

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

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

## **Northwest Area**

### **Enfield Town (Town)**

#### **Local need:**

Enfield Town is ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has a high percentage of older people aged 65+ compared to the borough population (21% compared to 15% respectively), so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older people.

Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (4%) and receiving universal credit (20%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%).

The ward has low levels of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (25%). The percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (15%) is also low compared to the borough average (22%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Grange Park, Whitewebbs and Ridgeway***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Enfield Town Library.

Grange Park ward is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (22%) in the borough. The ward has the lowest percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2%) and households receiving universal credit (12%). It should be noted that the ward also

borders Bush Hill Park ward, which has Ridge Avenue Library which is not recommended for closure.

Whitewebbs is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Whitewebbs has the second highest proportion of residents with a declared disability (16%) and the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield. It has the lowest population density out of the wards in Enfield, (1,332 p\sq. km), and a low percentage of households where English is no one's first language.

Ridgeway is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Ridgeway has a high percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%). Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (4%) and receiving universal credit (17%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%). Ridgeway is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

### **Distance from the nearest library:**

The nearest library is John Jackson which is 2.6km away. This would take the average person around 24 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk or cycle, it would take 9 minutes to travel by car and 14 minutes by public transport. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue library is 2.7km away. This would take the average person around 28 minutes to walk or 9 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 8 minutes to drive or 14 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 544 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they have used Enfield Town library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who said how they travel to Enfield Town library, 52% walk, 46% get the bus, 23% travel by car, 7% cycle and 7% get the train.<sup>379</sup> Similarly, of the respondents to the easy read questionnaire who use Enfield Town, 64% walk, 36% travel by car and 41% get the bus.<sup>380</sup>

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (55%), because it is close to shops (48%) and because it is close to public transport links (31%).<sup>381</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Ridge Avenue (32%), Palmers Green (29%) and Edmonton Green (24%).<sup>382</sup> Similarly, the most common

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<sup>379</sup> Base: 537 responses

<sup>380</sup> Base: 31 responses

<sup>381</sup> Base: 537 responses

<sup>382</sup> Base: 544 responses

alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Ridge Avenue (24%), Edmonton Green (24%) and Ordnance Unity Centre (24%).<sup>383</sup>

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Enfield Town Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
280,891	263,243	277,257	78,131	191,553	280,253	331,364

Officers have compared the usage of Enfield Town Library during 2023/24 to other large libraries in Enfield. During 2023/24, Enfield Town had 331,364 visits. This was the second highest number of overall visitors of any library. Enfield Town has the highest number of issues and renewals (49.7) of the four large libraries and had the highest percentage of active users per quarter (47%). Enfield Town has the second highest number of visits per hour open (110.5) of the four large libraries and the highest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (21%).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
62.5	110.5	49.7	21%	47%	2,505

The Council is increasing the opening hours at Enfield Town library by 1.5 hours per week. This will mean that the library’s opening hours will be increased on a Wednesday and reduced on a Friday and Saturday. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users.

The library is well-used by local primary schools, with class visits arranged throughout the year. In 2023/24 the library was visited by the following schools: Chaseside, One Degree Academy, George Spicer, St Andrews, Oaktree, St Michaels, Raglan, St Johns, Edmonton County and St Georges. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are 17 partners that operate from Enfield Town Library. These partners run events such as tutoring, activities for retired residents, advice and information sessions

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<sup>383</sup> Base:12 responses

and yoga. Officers will look to further maximise activities and events held at Enfield Town by our partners to respond to local need.

*Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority respondents used the library weekly (23%), monthly (22%) or less frequently than every other month (21%).<sup>384</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (49%), Thursday (41%) or Wednesday (41%).<sup>385</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (70%) or morning (63%).<sup>386</sup>

Overall, 27 representatives (57%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Enfield Town Library in the past two years.<sup>387</sup> This includes 11 representatives of VCS groups, 6 representatives of primary schools, 5 other respondents, two representatives of secondary schools and colleges, two representatives of healthcare providers and one representative of an early years provider.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Enfield Town said they used the library service for were to borrow a book, (87%), use the space to read, study or work (42%) and print a document (34%)<sup>388</sup>.

