

# Strategic Review of Library Buildings

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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, we need 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.

We 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).

This review proposes a new approach that intends to deliver a comprehensive library service with reduced costs for all those who live, work and study in the area.

Although we are proposing to close eight library buildings, we believe we can improve and enhance the offer in the remaining library buildings, whilst making more efficient use of our civic buildings and contributing towards organisational savings.

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

- Closure of the library building;
- Keeping the library building in its existing configuration and improve and enhance the library service.

The eight libraries which we propose to retain as part of our review represent 85% of visits in 2023/24, 80% of ICT minutes used in 2023/24 and were used by 78% of active users in 2023/24. This shows that they are well used by the communities they serve. To support any increase in usage, as a result of the closure of nearby libraries, we will increase opening hours at retained libraries by a total of 56 hours per week.

It is estimated that the proposals to close the eight buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.57 million to £0.63 million once fully implemented. These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that are proposed to close. Additionally, the buildings also require maintenance work and by

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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.

delivering the library service from fewer buildings, the Council will also be saving an estimated £5.3 million in future upkeep and maintenance costs. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £2.43 million and £3.25 million.

The closure of the eight library buildings will enable us 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 we need to invest over £2.9 million in our libraries over the next ten years.

We have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposed options which will form part of the consultation.

Following consultation, we will use its results and undertake a further equality impact assessment. We will then finalise the strategy for the library service to present at Full Council for agreement, scheduled for early 2025.

## **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 us to deliver on our priorities, in particular our priority 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 we 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 will underpin our approach in developing our proposals and the draft new library strategy.

### **Current library estate**

Enfield has 16 public libraries in the borough, including 4 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 6 (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 one library per 20,625 people, whereas Haringey for example has one library per 29,355.

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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)

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

Borough <sup>9</sup>	Enfield	Barnet	Haringey	Waltham Forest	Croydon	Redbridge	Brent	Ealing
Number of Libraries	16	17	9	9	13	11	6	13
Population	330,000	389,300	264,200	278,400	390,800	309,800	338,918	338,400
Population divided by number of libraries	20,625 <sup>10</sup>	22,900	29,355	30,933	30,061	28,164	56,486	26,031
Area (hectare)**	8,220.01	8,674.81	2,959.85	3,880.82	8,649.68	5,640.35	4,323.3	5,554.45
Area (km2)	82.20	86.74	29.59	38.80	86.49	56.40	43.32	55.56
Area (km2) divided by number of libraries	5.14 <sup>11</sup>	5.10	3.28	4.31	6.65	5.13	7.22	4.27
Total Expenditure on libraries 2022/23 (£000)	3,539	6,297	4,949	5,607	3,239	2,501	4,762	3,925
Net current Expenditure on libraries 2022/23 (£000)	2,915	6,084	4,716	5,027	2,624	2,501	4,707	3,744

The gross expenditure for our library service was £3.5 million in 2022/23, 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.

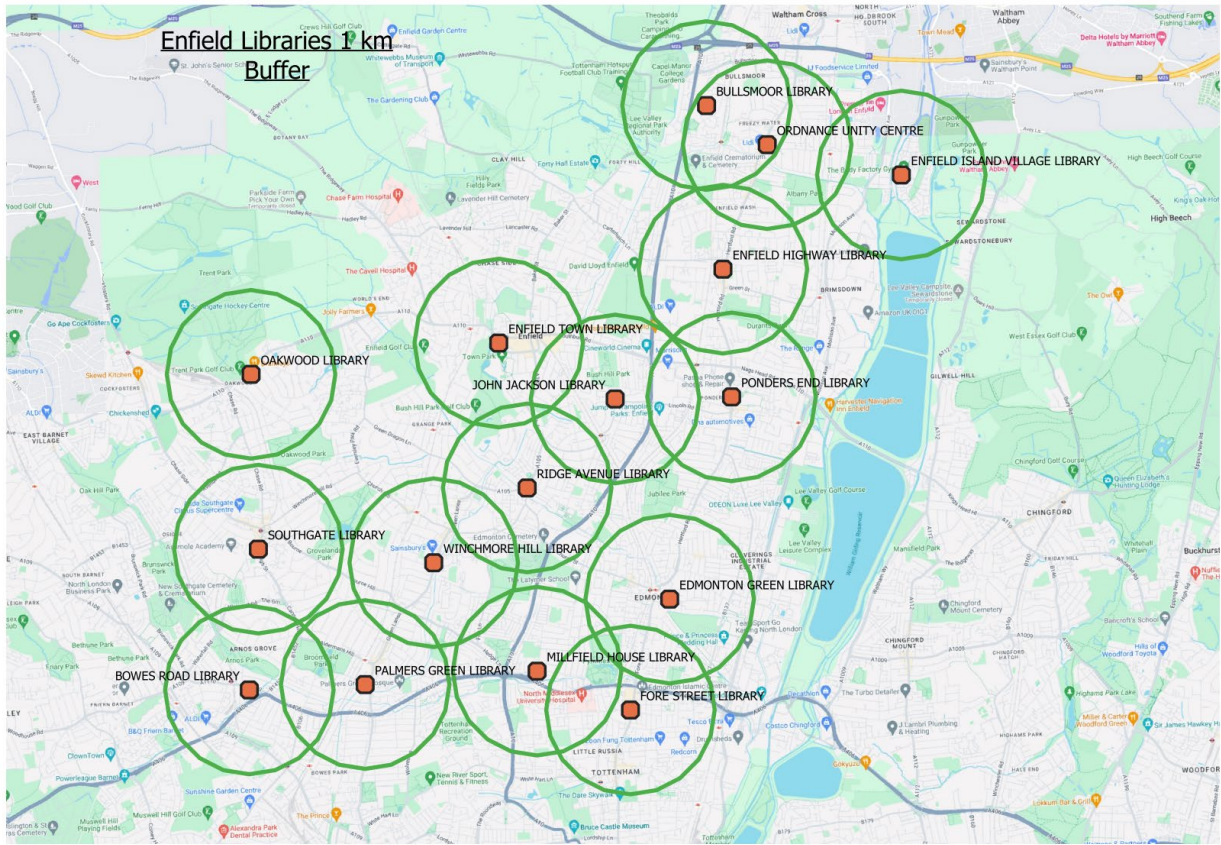
The map below shows the locations of each library in our current estate and its one-kilometre catchments. Many of the libraries are relatively close to each other.

<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 41,250.

<sup>11</sup> Based on our proposed model, this figure would be 10.28.



To meet the Council's principles to deliver accessible and responsive services and be financially resilient, we have considered how our 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.

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

## **Draft Library Strategy**

Our draft library strategy sets out how we propose to 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 proposed 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 draft 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 with stakeholders; and the operating and maintenance costs of library buildings.

Our draft 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 us to deliver on our five priorities, we have three underlying principles which have informed proposed 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**

As part of the development of the draft library strategy we 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 proposed model will ensure that:

- 85% of residents live within a 25-minute walk from their nearest library, (this was 98% for the 16 library buildings).



- 88% of residents live within a 20-minute public transport journey from their nearest library, (this was 97% for the 16 library buildings).
- 98% of residents live within a 10-minute cycle ride from their nearest library, (this was 99% for the 16 library buildings).
- 100% of residents live within a 10-minute car journey from their nearest library, (this was 100% for the 16 library buildings).

The proposed libraries which we will retain represent 85% of visits and were used by 78% of active users in 2023/24. To support an increase in usage, because of the proposed closure of alternative libraries, we will increase the opening hours at remaining libraries by 56 hours per week.

For those who would prefer to access the library service online, we have 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 digital library service, the Royal Voluntary Service can deliver services on our behalf to their home.

- **Delivering a financially resilient library service**

We have undertaken a review of our current library offer and developed a proposed 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 proposals to close the eight buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.57 to £0.63 million once fully implemented. These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that are proposed 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 £5.3 million in future upkeep and maintenance costs. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £2.43 and £3.25 million.

## **Overview of Phase One Engagement**

In the phase one engagement, we wanted to hear from stakeholders about our current library service. We wanted to understand whether they used our library service, their experience of our libraries and their ideas on how we could deliver our library service more efficiently. The phase one engagement launched on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and ran for 12 weeks, ending 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

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, we 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' with 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, we had over 1000 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. The key findings from this engagement have been used to inform our draft proposals.

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

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. We have therefore reported the responses to closed questions on the easy read version separately.

92% of the easy read respondents live in Enfield<sup>12</sup> and 93% had used Enfield library service in the last 2 years<sup>13</sup>. Of the 56 respondents who told us 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>14</sup> In addition, 44% had library books delivered to their home. Of the 52 respondents who told us 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:**

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<sup>12</sup> Base: 74 responses

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

<sup>14</sup> Base: 57 responses

90% of respondents live in Enfield<sup>15</sup> and 93% of respondents had used Enfield library service in the last 2 years.<sup>16</sup> Of the 797 respondents who told us 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 (21%), and Edmonton Green (21%).<sup>17</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>18</sup> Respondents most commonly use or visit libraries either less frequently than every other month (32%) or weekly (20%). Of the 741 respondents who told us how they travel to libraries, the most common mode of 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%).

We asked respondents 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>19</sup> give them access to books and resources that are relevant to them,<sup>20</sup> and have helpful staff who can answer their questions.<sup>21</sup>

### **Combined responses:**

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

We asked how we could improve the library service and facilities or make our libraries better and noted the themes across the 643 responses we 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.

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<sup>15</sup> Base: 896 responses

<sup>16</sup> Base: 864 responses

<sup>17</sup> Base: 797 responses

<sup>18</sup> Base: 798 responses

<sup>19</sup> 53% strongly agree, 31% tend to agree (Base: 844 responses).

<sup>20</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>21</sup> 55% strongly agree, 30% tend to agree (Base: 847 responses).

- *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.

We asked respondents to share ideas on what we could do differently to deliver our library service more efficiently and make savings to our library budget. We 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.
- *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.

20% of responses felt that the library budget should not be reduced.

We asked respondents 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>22</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%).

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<sup>22</sup> Base: 41 responses

## 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 we should continue to provide a service from the current site, or whether we should consult on the closure of the library building.

### Local need

This criterion is a key principle in our draft 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>23</sup>
- Community safety – This includes the number of recorded criminal offences between March 2022 and April 2023.<sup>24</sup>
- Health and disability – This includes the percentage of residents in good health and the percentage of residents with a disability.<sup>25</sup>
- Deprivation – This includes 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>26</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>27</sup>
- Broadband coverage - The percentage of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</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>24</sup> The higher the number, the higher the number of recorded criminal offences.

<sup>25</sup> The higher the number, the greater the level of ill health and disability.

<sup>26</sup> The higher the number, the greater the level of deprivation.

<sup>27</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>28</sup> The higher the number, the lower the number of premises with broadband coverage above 30Mb/s (so greatest level of ‘digital need’).

The 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
Upper Edmonton	23	24	15	24	18	19	123
Carterhatch	20	15	23	18	24	22	122
Lower Edmonton	24	17	20	23	20	11	115
Brimsgate	5	23	21	21	23	21	114
Ponders End	11	21	14	22	19	20	107
Jubilee	15	13	17	20	21	15	101
Bullsmoor	13	14	25	17	22	7	98
Haselbury	25	19	16	19	17	1	97
Enfield Lock	12	22	20	16	16	9	95
Southbury	16	18	11	13	12	13	83
Whitewebbs	2	12	22	11	10	26	82
Bowes	21	7	8	15	15	5	71
Southgate	19	10	6	8	9	18	70
Highfield	14	5	18	14	14	3	68
Palmers Green	18	16	3	10	9	8	64
New Southgate	18	9	9	12	13	2	63
Cockfosters	4	6	12	9	11	16	58
Town	8	20	7	7	9	4	55
Ridgeway	1	11	14	5	6	17	54
Bush Hill Park	6	8	11	3	6	14	48
Arnos Grove	10	3	5	6	4	10	38
Grange Park	3	1	2	1	1	23	31
Winchmore Hill	7	4	1	5	2	12	31
Oakwood	10	2	4	2	3	6	27

This assessment has allowed us 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 proposed change to the library service.

We 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, we do not believe it would be reasonable to purchase a new asset or re-purpose an existing asset.

