Haringey Draft Library Strategy (2026-2030)

September 2025

Haringey Draft Library Strategy (2026-2030)

Contents

Cabinet Member Foreword 1

Executive Summary 2

Introduction and Context 2

Our Vision 2

Our Priorities 2

Bespoke Development Plans for all 9 libraries 3

Strategic Context 5

Libraries in Haringey 7

Shaping the Strategy with Residents 9

Draft Library Strategy: Resident Feedback 11

Our Vision 12

Our Priorities in Detail 12

Priority 1: Upholding Equity 12

Priority 2: Improving Access 14

Priority 3: Encouraging Collaboration 16

Priority 4: Supporting Growth 18

Priority 5: Embedding Lifelong Learning 20

Priority 6: Promoting Visibility and Representation 23

New Opportunities to be carried forward 26

What we want our libraries to look like in 5 years' time 28

Cabinet Member Foreword

Haringey is fantastic – the world in one borough. A place brimming with creativity, vibrancy, personality, radicalism, diversity and community. It is a place where we stand up for each other. A place that is proudly distinctive.

Haringey is the London Borough of Culture for 2027 and we are planning a year of culture to celebrate our 'Rebel Borough'. We have a vision to create a borough where everyone can belong and thrive. We are proud to be a welcoming borough where 180 languages are spoken and many communities call it their home.

Haringey is a special place. We have great schools, wonderful libraries, green flag parks, and thriving shopping centres and high streets. We are home to ground-breaking artists, entrepreneurs, activists, educators; and thousands of dedicated and committed key workers. One in five jobs are in the creative industries, reflecting the importance of culture to our residents and communities.

There are still significant pockets of deprivation in the borough; life expectancy and the number of years which people are expected to live in good health show significant variation between different parts of the borough. Our nine libraries are a vital part of our local ecology and play an increasingly important role as centres of learning and engagement and as vital community and cultural hubs. They bring people together across generations and enable access to online resources, providing warm and cool spaces that are free and welcoming to all.

In March 2025, BBC research identified 190 libraries across the UK that have closed their doors in the past five years, 20 of them in London alone, reflecting the enormous pressure on local authority finances. Last year Haringey had to make the difficult decision to reduce library operating hours, from some of the longest in London to around the average of other boroughs in the capital. We know this was difficult for many residents who love our libraries as much as we do. However, we have fought to keep all of our libraries open, investing over £4.9 million pounds in refurbishing and restoring them and making them accessible for everyone, so they can continue to play a role as cherished community assets. We now want to work with you to ensure they can thrive and grow into the future.

So I am delighted to launch this draft Library Strategy for consultation. I would like to express my thanks to the Friends of Reading & Education (FORE), members of individual Library Friends Groups and particularly those who have taken part in the Library Strategy Co-Design Steering Group, along with young people from participating schools and the Youth Panel, who have all contributed to shaping our draft Vision, Principles and Priorities.

Now is your chance to have your say on whether we have identified the right priorities for the library service, to tell us what might be missing and where we should focus our efforts. Like many local authorities, Haringey faces a challenging financial situation, and it is more important than ever that we focus our limited resources where they will do the most good and have the greatest impact. I look forward to hearing your views and to working with you to help our libraries thrive into the future.

Cllr Emily Arkell,

Cabinet Lead for Culture and Leisure

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

This five-year Library Strategy, intended to run from January 2026 – December 2030, sets out a vision for the future of Haringey Libraries, as centres of learning and as vibrant community and cultural hubs. It identifies a set of priorities for the next five years, that we believe will sustain and grow our Library Service, for the benefit of all our residents.

To arrive at the proposed priorities in this Draft Library Strategy, we have listened closely to the feedback in our online and paper surveys, to feedback from multiple engagements with school groups, other community groups, library users, as well as those who do not use our libraries, and input from Library Friends Groups, the Library Strategy Co-design Steering Group and library staff.

The feedback we received through the public consultation on library hours in 2024 and our survey on our Libraries of the Future in 2025, demonstrated that libraries, quite rightly, hold a special place in the hearts of our communities. They mean different things to different people, but above all they are free, welcoming and inclusive places of learning and engagement, that open up new worlds and new possibilities and offer a quiet sanctuary within a busy metropolis.

In a recent House of Commons debate, on the Future of Libraries (14 May 2025), Chris Kane, MP for Stirling and Strathallan, described libraries as *"the NHS for the Soul"*. He went on to say that:

"Libraries ask for very little and give us everything in return. If we value community, we must value our libraries. Let's protect them, promote them and make sure that they are there - open, welcoming and thriving for generations to come."

This is our intent – to see Haringey Libraries thrive for the benefit of all, for years to come.

