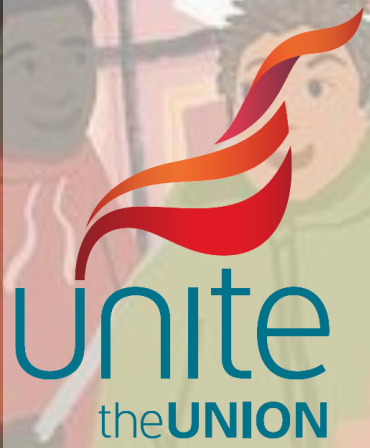


Future of Library Services: Strategy and Staffing Restructure



Background

Staff had limited opportunities to participate in the Libraries Review that also included the wider public consultation

The staff survey was heavily focused on operational problems and day-to-day issues, not staffing structure

Management did share themes from the Review with the unions before publishing the Libraries Strategy, and we are supportive of measures to increase usage (eg, improving connectivity, better focus on events)

The staff away day in July 2022 broadly explored service improvements and doing things differently

Crucially, all the relevant details - job cuts, grade and job changes - were not shared or even informally discussed before the formal consultation launched in Sept 2022

Restructure proposals

- Deleting 99 Libraries staff jobs
- Cutting 19 Full-Time Equivalent posts, equating to a third of all full-time staff; given the number of part-time staff within the service, this could be as many as 44 staff losing their jobs
- Whilst uplifting pay grade via new Library Officer post, they will all be expected to do supervisor-level tasks eg opening & closing libraries, cashing up etc
- Removal of set break times
- Library Managers moving away from being responsible for 1 site to instead covering up to 3 libraries, meaning in effect there won't be a manager present at all times
- Expecting officers to move between different sites, instead of currently assigned to a particular library
- New rotas to include mandatory regular Sunday working
- Further increasing the use of Relief staff
- Including security guards in minimum staffing numbers, despite them not being present during all opening hours

Workforce is older (69% over 45); female (66%); racially diverse (60% Black & Global Majority); 55% of affected UNISON members are Hackney residents themselves

	Library Relief workers	Zero-hours contracts	Permanent staff
Guaranteed hours	✗	✗	✓
Occupational Sick Pay	✗	✗	✓
Occupational Maternity Pay or Dependency Leave	✗	✗	✓
Protection by Grievance or anti-Bullying policies	✗	✓	✓
Redundancy Pay	✗	✓	✓
Protection from unfair dismissal	✗	✓	✓

Relief workers have frequently covered over 1,000 hours per month - equivalent of 8 full-time jobs. This highlights how the service is already understaffed and before the impact of cuts

Staff reaction

UNISON anonymously surveyed all staff within scope to which half responded; this showed:

- Colleague's main concerns were the job losses (94%), working below minimum staffing levels and the health & safety impacts (74%), lack of direct assimilation (74%), and inability to continue providing current service levels (57%)
- A universal feeling that the sums being cut were too much and not required at this time, with the £50K increase in senior management spend and now being recovered via additional staffing cuts proving particularly galling and unjustifiable
- They wanted to see staffing cuts avoided (75%), coupled with keeping the Scale 4 posts for job security (50%) and introducing a career grade system to allow for career development (55%)

Alternatives ideas put forward by the unions

- Introduce career or linked grades - offers development opportunities and pay progression whilst protecting existing jobs and staff
- Recruit to new development team posts in a first restructure phase
- Delay wider staffing restructure for suggested 12-18 months - allows usage to continue recovering from Covid and Cyber Attack, more informed of user numbers
- Run a pilot on reduced staffing numbers to see if sustainable and effective

In the interim, senior management could approve use of funds from the Council's General Fund Reserves (£168m at 31/3/2021, increase of £7m from previous year) to cover required corporate savings in the interim or protect the service from cuts

All alternatives have either been overlooked or dismissed out of hand without exploration or discussion

Stoke Newington Library refurbishment

Stoke Newington Library set for refurbishment

Hackney, 23 January 2020

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Stoke Newington Library is set to be fully renovated after Hackney Council's Cabinet pledged £4.5m to improve the well-used community facility.