We 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 draft 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 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, this is based on a Department for Transport guideline for the statutory accessibility indicators from 2012.

We 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**

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

We 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, we 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, but 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.

We have also reviewed the feedback from the phase one engagement about how often respondents used each library and what times and days they visited. We have also reviewed feedback where respondents use only one library.

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

### **Facilities and resources**

We 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. We have also considered the number of activities and full-time equivalent staff at each library. Furthermore, we 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 us 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). We have also included the protected characteristics of respondents from the phase one engagement, (where data is available).

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken to inform our proposals

### **Further considerations**

We 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, we 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 draft strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for a financially resilient council.

We have compared the operating cost of each large library and small library<sup>29</sup> to the median average to identify areas of higher-than-average and lower-than-average net expenditure. This has also enabled us to identify what savings could be generated by closing the library building.

## **Property implications**

We 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 draft strategy and aligns with our Council Plan principle for a financially resilient council.

## **Summary of recommendations**

### **Consult on closure of library buildings**

Based on the analysis set out in Appendix One, we are recommending that we consult on closing the following library buildings. This is a reduction of 281 hours per week in available service across the borough.

It is estimated that the proposals to close the eight buildings will achieve an annual revenue saving in the range of £0.57 million to £0.63 million once fully implemented.<sup>30</sup> These estimated savings are the operating costs and staffing posts for the buildings that are proposed 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 £5.3 million in future upkeep and maintenance costs. It is estimated that the buildings could generate a capital receipt of between £2.43 million and £3.25 million.

### **Northeast Area:**

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<sup>29</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>30</sup> When producing this estimated range of savings, we have considered that the remaining eight libraries will require a transfer of resources to support the proposed increases opening hours and potential increases in usage. The next report to members, following the consultation, will set out in full the proposed savings arising from the final proposals.

- Bullsmoor (Bullsmoor)

We are consulting on 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 we provide 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 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 large floorspace 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. The current opening hours in Ordnance Unity Centre are over double that of Bullsmoor, it is also open for an extra two days a week and is a fully accessible building.

To mitigate the impact of closing Bullsmoor Library, Ordnance Unity Centre's offer will be further strengthened to ensure it meets the needs of residents in Bullsmoor and Whitewebbs wards.

- Enfield Highway (Brimsdawn)

We are consulting on closure of Enfield Highway Library given its relatively low usage, proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre and Ponders End as an alternative provision and the opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide 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. The library is in close proximity to alternative provision at Ordnance Unity Centre (1.6km) and Ponders End (1.5km).

The current opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre are higher than those of Enfield Highway, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building. To mitigate against the impact of closing Enfield Highway Library, we will build further on the strong existing offer at Ordnance Unity Centre.

- Enfield Island Village (Enfield Lock)

We are consulting on closure of Enfield Island Village Library given its relatively low usage, proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre as an alternative provision and the opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

It is in the same ward as Ordnance Unity Centre which is 1.6km away. The current opening hours in Ordnance Unity Centre are more than double that those of Enfield Island Village, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building. By focusing resources at Ordnance Unity Centre, we will also seek to increase employment, benefits and skills support from this building, to support the needs of residents, given the high levels of benefit claimants and low levels of educational attainment and employment in Enfield Lock ward.

### **Southeast Area:**

- Angel Raynham (Upper Edmonton)

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, we are recommending that we consult on giving this library permanently to the school and permanently closing the public library.

### **Southwest Area:**

- Bowes Road (New Southgate)

We are consulting on the closure of Bowes Road Library given its lack of accessibility for users with a disability, low usage and proximity to Palmers Green library. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The library is in New Southgate ward which ranks 17<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. 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.

Palmers Green Library is 1.8km away and 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. The current opening hours in Palmers Green are almost double that of Bowes Road, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building.

- Winchmore Hill (Winchmore Hill)

We are consulting on 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 we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Winchmore Hill is an affluent ward 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.

Palmers Green Library is 1.7km away and has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. The weekly opening hours in Palmers Green are currently 10 hours longer than at Winchmore Hill Library and it is a fully accessible building.

- Southgate (Southgate)

We are consulting on 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. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Southgate is a relatively affluent ward and 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.

Palmers Green Library is 2.5km away and has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. The weekly opening hours in Palmers Green are currently 3.5 hours longer than at Southgate and it is a fully accessible building.

- Oakwood (Oakwood)

We are consulting on the closure of Oakwood Library, as it is in an area of low need and is located within a reasonable distance of alternative library provision at Enfield Town. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Oakwood ward has the lowest level of local need of all the wards. There is a relatively high proportion of residents aged 65+ in Oakwood and neighbouring Cockfosters and Ridgeway wards, but it is considered that this group can use free public transport to travel to alternative library provision which is on existing bus routes.

Enfield Town Library is 3.4km away. Enfield Town is a transport hub and main shopping and leisure area and residents who visit Oakwood Library are likely to already travel to Enfield Town for other reasons, as well as to visit the library. Enfield Town Library offers an extensive range of activities and services which include 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. The weekly opening

hours in Enfield Town are currently 9 hours longer than at Oakwood and it is a fully accessible building.

### **Northeast Hub Area:**

- John Jackson (Southbury)

We are consulting on 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 we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Southbury is ranked moderately (11<sup>th</sup>) for level of local need, with a relatively high percentage of children aged 0-15 (22%). However, given the proximity to Enfield Town (3.3km) and Ponders End (1.7km), 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 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. The weekly opening hours in Enfield Town are currently 17.5 hours longer than at John Jackson and it is a fully accessible building.

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

We are recommending that we keep 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
- Enfield Town
- Ridge Avenue

We will review staffing levels at each remaining library to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of nearby smaller libraries and review opening hours to ensure there is parity in opening hours.

The eight libraries which we are proposing to retain represent 85% of visits in 2023/24 and were used by 78% of active users in 2023/24. This shows that they are well used

by the communities they serve. To support an increase in usage, as a result of the closure of nearby libraries, we will increase opening hours at retained libraries by an additional 56 hours per week.

The closure of the eight library buildings will enable us 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 we need to invest over £2.9 million in our libraries over the next ten years.

We believe that this will enable us 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, we welcome any ideas from stakeholders which could achieve the same level of savings for the library service as our draft proposals.

In this section, we have outlined some of the options we have considered from feedback in the phase one engagement when developing our draft proposals.

### **Reduction in opening hours**

To make the same revenue levels of proposed savings we 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. We 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**

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 draft strategy, we want to continue to promote our volunteer offer at our libraries in order to increase participation and complement the service delivered by our library workforce.

Simply, replacing staff with volunteers would not achieve the same level of savings as our proposed approach, as the Council would still need to fund the operating and repair and maintenance costs of the buildings and undertake the necessary repairs and maintenance work. However, we welcome all alternative suggestions on the role of volunteers from stakeholders during the consultation process.

### **Community managed libraries and outsourcing**

In this consultation, we also welcome expressions of interest from organisations, such as a community group or voluntary association or charity or similar, that feels it has the capability and funds necessary to operate and maintain and repair a library.

To be considered to run a library in Enfield, an organisation must email a completed business case to <mailto:libraries.engagement@enfield.gov.uk> during the 12-week consultation period. There is no prescribed format for the business case, but it must demonstrate how the organisation would fund the operating and repair and maintenance costs associated with running a library from that building and demonstrate the capability to deliver an efficient library service from the building.

As part of their business case, we would expect an organisation to address the following criteria:

- The financial resources of the organisation and how they would be sufficient to meet the operating and repair and maintenance costs of running a library from the relevant building
- Demonstrate strong evidence regarding the organisation's capacity for and capability of providing an efficient library service and managing and maintaining and repairing a building
- Provide information about the outcomes to be achieved by the relevant body in providing or assisting in the provision of the relevant service and how the organisation will achieve the objectives set out in the emerging Library Strategy

The business case should contain no more than 5,000 words.

## 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 second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 years old (25%), 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 population overall (27%). The percentage of households receiving universal credit (37%) is significantly higher than the borough population overall (28%). The percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (26%) is higher than the borough population overall (22%).

##### 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 5-minute cycle. For those unable to walk this is a 5-minute car journey or 21-minute bus journey. Alternatively, this library is 1.9km from Enfield Island Library, which is a 26-minute walk for an average person or a 6-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 7-minute drive or a 13-minute bus journey. We are proposing to close both of these libraries.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 104 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Ordnance Unity Centre library, 51% walk, 35% travel by car, 30% get the bus, 6% cycle, and 2% get the train.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in the easy read version of the questionnaire, we also

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<sup>31</sup> Base: 134 responses



asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 7 respondents who use Ordnance Unity Centre, 86% walk and 29% get the bus.<sup>32</sup>

We 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 (20%).<sup>33</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (69%), Edmonton Green (43%), and Enfield Highway (43%).<sup>34</sup>

In the easy read version of the questionnaire, of the respondents who told us which libraries they go to, 12% said Ordnance Unity Centre.<sup>35</sup> Of the easy read respondents who visit Ordnance Unity Centre, 42% only visit this library. The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Enfield Town (75%), Edmonton Green (50%), and Ponders End (50%).<sup>36</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.

We 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
49.5	48.2	17	13%	40%

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<sup>32</sup> Base: 8 responses

<sup>33</sup> Base: 115 responses

<sup>34</sup> Base: 139 responses

<sup>35</sup> Base: 7 responses

<sup>36</sup> Base: 4 responses

Most respondents to the phase one engagement said they used the library weekly (25%), followed by every other month (22%) or monthly (19%)<sup>37</sup>. The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (47%), Thursday (47%) or Saturday (45%)<sup>38</sup>. A higher proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in a morning (60%) or afternoon (62%)<sup>39</sup>.

Furthermore, 5 representatives (10%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Ordnance Unity Centre Library in the past two years.

In 2023, the library was visited by St Giles and St Johns nursery and Freezywater primary school. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are three partners operating from Ordnance Unity Centre: Enfield Carers Centre, At One Counselling and Age UK. These partners hold events such as Tea and Chatter and one to one counselling. We look to further maximise activities and events held at Ordnance Unity Centre by our partners to respond to local need.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre by 10.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library will be open on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **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>40</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 below average number of activities per week (10 compared to 18), when compared to the other large libraries. OUC 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.

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<sup>37</sup> Base: 71 responses

<sup>38</sup> Base: 142 responses

<sup>39</sup> Base: 126 responses

<sup>40</sup> Base: 188 responses

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
29,160	4	20	1	4.07	9	10	Yes	43 metres

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>41</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 10-19 years old (22%), which is higher than the percentage of 10–19-year-olds living in the ward (16%) and suggests that the library is effectively engaging this cohort. The lowest percentage of active users are aged over 70 years old (4%) which is lower than the ward’s population aged 70+ (6%). It should be further considered how the library can further engage older people in its services.

In the phase one engagement, 67 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre 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>42</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%).

In the phase one engagement, 64 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre 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>43</sup>: Using 2021 Census data, it is estimated that 14% of residents in Enfield Lock have a disability. Ordnance Unity Centre has low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%). It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared it to the library service.

In the phase one engagement, 64 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre library declared whether they had a disability. This a small sample and would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population or active library users.

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<sup>41</sup> Base: 3,817 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>42</sup> Base: 1,789 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>43</sup> Base: 3,817 active users, 17,805 census

Gender<sup>44</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 one engagement, 64 respondents who used Ordnance Unity Centre 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>45</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 one engagement, 55 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

### **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,

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<sup>44</sup> Base: 4,759 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>45</sup> Base: 482 active users, 17,805 census

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 an average level of local need (10<sup>th</sup> of the 25 wards in Enfield). It has the second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 years old (25%) and given the percentage of active users is highest among 10–19-year-olds (22%), is effectively engaging this age group.

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 as a result of the proposed 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.

Furthermore, we are proposing to increase opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre by 10.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library will be open on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **Bullsmoor (Bullsmoor)**

#### **Local need:**

Bullsmoor ward is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> for level of need out of the 25 wards in Enfield. The percentage of children aged 0-15 (22%) is relatively reflective of the borough population overall (20%), whereas the percentage of residents aged 65+ (12%) is lower than the borough population overall (14%).