Our Vision

Our Vision is for Haringey's libraries to be welcoming, inclusive, and trusted spaces at the heart of our borough - free to access and open to all.

As vital community and cultural hubs, they will reflect the diversity of our borough and be shaped by the people who use them.

Our libraries will support reading, learning, creativity, and wellbeing – providing services, events and activities that inform, enrich, inspire and connect our communities.

Our Priorities

To achieve our vision for Haringey Libraries we have identified the following priorities, designed to meet the evolving needs of our library users:

Priority 1: Upholding Equity
Our goal is to promote equity, by ensuring that all our libraries are inclusive, welcoming spaces, that everyone—regardless of background, identity, or circumstance—can access and benefit from.

Priority 2: Improving Access
Our goal is to make our libraries more accessible, by transforming our digital and IT provision, through better communication of what libraries have to offer, and by supporting people who face barriers to getting online.

Priority 3: Encouraging Collaboration
Our goal is for library staff to work in partnership with local communities, Library Friends, local businesses and library users, to design and deliver events and activities. By working together, we can improve our library service and increase public engagement.

Priority 4: Supporting Growth
Our goal is to establish a sustainable and affordable service, that enhances library usage and increases earned income. Our libraries will fuel personal, social, and economic growth, through initiatives that support well-being, life chances, skills development and pathways into work.

Priority 5: **Embedding Lifelong learning**
Our goal is to promote a love of reading and learning at every stage of life. Our libraries will support this by enhancing our Early Years provision, introducing specific services for teenagers, and encouraging learning and engagement for children and adults, through a wide range of resources, activities, and partnerships.

Priority 6: Promoting Visibility and Representation
Our goal is for our libraries to celebrate the cultural richness of Haringey and its many diaspora communities. We will achieve this by maintaining diverse and evolving library collections and building on our programme of events and activities that reflect the voices and experiences of the people who make up our borough.

Bespoke Development Plans for all 9 libraries

These priorities will guide all our libraries. In addition, we are creating separate custom development plans for each individual library.

These plans will be jointly led by the Library Service, in partnership with local Library Friends Groups. Together, they will identify specific priorities for each library that align with the main strategy, whilst also recognising the unique character, location, opportunities, and needs of the community that use it.

These individual library development plans are envisaged as “living documents” that continue to evolve over time. They will be jointly owned by each library and its users, and once developed, will exist alongside the main Library Service Strategy.

What we want our libraries to look like in 5 years' time

In five years' time, our libraries will be vibrant community and cultural hotspots:

- Our libraries will be widely recognised as inclusive, friendly and welcoming spaces, that meet the needs and aspirations of our communities
- More residents will have greater awareness of the full range of services and benefits that libraries offer.

DRAFT

- Our libraries will be established as vibrant cultural anchors and community hubs that foster creativity, participation, and a greater sense of connection and belonging – a lasting legacy of London Borough of Culture 2027.
- Digital exclusion will affect significantly fewer of our residents, while a stronger digital infrastructure will deliver a much-improved service for our library users.
- Through stronger collaboration between the library service and its users, library usage will have increased, and the experience of library users will be enriched, with more community-driven events and initiatives.
- Our library service will be robust and sustainable, with a stronger set of external stakeholders and commercial partners, that help our libraries remain fit for the future, and better able to support well-being, life chances, skills development, and pathways into work.
- Through establishing a multi-disciplinary and multi-service approach, our libraries will be an exemplar of the notion of life-long learning, with reading at the heart of the journey from the very first years of a child's life, through to adulthood and into older age.
- Our libraries will truly reflect the rich cultural diversity of our borough, as welcoming spaces where anyone can feel a sense of connection and belonging.

Successful implementation of our Library Strategy will make a significant contribution towards achieving vision of Haringey 2035 - to be *a place where all our residents have the opportunity to thrive and enjoy the best possible version of their life …a place where people can put down roots and feel they really belong."*

We want everyone in our borough to be proud of our libraries and to take full advantage of all that they have to offer.

For further detail relating to how the strategy will achieve this, please read the full draft strategy document that follows.

DRAFT

Strategic Context

Our Statutory Duty

Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service" for all who live, work, or study in the area. This includes:

- Lending books and other printed material free of charge.
- Encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the service.
- Ensuring accessibility and equity of provision across the borough.