Enfield Town has the highest stock levels (55,972), highest number of activities per week (17) and highest number of full-time equivalent staff (8.81) of any library in Enfield.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step access	Distance from nearest bus stop
55,972	4	34	1	8.81	3	17	Yes	114 metres

**Equalities:**

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<sup>384</sup> Base: 541 responses

<sup>385</sup> Base: 529 responses

<sup>386</sup> Base: 537 responses

<sup>387</sup> Base: 47 responses

<sup>388</sup> Base: 882 responses

Age<sup>389</sup>: There is a low level of library usage among users aged 60+ (16%) compared to the proportion of the ward population aged 60+ (22%). There is a high level of library usage among 0-9-year-olds (20%) compared to the ward population (13%).

In the phase two consultation, 22% of respondents who declared their age were 40-49 and 20% were aged 60-69,<sup>390</sup> this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users in these age groups (15% and 15% and 10% and 8% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>391</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (47%). This is significantly lower than the proportion of the ward population who are from White British ethnic backgrounds (52%). However, the proportion of active library users from Black (15%) and Asian (11%) ethnic backgrounds is higher than the ward population (9% and 8% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 57% of respondents who used Enfield Town Library were from a White British ethnic background,<sup>392</sup> which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>393</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users with a declared disability (5%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 22% of respondents who used Enfield Town Library declared they had a disability.<sup>394</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>395</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (59% compared to 41%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47% respectively).

In the phase two consultation,<sup>396</sup> 68% of respondents who used Enfield Town Library were female and 32% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

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<sup>389</sup> Base: 10,401 active users, 13,461 census

<sup>390</sup> Base: 730 responses

<sup>391</sup> Base: 3,411 active users, 13,502 census

<sup>392</sup> Base: 682 responses

<sup>393</sup> Base: 10,401 active users, 13,461 census

<sup>394</sup> Base: 687 responses

<sup>395</sup> Base: 10,263 active users, 13,461 census

<sup>396</sup> Base: 725 responses



**Religion<sup>397</sup>:** Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportion of library users who are Buddhist, Sikh, and of other religions is higher (7%, 2% and 12% respectively) when compared to the ward population (1%, 0.2% and 1% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 50% of respondents who used Enfield Town Library were Christian.<sup>398</sup> This is lower than the proportion of ward population who are Christian but is representative of the proportion of active library users who are Christian (57% and 51% respectively). The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (37%) was higher compared to the proportions of the ward population and active library users (29% and 18% respectively).

**Operating costs:**

Enfield Town has the second highest net expenditure of the four large libraries in Enfield (£626,618.85). However, the cost per visit is the second lowest of the four large libraries (£2.091.89). The cost per hour open (£205.99) is broadly in line with the average of the four large libraries (£204.56). The staffing cost for Enfield Town (£383,384) and library resources (£79,226) is joint highest of the large libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£383,384	£79,226	£210,165	£46,157	£626,618.85	£205.99	£1.89

**Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £229,347 in maintenance works is required at Enfield Town. This includes replacing lighting systems and roof coverings.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended this library remains open. While Enfield Town ward has a relatively low level of need (ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need), Enfield Town Library is a large library which is in a convenient location for residents in neighbouring wards to use, and its size means it can support an increase in usage as result of closure of nearby libraries.

Enfield Town is a transport hub and main shopping and leisure area, and residents who visit other libraries are likely to already travel to Enfield Town for other reasons, as well as to visit the library. Enfield Town’s large floorspace and extensive range of activities

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<sup>397</sup> Base: 113 active users, 12,618 census

<sup>398</sup> Base: 591 responses

means that library users who use other libraries are already likely to be travelling to also use Enfield town library. The library has strong early years offer for young children and parents, activities for children and young people, and a range of activities for adults and older people, including book clubs and writing clubs, and activities to keep older people socially connected and independent. This should help to mitigate the impact of the closure of nearby libraries in the borough.