Bullsmoor ward has the highest proportion of disabled residents (16%) 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 (32%) low-income families is significantly higher than the borough population overall (27%). Furthermore, the percentage of households on unemployment benefits (7%) and receiving universal credit (35%) is significantly higher than the borough population overall (6% and 28%).

In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications is significantly higher than the borough population overall (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, we must also consider the needs of residents in wards without libraries who are in close proximity to Bullsmoor Library.

Whitewebbs ward is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has a higher percentage of older people (16%) than the borough population overall (14%). Whitewebbs ward also has the second highest proportion of residents with a disability (15%). The ward has lower proportions compared to the borough population overall in terms of children in relative and absolute (24% compared to 27%) low-income families, adults on unemployment benefits (5% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (24% compared to 28%). The ward also has the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not proposed for closure.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. Carterhatch has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%). It has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (32%) income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). There is also a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) and adults with no qualifications (28%). There is also a high percentage of residents with disabilities in the ward (14%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward which has Ponders End Library, which is not proposed 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 a 4-minute cycle. For those unable to walk this is a 4-minute car journey or 9-minute bus journey. 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.

In the phase one engagement, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 26 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Bullsmoor library, 42% drive, 38% walk, 25% get the bus and 8% cycle<sup>46</sup>.

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>47</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Highway (69%), Ordnance Unity Centre (65%), or Enfield Town (57%).<sup>48</sup>

**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

We 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%).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter
23	4.4	4.6	6%	44%

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<sup>46</sup> Base: 27 responses

<sup>47</sup> Base: 19 responses

<sup>48</sup> Base: 145 responses

Most respondents to phase one engagement used Bullsmoor Library less frequently than every other month (50%).<sup>49</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (65%) or Thursday (43%).<sup>50</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (58%).<sup>51</sup> We have reviewed the opening hours of remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

Only two respondents said they use only Bullsmoor Library. 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 as a result of the closure of Bullsmoor.

3 representatives (6%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Bullsmoor Library in the last two years. We will consult with these organisations to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

In 2022/23, the library was used by Liz Day Care Centre, Worcesters Primary School, and Honilands Primary School. Pupils at these schools will be disproportionately impacted by the proposed closure of this library. The nearest alternative library is Ordnance Unity Centre, which is an 18-minute walk or 11-minute bus journey for the day care centre, and 23-minute walk or 21-minute bus journey from Honilands Primary School. This may not be considered a reasonable distance for the school and nursery to travel. Worcesters Primary school have also used Enfield Town library which is a mitigating impact against the proposed closure of Bullsmoor Library on this school. As part of the phase two consultation, we will consult with these schools and nursery to understand the impact of our proposed closure and how we can mitigate this.

### **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>52</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).

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<sup>49</sup> Base: 17 responses

<sup>50</sup> Base: 47 responses

<sup>51</sup> Base: 36 responses

<sup>52</sup> Base: 51 responses



Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,755	1	5	0	1.1	Approx. 3	2	Yes	148 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at Bullsmoor Library are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre, if Bullsmoor Library was to close.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>53</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 10-19 years old (32%), which is considerably higher than the percentage of 10–19-year-olds living in the ward (17%). The second highest percentage of active library users are aged 0-9 years old (17%) which is significantly higher than the ward population (13%). The library is being particularly well used by this younger cohort for borrowing books / using the computers, suggesting that the library is being regularly used by families with young children and teenagers and is effective at engaging with this age group.

In the phase one engagement, 19 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>54</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 17 respondents to the phase one engagement who used Bullsmoor Library declared their ethnicity. These are small samples which would not enable a meaningful comparison to the ward population.

Disability<sup>55</sup>: Using 2021 Census data, it is estimated that 16% of residents in Bullsmoor have a disability. Bullsmoor has the highest disability rate for the borough. However, Bullsmoor library has low levels of active users with a declared disability (1%) in comparison to other libraries in Enfield. It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared this to the library service.

In the phase one engagement, 18 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>53</sup> Base: 221 active users, 11,454 census

<sup>54</sup> Base: 11,454 census

<sup>55</sup> Base: 222 active users, 11,454 census

Gender<sup>56</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (57% compared to 42%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (53% and 47% respectively).

In the phase one engagement, 18 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>57</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 17 respondents the phase one engagement 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>56</sup> Base: 219 active users, 11,454 census

<sup>57</sup> Base: 1 active users, 11,454 census

## **Recommendations:**

We are recommending consulting on 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 we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The usage of Bullsmoor library is below average in comparison to the other council run smaller libraries in the borough with active users per quarter sitting at 44%. 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 (50%) and only 4% stating they have used the library in the last two years.

The large floor space at Ordnance Unity Centre library means that is sufficient to support any increase in usage as a result of the closure of Bullsmoor Library. The current opening hours in Ordnance Unity Centre are over double that of Bullsmoor, it is also open for an extra two days a week and is a fully accessible building. Co-located with Ordnance Unity Health Care Centre, it is a well-connected library offering a wide variety of services, facilities and activities. Ordnance Unity Centre has a strong offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nursely 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.

To mitigate the impact of closing Bullsmoor Library, Ordnance Unity Centre's offer will be further strengthened to ensure it meets the needs of residents in Bullsmoor and Whitewebbs. We will further capitalise on the co-location of health facilities to offer a more joined-up approach and more signposting between the health services and library offer in the same building, linking with social prescribing activity. We will also seek to increase employment and skills support in the building, to support the needs of residents, given the low educational attainment in Bullsmoor ward.

## **Enfield Highway (Brimmsdown)**

### **Local need:**

Brimmsdown 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 (33%) low-income families is significantly higher than the borough population overall (27%). The percentage of households on unemployment benefits (8%) and receiving universal credit (38%) is significantly higher than the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively).

The percentage of residents aged 65+ (11%) is lower than the borough population overall (14%). The population density of people p/sq. km is lower (3,532) than the borough overall (4,083).

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

When considering local need, we 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 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. Carterhatch has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%). It has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (32%) income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). There is also a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) and adults with no qualifications (28%). There is also a high percentage of disabled residents in the ward (14%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward which has Ponders End Library, which is not proposed for closure.

**Distance to nearest library:**

This library is 1.6km from Ordnance Unity Centre, which is a 22-minute walk for an average person or a 6-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 5-minute drive or a 7-minute bus journey. Alternatively, 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 12-minute bus journey.

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.

In the phase one engagement, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 63 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Enfield Highway Library, 38% get the bus, 36% walk, 33% travel by car, 13% cycle, and 5% get the train. We 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.

We 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 public transport links (24%).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Base: 75 responses

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (76%), Ordnance Unity Centre (65%), and Edmonton Green (56%).<sup>59</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>60</sup>

**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

We 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.

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter
36	11.2	5.1	20%	41%

Most respondents to the phase one engagement questionnaire used the library less frequently than every other month (46%), weekly (21%) or monthly (17%)<sup>61</sup>. This relatively low 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 as a result of 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>62</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (44%). We have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

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<sup>59</sup> Base: 124 responses

<sup>60</sup> Base: 4 responses

<sup>61</sup> Base: 65 responses

<sup>62</sup> Base: 139 responses

In the phase one engagement, 8 representatives (6%) 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. Furthermore, the library is also currently used by the Whittington NHS Trust, NHS, Cancer UK, and for Councillor surgeries. We will consult with these organisations to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

Furthermore, one representative of a nursery, which did not state their organisation, also said that they had used the library in the past two years. Therefore, although we know that the nursery will be impacted by the closure of Enfield Highway, we are not able to calculate its travel time to alternative provision.

In 2023/24, the library was used by St James Primary and Toddlers at the Bridge Nursery. Pupils at these schools will be disproportionately impacted by the proposed closure of this library. The nearest alternative library is Ponders End Library, which is a 27-minute walk or 16-minute bus journey from the primary school, and 26-minute walk or 16-minute bus journey from the nursery. This may not be considered a reasonable distance to travel. As part of the phase two consultation, we will consult with the school and nursery to understand the impact of our proposed closure and how we can mitigate this.

The large floorspace at Ordnance Unity Centre means that it is sufficient to support an increase in usage as a result of the closure of Enfield Highway Library.

### **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>63</sup>.

When compared to other smaller libraries, Enfield Highway Library has below average stock levels (7,758 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 a higher-than-average number of activities per week (5 compared to 3). Enfield Highway is also the closest library to the nearest bus stop (32 metres). The lift at the library is at 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>63</sup> Base: 57 responses

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
7,558	2	8	1	1.7	2	5	No	32 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at Enfield Highway are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre, if Enfield Highway Library was to close.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>64</sup>: The highest percentage of active library users are aged 20-29-years-old (18%), which is higher than the percentage of 20–29-year-olds living in the ward (14%) and suggests that the library is effectively engaging this cohort. The library had a lower proportion of active users aged 0-9 years old than the ward population (9% compared to 14%).

In the phase one engagement, 46 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.

Ethnicity<sup>65</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from Black ethnic backgrounds (43%). This is significantly higher than the percentage of the ward population who are from Black ethnic backgrounds (24%) and suggests the library is effective at engaging with this cohort. Users from White British (19%) and White Other (20%) ethnicities are underrepresented when compared to the ward population (26% and 29% respectively).

In the phase one engagement, 44 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>66</sup>: Using 2021 Census data, it is estimated that 14% of residents in Brimsdown have a disability. However, Enfield Highway has low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%). It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared this to the library.

In the phase one engagement, 45 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.

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<sup>64</sup> Base: 1,069 active users, 16,249 census

<sup>65</sup> Base: 579 active users, 16,249 census

<sup>66</sup> Base: 1,069 active users, 16,249 census

**Gender<sup>67</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 one engagement, 43 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>68</sup>:** Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportion of library users who are Christian and Buddhist (54% and 2% respectively) is higher when compared to the ward population (48% and 0.5% respectively). The proportion of library users who are Muslim is broadly representative of the ward population (23% compared to 25%).

In the phase one engagement, 38 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.

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:**

We are recommending consulting on closure of Enfield Highway Library given its proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre and Ponders End as alternative provisions. This is

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<sup>67</sup> Base: 1,061 active users, 16,249 census

<sup>68</sup> Base: 142 active users, 16,249 census



an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The usage of Enfield Highway is below average in comparison to 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 the library less frequently than every other month (46%) and only 8% stating they have used the library in the last two years.

The current opening hours at Ordnance Unity Centre are higher than those of Enfield Highway, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building. To mitigate against the impact of closing Enfield Highway Library, we will build further on the strong existing offer at Ordnance Unity Centre. Co-located with Ordnance Unity Health Care Centre, it is a well-connected library offering a wide variety of services, facilities and activities. 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.

### **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 second highest percentage of children aged 0-15 years old (25%), 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 population overall (27%). The percentage of households receiving universal credit (37%) is significantly higher than the borough population overall (28%). The percentage of adults aged 16 and above with no qualifications (26%) is higher than the borough population overall (22%).

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

This library is 1.9km from Ordnance Unity Centre which is a 26-minute walk for an average person, or an 8-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it is a 7-minute drive or a 13-minute bus journey.

In the phase one engagement, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 49 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Enfield Island

Village Library, 44% walk, 38% travel by car, 35% get the bus, 15% cycle, and 9% get the train.<sup>69</sup>

We 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>70</sup> The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (71%), Ordnance Unity Centre (66%), and Enfield Highway (61%).<sup>71</sup>

**Usage:**

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

We 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%).

Opening hours per week	Visits per hour open	Issues and renewals per hour open	ICT hours used per hour open	Active users per quarter
20	14.6	2.9	17%	40%

Most respondents to the phase one engagement questionnaire used the library less frequently than every other month (38%), weekly (18%) or monthly (16%).<sup>72</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.

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<sup>69</sup> Base: 48 responses  
<sup>70</sup> Base: 50 responses  
<sup>71</sup> Base: 180 responses  
<sup>72</sup> Base: 96 responses

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (59%), Monday (54%), or Saturday (54%).<sup>73</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (53%).<sup>74</sup> We have reviewed opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times. Of the 49 respondents, two (4%) said they use only Enfield Island Village Library.

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). We will consult with these organisations to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

**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>75</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 a below average number of activities per week (1 compared to 3). 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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
3,819	1	5	0	1.1	0	1	Yes	80 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at Enfield Island Village are transferred to Ordnance Unity Centre if Enfield Island Village Library was to close.

