

Libraries Strategy for Hackney

2022-26





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1. Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this new strategy and vision for our libraries that meets present and future challenges and opportunities. Our libraries form an important part of our cultural infrastructure across the borough; they are free to access and are trusted places offering a range of quality services that are used by thousands of residents every year.

We want to make sure our libraries cater for the ever-changing needs of local people. We launched the libraries service review in April 2021 – setting a new precedent in community engagement – reaching more than 8,500 residents of all ages and backgrounds. We asked residents and staff how they would like to see their local library service delivered in the future.

We understand the crucial role libraries play in supporting the post-Covid recovery. We worked with our libraries' workforce – taking on board the needs of residents – and co-designed a new strategy and vision with a focus on addressing inequalities, supporting economic recovery, and enabling social mobility.

Local culture delivery has changed since the arrival of the pandemic. Fragilities that existed prior to COVID-19 have been exacerbated by declines in income and visitor numbers, and council resources remain under increased pressure.

The creativity and resilience of the cultural sector to respond to the world's biggest challenge in decades was demonstrated by moves to new and innovative business models and an acceleration of digital engagement to reach people in new ways. Our library services played their part too, supporting the emergency response that included delivering

food parcels and making welfare calls to those in need.

We see the work we do across our cultural services as an investment in local people and our recovery strategies. The library service will benefit from a more joined-up service across culture, heritage, filming, events, and venues which will ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of parts. We will horizontally connect all our cultural services in a way that adds to the overall experience of what local people can enjoy. Collaboration will be a central theme of our new vision too. We will work in partnership with residents and local organisations who will influence our future approaches.

The Our Libraries Strategy is a clearly stated vision for what the library service is going to achieve in the future and responds directly to what residents told us they wanted for their libraries.

First and foremost, we will make sure that our libraries continue to offer the very best service so that local people can take part in a wide range of activities – take out a book, read for pleasure, socialise with their friends, get creative, learn a new skill and study, or complete everyday online tasks and research.

The Our Libraries Strategy is a clearly stated vision for what the library service is going to achieve in the future and responds directly to what residents told us they wanted for their libraries.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.M. Kennedy'.

Cllr Chris Kennedy
Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care,
Voluntary Sector and Culture

2. Introduction

Hackney residents value their local library and see the libraries as safe and trusted spaces. They find our library staff friendly and knowledgeable. Residents also value the good availability of books and their local library being nearby.

These were some of the key findings from the Council's Libraries Review which was launched in April 2021 looking into the current service provision and assets, as well as recommendations for a service that is fit for the future.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we recognise that customers have higher expectations of the role technology plays in delivering services. It is evident that more traditional library services can form an important part of reconnecting different communities with one another, as well as providing opportunities for lifelong learning, wellbeing, and personal growth and enrichment. Our libraries are our touchpoints in every single neighbourhood, with eight libraries situated no more than one mile from every resident. We want to encourage more residents that live, work or learn in our borough to make full use of our library services.

Our library service is well used by residents of all ages and backgrounds. Pre-pandemic, our libraries saw more than 1.5 million visits per year – above the London average. In 2020, the Libraries Service rose to the challenge of the pandemic making the e-book stock available, providing digital engagement activities for residents, and supporting the borough's emergency response.

However, Hackney follows the national pattern, which has seen visitor numbers fall over the past decade – attributable to wider societal and technological trends. This trend was expedited by the pandemic when libraries were forced to close their doors for long periods of time and provide enhanced online resources.

The national picture shows that library use is growing in places where there is strong leadership and they are being effective in tackling major challenges such as digital literacy, lack of education and skills in local populations, as well as loneliness or isolation.

Since April 2021, Hackney's Libraries Service Review set out to achieve a roadmap that will:

- **Co-design a vision for the future that answers diverse local needs and draws upon the expert knowledge of library employees**
- **Provide a long-term strategy that will put libraries at the forefront of the Council's relationship with residents and the cultural life of the borough**
- **Deliver a service that is sustainable, fit for the modern digital world and accessible to all.**



The review highlights the key strengths of the current library service including: the Community Library Service for housebound residents; the newly refurbished Shoreditch Library and Clapton Library buildings; the Libraries Consortium partnership; and the strong commitment to diversity and equality seen within the workforce and library users. There is also a strong political commitment to maintain existing library buildings and opening hours across the borough.

The proactive work of library staff can have a strong impact on the borough's shared outcomes and there are opportunities to work even closer with partners – both inside and outside the Council – to maximise their contributions.

Fundamentally, there are opportunities to inspire, innovate and encourage more local people to take up broader services as part of a more inclusive way of working.



“Libraries give you
a better imagination.”

3. Opportunities

Residents that use the libraries, and those that have not used the service, have told us that in the future they would like to use the library spaces more for a hybrid offer in particular for cultural and community hub activities, digital and lifelong learning, and places that include the community in co-producing what it can offer.

The Council will ensure that those views inform the future capital investment into our library spaces so that they are flexible, innovative and inclusive spaces that respond to the needs of our residents.

3.1 Literacy and lifelong learning

Hackney libraries can make a strong impact on learning, from formal learning leading to qualifications, to informal learning through the provision of information resources, homework clubs and reading groups as well as self-directed study and research. The new strategy focuses on partnering with local organisations and national reading agencies to increase support for reading. The Libraries Service will also work closely with the Council's Adult Learning Service to enhance the formal and informal learning offer and to provide resources to enable an effective partnership for learners of all ages. Libraries are perceived as an important source of information for people seeking employment and training opportunities and they positively influence outcomes for individuals and businesses.

3.2 Digital inclusion

The digital world has highlighted – and the pandemic has exacerbated – the challenges facing those who have limited digital access to the internet. Libraries play a leading role in helping people become capable of using and benefitting from the internet by: developing digital skills to use ICT resources; providing free access to computers, loanable devices, Wi-Fi or other data packages; and improving accessibility in the design of digital services to meet users' needs and impairments. Access to basic and higher-end digital resources are used by individuals, community groups and microbusinesses to support the borough's provision of affordable workspace and meeting space. All libraries will develop access to digital resources and sufficient study space for learners and young people with a view to piloting extended opening hours. The transformation of library spaces into local digital hubs requires an assessment of digital skills training needs in library staff and residents as well as a focus on accessibility.

3.3 Health and wellbeing

Libraries can positively impact mental health and community wellbeing in several ways as part of a community hub approach. Hackney Council's partnerships deliver a variety of wellbeing workshops, with the potential for these to take place in libraries, along with other public health-related partnerships, such as dementia, autism, ageing well and other health services. Training with Customer Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs will help library staff to identify safeguarding needs and confidently sign post residents to public services to support their individual needs. Libraries will offer residents activities that promote good health and provide information to make informed choices about their health in a welcoming and neutral environment. They will also offer touchdown space and a trusted place for other Council services to reach out and cross-refer so that library users can take up a wider range of services on offer.



3.4 Cultural development and creativity

The role of Libraries in the cultural development of individuals and in building creative and cohesive communities is crucial. The libraries service is well-placed to increase participation in arts and cultural activities because of their use by all social groups and their role as inclusive, creative hubs within communities. Hackney's libraries will further expand to develop welcoming places where children and adults can immerse themselves in a vast range of art and learn from the borough's rich creative and cultural industry sector. Libraries can offer activities for older residents to volunteer, to socialise and to meet friends, therefore tackling isolation and reducing loneliness.