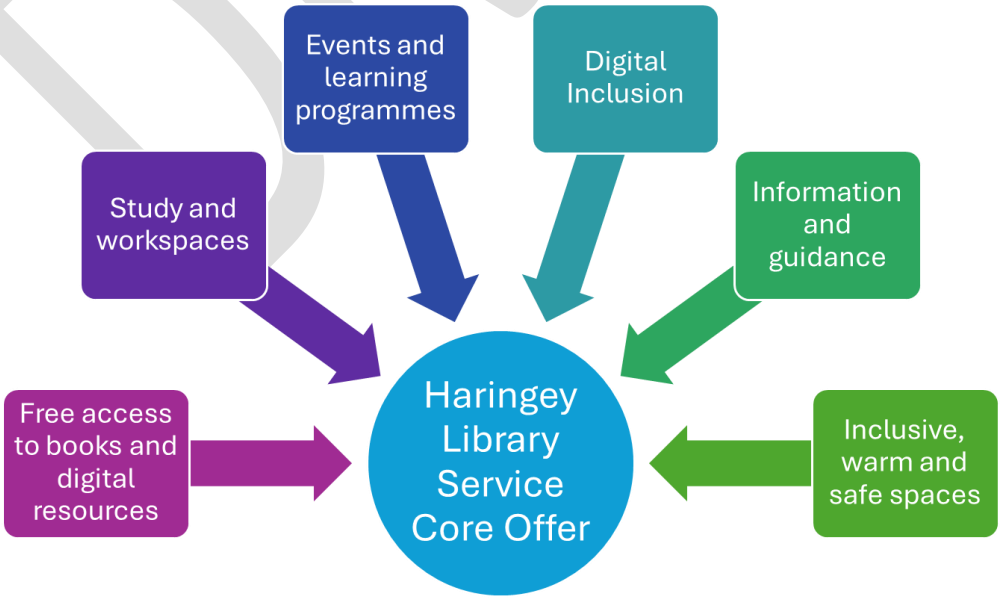
Public libraries play a key role in delivering local government services and objectives. The national guidance allows local authorities to tailor the library service to suit what their community needs. It is the responsibility of each local authority to determine how to deliver public library services in the context of local need. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) oversee this to ensure adequate provision.

The supporting national polices are linked below:

- An independent review of English public libraries
- Libraries as a statutory service
- Annual Libraries Report 2023–2024
- Future of public libraries - House of Commons Library

Core Offer

A library service's Core Offer refers to the essential services and resources it consistently provides to the public



DRAFT

Methodology: Strategy Development

To ensure the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of all Haringey residents, whether or not they use library services, it was developed collaboratively through a range of engagement activities with local communities and library stakeholders, including:

- A co-design group made up of library stakeholders from across the borough, meeting regularly to develop the strategy.
- Library visits and drop-in sessions hosted by Haringey staff to speak with library users.
- School visits to include the voice of young people in the future of our libraries.
- Online engagement through rich surveys to help set strategy priorities.

Local Strategy

This strategy is not a standalone document; it links with Haringey's wider corporate and cultural aims outlined in:

- Haringey 2035, Our Vision.
- Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2024-2028

This strategy is particularly informed by the guiding principles of the Arts and Culture Strategy

Access
Striving for better access, so that everyone can benefit from, enjoy and participate in arts & culture.

Collaboration
Encouraging collaboration, especially where it leads to enhanced cultural provision, better infrastructure, increased transparency, and better access to information for our creative and cultural communities.

Equity
Supporting increased equity, by valuing, respecting, celebrating, taking pride in, and learning from our rich heritage, diverse culture, and histories.

Growth
Promoting growth and autonomy for our residents and local businesses so that they can achieve their potential.

Life-Long Learning
Ensuring that our children and young people can fully participate in rich and sustained cultural learning, and benefit from the transformative power of arts & culture throughout their lives.

Visibility & Representation
All of our communities should be able to see themselves represented in Haringey's cultural and creative offer and be actively involved in decision- making.

DRAFT

Libraries in Haringey



Haringey has nine library centres, and a home and digital library service, and around 65,000 active registered library users (active at least once in the last three years). As well as lending books, magazines, DVDs and other materials, the Library Service hosts many different programmes and events for Haringey residents and provides a space for other services and community groups. These include sessions run by VCS organisations, as well as other council-run services, including Haringey Works and Haringey Learns. The libraries also offer free computer and internet access, and spaces for hire. Wood Green Library, Marcus Garvey Library, and Hornsey library act as central hubs, and are the most heavily used libraries with the highest footfall. Wood Green and Marcus Garvey also have an in-person customer service centre.

Haringey has recently joined the Libraries Consortium which is a group of 23 local authorities (19 in London) set up under a unified library management system, which allows for stock, transport and digital resources to be shared and jointly managed, giving users access to resources from library services across London.

Haringey's libraries stretch far beyond the traditional services of book lending and borrowing, and act as community hubs, providing unique access to information, support, warm spaces and public facilities.