**Equalities:**

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<sup>73</sup> Base: 99 responses

<sup>74</sup> Base: 46 responses

<sup>75</sup> Base: 170 responses

Age<sup>76</sup>: At Enfield Island Village Library, 21% of its active users are aged between 10-19 years old which is higher than the ward population (16%), suggesting the library is effective at engaging this cohort. The library has a significantly lower proportion of active users aged 70+ when compared to the ward population (1% compared to 9%).

In the phase one engagement, 23 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>77</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from Black ethnic backgrounds (37%), this is higher than the ward population (30%). People from White British and White Other ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented amongst active library users when compared to the ward population (20% and 22% 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 one engagement, 23 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.

Disability<sup>78</sup>: Enfield Lock has average levels of disability (14%); however, the library has a very low level of active users with a declared disability (0.3%). It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared this to the library service.

In the phase one engagement, 23 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>79</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 one engagement, 23 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>80</sup>: Using the 2021 Census, 51% of residents in Enfield Lock ward are Christian, 21% are non-religious and 20% are Muslim. Overall, 23 active library users and 21

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<sup>76</sup> Base: 336 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>77</sup> Base: 205 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>78</sup> Base: 362 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>79</sup> Base: 336 active users, 17,805 census

<sup>80</sup> Base: 17,805 census

respondents to the phase one engagement 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. In regard to staffing (£45,104) and library resources (£9,321), the library’s operating costs are below average and among the lowest out of 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.

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:**

We are recommending consulting on closure of Enfield Island Village Library given its proximity to Ordnance Unity Centre.

The usage of Enfield Island Village is below average in comparison to the other council run libraries in the borough with active users per quarter sitting at 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%) and only 6% stating they have used the library in the last two years.

The opening hours in Ordnance Unity Centre are currently more than double those of Enfield Island Village, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building. Ordnance Unity Centre has a strong offer for children, with baby and parent groups, nurse 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.

By transferring the existing services within this library into Ordnance Unity Centre, we will build upon the strong existing offer from this large library. This proposed approach would support greater promotion of the services offered here across the Enfield Lock ward to ensure that the needs of residents in Enfield Lock are met. We will further capitalise on the co-location of health facilities to offer a more joined-up approach and more sign-posting between the health services and the library offer in the same building. By focusing resources at Ordnance Unity Centre, we could also seek to increase employment, benefits, and skills support from this building, to support the needs of residents, given the high levels of benefit claimants, low educational attainment and employment in Enfield Lock ward.

## **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 (48%) low-income families out of all the wards in Enfield. The ward also has the highest proportion of adults on unemployment benefits (11%) and adults with no qualifications (30%). Edmonton Green has the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (20%) out of the wards in Enfield. 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 higher proportion of disabled residents (15%) when compared to the borough population overall (13%).

Edmonton Green has very high levels of crime, with the highest criminal offence count out of the wards in Enfield (2,805) between April 2022 and March 2023.

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

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

Lower Edmonton is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Lower Edmonton has a high percentage of children in relative and absolute (43%) low-

income families. The ward also has the second highest percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (10%) and the highest percentage of households receiving universal credit (46%). Lower Edmonton also has a significantly higher percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (28%) compared to the borough population overall (22%).

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The library is 1.5km from Fore Street Library. This would take the average person 21 minutes to walk or a 5-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be a 7-minute drive or a 11-minute bus journey.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 169 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Edmonton Green Library, 48% get the bus, 37% walk, 26% travel by car, 9% get the train, and 9% cycle. We 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.

We 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>81</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents to the questionnaire were Enfield Town (78%), Palmers Green (47%), and Ridge Avenue (41%).<sup>82</sup> most common alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read version of the questionnaire were Fore Street (58%), Ponders End (58%) and Enfield Town (42%).<sup>83</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

We 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

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<sup>81</sup> Base: 185 responses  
<sup>82</sup> Base: 280 responses  
<sup>83</sup> Base: 12 respondents

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
56.5	135.4	22.8	11%	41%

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>84</sup> Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Tuesday (43%), Thursday (43%), or Wednesday (42%)<sup>85</sup>. Respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (61%) or afternoon (61%)<sup>86</sup>. Of the 169 respondents, 13 (8%) said they use only Edmonton Green Library.

Overall, 27 representatives (46%) 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, 3 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. We 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 the library was visited by the following primary schools: Churchfield, Brettenham, Fleecefield, Edmonton County, Latymer, Eldon, Starksfield, Hazelbury, Galliard, Houndsfield, St Edmunds and North Star Community Trust. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Edmonton Green by 7.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library will be open on a Sunday and extended operating

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<sup>84</sup> Base: 172 responses

<sup>85</sup> Base: 383 responses

<sup>86</sup> Base: 227 responses



hours on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

**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 (58%) and print a document (53%)<sup>87</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) and an average number of activities per week (18). 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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
42,816	4	100	1	4.89	0	18	Yes	68 metres

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

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>88</sup>: The ward has a higher population of children and young adults when compared to the borough population. However, children aged 0-9 are underrepresented as active library users at Edmonton Green when compared to the ward population (10% compared to 15%). The highest percentage of active library users are aged between 30 – 39 (19%), this is higher than the ward population in this age range (14%), suggesting that the library is effective at engaging this age cohort.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their age,<sup>89</sup> the highest proportion (21%) were aged 50-59 which is

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<sup>87</sup> Base: 741 responses

<sup>88</sup> Base: 7,302 active users, 17,126 census

<sup>89</sup> Base: 111 respondents

significantly higher than the proportion of ward population or active library users in this age group (13% and 14% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>90</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 proportion of the ward population (34%) and suggests that the library is effectively engaging this cohort. Users from White British (12%) and White Other (15%) backgrounds are underrepresented as active users, when compared to the ward population (16% and 28% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>91</sup> the highest proportion (48%) 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 (27%) is lower when compared to the proportion of the ward population and active library users.

Disability<sup>92</sup>: There is a relatively high number of disabled residents in the ward (15%), but low levels of library users with a declared disability (2%). It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared this to the library service.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their protected characteristics,<sup>93</sup> 28% declared they had a disability. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>94</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Edmonton Green Library and declared their gender,<sup>95</sup> 69% said they were female and 28% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

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<sup>90</sup> Base: 1,581 active users, 17,126 census

<sup>91</sup> Base: 101 respondents

<sup>92</sup> Base: 7,909 active users, 17,126 census

<sup>93</sup> Base: 105 respondents

<sup>94</sup> Base: 7,039 active users, 17,126 census

<sup>95</sup> Base: 109 respondents

**Religion<sup>96</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 one engagement, 97 respondents who used Edmonton Green 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:**

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 (£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 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 (48%) low-income families out of all the wards in Enfield, which is significantly higher than the borough population (27%). The ward also

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<sup>96</sup> Base: 494 active users, 17,126 census

has the highest proportion of adults on unemployment benefits (11%) 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, we are proposing to increase opening hours at Edmonton Green by 7.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library will be open on a Sunday and extended operating hours on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

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

#### **Local need:**

Ponders End is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 6<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%).

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

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

Jubilee is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Jubilee has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (44%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward has a significantly higher percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (8%) and households receiving universal credit (37%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Jubilee also has a high percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%).

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. Carterhatch has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%). It has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (32%) income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). There is also a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) and adults with no qualifications (28%). There is also a high percentage of disabled residents in the ward (14%).

**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 9-minute drive or 14 minutes by bus. 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, whose residents may access Ponders End as their closest library provision.

In the phase one engagement, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 61 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Ponders End Library, 60% walk, 35% get the bus, 26% travel by car, 9% get the train, and 9% cycle. 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.

We 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>97</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (84%), Edmonton Green (56%), and Enfield Highway (36%).<sup>98</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>99</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
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<sup>97</sup> Base: 74 responses  
<sup>98</sup> Base: 237 responses  
<sup>99</sup> Base: 17 responses

43,463	23,152	11,120	0	12,106	18,658	27,024
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We 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 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 (22%).<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Wednesday (54%), Friday (43%), or Monday (42%)<sup>101</sup>. The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (62%) or afternoon (58%)<sup>102</sup>. Of the 61 respondents, 5 (8%) said they used only Ponders End Library.

Overall, 4 representatives (8%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Ponders End Library in the past two years. We will look to further maximise activities and events held at Ponders End Library by our partners to respond to local need.

In 2023, the library was used by Southbury 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 we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Ponders End by 11 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended. This is to standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **Facilities and resources:**

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<sup>100</sup> Base: 57 responses

<sup>101</sup> Base: 151 responses

<sup>102</sup> Base: 76 responses

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>103</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 weekly activities.

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

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>104</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 10-19 years old (18%) which is higher than the ward population in this age group (16%) and suggests that the library is effectively engaging this cohort. There is relatively low percentage of active users aged 60+ (11%), which is lower than the ward population (14%).

Only 38 respondents to the phase one engagement 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>105</sup>: At Ponders End Library, the highest percentage of active users are from Black ethnic backgrounds (40%), which is higher when compared to the ward population (32%). Furthermore, there is a significantly higher percentage of active library users who declared they are from an Asian ethnic background (33%), compared to the ward population (13%).

Only 34 respondents to the phase one engagement 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.

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<sup>103</sup> Base: 303 responses

<sup>104</sup> Base: 1,367 active users, 13,684 census

<sup>105</sup> Base: 687 active users, 13,684 census

Disability<sup>106</sup>: At Ponders End Library, 2% of active users declared having a disability, which is low in comparison to the ward population (13%). Only 36 respondents to the phase one engagement who use Ponders End Library declared a disability. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Gender<sup>107</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 36 respondents to the phase one engagement 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>108</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 34 respondents to the phase one engagement 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:**

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

<sup>106</sup> Base: 1,367, active users 13,684 census

<sup>107</sup> Base: 1,359 active users, 13,684 census

<sup>108</sup> Base: 152 active users, 13,684 census



### **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. Ponders End is ranked 6<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 second highest percentage of adults receiving universal credit (46%). The ward also has high levels of fuel poverty (18%) and adults with no qualifications (29%).

Furthermore, we are proposing to increase opening hours at Ponders End by 11 hours per week. This is to standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

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

#### **Local need:**

Haselbury is within the top 20% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. The ward has a high population density (9,068 people p/sq. km).

The ward has the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (20%) so any change to the library service in this area could particularly impact these households, who may require a warm public space in winter. The ward also has a significantly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (36%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). The ward has a high percentage of households receiving unemployment benefits (8%) and the second highest percentage of residents receiving universal credit (50%).

There is also a significantly higher percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (28%) compared to the borough population overall (22%).

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

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

One of Highfield's closest libraries is Millfield House. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%).

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

The nearest large library is Edmonton Green is 2.4km away. This would take the average person 32 minutes to walk or an 8-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be an 8-minute drive or a 15-minute bus 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, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 24 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Millfield House Library 38% travel by car, 33% get the bus, 19% walk, and 19% cycle.<sup>109</sup>

We 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>110</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (83%), Edmonton Green (71%), and Palmers Green (54%).<sup>111</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. During 2023/24, Millfield House had 2,160 visits. 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
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<sup>109</sup> Base: 23 responses

<sup>110</sup> Base: 26 responses

<sup>111</sup> Base: 124 responses

35	1.3	0.07	2%	49%
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In the phase one engagement questionnaire, most respondents used Millfield House Library less frequently than every other month (63%), fortnightly (20%) or weekly (19%)<sup>112</sup>. The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Monday (38%), Wednesday (38%), or Tuesday (33%).<sup>113</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (61%) or morning (39%).<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, 4 representatives (8%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Millfield House Library in the past two years. This included three representatives of VCS groups and one primary school (Firs Farm).