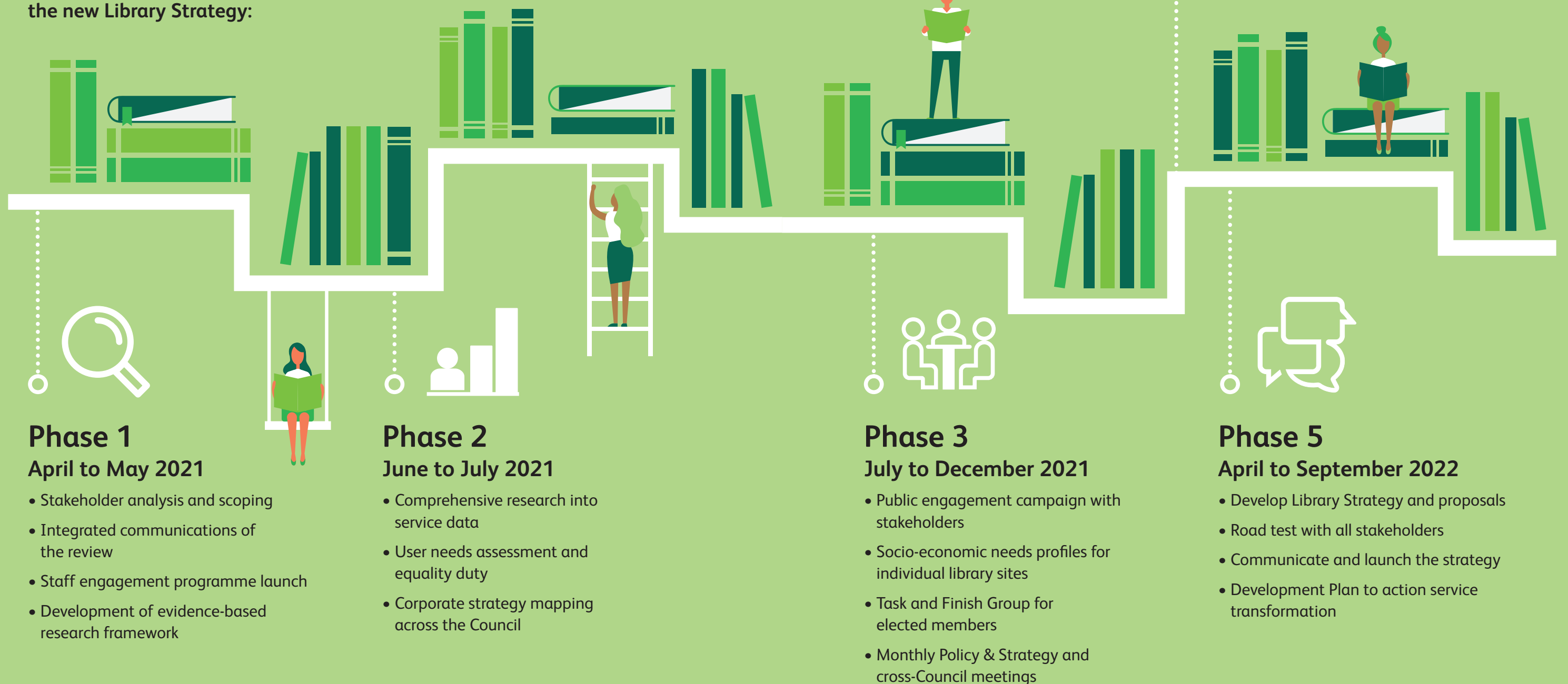


“Offer more interactive events and workshops for children and young people.”

4. Roadmap

The new Library Strategy is rooted in an evidence-based research framework that will help us align around our common purpose and work towards shared goals. It will help us be bolder, take informed risks and demonstrate value. In developing the new strategy, we have considered all those who contribute to the library service across the Council, our residents and the community sector.

This roadmap shows how we developed the new Library Strategy:



Phase 1

April to May 2021

- Stakeholder analysis and scoping
- Integrated communications of the review
- Staff engagement programme launch
- Development of evidence-based research framework

Phase 2

June to July 2021

- Comprehensive research into service data
- User needs assessment and equality duty
- Corporate strategy mapping across the Council

Phase 3

July to December 2021

- Public engagement campaign with stakeholders
- Socio-economic needs profiles for individual library sites
- Task and Finish Group for elected members
- Monthly Policy & Strategy and cross-Council meetings

Phase 5

April to September 2022

- Develop Library Strategy and proposals
- Road test with all stakeholders
- Communicate and launch the strategy
- Development Plan to action service transformation

Phase 4

January to March 2022

- Develop the Libraries Outcomes Framework (Universal Library Offer)
- Benchmarking service operations
- Service innovation and pilot programme launch



5. The vision

Our Libraries

Our vision is that our libraries innovate and succeed in order to:

- Help fulfil the potential of every person in Hackney
- Put our Libraries Service at the heart of the cultural life in the borough
- Provide an effective, connected and impactful service that meets user's individual needs in a timely and relevant way
- Meet the requirements of our user's needs through investment in technology
- Encourage more local people to take up a diverse range of our services and support

Our mission is:

- To enable innovation and support literacy and lifelong learning wherever you are on your journey
- To provide relevant physical and online spaces that give people what they want and need
- To support the cultural development of individuals and the health and wellbeing of local people
- To be a home for creativity and ideas that can enrich local economies and employment opportunities, and inspire communities

Hackney Library Services outcomes framework

To ensure that the service meets the outcomes of a comprehensive and efficient service, the Universal Library Offer framework was used as a local strategic tool to support recommendations for the new Library strategy. Insight from residents, library staff and cross-Council stakeholders was consolidated to create a new set of outcomes for Hackney's library service.

How we are going to achieve our new vision:

What connects our library staff is the Council's organisational values, which have been aligned with the new approach for our Libraries Service. It emphasises the unique role of Council-funded and supported culture in our recovery from the pandemic. It delivers a library service that has long-term outcomes for residents and makes commitments that are underpinned by four ambitions:



Inspirational and proactive



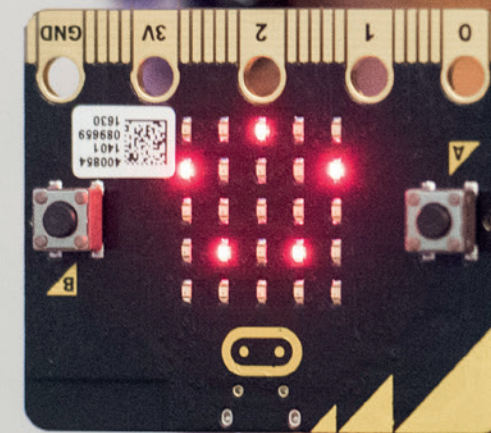
Ambitious and pioneering



Relevant and open



Nurturing and inclusive



5.1 Ambition 1 – Inspirational and proactive

Outcomes

We will increase reading and literacy by:

Providing access to a wider range of books and reading materials that meet the needs of all our communities

Supporting more families and adults to build and sustain reading habits

Supporting more functional literacy through reading for pleasure and learning

Increasing scale and diversity of demand for local writers and authors

Our commitments:

- To deliver more reading activities, homework clubs and groups for families, and create spaces for reading for pleasure
- To promote local writers and work with local bookshops
- To continue to develop and promote the digital library offer for those who prefer to access the online library facility
- To increase effectiveness of spending, which will increase the variety of stock and meet the different needs of library users

Outcomes

We will enable cultural and creative enrichment by:

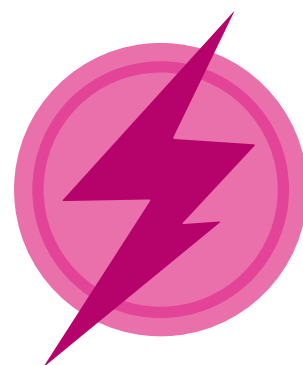
Increasing resident access to and participation in Hackney's creative and cultural outputs and initiatives