The Grade II listed library, which was built in 1892, currently hosts a full range of library services, as well as the Council's Community Library Service, providing mobile book and DVD lending to residents who are unable to leave their home.

The renovation is aimed at restoring the library to its former glory and redesigning its layout so it can continue to provide quality library services to residents into the future. It is also hoped that the building's 1930s reference library will be opened up to residents as part of the renovation.

The Council's Cabinet agreed to fund the £4.5m refurbishment work at a meeting on Monday. Before the work begins, consultation with library users will take place to ensure that the plans meet their needs.

Multi-million pound makeover to Stoke Newington Library is part of strategy to ensure Hackney libraries are fit for future

Hackney, 26 October 2022

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A £4.4m investment into Stoke Newington Library is part of a new library strategy approved at a Cabinet meeting this week to modernise the borough's libraries service and ensure Hackney's libraries are flexible, innovative and inclusive spaces that cater to the needs of residents.

The renovation of Stoke Newington Library will see repairs made to the roof and the fabric of the Grade 2 listed building, which was built in 1892 and houses Stoke Newington's World War One memorial.

The work is part of a new library strategy focused on ensuring that Hackney libraries deliver a sustainable service that is fit for the modern digital world and accessible to all. The strategy approved at Monday's Cabinet meeting includes plans to:

- Introduce partnerships with local organisations and national reading agencies to increase support for reading and lifelong adult learning.
- Improve the provision of help and information for people seeking employment and training opportunities.
- Transform library spaces into local digital hubs with library staff trained in digital skills.
- Develop access to digital resources and study space for learners and young people with a view to piloting extended opening hours.
- Establish libraries as welcoming community hubs and warm spaces to support residents by providing advice and information in a comfortable environment.
- Offer residents activities that promote good health and provide information to make informed choices about their wellbeing.
- Establish the role of libraries in the cultural development of individuals by building creative and cohesive communities 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.
- Offer more activities for older residents to volunteer, socialise and meet friends, to help tackle isolation and reduce loneliness.

The four-year plan was adopted following a [borough-wide Libraries Review](#) launched in April 2021 in which more than 8,500 residents of all ages and backgrounds described what they would like to see their local library service deliver in the future.

Hackney Council Press Office
020 8356 3736

Email: press@hackney.gov.uk

Contact information

Hackney Council - general enquiry
Tel: 020 8356 3000
Email: info@hackney.gov.uk

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Multi-million pound makeover to Stoke Newington Library is part of strategy to ensure Hackney libraries are fit for future



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‘Absolute disgrace’: Protesters hit out at council plan to cut library jobs – with union set to vote on strike action

By Julia Gregory, Local Democracy Reporter | Tuesday 25 October 2022 at 18:41



Hackney Unison chair Brian Debus addresses protesters. Photograph: Julia Gregory

Potential job cuts in Hackney’s library service could have a “devastating impact”, campaigners have warned.

Protesters gathered outside the Town Hall this week, with Brian Debus, chair of Hackney Unison, urging councillors to pause a consultation over redundancies.

Debus said the union will ballot members for strike action.

Hackney Council is looking at cutting 76 roles, including weekend assistants, but will create 57 new jobs, putting some people on higher grades and increasing wages and training.

To: Phil Glanville, Mayor of Hackney

Save Hackney Library Services - stop the cuts!

 Campaign created by
Hackney UNISON branch 



Dear Mayor Glanville,

Hackney’s libraries are a vital and much-loved public asset. In an area of extreme inequality, libraries offer our citizens knowledge, empowerment and community.