### **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 use the space to read, study or work (71%), print a document (63%), and borrow a book (22%).<sup>115</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 activities per week 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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
958	0	4	0	0	Approx. 20	0	Yes	52 metres

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>116</sup>: The ward has relatively high levels of children and young people aged 0-9 and 10-19 (14% and 15% respectively) and 16% of the ward population are aged over 60. Overall, 36 active library users and 15 respondents to the phase one engagement who

<sup>112</sup> Base: 23 responses

<sup>113</sup> Base: 48 responses

<sup>114</sup> Base: 30 responses

<sup>115</sup> Base: 127 responses

<sup>116</sup> Base: 18,135 census

used Millfield House Library declared their age. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Ethnicity<sup>117</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 13 respondents to the phase one engagement who used Millfield House Library declared their ethnicity. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Disability<sup>118</sup>: Haselbury has average rates of disability (14%), when compared to other wards. Overall, 36 active library users and 14 respondents to the phase one engagement 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>119</sup>: In Haselbury, 52% of the ward population are female and 48% are male. Overall, 36 active library users and 14 respondents to the phase one engagement 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>120</sup>: In Haselbury, 50% of residents in 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 we are unable to compare this to the ward population. In the phase one engagement, 12 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

<sup>117</sup> Base: 18,135 census

<sup>118</sup> Base: 18,135 census

<sup>119</sup> Base: 18,135 census

<sup>120</sup> Base: 18,135 census

### **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.

To ensure the library is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, it is recommended that a wheelchair access path is installed in the carpark 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 9<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. The ward has a high population density (9,068 people p/sq. km). The ward has the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty (20%), 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 will be managed by Platinum Performing Arts, which will be a condition of their lease. Therefore, although the library's usage is low when looking at issues/renewals and ICT equipment use, given the very low running costs of keeping this self-serve library open, we are not proposing to make 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 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

The ward has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (23%) and a low percentage of residents aged 65+ (9%). The ward has a high percentage of children aged 0-19 in relative and absolute (41%) low-income families. There are also high percentages of adults on unemployment benefits (8%), high percentages of households receiving universal credit (39%) and high percentages of households in fuel poverty (18%). Furthermore, the ward has a high percentage of adults aged 16+ 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: Bowes and Highfield***

When considering local need, we 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 (8,298 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (38%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). The ward also has a high percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (6%) and households receiving universal credit (30%) compared to the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is also higher than the borough population overall (25% compared to 22%). 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.

Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%).

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

The library is 1.5km from Edmonton Green Library. This would take the average person 21 minutes to walk or a 5-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, this journey would be a 6-minute drive or a 11-minute bus journey. Alternatively, this library is 1.5km from Millfield House which is an 18-minute walk or 7-minute cycle. For those unable to walk, it would take 7 minutes to travel by car or 12 minutes by public transport.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 46 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Fore Street Library, 52% get the bus, 43% walk, 18% travel by car, 14% get the train and 9% cycle.<sup>121</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.

We also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (53%), because it is close to the shops (42%) and because it is close to public transport links (34%).<sup>122</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Edmonton Green (76%), Enfield Town (72%), and Palmers Green (48%).<sup>123</sup> Similarly, the most common

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<sup>121</sup> Base: 40 responses

<sup>122</sup> Base: 63 responses

<sup>123</sup> Base: 184 responses

alternative libraries for respondents to the easy read questionnaire were Edmonton Green (100%), Ponders End (43%), Enfield Town (29%) and Ridge Avenue (29%)<sup>124</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
89,887	63,127	55,661	0	22,812	19,535	39,571

We 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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used Fore Street less frequently than every other month (35%), fortnightly (29%) or weekly (16%).<sup>125</sup>

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Friday (21%), Wednesday (50%), or Tuesday (45%).<sup>126</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (63%) or morning (56%).<sup>127</sup> Of the 46 respondents, three (7%) said they use only Fore Street library.

Furthermore, 6 representatives (56%) who responded to the questionnaire stated that their organisation had used Fore Street Library in the past two years. This includes four representatives of VCS groups, one representative of a primary school and one other respondent.

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<sup>124</sup> Base: 14 responses

<sup>125</sup> Base: 43 responses

<sup>126</sup> Base: 107 responses

<sup>127</sup> Base: 60 responses

In 2023, the library was used by St John and St James 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 we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are several partners operating from Fore Street Library. These partners are Fore Street For All, Page Turners, Knit and Natter, Maroon Community Media Podcast Clinic, Potter’s House Community Events, STEP team, and Age UK memory meet up. We will look to further maximise activities and events held at Fore Street Library by our partners to respond to local need.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Fore Street by 15 hours per week, this will mean that the library’s opening hours will be extended, and it will be open on a Thursday. This is to standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

**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>128</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 four weekly activities, which is slightly higher than the average of three. 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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop

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<sup>128</sup> Base: 89 responses



14,841	1	13	0	3.3	0	4	Yes	36 metres
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**Equalities:**

Age<sup>129</sup>: The highest percentage of users at Fore Street Library are aged 10–19-year-olds (18%) which is broadly representative of the ward population in this age group (16%) and suggests that the library is effectively engaging this cohort.

In the phase one engagement, 33 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.

Ethnicity<sup>130</sup>: The highest proportion of active users are from Black ethnic backgrounds (44%) which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (32%). This suggests the library is effective at engaging this cohort. Those from White Other ethnic backgrounds are considerably underrepresented (19%), when compared to the ward population (29%).

In the phase one engagement, 29 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>131</sup>: Upper Edmonton has average rates of disability (13%), and the library has very low levels of active users with a declared disability (2%). It may be that additional library users have a disability but have not declared this to the library.

In the phase one engagement, 31 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>132</sup>: The library has a considerably higher proportion of female active library users than male active library users (57% compared to 42%). This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population (52% compared to 48%).

In the phase one engagement, 32 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.

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<sup>129</sup> Base: 1,581 active users, 16,726 census

<sup>130</sup> Base: 675 active users, 16,726 census

<sup>131</sup> Base: 1,581 active users, 16,726 census

<sup>132</sup> Base: 1,545 active users, 16,726 census

Religion<sup>133</sup>: Of the active library users who declared their religion, the proportion of library users who are Christian and Muslim are broadly representative (41% and 36% respectively), when compared to the ward population, (44% and 32% respectively). The proportion of active library users who are Buddhist is significantly higher when compared to the proportion of the ward population (7% compared to 0.8%).

In the phase one engagement, 29 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 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 of 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

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<sup>133</sup> Base: 107 active users, 16,726 census

### **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 located in Upper Edmonton which is within the top 10% most deprived wards within the country and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Fore Street by 15 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended, and it will be open on a Thursday. This is to standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

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 (11%) and low numbers of children aged 0-15 (17%). It has relatively low levels of unemployment (5%) and low numbers of adults on unemployment benefits (5%) and households receiving universal credit (23%) compared to the borough population overall (5% and 27% respectively). The percentage of residents in very good or good health is 86% which is broadly in line with the borough population overall (84%).

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Highfield, Bowes and Arnos Grove***

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

Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%).

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 (8,298 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (38%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). The ward also has a high percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (6%) and households receiving universal credit (30%) compared to the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is also higher than the borough population overall (25% compared to 22%). 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.

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Arnos Grove has a high percentage of older people aged 65+ compared to the borough population overall (20% compared to 14%). There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward also has a low percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (14%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Compared to the borough population overall, Arnos Grove also has a low percentage of adults with no qualifications (15% compared to 22%) and disabled residents (12% compared to 13%).

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

The nearest library is Bowes Road, which is 1.7km away. This would take the average person 23 minutes to walk, 6 minutes to cycle, 15 minutes by bus or 5 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Winchmore Hill is 1.7km 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 bus or 5 minutes to drive. We are proposing to close both libraries.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 259 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Palmers Green Library, 51% walk, 31% get the bus, 25% travel by car, 7% cycle and

4% get the train<sup>134</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>135</sup>

We 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 (26%), and because it is close to the shops (23%).<sup>136</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (61%), Winchmore Hill (44%), and Ridge Avenue (34%).<sup>137</sup> The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Oakwood (60%), Southgate (60%) and Winchmore Hill (40%).<sup>138</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

We 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 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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (26%), weekly (22%) or monthly (21%)<sup>139</sup>. Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a

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<sup>134</sup> Base: 292 responses

<sup>135</sup> Base: 10 responses

<sup>136</sup> Base: 982 responses

<sup>137</sup> Base: 225 responses

<sup>138</sup> Base: 8 responses

<sup>139</sup> Base: 182 responses

Saturday (46%), Monday (44%), or Tuesday (42%).<sup>140</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (63%) or morning (62%)<sup>141</sup>.

Of the 259 respondents to the questionnaire, 13% (35) said they used only Palmers Green library. Furthermore, one respondent to the easy read questionnaire said that they used only Palmers Green Library in the last two years.

Overall, 9 representatives (21%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Palmers Green Library in the past two years. 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.

The library is well-used by local primary schools, with class visits arranged throughout the year. In 2023 the library was visited by the following primary schools: Westgrove, Walker, Tottenhall, Garfield, St Michael at Bowes, St Andrews, Our Ladies of Lourdes, St Monicas, Hazelwood and Bowes. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are 6 partners that operate from Palmers Green Library: Enfield Carer, MP surgeries, Councillor surgeries, U3A, Women's Environmental Network and Dr Bike. These partners run events such as reading clubs, training for Enfield carers and delivering reusable nappy demonstrations. We look to further maximise activities and events held at Palmers Green by our partners to respond to local need

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Palmers Green by 10.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended, and it will be open on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **Facilities and resources:**

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 9 weekly activities, which is lower than the average of 18 for large libraries. When comparing to other four large libraries,

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<sup>140</sup> Base: 330 responses

<sup>141</sup> Base: 310 responses

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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
34,195	4	20	1	4.3	15	9	Yes	137 metres

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>142</sup>

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>143</sup>: The ward has higher proportions of 25 to 44-year-olds and relatively few school-aged children and young adults compared to the borough population overall. However, there is a high level of library usage among 0-9 and 10–19-year-olds (22% and 12% respectively) compared to the ward population (12% and 9% respectively) which suggests the library is effectively engaging this cohort.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Palmers Green Library and declared their age,<sup>144</sup> the highest proportion (26%) were aged 60-69. This is significantly higher when compared to ward population or active library users (10% for both).

Ethnicity<sup>145</sup>: A high proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (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 one engagement who used Palmers Green Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>146</sup> 58% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

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<sup>142</sup> Base: 2452 responses

<sup>143</sup> Base: 5,052 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>144</sup> Base: 175 respondents

<sup>145</sup> Base: 2,128 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>146</sup> Base: 172 respondents

Disability<sup>147</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (11%), but the library has a low level of active users with a declared disability (4%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (3.5%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Palmers Green Library and declared their protected characteristics, <sup>148</sup> 24% declared they had a disability. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>149</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Palmers Green Library and declared their gender, 68% said they were female and 31% were male.<sup>150</sup> This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>151</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%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Palmers Green Library and declared their religion or belief <sup>152</sup>, 49% declared they were Christian. This is slightly lower than the proportion in the ward population and higher than the proportion of active library users who are Christian.

### **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.

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<sup>147</sup> Base: 5,052 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>148</sup> Base: 170 respondents

<sup>149</sup> Base: 4,996 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>150</sup> Base: 173 respondents

<sup>151</sup> Base: 289 active users, 11,017 census

<sup>152</sup> Base: 157 respondents



Staffing	Library Resources	Premises	Income	Net Expenditure	Cost per hour open	Cost per visit
£338,280	£69,906	£157,500	£76,635	£489,050.84	£190.00	£5.73

### **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 is a relatively affluent ward (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.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Palmers Green by 10.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended, and it will be open on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative 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, nurse 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. 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.

### **Bowes Road (New Southgate)**

#### **Local need:**

New Southgate ranks 17<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 Enfield wards for level of local need and has the highest population density in Enfield (10,820 people p/sq. km). It has lower levels of

children aged 0-15 (18%) and older people aged 65+ (11%) compared to the borough population overall (20% and 14% 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 (26%) are lower than the borough population overall (6% and 28%). The ward has a slightly higher percentage of children in relative and absolute (29%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%).

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Bowes and Arnos Grove wards***

When considering local need, we 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 (8,298 people p/sq. km) in the borough. Bowes ward has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (38%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). The ward also has a high percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (6%) and households receiving universal credit (30%) compared to the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is also higher than the borough population overall (25% compared to 22%). 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 proposed for closure.