Using cultural partnerships to reduce barriers to cultural and creative education and careers

Providing access to a variety of arts and cultural experiences that celebrate the cultural heritage of local people

Our commitments:

- To create a programme of high-quality cultural activities in partnership with the local cultural and creative industries sector
- To join up Council-supported programmes between arts, heritage and libraries to provide a wider range of activities
- To provide suitable exhibition and performance spaces across libraries to celebrate the local heritage of all our communities
- To increase partnership work with schools and the music service to promote pathways into the cultural and creative industries



5.2 Ambition 2 – Ambitious and pioneering

Outcomes

We will support the Council's corporate priorities by:

Providing a platform for public services to join-up and cross-refer

Being a channel (digital and physical) to build and maintain trust in the Council

Offering locations where services can reach target groups and provide customer service that makes every contact count

Providing a route to educate and inform residents about channel shift, and provide skills and knowledge

Being a channel to maintain relational interactions with residents as others become transactional

Our commitments:

- To increase our partnerships to offer support and advice thereby extending the reach of our services to more vulnerable residents
- To work with Adult Social Care, Public Health, Voluntary and Community Sector, Housing and Customer Services to provide a range of information, advice and guidance services for residents
- To create a consistent brand and marketing campaign, and improve wayfinding for all libraries
- To develop the capital redesign of library spaces to accommodate community hub activities and co-location of services
- To strengthen the link between libraries and services for families and contribute to localised activities

Outcomes

We will enable greater prosperity and thriving communities by:

Providing routes to skills and qualifications which support employability

Creating access for microbusinesses/self-employed to space, resources, networks and contribute towards economic development

Increasing access to employment and job opportunities

Providing routes through which information, advice and guidance services can reach in-need groups

Our commitments:

- To improve study space and stock for young people and provide relevant activities that promote pathways and skills for employment
- To work with the Adult Learning Service and introduce new services in libraries that meet requirements identified in The Skills for Londoners Strategy and Framework such as building functional skills through formal and informal learning
- To introduce library apprenticeships and work with Hackney Works and external partners to strengthen links for employment advice
- To provide affordable meeting room and work spaces for local people to network including careers advice, enterprising or charitable work



5.3 Ambition 3 – Relevant and open

Outcomes

We will improve digital access and literacy by:
Providing digital skills - higher level for employability and progression
Providing digital skills – basic level for everyday essentials
Creating accessibility solutions for sensory impairments and physical disabilities
Providing digital access – to higher cost digital resources
Providing digital access – to PCs, printing, internet for those with low economic means

Our commitments:

- To gather cross-Council insight and market research on the digital skills and training needs to increase employability for residents
- To create lifelong learning hubs in libraries that are fit-for-purpose for all abilities and to provide opportunities for independent learning through the use of makerspaces
- To provide digital support to help people develop IT skills, expand reach into the community and support the Digital Buddies scheme to tackle digital exclusion
- To invest in high-quality digital resources and internet access, and find solutions for assistive tech that can support customers with impairments

Outcomes

We will help everyone achieve their full potential by:
Providing a network of adult learning settings with on-site access to resources and study space
Actively reaching households of greatest need to increase their use of library resources
Providing safe, good, quality, study space for young people especially KS4/5, and for further education
Supporting culture of lifelong learning for wellbeing and opportunity routes

Our commitments:

- To extend the range of affordable skills-based classes by working in partnership with Adult Learning Services and the Voluntary and Community Sector
- To increase the availability of study space in every library and to provide homework clubs
- To consult and coproduce new activities in libraries with library users and non-users
- To develop a marketing and evaluation strategy with key partners to increase reach into households of greatest need



5.4 Ambition 4 – Nurturing and inclusive

Outcomes

We will support stronger and more resilient communities by:
Providing access to free, safe, welcoming and trusted 'indoor public realm'
Establishing library principles of neutral, trusted information builds well-informed borough
Promoting library use by all demographics to create community cohesion, acceptance and belonging
Developing libraries provision, space and resources to learn about and discuss decarbonisation

Our commitments:

- To remain responsive to changing community needs by increasing volunteer involvement and involving residents
- To develop our libraries as community hubs, bringing suitable partners together and make library services more visible to underrepresented communities
- To create first class library spaces that offer quiet places for study and vibrant spaces for community hub activities
- To model good environmental practice through our buildings and supplier choices, and take action around environmental issues

Outcomes

We will encourage healthier and happier lives by:
Promoting the preventative role of library activities – socialisation, maintaining routine, enrichment
Providing self-help resources (physical, digital) and structured health and wellbeing resources
Creating an affordable space in trusted settings for community groups and community-led activities
Delivering a vibrant Community Library service – mobile distribution of bookstock by library officers for housebound residents, in care homes, hospices and hospitals

Our commitments:

- To promote the preventative role of our libraries, supporting residents to keep well and independent by tackling loneliness and social isolation
- To create a health and wellbeing offer in partnership with Public Health Services, to support individuals to access health information and make a referral as required
- To provide Adult Social Care Services with information about what's on in libraries to support individuals
- To provide support and training for library staff to feel confident to be able to raise a safeguarding concern

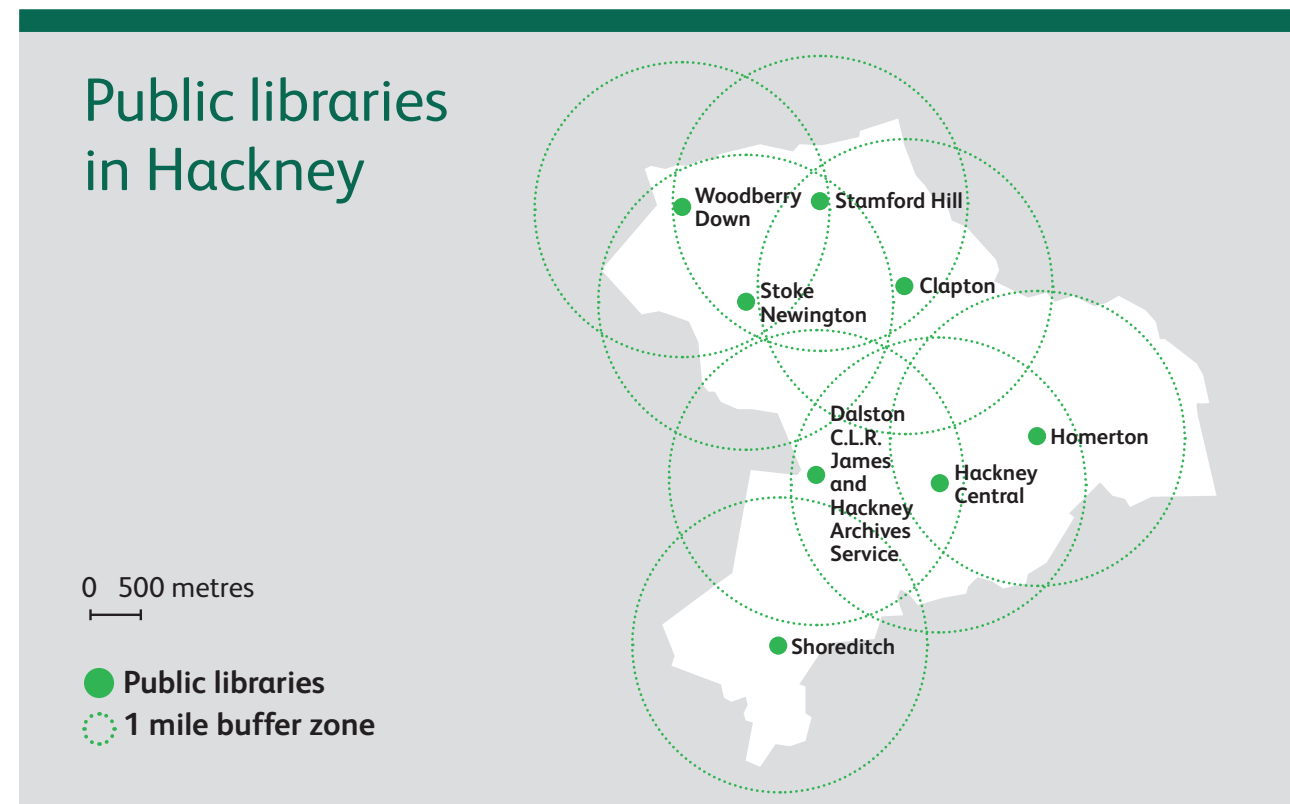


“I would like to meet more of my neighbours and interact with the community more...”