The Council is increasing the opening hours at Enfield Town library by 1.5 hours per week. This will ensure that the library service is accessible to a wide range of existing and potential users, as well as ensuring the offer is consistent with Edmonton Green Library.

### **Ridge Avenue (Bush Hill Park)**

#### **Local need:**

Bush Hill Park is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The percentage of older people aged 65+ in the ward is 22% which is the highest out of all wards in Enfield, so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact older people. The ward has a lower percentage of children aged 0-15 compared to the borough average (18% compared to 21%).

Household incomes in the ward are higher than the borough population overall, and the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (3%) and receiving universal credit (15%) are lower than the borough averages (6% and 31%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Grange Park and Highfield***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Ridge Avenue Library.

Grange Park ward is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (22%) in the borough. The ward has the lowest percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2%) and households receiving universal credit (12%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Highfield is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough average. It should be noted that this ward also borders Haselbury, Upper Edmonton, and Palmers Green wards which has Millfield House, Fore Street and Palmers Green libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

#### **Distance from the nearest library:**

The nearest library is Enfield Town, which is 2.7km away. This would take the average person around 29 minutes to walk or 8 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the

journey would take 8 minutes to drive or 13 minutes by public transport. Winchmore Hill is also an alternative library; this would take the average person 25 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 6 minutes to drive or 11 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 206 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who said how they travel to Ridge Avenue, 44% walk, 44% travel by car, 30% get the bus, 8% cycle and 1% get the train.<sup>399</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the 7 respondents who use Ridge Avenue, 86% walk, 43% travel by car and 43% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (56%), because it has parking facilities (34%) and because it is close to public transport links (20%).<sup>400</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (84%), Palmers Green (43%) and Winchmore Hill (38%).<sup>401</sup> The most common alternative library for respondents to the easy read questionnaire was Enfield Town (60%).<sup>402</sup>

### **Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for Ridge Avenue Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
72,220	68,929	58,205	0	30,288	47,713	52,928

Officers have compared the usage of Ridge Avenue Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. Out of the council run smaller libraries, Ridge Avenue has the highest number of visits (22.1) and the third highest number of issues and renewals (20.6) per hour open. Ridge Avenue has a relatively high percentage of active users per quarter in comparison to the average of the council run smaller libraries (48% compared to 46%).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
50	22.1	20.6	21%	48%	641

<sup>399</sup> Base: 202 responses

<sup>400</sup> Base: 198 responses

<sup>401</sup> Base: 206 responses

<sup>402</sup> Base: 3 responses

### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (37%), monthly (18%), or every other month (16%).<sup>403</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Wednesday (43%), Monday (41%), or Tuesday (40%).<sup>404</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (67%) or morning (63%).<sup>405</sup>

In 2023, the library was used by Raglan Primary School and Edmonton Primary School for class visits. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy the Council will increase its partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development. The library is also used by the NHS for baby weight clinics.

### **Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of Ridge Avenue said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (92%), use the space to read, study or work (42%) and print a document (38%).<sup>406</sup>

Ridge Avenue has the highest stock levels (27,459) of the smaller libraries in Enfield. The library has a higher number than average of computer (12 compared to 7) and higher number of full-time equivalent staff (3.3 compared to 2), when compared to other smaller libraries. The library currently has no regular activities.