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Arnos Grove has a high percentage of older people aged 65+ compared to the borough population overall (20% compared to 14%). There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward also has a low percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (14%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Compared to the borough population overall, Arnos Grove also has a low percentage of adults with no qualifications (15% compared to 22%) and disabled residents (12% compared to 13%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Palmers Green ward which has Palmers Green library, which is not proposed 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 17 minutes by bus. Given the moderate levels of affluence

in this area and low levels of deprivation, it would be reasonable to assume that the majority of those visiting Bowes Road would be able to access Palmers Green as an alternative library provision.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and told us 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>153</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.

We 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 public transport links (27%) and because it has parking facilities (22%).<sup>154</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Palmers Green (85%), Enfield Town (65%), and Winchmore Hill (58%).<sup>155</sup>

**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

We 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 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.

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

<sup>153</sup> Base: 48 responses

<sup>154</sup> Base: 40 responses

<sup>155</sup> Base: 83 responses

The majority of respondents in the phase one engagement used the library less frequently than every other month (39%), weekly (23%), or every other month (18%).<sup>156</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>157</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (63%) or morning (63%).<sup>158</sup> We have reviewed the opening hours of remaining libraries to ensure alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times. Of the 40 respondents, four respondents said they used only Bowes Road Library.

Furthermore, 4 representatives (8%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Bowes Road Library in the past two years. This included two community groups (Over 50s Forum and AB Promotions Health Consultancy), one local business and an educational trust representing seven schools. The library is also used for Duke of Edinburgh courses. We will consult with these organisations to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

### **Facilities and resources:**

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>159</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.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,738	0	1	0	1.1	Approx. 5	0	No	42 metres

<sup>156</sup> Base: 41 responses

<sup>157</sup> Base: 48 responses

<sup>158</sup> Base: 46 responses

<sup>159</sup> Base: 82 responses

We will ensure that services currently offered at Bowes Road Library are transferred to Palmers Green Library, if Bowes Road Library was to close.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>160</sup>: The ward proportionately has significantly more residents aged 25-44 (36%) and relatively fewer children aged 5-14 (12%), compared to the borough population overall (28% and 14% respectively). The highest proportion of active users are aged 30-39 years old (19%). However, there is also a high level of library usage among 0-9- and 10–19-year-olds (18% and 14% respectively) which suggests that the library is effective at engaging this cohort.

In the phase one engagement, 31 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>161</sup>: The ward has a high proportion of residents from White Other ethnic backgrounds (32%) who are underrepresented in 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 Asian ethnic backgrounds (19%) is higher than the proportion of the ward population (15%).

In the phase one engagement, 31 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>162</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users with a declared disability (4%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (3.5%). Therefore, in the phase two consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

In the phase one engagement, 28 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.

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<sup>160</sup> Base: 587 active users, 11,902 census

<sup>161</sup> Base: 242 active users, 11,902 census

<sup>162</sup> Base: 587 active users, 11,902 census

Gender<sup>163</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 (51% compared to 49%).

In the phase one engagement, 30 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>164</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 users and 28 respondents in the phase one engagement 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.

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<sup>163</sup> Base: 577 active users, 11,902 census

<sup>164</sup> Base: 11,902 census

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.

### **Recommendations:**

We are recommending consulting on the closure of Bowes Road library given its lack of accessibility for users with a disability, low usage and proximity to Palmers Green library. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

The usage of Bowes Road is generally below average compared to the other council run smaller libraries in the borough with 6.1 visits per hour open. 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 (39%) and only 5% stating they have used the library in the last two years.

Palmers Green Library 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. The opening hours in Palmers Green are currently almost double that of Bowes Road, it is also open for an extra day a week and is a fully accessible building. 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. To further mitigate the impact of closing Bowes Road Library, we will further strengthen Palmers Green Library to ensure that the needs of residents in New Southgate are met. This could include increasing employment support available at the library.

This building currently houses the library resources unit, which is independent of the library, and should be relocated if the decision is taken to close the library building following consultation.

### **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%). Winchmore Hill also has low levels of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (14%). Similarly, the percentage of children in relative and absolute (15%) low-income families is low in

comparison to the borough population overall (27%). Winchmore Hill is also among the wards with the lowest proportion of disabled residents (11%).

***Nearby wards without libraries: Highfield and Grange Park***

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

Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%). 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 proposed for closure.

Grange Park is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the third highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town and Bush Hill Park wards which are Enfield Town and Ridge Avenue libraries, which are not proposed for closure.

**Distance to the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Palmers Green which is 1.7km 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 13 minutes by bus or 6 minutes to drive. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue Library is 1.7km 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 5 minutes to drive or 8 minutes by bus.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and told us how they travel to Winchmore Hill Library, 49% walk, 37% travel by car, 29% get the bus, 8% cycle and 1% get the train.<sup>165</sup> Similarly, of the four easy read respondents who used Winchmore Hill, 75% walk, 50% travel by car and 25% get the bus.

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<sup>165</sup> Base: 204 responses



We 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 shops (35%) and because it is close to public transport links (25%).<sup>166</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (69%), Palmers Green (68%) and Ridge Avenue (49%).<sup>167</sup> The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Oakwood (75%), Enfield Town (75%) and Palmers Green (50%).<sup>168</sup>

**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

We 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.

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

Of the phase one engagement respondents who used Winchmore Hill Library, the majority used the library less frequently than every other month (34%), monthly (22%), or every other month (20%)<sup>169</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.

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<sup>166</sup> Base: 192 responses

<sup>167</sup> Base: 270 responses

<sup>168</sup> Base: 8 responses

<sup>169</sup> Base: 122 responses

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (47%), Wednesday (46%), or Tuesday (43%).<sup>170</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (65%) or morning (62%)<sup>171</sup>. We have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

Overall, 4 representatives (9%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Winchmore Hill Library in the past two years. This included two representatives of VCS groups (Enfield Over 50s Forum and AB Promotions Health Consultancy). The library is also used for Duke of Edinburgh courses. We will consult with these organisations to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

One primary school (Highfield) also responded to the phase one engagement. The nearest alternative library for Highfield Primary School is Ridge Avenue Library, which is an 18-minute walk or a 12-minute bus journey. This could be considered a reasonable distance to travel for alternative provision.

**Facilities and resources:**

In the phase one engagement, the top three 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 (35%) and use the computers (42%).<sup>172</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 has a lower-than-average number of activities per week compared to other smaller libraries (1 compared to 4).

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
15,291	1	9	0	2.2	3	1	Yes	71 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at Winchmore Hill Library are transferred to Palmers Green Library, if Winchmore Hill Library was to close.

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<sup>170</sup> Base: 211 responses

<sup>171</sup> Base: 199 responses

<sup>172</sup> Base: 287 responses

## **Equalities:**

Age<sup>173</sup>: Winchmore Hill has a comparatively higher proportion of residents over the age of 64. However, library usage is relatively low among residents aged 60+ (14%) compared to the ward population (24%). There are fewer children and young adults compared to the borough population overall, 23% of the ward's population are aged under 19. However, there is a high level of library usage among 0-9 and 10-19-year-olds (22% and 15% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Winchmore Hill Library and declared their age,<sup>174</sup> the highest proportions were aged 40-49 and 60-69 (25% and 24% respectively) this is higher when compared to ward population or active library users (15% and 14%, and 14% and 8% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>175</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from White British ethnic backgrounds (42%) which is slightly 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%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Winchmore Hill Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>176</sup> 58% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (47%) or active library users (42%) who are White British.

Disability<sup>177</sup>: The ward has low levels of disability (11%) in comparison to the other wards. Similarly, the library has low levels of active users with a declared disability (4%), however, this is a high level of disabled users compared to the other libraries in Enfield. Therefore, in the phase two consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Winchmore Hill Library and declared their protected characteristics,<sup>178</sup> 24% declared they had a disability. 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>173</sup> Base: 2,305 active users, 10,400 census

<sup>174</sup> Base: 114 respondents

<sup>175</sup> Base: 903 active users, 10,400 census

<sup>176</sup> Base: 105 respondents

<sup>177</sup> Base: 2305 active users, 10,400 census

<sup>178</sup> Base: 108 respondents

Gender<sup>179</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Winchmore Hill Library and declared their gender, <sup>180</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>181</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 58% of residents in Winchmore Hill ward are Christian, 26% are non-religious and 9% are Muslim. Overall, 92 active library users and 99 respondents to the phase one engagement who used Winchmore Hill Library declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

**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). It's 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

**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.

It should be noted that Winchmore Hill has a separate partner organisation based in the building, which pays rent to the Council annually.

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<sup>179</sup> Base: 2,292 active users, 10,400 census

<sup>180</sup> Base: 112 respondents

<sup>181</sup> Base: 10,400 census

## **Recommendations:**

We are recommending consulting on 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 we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Winchmore Hill is an affluent ward 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.

Palmers Green Library has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. The weekly opening hours in Palmers Green are currently 10 hours longer than at Winchmore Hill Library and it is a fully accessible building. 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.

## **Southgate (Southgate)**

### **Local need:**

Southgate is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has a slighter higher percentage of older people aged 65+ (16%) compared to the borough population overall (14%). There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (17%) low-income families. Furthermore, the percentage of adults on employment benefits (4%) and households receiving universal credit (17%) is low compared to the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). There is also a low percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (17%).

### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Arnos Grove, Cockfosters Grange Park***

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

Arnos Grove is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Arnos Grove has a high percentage of older people compared to the borough population overall (20% compared to 14%). There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward also has a low percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (14%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Compared to the borough population overall, Arnos

Grove also has a low percentage of adults with no qualifications (15% compared to 22%) and residents with a disability (12% compared to 13%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Palmers Green ward which has Palmers Green Library, which is not proposed for closure.

Cockfosters ranks 18<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough. The ward has the lowest population density (1,094 people p/sq. km) out of the wards in Enfield. Cockfosters has a below average percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (16% compared to 28%) when compared to the borough population overall. Similarly, the ward has a lower percentage of children in relative and absolute (22%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (15% and 12% respectively).

Grange Park is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the third highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town and Bush Hill Parks wards which have Enfield Town and Bush Hill Park libraries, which are not proposed for closure.

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

The nearest large library is Palmers Green which is 2.5km away. This would take the average person 32 minutes to walk or 7 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 13 minutes by bus or 6 minutes to drive.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 118 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and answered the question on how they travel to Southgate Library, 57% walk, 39% get the bus, 17% travel by car, 6% cycle and 5% get the train. Similarly, of the 6 respondents to the easy read questionnaire who use Southgate, 67% walk, 17% travel by car and 50% get the bus.

We 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 public transport links (35%) and because it is close to shops (26%).<sup>182</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Palmers Green (66%), Enfield Town (59%), and Winchmore Hill (47%).<sup>183</sup> The most common alternative

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<sup>182</sup> Base: 142 responses

<sup>183</sup> Base: 203 responses

libraries for respondents to the easy read questionnaire were Enfield Town (50%), Palmers Green (50%), Edmonton Green (33%) and Oakwood (33%).<sup>184</sup>

Given the low levels of need for this area and the high affluence in the ward, 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 in 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

We 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).

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

Most respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (25%), monthly (23%), or fortnightly (19%)<sup>185</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 (42%) or Saturday (42%).<sup>186</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (71%) or afternoon (58%).<sup>187</sup> We have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative

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<sup>184</sup> Base: 10 responses

<sup>185</sup> Base: 69 responses

<sup>186</sup> Base: 146 responses

<sup>187</sup> Base: 147 responses

provision is adequately provided at these days and times. Of the 118 respondents, 9 (8%) said they use only Southgate Library.

Overall, 4 representatives (8%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Southgate Library in the past two years. This included two community groups (Over 50s Forum and AB Promotions Health Consultancy), one representative of an early years provider and one representative of a primary school. The representatives of the school and early years provider did not state the name of their organisation. Therefore, although we know that they will be impacted by the proposed closure of Southgate Library, we are not able to calculate their travel time to alternative provision.

Several library partners currently operate out of Southgate Library. These partners are Bambos Charalambous MP, Forty Hall Farm, NHS, and Age UK. The library also hosts Duke of Edinburgh courses. We will consult with these partner organisations using Southgate Library to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

**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>188</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) and a higher-than-average number of activities per week (4 compared to 3). The library has a lower-than-average number 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.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
17,425	1	8	2	1.7	8	4	Yes	37 metres

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<sup>188</sup> Base: 207 responses



We will ensure that services currently offered at Southgate Library are transferred to Palmers Green Library, if Southgate Library was to close.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>189</sup>: There is a high level of library usage among residents aged 70+ (16%) compared to the ward population (14%). The library also has a relatively high level of library active users aged 0-9 compared to the ward population (16% compared to 12%).