6. Key facts about Hackney Libraries Service

Hackney has eight libraries – its membership is open to anyone and allows customers to borrow stock and to use the computers.



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Dalston C.L.R. James Library opened in 2012 and houses the Hackney Archives Service. The Woodberry Down Library is based at the Redmond Centre and has been operated by volunteers since its opening in 2007.

A Community Library Service, based in Stoke Newington Library, is offered to residents who are housebound or in hospital. The Service also makes regular deliveries to the local hospice and hostels within the borough as well as maintaining collections of stock in 34 nurseries and 41 residential homes.

As well as a delivery to residents every four weeks, the Service provides information on a variety of Council services, runs a telephone reading group and performs a safeguarding role to its customers.

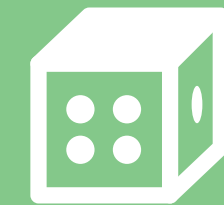
Hackney Libraries are a member of the Libraries Consortium which allows customers to order library stock from other library authorities which are members. Being a member of this Consortium allows the Service to purchase certain products at a cheaper rate due to economies of scale.

Services at all libraries



Under 5s

- Storytime sessions
- Baby rhyme time
- Bookstart packs
- Weekly toy libraries



5-12 year olds

- Chatterbooks reading groups
- Board game clubs
- School holiday activities
- Summer reading challenge
- Creative writing sessions



Teens

- Revision zones
- Use of computers
- Online info resources
- Reading groups
- Work experience and placements



Computers

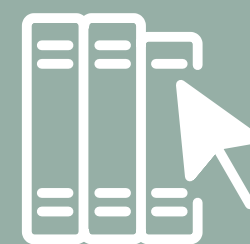
- 1 hour slots for adults
- 30 minutes for children
- Slots can be extended daily

Key facts



Network

- 8 public libraries
- The Community Library Service issued **80,519** stock items during 2019–20
- 24 hours digital library



Free e-lending

- 26,430** customer downloads in 2019–20:
- 19,570 ebooks
 - 15,252 eaudio books
 - 56,659 emagazines
- 55,883** customer downloads in 2020–21:
- 43,397 ebooks
 - 51,659 eaudio books
 - 64,039 emagazines



Library visits

- 43% of residents used the library service in 2019–20
- **1,484,665** physical and **652,145** virtual visits a year in 2019–20
- **119,153** members in 2019–20
- **1,484,665** annual visits in 2019–20
- **802** users of the Community Library Service in 2019–20



Digital resources

- **422,321** hours of public IT use (hours on library computers) in 2019–20
- Free WiFi in every static library
- **652,145** website visits
- 84% average PC use in 2019–20
- **9,587** PC hours/wk in 2019–20
- **261** PC tuitions



Finance

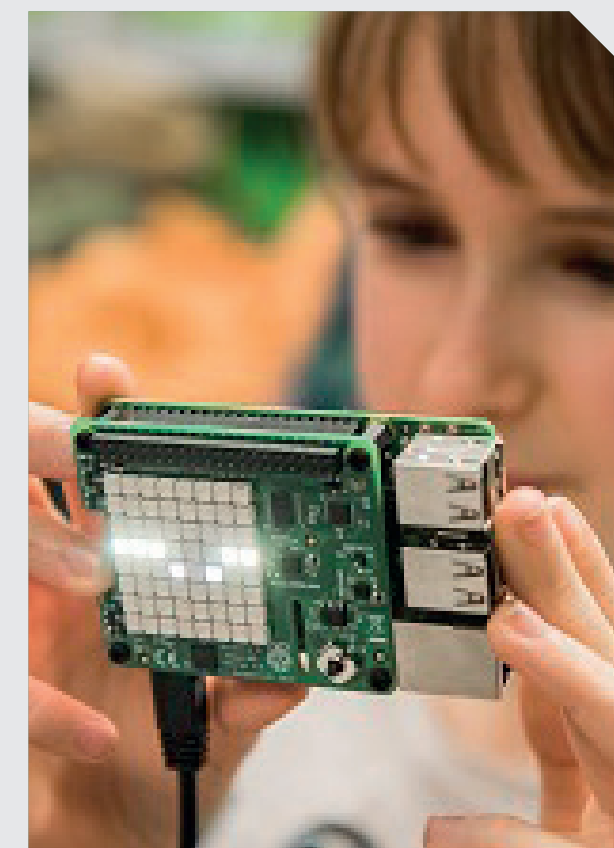
- In 2019–20, Library service expenditure was **£5,840,464*** per year and income **£158,008*** income
- **82** full time equivalent staff
- **Over 2,910** hours of volunteer support at Woodberry Down Library
- **£292,919** spent on service buildings improvements in 2019–20

* According to CIPFA/accounts



Books & reading stock

- **793,269** items loaned in 2019–20 (library issues) and **198,347** in 2020–21
- **638,863** loans and **91,481** digital loans in 2019–20 due to COVID-19 and **166,728** in 2020–21
- **40,175** CD issues in 2019–20
- **14,082** audiobook issues in 2019–20





“Libraries are storehouses of knowledge... they can also be a place that engenders a sense of community and belonging.”



7. Local and national context

In order to consider how our libraries in Hackney can have the best future, the Libraries Review had to consider local and national issues affecting the library service as well as socio-economic needs of users and non-users.



7.1 Local strategies

The Council delivered a strategic mapping exercise which brings together the strategic plans for libraries with the corporate plan and priorities across the Council. A presentation has been developed that looks at the main plans and strategies, summarises their key objectives and highlights the potential ways in which a refreshed Libraries Service might help achieve them. The ideas were generated in the main through a series of discussions with strategic lead officers across the Council. The work also includes considerations for libraries in relation to the impact of the pandemic, the financial context, the cyberattack and new ways of working and leading. The three key strategies related to the Libraries Strategy amongst others are as follows:

The Mayor's Priorities 2022–2026

In May, 2022 Philip Glanville was reelected to Mayor of Hackney with the following priorities:

For a Fairer, Safer Hackney

We will tackle inequality through poverty reduction, and anti-racism, providing more Council homes as we improve standards of our existing homes, and creating pathways into decent jobs. We will improve our customer services. We will create safe, vibrant, and successful town centres and neighbourhoods and foster strong, cohesive communities and a more inclusive economy.

For a Greener, Healthier Hackney

We will continue to lead the way in the fight against climate change, working towards a net zero Hackney, with cleaner air, less motor traffic, and more liveable neighbourhoods. We will transform adult and children's social care, tackle health inequalities and continue to support, value, and give voice to our older and disabled residents.