The library is also co-located with the borough's archive service.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
27,459	1	12	0	3.3	Approx. 10	0	Yes	39 metres

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<sup>403</sup> Base: 212 responses

<sup>404</sup> Base: 194 responses

<sup>405</sup> Base: 262 responses

<sup>406</sup> Base: 204 respondents

## **Equalities:**

Age<sup>407</sup>: Bush Hill Park ward has a high proportion of residents aged 60+ (30%), however, there is a moderately low level of library usage among users aged 60+ (24%). The ward has relatively few children and young people. However, the library has high proportions of active users aged 0-19 years old compared to the ward population (33% compared to 22%).

In the phase two consultation, 21% of respondents who declared their age were 40-49 and 19% were aged 70-79,<sup>408</sup> this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users in these age groups (13% and 13% and 10% and 9% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>409</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (48%). This is higher than the ward population who are from White British ethnic backgrounds (44%). The percentage of active library users from White Other ethnic backgrounds (19%) is lower compared to the proportion of the ward population (27%).

In the phase two consultation, 60% of respondents who used Ridge Avenue Library were from a White British ethnic background,<sup>410</sup> which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>411</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (14%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (7%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 22% of respondents who used Ridge Avenue Library declared they had a disability.<sup>412</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>413</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (60% compared to 40%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% and 48% respectively).

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<sup>407</sup> Base: 2,454 active users, 12,496 census

<sup>408</sup> Base: 322 responses

<sup>409</sup> Base: 798 active users, 12,714 census

<sup>410</sup> Base: 307 responses

<sup>411</sup> Base: 2,454 active users, 12,496 census

<sup>412</sup> Base: 157 responses

<sup>413</sup> Base: 2,414 active users, 12,496 census

In the phase two consultation, 69% of respondents who used Ridge Avenue Library were female and 31% were male.<sup>414</sup> This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

**Religion<sup>415</sup>:** In the phase two consultation, 55% of respondents who used Ridge Avenue library were Christian which is slightly lower than the proportion of the ward population who are Christian (58%). The proportion of respondents who were Muslim (6%) was lower compared to the proportion of the ward population (13%). The proportion of respondents who were non-religious (30%) was higher compared to the proportion of the ward population (22%).

Overall, 26 active library users who used Ridge Avenue Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or phase two consultation respondents.

**Operating costs:**

Ridge Avenue has the highest net expenditure of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£217,205.81). The cost per visit for Ridge Avenue is the only operational cost that does not exceed the average of the smaller libraries (£4.10 compared to £6.80). Ridge Avenue is among the highest for cost of staffing (£135,312), library resources (£27,962) and income (£16,291). The premises cost for Ridge Avenue (£70,222) is the highest out of the smaller council run libraries and cost per hour (£83.54) is the second highest.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£135,312	£27,962	£70,222	£16,291	£217,205.81	£83.54	£4.10

**Property Considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £1,334,628 in maintenance works is required at Ridge Avenue. This includes replacing the power distribution systems, the single glazed windows, the lighting, the communications systems and the local heating systems.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that the floor marking is renewed in the car park. It is estimated this will cost less than £5,000.

**Recommendations:**

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<sup>414</sup> Base: 322 responses

<sup>415</sup> Base: 11,811 census

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

### **John Jackson (Southbury)**

#### **Local need:**

Southbury is within the 30% most deprived wards in the UK and is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Southbury's ward's demographics and deprivation levels are broadly reflective of the borough average. The ward has a high population density (7,450 people p/sq. km) and a relatively high proportion of children aged 0-15 (23%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Jubilee, Whitewebbs and Carterhatch***

When considering local need, the Council must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to John Jackson Library.

Jubilee is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Jubilee has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (34%) low-income families compared to the borough average (25%). Similarly, the ward has a high percentage households receiving universal credit (42%) compared the borough average (31%). Jubilee also has the second highest percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End, Haselbury and Bush Hill Park wards which have Ponders End, Millfield House and Ridge Avenue Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

Whitewebbs is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Whitewebbs has the second highest proportion of residents with a declared disability (16%) and the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield. It has the lowest population density out of the wards in Enfield, (1,332 p\sq. km), and a low percentage of households where English is no one's first language. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not recommended for closure.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%) and in relative and absolute (32%) low-income families. It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward and Enfield Lock ward, which have Ponders End Ordnance Unity Centre Libraries respectively, which are not recommended for closure.