The library is being particularly well used by these younger and older cohorts for borrowing books, suggesting that the library is being regularly used by older and younger residents, and is effective in engaging with these age groups.

In the phase one engagement, 80 respondents who used Southgate 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>190</sup>: The highest proportion of active library users who declared their ethnicity were from a White British ethnic background (37%), which is higher than the proportion of the ward population who are from White British ethnic backgrounds (35%). The proportion of active library users from Other ethnic backgrounds (3%) is relatively low compared to ward population (5%). Active library usage among individuals from Asian ethnic backgrounds was significantly higher than the ward population (22% compared to 15%).

In the phase one engagement, 72 respondents who used Southgate 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>191</sup>: The library has low levels of active users with a declared disability (4%) compared to the population of Southgate ward (12%). However, this is a high level of disabled users compared to the other libraries in Enfield. Therefore, in the phase two consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

In the phase one engagement, 78 respondents who used Southgate Library declared having 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>189</sup> Base: 1,965 active users, 14,514 census

<sup>190</sup> Base: 728 active users, 14,514 census

<sup>191</sup> Base: 1,964 active users, 14,514 census

Gender<sup>192</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 (52% and 48% respectively).

In the phase one engagement, only 79 respondents who used Southgate 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>193</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 49% of residents in Southgate ward are Christian, 26% are non-religious and 13% are Muslim. Only 90 active library users registered at Southgate library declared their religion or belief and only 68 respondents to the phase one engagement who used Southgate Library declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

**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 facility is installed and line markings in the car park are renewed. It is estimated this will cost less than £15,000.

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<sup>192</sup> Base: 1,944 active users, 14,514 census

<sup>193</sup> Base: 14,514 census

## **Recommendations:**

We are recommending consulting on the closure of Southgate Library given its relatively low level of need and its proximity to alternative provision at Palmers Green. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

Southgate is a relatively affluent ward and 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.

Palmers Green Library has good transport connections, good facilities and a wide offer of services and activities. The weekly opening hours in Palmers Green are currently 3.5 hours longer than at Southgate and it is a fully accessible building. Palmers Green 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, the library is located within a reasonable distance of other library provision (Ridge Avenue and Enfield Town, respectively).

This building currently houses the home library service, and which should be relocated if the decision is taken to close the library building following consultation.

## **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. There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (27%) low-income families. Furthermore, the percentage of adults on employment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (13%) is low compared to the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). 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, we 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. It has the second highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough. The ward has the lowest population density (1,094 people p/sq. km) out of the wards in Enfield.

Cockfosters has a below average percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (2% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (16% compared to 28%) when compared to the borough population overall. Similarly, the ward has a lower percentage of children in relative and absolute (22%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (15% and 12% respectively).

Ridgeway is ranked 20<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+ (20%). The ward has a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families. Similarly, there are a low percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (4% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (14% compared to 28%) when compared to the borough population overall. There is also a low percentage of adults with no qualifications (16%). Ridgeway also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town library, which is not proposed 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 8 minutes to drive or 13 minutes by bus.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the 154 respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and have used Oakwood library, 45% travel by car, 37% walk, 32% get the bus, 6% cycle and 6% get the train. 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.

We 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>194</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (77%), Palmers Green (45%) and Ridge Avenue (41%).<sup>195</sup> The most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Enfield Town (71%), Winchmore Hill (43%) and Southgate (29%).<sup>196</sup>

### **Usage:**

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

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<sup>194</sup> Base: 173 responses

<sup>195</sup> Base: 252 responses

<sup>196</sup> Base: 10 responses

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

We 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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority of respondents used the library monthly (24%), every other month (20%), or less frequently than every other month (20%).<sup>197</sup> Of the 154 respondents, 10% said they use only Oakwood Library.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (41%), Thursday (39%), Wednesday or Friday (38% respectively).<sup>198</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the morning (67%) or afternoon (63%).<sup>199</sup> We have reviewed the opening hours of the remaining libraries to ensure that alternative provision is adequately provided at these days and times.

Several library partners operate out of Oakwood, library including the NHS, Over 50s forum, U3A, 1<sup>st</sup> point training, Women’s Environmental Network, MCKS and On Maths Tutoring. Furthermore, 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. This included five representatives of VCS groups (U3A, Chickenshed and Over 50s Forum), two representatives of primary schools and one further education college. We will consult with all organisations using Oakwood Library to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

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<sup>197</sup> Base: 112 responses

<sup>198</sup> Base: 222 responses

<sup>199</sup> Base: 188 responses

The representatives of the schools and further education college did not state the name of their organisation. Therefore, although we know that they will be impacted by the proposed closure of Oakwood Library, we are not able to calculate their travel time to alternative provision.

**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>200</sup>

Oakwood Library, when compared to other smaller libraries, has higher-than-average stock levels (15,676 compared to 11,549), number of full-time equivalent staff (3.3 compared to 2) and activities per week (10 compared to 3). The library has a lower-than-average number of computers (5 compared to 7).

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
15,676	1	5	1	3.3	0	10	Yes	44 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at Oakwood Library are transferred to Enfield Town Library, if Oakwood Library was to close.

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>201</sup>: The ward has significantly more residents aged 65+ (18%) when compared to the borough population (14%). The library has a high level of users aged 80+ (5%) compared to the average for libraries in Enfield overall (2%). Therefore, in the phase two consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

The ward population has a relatively low proportion of children and young people aged of 0 to 9 years olds (13%). However, there is a high level of library usage among 0 to 9-year-olds (23%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Oakwood Library and declared their age,<sup>202</sup> the highest proportions were aged 60-69 (23%) which is higher when compared to ward population or active library users (10% and 8% respectively).

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<sup>200</sup> Base: 260 responses

<sup>201</sup> Base: 2,408 active users, 8,756 census

<sup>202</sup> Base: 108 respondents

Ethnicity<sup>203</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 one engagement, 99 respondents who used Oakwood 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>204</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 (3.5%). Therefore, in the phase two consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Oakwood Library and declared their protected characteristics, 28% declared they had a disability.<sup>205</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>206</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Oakwood Library and declared their gender,<sup>207</sup> 74% said they were female and 26% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>208</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 50% of residents in Oakwood ward are Christian, 21% are non-religious and 12% are Muslim. Overall, 98 active library users and 92 respondents to the phase one engagement who used Oakwood Library have declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

### **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

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<sup>203</sup> Base: 758 active users, 8,756 census

<sup>204</sup> Base: 2,408 active users, 8,756 census

<sup>205</sup> Base: 101 respondents

<sup>206</sup> Base: 2,392 active users, 8,756 census

<sup>207</sup> Base: 105 respondents

<sup>208</sup> Base: 8,756 census

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:**

We are recommending consulting on the closure of Oakwood Library. While the library has high usage, Oakwood ward has the lowest level of local need of all the wards. It is considered that it would be reasonable for library users to travel to alternative provision at Enfield Town. This is an opportunity to reduce library costs whilst ensuring we provide a comprehensive library service that responds to local need.

There is a relatively high proportion of residents aged 65+ in Oakwood and neighbouring Cockfosters and Ridgeway wards, but it is considered that this group can use free public transport to travel to alternative library provision which is on existing bus routes. In addition, both Cockfosters and Ridgeway wards have relatively low levels of local need (ranked 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> out of all wards). Furthermore, for those who have a mobility, disability or caring responsibility that would it difficult to visit an alternative library, the Royal Voluntary Service can deliver library services on our behalf to their home. There is no charge for the home library service for its users.

Enfield Town is a transport hub and main shopping and leisure area and residents who visit Oakwood Library are likely to already travel to Enfield Town for other reasons, as well as to visit the library. Enfield Town Library is one of our most popular and well-used libraries. It offers an extensive range of activities and services which include 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. The



weekly opening hours in Enfield Town are currently 9 hours longer than at Oakwood and it is a fully accessible building.

## **Northwest Area**

### **Enfield Town (Town)**

#### **Local need:**

Enfield Town is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. The ward has low levels of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, there are low levels of adults on unemployment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (17%). The percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (15%) is low compared to the borough population overall (22%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Grange Park, Whitewebbs and Ridgeway***

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

Grange Park is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Grange Park has the third highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough.

Whitewebbs ward is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has a higher percentage of older people (16%) than the borough population overall (14%). Whitewebbs ward also has the second highest proportion of residents with a disability (15%). The ward has lower proportions compared to the borough population overall in terms of children in relative and absolute (24% compared to 27%) low-income families, adults on unemployment benefits (5% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (24% compared to 28%). The ward has the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield.

Ridgeway is ranked 20<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+ (20%). The ward has a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (13%) low-income families. Similarly, there are a low percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (4% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (14% compared to 28%) when compared to the borough population overall. There is also a low percentage of adults with no qualifications (16%).

#### **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 8 minutes to travel by car and 13 minutes by bus. Alternatively, Ridge Avenue library is 3.2 km 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 7 minutes to drive or 13 minutes by bus.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Enfield Town library, 52% walk, 46% get the bus, 23% travel by car, 7% cycle and 6% get the train.<sup>209</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>210</sup>

We 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>211</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Ridge Avenue (32%), Palmers Green (29%) and Edmonton Green (24%).<sup>212</sup> Similarly, the most common alternative libraries for easy read respondents were Ridge Avenue (24%), Edmonton Green (24%) and Ordnance Unity Centre (24%).<sup>213</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

We 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

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<sup>209</sup> Base: 725 responses

<sup>210</sup> Base: 31 responses

<sup>211</sup> Base: 722 responses

<sup>212</sup> Base: 462 responses

<sup>213</sup> Base: 12 responses

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>214</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Saturday (49%), Thursday (41%) or Wednesday (41%).<sup>215</sup> The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (70%) or morning (63%).<sup>216</sup> Of the 544 respondents, 4% said they use only Enfield Town library.

Overall, 27 representatives (56%) who responded to the questionnaire stated their organisation had used Enfield Town Library in the past two years. 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.

The library is well-used by local primary schools, with class visits arranged throughout the year. In 2022/23 the library was visited by the following schools and nurseries: One Degree Academy, Forty Hill, Worcesters, Oaktree, St Johns, St Andrews, St Georges, Monkey Puzzle, Lavender. The library has capacity to support a further increase in usage by nearby schools and early years provision, and as part of the strategy we will increase our partnership working and outreach with schools and early years providers to support literacy development.

There are 13 partners that operate from Enfield Town Library. These partners include Page Turners Enfield, Life Eternal Trust (LET) Meditation, Over 50s forum, U3A among others. We look to further maximise activities and events held at Enfield Town by our partners to respond to local need.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Enfield Town by 1.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **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>217</sup> Enfield Town has the highest stock levels

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<sup>214</sup> Base: 358 responses

<sup>215</sup> Base: 695 responses

<sup>216</sup> Base: 715 responses

<sup>217</sup> Base: 882 responses

(55,972), highest number of activities per week (34) 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 activities per week	Step access	Distance from nearest bus stop
55,972	4	34	1	8.81	3	34	Yes	114 metres

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>218</sup>: There is a low level of library usage among users aged 60+ (16%) compared to the proportion of the ward population aged 60+ (21%). There is a high level of library usage among 0 to 9-year-olds (20%) compared to the ward population (13%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Enfield Town Library and declared their age,<sup>219</sup> the highest proportions were aged 60-69 (23%). This is significantly higher when compared to ward population or active library users (10% and 7% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>220</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 (51%). 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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Enfield Town Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>221</sup> 72% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population (51%) or active library users (47%) who are White British.

Disability<sup>222</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 (3.5%).