For every child in Hackney

We will work to ensure every child and young person in Hackney has the best start in life; shaping a more inclusive and high performing education system, maintaining our early years and youth services, keeping children safe and invest in their mental health and well being, providing access to outstanding play, culture, and sport, and opportunities; tackling child poverty, and supporting those families who need us most.

Manifesto Commitments relating to libraries

The Mayor's 2022–2026 manifesto makes a commitment to the borough's eight libraries and proposes to retain, and in many instances to improve, Hackney's libraries in order to deliver a fairer, safer and more sustainable Hackney and celebrate the heart of Hackney through our Libraries Service. The Mayoral manifesto pledge is to act on the outcomes of this review, in which thousands of residents told the Council that they valued libraries.

The commitment includes developing a Libraries Plan that will create a great network of library hubs: places of public and open access; places where arts, learning, culture, work and play can come together; libraries that are there for everyone in each neighbourhood of our borough.

Corporate Plan 2020 and beyond

Following the outbreak of the pandemic and its impacts on Hackney's diverse communities, the Council refreshed its Corporate Plan with seven key objectives:

Fairer	Safer	Greener
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poverty reduction 2. Rebuilding an inclusive economy 3. Lasting solutions to London's housing crisis and homelessness 4. Supporting children and families to thrive 5. Community wellbeing and tackling health inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Reducing harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Responding to the climate emergency

We are currently developing a new Strategic Plan for 2022–26 to reflect the current Mayoral priorities and manifesto commitments.

Community Strategy

The Community Strategy sets out a 10-year, shared vision for the borough and five priorities for collective action.

1. A borough where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life and the whole community can benefit from growth
2. A borough where residents and local businesses fulfil their potential and everyone enjoys the benefits of increased local prosperity and contributes to community life
3. A greener and environmentally sustainable community that is prepared for the future
4. An open, cohesive, safer and supportive community
5. A borough with healthy, active and independent residents

Considerations for libraries

- How can we use libraries to bring communities together?
- Can we use major housing, transport or town centre development to enhance our library spaces?
- How can we use the libraries to promote lifelong learning and access to good quality, skilled employment?
- How can libraries improve links with other local institutions like children's centres, schools, health services, neighbourhood forums and community organisations?
- What more can libraries do to help businesses develop and grow?
- Can libraries help create a greater sense of safety – e.g. enabling people to report crime safely?

The Arts and Cultural Strategy 2022–2026

The Council's ambition is to create joint delivery of this strategy across arts and culture, heritage and libraries services so that communities can reap the benefits from engaging with Council-funded and supported culture.



The strategy aims to support and develop the unique opportunities for Hackney residents and the local economy to benefit from Hackney's cultural sector, which includes world class venues, grass roots, community-led organisations and multiple creative workspaces, to deliver the following cultural priorities:

1. Community cohesion
2. Economic dividend
3. Employment dividend
4. Health dividend
5. Education dividend

7.2 Local population needs

Analysis of local socio-economic needs

A user needs assessment was undertaken by the Council's National Management Trainees to complement the findings from the Hackney usage data report. The report is available upon request and provides an assessment of socio-economic need in the vicinity of each library and for the borough as a whole. These individual library profiles and heat maps including book borrowers' full postcodes matched to local areas of need and user patterns for each library have been made available in order to inform future directions for the service.

The profiles created for each library map relevant local services and considerations including:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations and Find Support Services
- Hackney Council funded organisations
- Primary and secondary schools
- Library services available at the branch
- Ward characteristics
- Library user profiles including age, ethnicity and location
- Considerations for future work

The data helps the Libraries Service to understand the needs and profiles of the different communities within Hackney, and aids in identifying what needs it should take into account when putting forward plans for an improved and more sustainable service. The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales.

In the summer of 2022, the Government aims to publish the first results from the census taken in 2021. The local library profiles will be compared and updated as part of the new results.

Hackney borough profile

The following summary provides a profile of the London Borough of Hackney and the people living and working across the 21 local wards.



Hackney's population is estimated at 281,100 people.

- Hackney is a relatively young borough with a quarter of its population under 20. The proportion of residents between 20–29 years old has grown in the last ten years and now stands at just under 25%. People aged over 55 make up only 15% of the population.
- Hackney is a culturally diverse area, with significant 'Other White', Black and Turkish/Kurdish communities. A large Charedi Jewish community is concentrated in the north-east of the borough and is growing.
- People from Australia, the US and Western European countries like Spain, France and Italy make up the largest groups who have recently come to live in Hackney from abroad.
- Just over a third of Hackney's residents are Christian. This is a lower percentage than the London and England averages. Hackney has significantly more people of the Jewish and Muslim faiths, and a higher proportion of people with no religion and those who did not state a religion.
- In 2011, 14.5% of Hackney residents said they were disabled or had a long-term limiting illness.

- Nine-out-of-10 Hackney residents say that Hackney is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Hackney's diversity and multiculturalism are the main factors contributing to residents feeling proud of the borough. More than a third of Hackney residents were born outside the UK.
- Hackney's population is likely to grow to 294,300 people by 2028 and to 325,600 people by 2050. The borough is also a place of refuge and a home for people from other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan and Ukraine.



Health and wellbeing

- Life expectancy is increasing for men and women, and is now 79.6 years for men and 83.7 years for women. Life expectancy in Hackney is below the London average, especially for men.



Deprivation

- Hackney was the 22nd most-deprived local authority overall in England in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation; in 2015, it was ranked 11th, and in 2010 it was ranked second.
- Hackney is relatively more deprived in relation to barriers to housing services, income and living environment than its overall rank suggests, but generally less deprived than its overall ranking for crime, employment and health and significantly less deprived for education.



Education

- At GCSE, the average attainment eight point score per pupil in Hackney was 49.2 points, slightly lower than the London average of 49.7.



Economy

- Hackney has experienced rapid economic growth over the last decade. In 2019, Hackney hosted 22,560 businesses, a 13 % increase from 19,905 businesses in 2018.
- The March 2020 data shows a 8.5 % increase in the unemployment rates in Hackney which is slightly higher than London which saw a 7.4 % increase. The increase in unemployment can be attributed to the financial impact of the pandemic on businesses.



Housing

- The proportion of households who rent from a private landlord in Hackney has more than doubled in the past 10 years. Nearly a third of all households are now private renters.
- Nearly 45 % of all households in Hackney rent from a social landlord. They tend to have higher unemployment and lower average incomes than people living in other tenures.
- More than 13,000 additional new homes are expected to be built in the borough in the next 10 years. Development will be most heavily concentrated around Manor House and Dalston in the west; Hoxton and Shoreditch in the south; and Hackney Central and Hackney Wick in the east.



Environment and transport

- Hackney is the third-most densely populated borough in London, but it is also one of the greenest in inner London with 58 parks and green spaces, 27 of which have been awarded the Green Flag quality mark.



Crime and community safety

- Crime fell by over a third between 2003 and 2015 (more than 13,000 fewer victims of crime). Crime levels have since increased by a third since 2015. Crime in Hackney is now higher than in other inner-London boroughs with similar social and economic characteristics.



Growth and change

- Significant growth is expected in the north-west of the borough, centred on the regeneration of the Woodberry Down Estate; and in Shoreditch in the south of the borough.



Patterns of library use

The Libraries Service review produced a Hackney user report. The usage data was gathered by the organisation Shared Intelligence which was given the brief to look at patterns in library use in the London Borough of Hackney, to make comparisons with other services and national trends, and to draw out issues relevant to the strategic review of Hackney libraries.

Data was collected from the Library Management System (LMS), public library profiles from Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Active Lives Survey, and the analysis is based on data available, in the majority, over 2019/20.