#### **Distance from the nearest library:**

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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, 80 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield said that they have used John Jackson library. The Council asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library and of the respondents who said how they travel to John Jackson library, 61% walk, 24% get the bus, 24% travel by car, 5% cycle and 4% get the train.<sup>416</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the four respondents who used John Jackson library, 100% walk and 25% get the bus.

The Council also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (60%), because it is close to work (17%) and because it is close to public transport links (17%).<sup>417</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (81%), Ridge Avenue (50%) and Edmonton Green (46%)<sup>418</sup>. The most common alternative library for respondents to easy read questionnaire was Enfield Town (50%).<sup>419</sup>

Given the moderate levels of deprivation in the area, the cost attached to taking public transport to visit Enfield Town could be a barrier to some residents who usually visit John Jackson Library. However, given John Jackson Library’s relatively low usage, it could be assumed that many residents local to John Jackson Library are already travelling to Enfield Town or other alternative libraries to access their broader offers of services and activities.

**Usage:**

The table below shows the visitor numbers for John Jackson Library from 2017/18 to 2023/24.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
43,148	33,210	43,031	0	4,229	24,824	26,525

Officers have compared the usage of John Jackson Library during 2023/24 to other council run libraries in Enfield. John Jackson has a relatively low number of issues and

<sup>416</sup> Base: 75 responses

<sup>417</sup> Base: 78 responses

<sup>418</sup> Base: 80 responses

<sup>419</sup> Base: 2 responses



renewals per hour (6.2) compared to the average of the council run smaller libraries (11.2). The number of visits per hour open for this library is just below the average for the council run smaller libraries (12.3 compared to 14.1). Similarly, the library has a relatively low percentage of active users per quarter (45%) compared to the average (46%). John Jackson also has the second lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (9%). Officers will ensure that services currently offered at John Jackson Library are transferred to Enfield Town Library.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter	New users 2023/24
43	12.3	6.2	9%	45%	365

The library is regularly used for Councillor surgeries and alternative location for these surgeries will need to be found in Southbury ward.

### *Phase one engagement - Usage*

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (33%), monthly (20%), or fortnightly (19%).<sup>420</sup>

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (51%), Monday (49%) or Wednesday (42%)<sup>421</sup>. The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (56%).<sup>422</sup> Officers have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

Due to the relatively low levels of usage and frequency of use, the large floorspace at Enfield Town and increased floorspace at Ponders End is sufficient to support an increase in usage because of the closure of John Jackson Library.

### **Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three facilities users of John Jackson said they used the library service for were to borrow a book (86%), use the computers (51%) and use the space to read, study or work (51%).<sup>423</sup>

John Jackson library, when compared to other smaller libraries, has lower-than-average stock levels (8,821 compared to 11,549), and a lower-than-average number of full-time

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<sup>420</sup> Base: 86 responses

<sup>421</sup> Base: 79 responses

<sup>422</sup> Base: 80 responses

<sup>423</sup> Base: 80 responses

equivalent staff (1.7 compared to 2). The library has a higher number than average of computers (11 compared to 7). The library currently has no regular activities.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of regular activities	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,821	1	11	0	1.7	0	0	Yes	53 metres

## **Phase Two Consultation:**

### *Standard Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 181 respondents to the standard questionnaire who said that they used John Jackson Library in the past two years. Of these respondents:

- 174 were residents.
- Three were representatives of secondary schools / further education colleges.
- Three were representatives of a community organisation (Age UK Enfield).
- One was a person who works in the borough but did not live here.
- One was a Councillor (Cllr Maria Alexandrou).
- One was other.