But our libraries service isn’t just the buildings and books & materials they house - it’s run by caring and dedicated staff. It’s our staff that make sure the libraries open on time, run the events and offer help to those in need. Put simply, Hackney’s libraries are great because we have great staff.

This is now at risk with plans to cut a significant

2,592

of 3,000
signatures



Jo M. signed 10 hours ago
Gareth W. signed 14-12-2022

Sign the petition

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Postcode *

Country

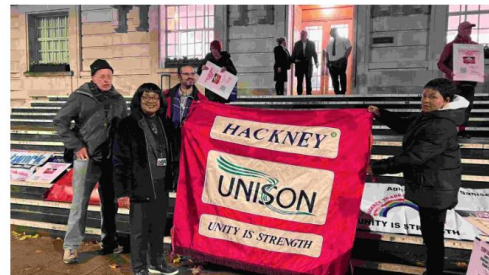
United Kingdom 

I want to be updated via email about this and other important Megaphone campaigns

- Yes, keep me informed via email
 No, I do not want to hear

Protests at Town Hall over Hackney plans to cut library staff

by [Melody Chan](#) / November 25, 2022



Diane Abbott, Matt Paul & fellow protestors outside the Town Hall. Pic: Melody Chan.

With a third of library staff warned that they face redundancy, supporters of Hackney libraries protested outside the Town Hall on Wednesday night to put pressure on councillors to readdress the cuts.

Around 2,500 people have signed a petition by [UNISON](#) to stop cuts to library staff; politicians.



The resident illustrator Francisco de la Mora shows his appreciation for the borough's public libraries, which are being closed or restructured under plans drafted by the council (see story below and page 2).

Town Hall defends plan to restructure libraries as unions vow to fight job cuts

Council proposals, designed to save £300,000 and protect libraries from closure, could lead to 19 jobs being scrapped

By Kate Murison-Bowie



Our resident illustrator Francisco de la Mora shows his appreciation for the borough's public libraries, which are facing a possible restructure under plans drafted by the council (see story below and page 2).



Home > NEWS > Job cuts will help fund Hackney libraries revamp, says Council

NEWS TOP STORY

Job cuts will help fund Hackney libraries revamp, says Council

By Kate Murison-Bowie · 17 November 2022

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Zoe Garbett and Tyrone Scott outside Dalston CLR James Library

Job cuts are to help fund Stoke Newington library's £4.4m revamp as part of Hackney Council's library strategy, prompting possible industrial action.

The council's plans involve cutting 76 jobs and creating 57 new roles that staff will have to reapply for. Funding the refurbishment with money saved from job cuts was not mentioned in the original plans proposed three years ago.

Hackney Unison, the trade union representing library workers, has this week entered a formal industrial dispute with Hackney council over the plans. UNISON have told *The Hackney Post* that they believe the Council's claims are false and intended to justify that the proposals will have a devastating impact on the service.

The union has also received more than 2,000 signatures on a

← Tweet



Cornershop ✓
@CornershopHQ

Of course we support #Hackney libraries. Regularly use #n16 library, v sad to see the building so dilapidated. Librarians seem dilapidated too, as they are #working harder than ever for the community #support #our #libraries they support us

HackneyUNISON @HackneyUNISON · 1d

Hi @CornershopHQ @TjinderSingh will you support our campaign? 🙌👏🙌

0:34 · 18 Nov 22 · Twitter for iPhone

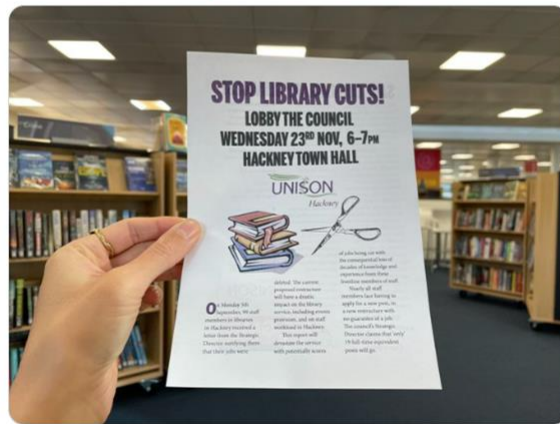


Received support from national and local library campaign groups from across the country, union branches and the Trades Union Congress, Hackney Labour Party activists and councillors