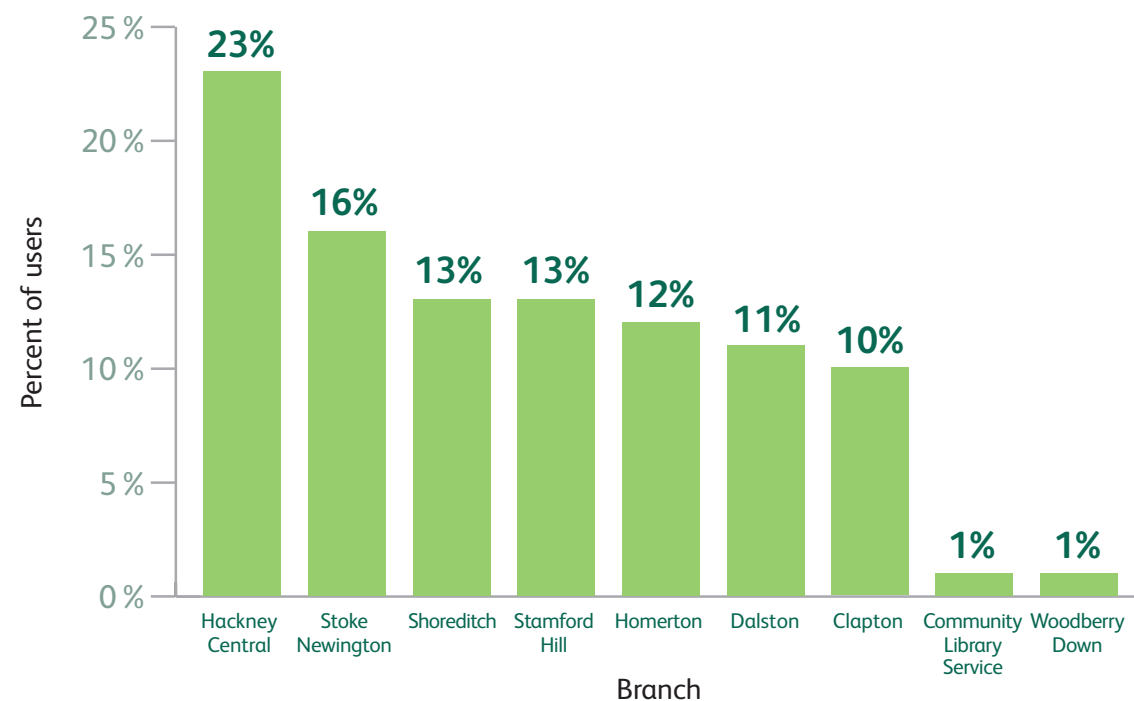
The overall picture of library use in Hackney is fairly positive and points to a service which is performing above average, both nationally and in comparison with its statistical neighbours. The Libraries Service continues to have significant reach: 43 % of the population used the service in 2019/20 (equivalent to 119,153 residents).

Along with having a higher revenue expenditure than its statistical neighbours, Hackney also performs above average when it comes to visits for library purposes and active borrowers.

The two largest libraries, Hackney Central and Dalston CLR James Library, are by far the most used libraries due to their central locations in town centres with high footfall. Active users by branch for 2019/20 show that one library branch (Hackney Central) makes up a large proportion (23 %) of all users within the borough, whilst the area with the highest level of deprivation (Woodberry Down) only accounts for 1 % of active users.

There is a need to ensure all branches are being better utilised to fully exploit the services and assets on offer and in order to reach more of those who stand to benefit most. One measure of this would be to say that the most deprived areas in Hackney should become the areas with the highest library use.

Proportion of active users by branch, Hackney LMS 2010–20



Junior vs adult lending

In Hackney, although many older adults use libraries, service reach among children and young people is disproportionately high compared to their share of the overall population. Under-18s in Hackney account for less than a quarter of the total population (23 %) but total library issues of junior items account for 52 % of all loans within the borough. Library loans of junior stock (i.e. books kept in the junior sections, and which are predominantly borrowed for use by children) account for 39 % of all lending stock, which is 16 % higher than the population make-up for the demographic.

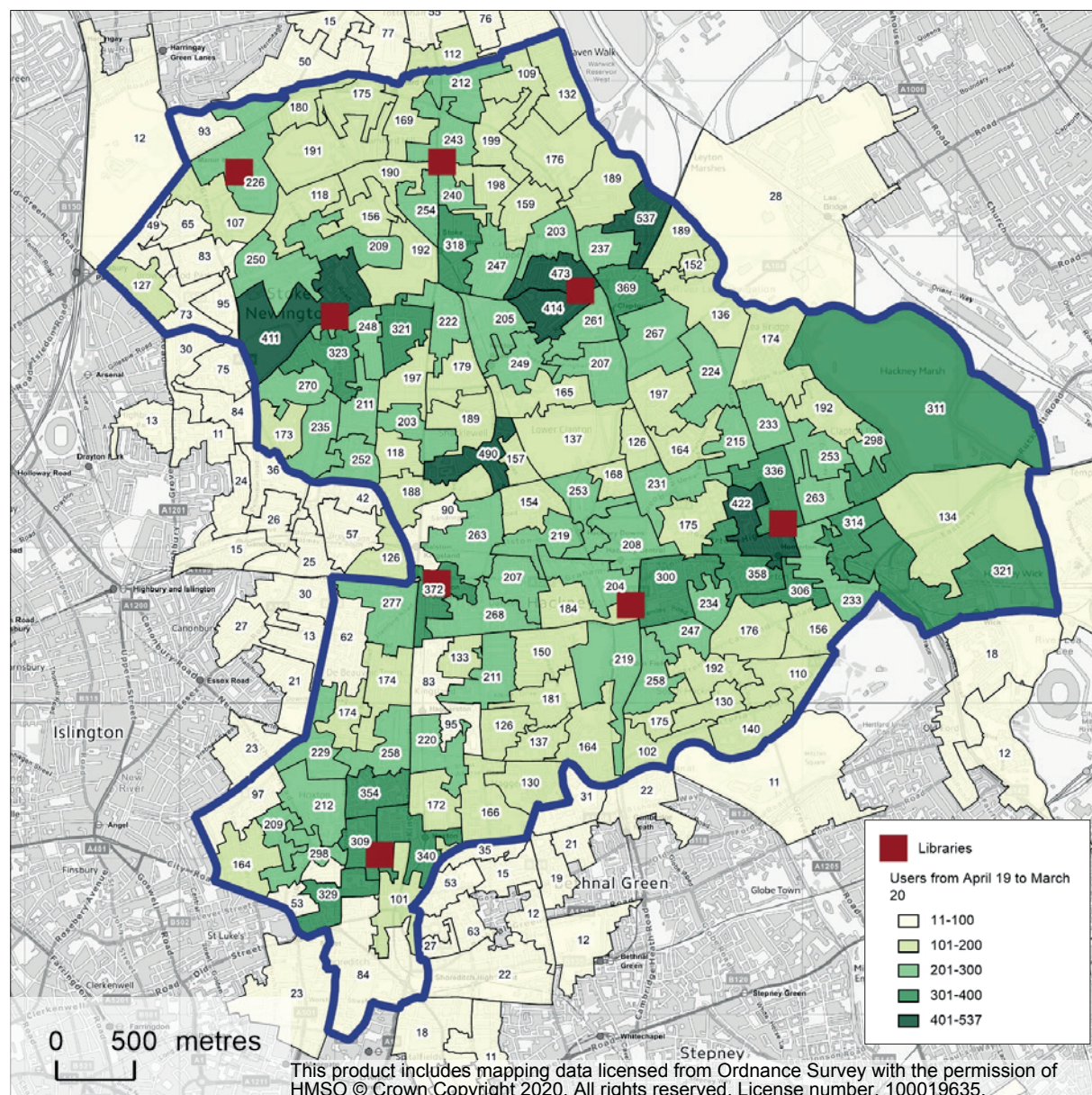


Geographic analysis

Geographic patterns of library use were based on data taken from the library service's user records known as the Library Management System (LMS). Although this provides a detailed picture of user demographics and enables us to build heat-maps showing the geographic distribution of users, LMS data cannot show total individual users. This is because LMS data relies on individuals having their library cards scanned or 'blipped' when they borrow a lending item. LMS data does not capture instances when individuals participate in activities such as rhyme times, visiting to read without borrowing, studying, or using a computer or Wi-Fi.