50% of individual respondents said that the proposed closure of John Jackson Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 31% of individual respondents said it would have a negative impact on their household and 3% of individual respondents said it would have a positive impact on their household.<sup>424</sup>

The Council asked individual respondents what the negative impact of closing John Jackson Library on their household was.<sup>425</sup> The most common impacts identified were that the proposed closure would have a negative impact on the community (49%), the respondent would lose access to the library service (37%) and the library is close to the respondent's home (18%).

The Council asked individual respondents how it could mitigate the negative impact on their household.<sup>426</sup> Of which:

- 17% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield

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<sup>424</sup> Base: 901 responses

<sup>425</sup> Base: 233 responses

<sup>426</sup> Base: 294 responses

- 6% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium
- 4% said they use the home library service
- 4% said they would use the digital library service
- 8% proposed alternative mitigations
- 13% were unsure / didn't know.

Overall, 59% individual respondents said there could be no mitigations. The most popular alternative library in Enfield for individual respondents was Enfield Town (63%).<sup>427</sup>

One representative of a secondary school who used John Jackson said that the closure would have a negative impact on the school and their pupils, which not be mitigated.

A representative of Age UK Enfield raised concerns about the negative on the community and their organisation if John Jackson library was closed. Similarly, two further representatives of organisations who used John Jackson Library stated that that they opposed the closure of libraries in the borough.

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used John Jackson Library in past two years,<sup>428</sup> 43% said the proposed extensions in opened worked for them and 41% said it did not work for them. The Council also asked respondents if it made them more likely to use these 8 libraries,<sup>429</sup> 38% said it did and 50% said it did not. The library respondents were most likely to visit because of the proposed extension in hours was Enfield Town (74%).<sup>430</sup>

### *Face to Face Interviews*

Of the 522 participants in the face-to-face interviews, 2% had used John Jackson Library in the past two years.

In the face-to-face interviews,<sup>431</sup> 86% of participants said that the proposed closure of John Jackson Library would have a neutral impact on their household, 12% of participants said it would have a negative impact on their household and 2% of individual respondents said it would have a positive impact on their household.

For the participants who said that the proposed closure of John Jackson Library would have a negative impact on their household, The Council asked how it could mitigate this

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<sup>427</sup> Base: 60 responses

<sup>428</sup> Base: 170 responses

<sup>429</sup> Base: 175 responses

<sup>430</sup> Base: 111 responses

<sup>431</sup> Base: 201 responses

impact.<sup>432</sup> In response, 52% said they would visit alternative libraries in Enfield, 50% said they would use the digital service, 54% said they would use the home library service and 7% said they would use libraries outside of Enfield which are members of the library consortium.

### *Easy Read Questionnaire*

In the phase two consultation, the Council had 20 respondents to the Easy Read questionnaire who said that they used John Jackson Library in the past two years.

The Council asked respondents how the proposed closure of John Jackson Library will impact them. In response, 40% said the closure would have a negative impact on the community, while 25% said that they will lose access to the library services or that the library is close to their house.<sup>433</sup> When asked how the Council can help respondents to still use the library service, 64% used this question as an opportunity to say that they want the libraries to be kept open and 29% said a reduction in the number of libraries proposed to close could mitigate the negative impacts.<sup>434</sup>

The Council asked all respondents if the proposed extension in opening hours at the 8 libraries proposed to remain open worked for them. Of those who used John Jackson Library in past two years,<sup>435</sup> 43% said the proposed extensions in opening hours work for them, while 57% said they do not.

### *Letters and emails*

During the consultation, the Council received letters and emails from Bush Hill Park Residents Association and 5 residents regarding their opposition to the proposed closure of John Jackson Library. In all these responses, concerns were raised about the negative impact of the proposed closure of John Jackson Library on the community, especially children and young people.