Leah Cowan
@leahacowan

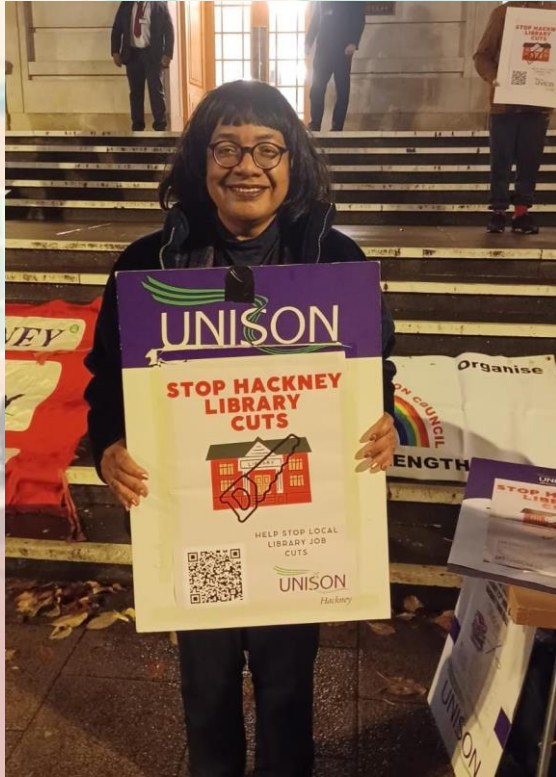
I've been bopping around libraries in Hackney all week as (reveal) i'm working on a 2nd book. Really disappointing to hear from staff that job cuts are being proposed while budgets for senior management are going up. Join the lobby of the council on 23 Nov, Hackney Town Hall 🇬🇧



2:15 pm · 11 Nov 2022

35 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 91 Likes

[Click here to play video](#)



'You will see me on picket lines': Hackney MP Diane Abbott backs library staff fighting council cuts

By Julia Gregory, Local Democracy Reporter | Thursday 24 November 2022 at 17:48



Local MP Diane Abbott joins protest against the cuts. Photograph: Julia Gregory

Local library staff at risk of redundancy are balloting over strike action.

Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP Diane Abbott joined a recent protest on the steps of the Town Hall.

Hackney Council is consulting with 99 full- and part-time staff on cuts that could see 76 jobs go and 57 new roles created.

It is offering voluntary redundancy as part of its consultation package, which is designed to save £250,000.

The shake-up will see some higher grade posts created, with managers each taking responsibility for several libraries rather than just one.

Saturday assistants will be scrapped and the council will create apprenticeships instead.

Library staff warned Hackney's cabinet that the changes would put them under pressure.

Unison and Unite unions are balloting their members over strike action.

Diane Abbott told protesters: "It's important that we fight all these cuts. We may think we are going through hard times now, but it is going to get worse."

The Labour MP credited libraries for helping her to thrive after her mother signed her up to use them as a primary school pupil.

"Without libraries I would not have had the life that I've had," she explained. "I think it's so important for young working class children and their families to have access to a library service – a fully funded library service and a fully staffed library service – and I think we have to fight these cuts."

Conclusion

Unions and staff want to see innovation and improvements to this vital public service to best protect its future and deliver for the community

BUT these deeply disruptive proposals are unsustainable, will put staff and users alike at greater safety risk, are financially unsound, and could well lead to temporary or even permanent site closures in the near future

Management must meaningfully engage with unions, respect our collective bargaining rights, and be prepared to negotiate in order to better protect jobs, staff safety and wellbeing and the service itself