The socio-economic analysis of people that hold a library card and are active users of the library service in 2019–20 shows that a large proportion of library users in Hackney are from the most deprived areas. The proportion of these users currently matches with the deprivation breakdown within the borough. Because individuals from more deprived areas are likely to benefit more from library services, in conclusion there is a need to engage further with users from these areas.

Map of library users in Hackney



This map shows the areas with the highest concentration of Library users in Hackney. Mid 09 population estimates: Office for National Statistics.

The research suggests overall conclusions across wards and libraries

- Hackney is in the top half of the range for total visits when compared nationally, it has the 11th highest number of visits per 1,000 population in the country.
- Hackney experienced a 10 per cent fall in the number of library visits in 2019–20 with the number of visits in 2018–19.
- Less male than female users of libraries visit Hackney’s libraries based on active membership.
- Majority of wards have higher than average numbers of over 65s living alone indicating programmes to reduce social isolation and advice.
- Junior borrowers are making more frequent use of the libraries than there are in the overall Hackney population.
- Almost 20% of Hackney residents over 16 years old have no qualification according to the 2011 Census. Work can be done to improve educational attainment for young adults, promotion of training, distribution of educational materials and free resources.
- Council tenants were more likely to access digital resources or use the library to study. Council leaseholders were more likely to bring children to the library.

7.3 National and wider context

Legal requirements and statutory duty

Public libraries are a statutory service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Act requires library authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient service for people who live, work or study within the authority area. In Hackney, there are eight libraries situated within one mile walking distance for all residents with good opening hours from Monday to Saturday at all library sites and Sunday openings in three libraries.

Libraries Connected

Libraries Connected advocates a set of core services embraced by 90% of library services which are reading, information, digital, health, learning and culture under the universal offer.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England’s four priority areas for development are:

- Place the library as the hub of the community.
- Make the most of digital technology and creative media.
- Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable.
- Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries.

Tackling inequality and UNESCO Public Library Manifesto

- Libraries are a gateway to knowledge
- Support the development of informed and educated people as the basis for freedom, prosperity, and the development of society
- To provide services responding to the needs of all the community – including those in disadvantaged or difficult situations.

“Libraries are a space for academic inquiry and a meeting point.”



8. Future needs

In July 2021 we launched an extensive libraries conversation with our residents, including current users and those that don't use libraries, to hear what those who use the service and those who do not use the service have to say – what areas of the service they value and where we can make improvements.

More than 8,500 respondents were engaged in our public engagement programme which included surveys, focus groups, schools workshops, community interviews and street engagement. A separate public engagement report is available on our website at www.hackney.gov.uk/libraries

Top three reasons for all respondents to use libraries were:

1. Reading and literacy
2. Creative and cultural enrichment
3. Digital access and study/workspace.



Overall a positive response to the borough's libraries

Residents are 'overall satisfied' with the service when asked about access to library buildings, availability and range of books, and knowledge and friendliness of staff. Regular library users visit the library three-to-four times per month to borrow books and browse, access children's books and activities, and use the library for study or work space. A total of 42% of Council tenants and leaseholders use library services at least once a year. Community groups and businesses valued libraries and their

role as a non-judgmental community venue, providing a wide-ranging offer and access to digital resources. Children in Hackney schools said their local libraries are favourite places to go – alongside theatres, parks and cinemas – and were a valued place away from home.



Access to good quality collections of books and reading materials

Books and reading material are still the most important thing about our libraries. Library users suggested making improvements to book stock by having a wider range of books, stocking books in more languages, and with more popular titles.



Extended opening hours to library spaces

Daytime opening hours from 9am–5pm were most popular in the borough-wide survey, followed by evenings 5pm–10pm, and weekends. Fewer people would like access in the mornings. Adults, as well as young people, stated they would like longer opening hours in the evening. In our consultation with the Hackney Young Futures Commission, young people requested longer opening hours to access study and learning spaces in their local libraries.



Improved digital access, support services and business needs

Respondents want improvements to internet speed and IT services at libraries. Council tenants and leaseholders use library space for printing, photocopying and scanning, in addition to studying and bringing children to the library. Small businesses, community groups and freelancers value the availability and low-cost access to digital resources and meeting rooms. The majority of business respondents would pay a value-for-money fee for a library membership to use meeting spaces that offer high speed WiFi and digital resources, quiet space, easy booking access and refreshments.



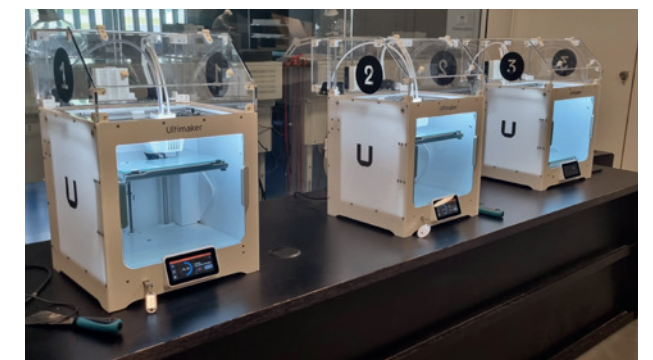
Libraries as culture and community hubs

All stakeholders were keen to attend more interactive, cultural events and arts exhibitions for children, young people and adults. Cultural organisations want to offer a variety of experiences that celebrate the cultural heritage of local people and reduce barriers to creative education. Library users of all ages wanted to make libraries community hubs and create more comfortable spaces to socialise and network. Provision of reasonably priced cafes and bookshops were also popular suggestions by residents.



Better communication and promotion of future library services

Residents want a reminder of services provided at libraries to encourage use and suggest better promotion and use of notice boards outside of opening hours. The Council should promote campaigns via targeted newsletters for ethnic groups and e-information to all residents on a regular basis. Non-users suggested having more cultural events, including events with authors, artists and writers, to bring in new people to the library.



Future inspiration from Oodi – the world's best library in Finland.



“Networking opportunities to meet, collaborate and improve community cohesion.”

9. Internal and external factors

The Mayor's 2022–26 Manifesto makes a commitment to the borough's eight libraries and proposes to retain, and in many instances to improve, Hackney's libraries in order to deliver a fairer, safer and more sustainable Hackney and celebrate the heart of Hackney through our Libraries Service.

The Libraries Service in Hackney will look towards increasing the variety of its offer – whether that is physical, digital or outreach into the community. The Council will support the service improvements by joining up culture, heritage, libraries and venues, under one strategic service plan, that focuses on how to shape those services more effectively, rethink what our services can offer together, and ensure we have the right services in the right places.

The Libraries Service Review used the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) Benchmarking Framework and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis for Hackney's Libraries Service as tools to examine how the service compared with those in other boroughs and to identify the best performers and learn from them. It focused on potential efficiencies, the use of technology, the service offer, marketing, service take-up, the staffing structure and the physical library network.