### **Equalities:**

**Age**<sup>436</sup>: Library usage is highest among users aged 0-19 (38%), which is significantly higher than the ward population aged 0-19 (28%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation, who used John Jackson library and declared their age,<sup>437</sup> the highest proportion were aged 40-49 (28%) which is higher

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<sup>432</sup> Base: 25 responses

<sup>433</sup> Base: 20 responses

<sup>434</sup> Base: 14 responses

<sup>435</sup> Base: 28 responses

<sup>436</sup> Base: 809 active users, 15,645 census

<sup>437</sup> Base: 168 responses

when compared to ward population and active library users in this age group (15% and 14% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>438</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (35%), this is slightly lower than the proportion of the ward population (37%). The second highest proportion of active users were from Black ethnic backgrounds (26%), this is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (16%).

The proportion of active library users from White Other ethnic backgrounds (16%) is lower compared to the proportion of the ward population (26%).

Of the respondents to the phase two consultation who used John Jackson Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>439</sup> 52% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (37%) and active library users (35%) who are White British.

Disability<sup>440</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users who declared their disability (4%). However, this is representative of the average for libraries in Enfield (4%).

In the phase two consultation, 32% of respondents who used John Jackson Library declared they had a disability.<sup>441</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>442</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (61% compared to 39%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population, (53% and 47% respectively).

In the phase two consultation, 68% of respondents who used John Jackson Library were female and 32% were male.<sup>443</sup> This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>444</sup>: In the phase two consultation, 50% of respondents who used John Jackson library were Christian which is proportionate compared to the ward population (51%).<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Base: 293 active users, 15,908 census

<sup>439</sup> Base: 149 responses

<sup>440</sup> Base: 809 active users, 15,645 census

<sup>441</sup> Base: 157 responses

<sup>442</sup> Base: 798 active users, 15,645 census

<sup>443</sup> Base: 165 responses

<sup>444</sup> Base: 14,824 census

<sup>445</sup> Base: 133 responses

The proportion of respondents who were Jewish (4%), and non-religious (34%) was significantly higher than the proportions of the ward population who were Jewish and non-religious, (0.4% and 26% respectively). The proportion of respondents who were Muslim (8%) was significantly lower than the proportions of the ward population who were Muslim (16%).

Overall, 13 active library users who used John Jackson Library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population or phase two consultation respondents.

**Operating costs:**

John Jackson library has a net expenditure of £114,014.12, which is below the average of the council run smaller libraries in Enfield (£132,529.46). The operating costs for John Jackson are all below the average for the council run smaller libraries in Enfield, apart from premises cost. The premises cost for John Jackson library is £49,522, which is above the average of £42,694. The library building generated £17,145 in income which is higher than the average of £11,592.62 for smaller council run libraries. The cost per hour (£50.99) is the lowest out of the smaller council run libraries.

Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£67,656	£13,981	£49,522	£17,145	£114,014.12	£50.99	£4.30

**Property considerations:**

The building is an LBE owned freehold. A condition survey carried out in January 2024 has identified that £181,055 in maintenance works is required at John Jackson. This includes replacing the lighting and the roof coverings and upkeeping furnishings and decorations.

Age UK Enfield currently lease a section of John Jackson library, this lease is separate to the building’s use as a public library.

**Recommendations:**

Officers are recommending the closure of this library given its low usage and proximity to Enfield Town and Ponders End as an alternative provision. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring the Council provides a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The usage of John Jackson is below average for the other council run smaller libraries in the borough with active users per quarter sitting at 41%. This is supported by the phase one engagement, whereby most respondents who stated they live, work or study

in Enfield used John Jackson library less frequently than every other month (26%) and only 10% stating they have used the library in the last two years.

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

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

Enfield Town library is one of our most popular and well-used libraries. It offers an extensive range of activities and services which includes a strong early years offer for young children and parents, activities for children and young people, and a range of activities for adults and older people, including book clubs and writing clubs, and activities to keep older people socially connected and independent. Furthermore, Ponders End Library has good transport connections, good facilities and potential further to maximise its community offer.