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<sup>218</sup> Base: 10,401 active users, 13,516 census

<sup>219</sup> Base: 381 respondents

<sup>220</sup> Base: 3,411 active users, 13,516 census

<sup>221</sup> Base: 339 respondents

<sup>222</sup> Base: 10,401 active users, 13,516 census

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Enfield Town Library and declared their protected characteristics, 22% declared they had a disability.<sup>223</sup> This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>224</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Enfield Town Library and declared their gender, <sup>225</sup> 72% said they were female and 27% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>226</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%, 3% and 12% respectively) when compared to the ward population (1%, 0.2% and 1% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Enfield Town Library and declared their religion or belief, <sup>227</sup> 49% declared they were Christian. This is significantly lower than the proportion of ward population and active library users who are Christian (57% and 51% 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:**

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<sup>223</sup> Base: 363 respondents

<sup>224</sup> Base: 10,269 active users, 13,516 census

<sup>225</sup> Base: 373 respondents

<sup>226</sup> Base: 113 active users, 13,516 census

<sup>227</sup> Base: 332 respondents

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 is a relatively affluent ward (ranked 19<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 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.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Enfield Town by 1.5 hours per week, this will mean that the library's opening hours will be extended on a Wednesday. This is to standardise opening hours with other large libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

### **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. There is a low percentage of children in relative and absolute (16%) low-income families. Furthermore, the percentage of adults on employment benefits (3%) and households receiving universal credit (12%) is low compared to the borough population overall (5% and 28% respectively). There is also a low percentage of adults aged 16+ with no qualifications (18%).

#### ***Nearby wards without libraries: Grange Park and Highfield***

When considering local need, we 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 third highest percentage of older people aged 65+ (21%) in the borough.

Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%).

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

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

Jubilee is ranked 7<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 (44%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward has a significantly high percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (8%) and households receiving universal credit (37%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Jubilee also has a high percentage of adults with no qualifications (29%).

Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. Highfield has a higher percentage of older people (17%) than the borough population overall (14%). The percentage of children in relative and absolute (28%) low-income families in Highfield is broadly in line with the borough population (27%). The percentage of adults with no qualifications is broadly in line with the borough population overall (23% compared to 22%).

### **Distance from the nearest library:**

The nearest library is Enfield Town, which is 3.1 km 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 7 minutes to drive or 12 minutes by bus. Winchmore Hill is also an alternative library; this would take the average person 24 minutes to walk or 6 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk the journey would take 5 minutes to drive or 11 minutes by bus.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use Ridge Avenue library, 44% walk, 44% travel by car, 30% get the bus, 8% cycle and 1%

get the train.<sup>228</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.

We also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (57%), because it has parking facilities (34%) and because it is close to public transport links (19%).<sup>229</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (84%), Palmers Green (43%) and Winchmore Hill (38%).<sup>230</sup> The most common alternative library for respondents to the easy read questionnaire was Enfield Town (60%).<sup>231</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

We 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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (35%), monthly (18%), or every other month (17%).<sup>232</sup> The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Wednesday (43%), Monday (41%), or Tuesday (40%).<sup>233</sup> The highest proportion of

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<sup>228</sup> Base: 254 responses

<sup>229</sup> Base: 218 responses

<sup>230</sup> Base: 340 responses

<sup>231</sup> Base: 3 responses

<sup>232</sup> Base: 251 responses

<sup>233</sup> Base: 241 responses



respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (67%) or morning (63%).<sup>234</sup> Of the 206 respondents, 4% said they use only Ridge Avenue library.

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 we will increase our 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.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Ridge Avenue by 3 hours per week, this will mean that the library’s opening hours will be extended on a Saturday. This is to standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

**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>235</sup>

Ridge Avenue has the highest stock levels (27,459) and highest number of activities per week (12) 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 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 activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
27,459	1	12	0	3.3	Approx. 10	12	Yes	39 metres

**Equalities:**

Age<sup>236</sup>: The ward has a high proportion of residents aged 65+ (22%) compared to the borough population overall (14%). However, there is a moderately low level of library usage among users aged 60+ (24%) compared to the ward population (29%). The ward has relatively few children and young people. However, the library has high proportions

<sup>234</sup> Base: 262 responses

<sup>235</sup> Base: 147 respondents

<sup>236</sup> Base: 2,444 active users, 12,709 census

of active users aged 0 to 9 years-old (20%) and 10 to 19 years old (13%), compared to the ward population (11% and 10% respectively).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Ridge Avenue Library and declared their age,<sup>237</sup> the highest proportions were aged 60-69 (22%) this is higher when compared to ward population and active library users (13% and 10% respectively).

Ethnicity<sup>238</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 than the ward population (27%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Ridge Avenue Library and declared their ethnicity,<sup>239</sup> 67% were White British which is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population or active library users who are White British.

Disability<sup>240</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), 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 (3.5%).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Ridge Avenue Library and declared their protected characteristics,<sup>241</sup> 19% declared they had a disability. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the ward population and active library users who have a declared disability.

Gender<sup>242</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).

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Ridge Avenue Library and declared their gender,<sup>243</sup> 73% said they were female and 27% were male. This is disproportionate when compared to the ward population and active library users.

Religion<sup>244</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 58% of residents in Bush Hill Park ward are Christian, 22% are non-religious and 13% are Muslim. Only 26 active library users

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<sup>237</sup> Base: 136 respondents

<sup>238</sup> Base: 798 active users, 12,709 census

<sup>239</sup> Base: 136 respondents

<sup>240</sup> Base: 2,444 active users, 12,709 census

<sup>241</sup> Base: 142 respondents

<sup>242</sup> Base: 2,417 active users, 12,709 census

<sup>243</sup> Base: 145 respondents

<sup>244</sup> Base: 12,709 census

registered at Ridge Avenue library declared their religion or belief. This is a small sample and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

Of the respondents to the phase one engagement who used Ridge Avenue Library and declared their religion or belief, <sup>245</sup> 52% declared they were Christian. This is significantly lower than the proportion of the ward population.

**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:**

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.

We are proposing to increase opening hours at Ridge Avenue by 3 hours per week, this will mean that the library’s opening hours will be extended on a Wednesday. This is to

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<sup>245</sup> Base: 130 respondents

standardise opening hours with other small libraries and to support a potential increase in usage as a result of the closure of alternative libraries.

## **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. The percentage of households receiving universal credit (30%) is slightly higher than the borough population overall (28%). The ward has a high population density (7,576 people p/sq. km) and a relatively high proportion of children aged 0-15 (22%).

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

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

Jubilee is ranked 7<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 (44%) low-income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). Similarly, the ward has a significantly high percentage of adults on unemployment benefits (8%) and households receiving universal credit (37%) compared the borough population overall (6% and 28% respectively). Jubilee also has a high 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 proposed for closure.

Whitewebbs ward is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 25 wards in Enfield for level of local need. It has a higher percentage of older people (16%) than the borough population overall (14%). Whitewebbs ward also has the second highest proportion of residents with a disability (15%). The ward is below average compared to the borough in terms of children in relative and absolute (24% compared to 27%) low-income families, adults on unemployment benefits (5% compared to 6%) and households receiving universal credit (24% compared to 28%). The ward has the lowest percentage of broadband coverage (89.69%) out of the wards in Enfield. It should be noted that this ward also borders Town ward which has Enfield Town Library, which is not proposed for closure.

Carterhatch is within the top 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 25 wards for level of local need. Carterhatch has a high percentage of children aged 0-15 (24%). It has a significantly high percentage of children in relative and absolute (32%) income families compared to the borough population overall (27%). There is also a high percentage of households receiving universal credit (41%) and adults with no qualifications (28%). There is also a high percentage of residents with disabilities in the ward (14%). It should be noted that this ward also borders Ponders End ward which has Ponders End Library, which is not proposed for closure.

### **Distance from the nearest library:**

The nearest large library is Enfield Town which is 3.3km away. This would take the average person around 25 minutes to walk or 9 minutes to cycle. For those unable to walk or cycle, it would take 9 minutes to travel by car and 15 minutes by bus. Ponders End is another alternative library, which is 1.7km away, this would take the average person around 24 minutes to walk or 7 minutes to cycle. It is also a 6-minute journey by car or 21 minutes by bus.

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, we asked respondents how they tend to travel to each library. Of the respondents who live, work or study in Enfield and use John Jackson library, 61% walk, 24% get the bus, 24% travel by car, 5% cycle and 4% get the train<sup>246</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.

We also asked respondents why they used the library. The most frequent responses were because it was close to home (61%), because it is close to work (17%) and because it is close to public transport links (16%).<sup>247</sup>

The most common alternative libraries for respondents were Enfield Town (81%), Ridge Avenue (50%) and Edmonton Green (46%)<sup>248</sup>. The most common alternative library for respondents to easy read questionnaire was Enfield Town (50%).<sup>249</sup>

### **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

We 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 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

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<sup>246</sup> Base: 89 responses

<sup>247</sup> Base: 13 responses

<sup>248</sup> Base: 142 responses

<sup>249</sup> Base: 2 responses

(46%). John Jackson also has the second lowest percentage of ICT hours used per hour open (9%).

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

In the phase one engagement questionnaire, the majority respondents used the library less frequently than every other month (26%), monthly (22%), or fortnightly (20%).<sup>250</sup> Of the 80 respondents who used John Jackson, 5 said they used only John Jackson library.

The majority of respondents said that they tend to use the library on a Thursday (51%), Monday (47%) or Wednesday (42%)<sup>251</sup>. The highest proportion of respondents also said that they tend to use the library in the afternoon (75%) or morning (57%).<sup>252</sup> We 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 as a result of the closure of John Jackson Library.

Two representatives of organisations responded to the phase one engagement saying that they used John Jackson library in the past two years (Over 50s Forum and Kingsmead School Work Experience). Age UK currently operates out of John Jackson Library and the library is also used for Councillor surgeries. We will consult with these partner organisations using John Jackson Library to understand whether they can operate from an alternative library and how we can mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of the library on them.

### **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>253</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>250</sup> Base: 61 responses

<sup>251</sup> Base: 112 responses

<sup>252</sup> Base: 105 responses

<sup>253</sup> Base: 151 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 weekly activities.

Stock Levels	Number of toilets	Number of computers	Number of community rooms	Number of FTE staff	Car parking spaces	Number of activities per week	Step free access	Distance from nearest bus stop
8,821	1	11	0	1.7	0	0	Yes	53 metres

We will ensure that services currently offered at John Jackson Library are transferred to Enfield Town Library, if John Jackson Library was to close.

### **Equalities:**

Age<sup>254</sup>: The ward has moderately fewer residents aged 65+ (11%) compared to the borough population overall (14%) and a moderately higher proportion of residents aged 35 to 44 (16%) compared to the borough population overall. Library usage is highest among users aged 10 to 19 (21%), which is significantly higher than the ward population aged 10 to 19 (14%) and suggests the library is effectively engaging this cohort.

In the phase one engagement, 55 respondents who used John Jackson 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>255</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%). Active library users from White Other ethnic backgrounds and Mixed ethnic backgrounds (16% and 2% respectively) were underrepresented compared to the proportions of the ward population (26% and 8% respectively).

In the phase one engagement, 53 respondents who used John Jackson 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>256</sup>: The ward has average levels of disability (13%), but the library has a low level of active users with a declared disability (4%). However, this is high compared to the average for other libraries in Enfield (3.5%). Therefore, in the phase two

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<sup>254</sup> Base: 808 active users, 15,910 census

<sup>255</sup> Base: 293 active users, 15,910 census

<sup>256</sup> Base: 809 active users, 15,910 census

consultation we need to understand how the closure of this library would impact this group and how we could mitigate against this.

In the phase one engagement, 52 respondents who used John Jackson 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>257</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 one engagement, 54 respondents who used John Jackson 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>258</sup>: Using the 2021 Census data, 51% of residents in John Jackson ward are Christian, 26% are non-religious and 16% are Muslim. Overall, 13 active library users and 50 respondents to the phase one engagement who used John Jackson Library declared their religion or belief. These are small samples and would not be proportionate to compare to the ward population.

### **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

<sup>257</sup> Base: 798 active users, 15,910 census

<sup>258</sup> Base: 15,910 census



includes replacing the lighting and the roof coverings and upkeeping furnishings and decorations.

Part of the Council freehold owned building is occupied by Age UK Enfield, which pays rent to the Council annually.

**Recommendations:**

We are recommending consulting on 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 we provide 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, with a relatively high percentage of children aged 0-15 (22%). However, given the proximity to Enfield Town and Ponders End, 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 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. The weekly opening hours in Enfield Town are currently 17.5 hours longer than at John Jackson and it is a fully accessible building.