Research on good practice was undertaken further afield, including case studies in Helsinki, Finland and conversations with Libraries Connected, Arts Council England, DCMS, and CILIP – the library and information association. The benchmarking included comparisons with Waltham Forest, Haringey, Merton, Redbridge, Kingston, Newham, Sutton, Brighton and Tower Hamlets using a variety of performance data and one-to-one interviews, visits and library service away days. It enabled Hackney to identify significant differences in performance or costs and establish the reasons for them.

The self-assessment stimulated thinking on what Hackney's Libraries Service has achieved and the continual improvement that should lead to an excellent service. The Libraries Review identified some key areas that would establish the Libraries Service as forward-looking and outstanding in terms of provision for local people and communities. Consequently, there are internal and external factors that require development. These are as follows:



Internal factors

- Digital skills, IT infrastructure and access to technology to enhance user experience.
- Capability, capacity and skills of library staff to adapt to new roles and contexts to achieve better outcomes for communities.
- Organisational culture, leadership and workforce development needs.
- Effective communication with the public, and building services that respond to need.
- Provide greater value-for-money by modernising service delivery – especially operational and development functions within the service.

External factors

- Financial support, external income and capital investment to protect and develop library spaces and fund activities within them.
- Changing nature of libraries – becoming more hybrid and flexible in opening hours and the need to diversify and co-locate its service offer.
- Relationships with decision-makers and trade unions to think 'Libraries First' and 'Digital First'.
- Strength of partnerships with a wide range of key stakeholders to enhance user satisfaction and increase footfall.
- Desire for libraries to demonstrate their positive environmental impact and what it means to be an environmentally friendly library service.



“I feel epic when I read.”



10. Implementation of the strategy

Service planning and improvement

To achieve an effective and connected Libraries Service, the Council has to put in place a programme of short, medium and long-term goals. Without front-loading digital transformation and workforce redevelopment, it is unlikely that the strategy will achieve its goals to meet current and future customer needs.

Long-term, the new vision will only be achieved if the right conditions, or 'enablers' are put in place. Those conditions might include ideas for new types of service – or simply doing more of what is already being done. They also include new staffing resources and new skills and begin to point to what the borough's libraries must become in the future.

The strategic enablers set out in the table below are drawn from the ideas and suggestions that have emerged from workshops involving library staff and cross-Council colleagues. These will be built into the future service development and quality assurance for all libraries:



Effectiveness and financial sustainability

Diversify and increase income, including attracting commissioning, grant funding and commercial income and further explore alternative trust models to make the library service sustainable into the future. Bring expenditure on running costs and staffing in line with comparator authorities by reviewing the workforce needs and making better use of resources across the service.



People/workforce

Encourage leadership at all levels and develop the workforce in the context of the post-Covid and post-digital world. Review the roles of library staff at all levels, ensuring that the jobs are relevant to the role of libraries now and in the future and that they provide continuing professional development opportunities as part of the Council's learning organisation ethos. Share the new vision, develop standards and a workforce development plan to ensure that library staff have the skills to meet our future challenges in a changing workplace. Priorities should focus on developing a fully engaged workforce with high levels of morale, attracting the best people to deliver the best services, growing our local workforce and reflecting the residents the Council serves.



Infrastructure

Provide a core library offer that will retain a very high level of quality and accessibility to all residents and empower those with the greatest needs. Develop robust processes for monitoring performance and work towards achieving Arts Council's new Libraries Accreditation. Develop the options for co-location of Council services and capital investment plans that align with corporate priorities and local regeneration plans to protect and develop cultural assets.

Develop safe and creative library spaces as community hubs, particularly the role of libraries as social and cultural centres, learning and digital hubs and economic enablers. Redesign library spaces that are inclusive, innovative and flexible to meet the changing needs of society in the future.



Digital transformation

Develop the ICT core infrastructure and improve digital resources to enable opportunities for learning, development, employment and creative activity especially for those without good access at home. Provide access to basic and higher-end digital resources and offer flexible spaces for training and digital skills. A list of key drivers are the provision of effective technology for local user needs, improved digital presence and engagement with online customers, new skills and approaches in the workforce, and digital inclusion for those most in need.



Network/partnership

Map stakeholders and develop effective partnerships with communities, businesses, schools and residents to co-produce activities that put the libraries at the heart of the cultural life in the borough – an improved community-led offer. Re-shape the library network to increase co-location and joint working with partners, enabling access to a range of services in library locations.



Communication and targeted marketing

Creating a clear, new vision and brand that is widely promoted with residents and partners. Improve communication and promotion of future library services by offering more cultural events that celebrate the local heritage of communities and better targeted marketing to all residents. Provide a more targeted service offer in the local branches by using the Libraries Review's evidence-based data to inform decision-making. Improve communication and promotion of future library services by enhancing traditional and digital communications methods and by offering more inclusive cultural events and targeted audience development and marketing to all residents. Provide a more targeted service offer in the local branches and increase the service offer to those in most need using evidence-based data to inform decision making. Create a clear, new vision and library strategy and roll out a refreshed brand and reputation of the service across all library sites.



Environmental sustainability

Hackney libraries are a key part of the circular economy, by their nature allowing residents to reduce consumption of large quantities of new books through its borrowing activity whilst ensuring the extraction of global natural resources are minimised. The Libraries Service’s environmental policy is in line with the Council’s Climate Action Plan to become net zero by 2040. All library sites will model good environmental practice through their buildings and supplier choices by following sustainable procurement commitments. Library managers will empower library staff and users to re-think their consumption and make space for inclusive discussions, education and action around climate emergency issues.



Monitoring our progress

Provide a core library offer that will retain a very high level of accessibility to everyone who lives, works and studies in Hackney and empower those with the greatest needs to improve their quality of life. Public libraries in England currently have no set standards to meet, however Hackney’s Libraries Service will build a development plan and work towards receiving the new Libraries Accreditation, launching in 2022–23, by Arts Council England. We will ensure that we clearly communicate the steps we will take to implement the strategy and work with library staff and the public to judge the impact and success of the strategy. We will run more frequent customer surveys to measure whether the aims we set ourselves were achieved. The Libraries service will share learning across the system and benchmark to make comparisons with other organisations, identifying the best performers and learning from them.



Tackling key inequalities

The Single Equality Scheme 2018–22 aims to tackle social and economic deprivation, address disadvantage amongst specific groups and promote cohesion through engagement, inclusive collections and cultural activities. All local libraries will continue to build their understanding of the local community and its needs, motivations and requirements of library services through analysis of user data, dialogue with users and the wider community. The service will ensure libraries are physically accessible and that the services within them have assistive technology for different impairments. The service will also contribute towards the preventive approach across the Council – promoting an inclusive leadership culture and ensuring workforce diversity at all levels.



Capital investment and review of assets

A review of assets will be followed by a capital investment programme to modernise spaces which will consider relevant refurbishment, redesign and new construction of library spaces across the library estate to deliver the new libraries strategy. Any redesign will need to carefully consider the zoning of quiet spaces and community hub spaces to provide for a wider range of activities and a more comfortable social environment for future users. Hackney Central and Dalston CLR James libraries provide a popular service offer and a suitable space that is used by many residents who travel to those branches from other neighbourhoods. Shoreditch and Clapton libraries underwent refurbishment in 2019/20 and are now transformed buildings with modern and flexible library spaces. Libraries in Homerton, Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington are in need of repair and modernisation and will be included in the ambition to deliver a capital improvement programme in the future. A review of the Woodberry Down Library, which is largely led by volunteers, will explore the feasibility of a new library provision as part of the Council’s regeneration programme in Woodberry Down, which began in 2007.



For further information please
go to Hackney Council's website:

 hackney.gov.uk/libraries