DRAFT

Key Facts about Haringey Libraries

- Our nine libraries have over 106,000 registered library users, of which 16,000 have been active in 2024/25.

- There has been an increase in stock borrowing by 49,372 items, from 564,644 items in 2023-24, to 614,376 in 2024-25. This is also an increase by 1.85% compared to pre-pandemic levels.

- Haringey Libraries saw a remarkable rise in digital engagement during and after the pandemic. In 2024–2025, over 68,000 more digital items were borrowed compared to previous years—almost ten times the 7,511 digital loans recorded in 2019–2020. This growth demonstrates a major shift toward digital resources and remote access services.

- We were visited by 20,000 more residents in 2024-2025 compared to 2023-24, bringing in 840,000 people in total, to access our services in person. This still represents 1.2 million fewer than 2011-12, reflecting a national long-term trend of declining footfall, but is a welcome sign of recovery since the pandemic.

- Since joining The Libraries Consortium in 2022, Haringey users have access to 7 million physical titles as well as 45K digital stock titles which has ensured stock and digital resources are utilised efficiently and effectively. In 2024-2025, almost 20,000 items were successfully borrowed thorough inter-library lending.

- Haringey Libraries are established as dynamic community hubs that bring together culture, creativity, and learning for all residents. Recent initiatives include *Library Lates* in partnership with Alexandra Palace and their Young Creatives Network, offering evening events with live music and performances, curated and hosted by the young members; the launch of *Creative Studios* featuring recording and podcast facilities to support digital content creation; and the introduction of new gallery artist spaces to showcase and nurture local talent. Libraries continue to evolve as inclusive environments that combine traditional services with opportunities for creative expression and community connection.

DRAFT

Shaping the Strategy with Residents

Haringey's libraries and library service are deeply valued by residents, and any future strategy must be shaped by the voices of those who use them and those who currently do not. From the outset, the development of this strategy has been rooted in meaningful engagement, ensuring that the aspirations, concerns, and ideas of our communities are reflected in our vision for the future.

Our Engagement Approach

Between March and September 2025, the Council undertook a borough-wide engagement programme, designed to reach a broad and diverse cross-section of residents and shape the draft strategy. Activities included:

- Formation of a Co-design Steering Group, made up of volunteers from Friends of Libraries groups and library users, who helped shape strategy principles and engagement questions.
- Face-to-face engagement in all libraries, in a range of schools, and a dedicated Youth Panel session.
- Digital engagement via the Commonplace platform - four thematic online surveys exploring strategy priorities, library use, non-use, and future technology.
- Targeted communications to promote the surveys through council newsletters, social media, digital screens on high streets, and Friends of Libraries networks.

Each of these engagement activities have helped shape the draft strategy.

What We Heard

Resident feedback has been vital in shaping the priorities of this strategy. These key themes emerged across all engagement activities:

Access and Opening Hours

- Emphasis on the need for consistent and predictable opening hours.
- Evening and weekend access is essential for working people and families.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Libraries must be physically accessible, with clear signage, ramps, and accessible toilets.
- Spaces should reflect diverse communities, languages, and needs — including neurodivergent users, older adults, and non-digital users.
- Staff training to support both visible and hidden disabilities.

Community Hubs and Social Connection

- Libraries are seen as vital "third spaces" for socialising, learning, and reducing isolation.

DRAFT

- Proposed activities that build social connection included: cafés, baby groups, intergenerational activities, and safe spaces for groups that need them.
- Opportunities for volunteering and community-led programming were welcomed.

Library Environment and Facilities

- Importance of comfortable, welcoming, and contemporary environments.
- Requests for better seating, quiet zones, sensory areas, and child-friendly spaces.
- Clean, warm, and well-maintained spaces.
- Flexibility of space to facilitate different needs e.g. quiet spaces for study and reading, alternative spaces for activities and social connection.

Staffing and Expertise

- Residents value friendly, knowledgeable, and visible staff.
- Staff expertise is the foundation of the service; any volunteer opportunities should be complementary, not a replacement.

Events, Activities and Learning

- Community appetite for well-publicised events: author talks, book clubs, workshops, language classes, and creative sessions.
- Libraries are seen as lifelong learning centres, especially for children, older adults, and job seekers.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Opportunities to work with schools, local businesses, health services, and community groups.
- Suggestions for shared use of space and co-hosted events.

Promotion and Awareness

- Some residents are unaware of the full range of services libraries offer.
- Need for improved marketing, outreach, and signage — especially offline and in multiple languages.

Technology and Digital Services

- Libraries are appreciated for internet access, printing, and other digital resources.
- Suggestions included improved Wi-Fi, better public computers, and simplified printing services e.g. contactless payments.

DRAFT

- Some residents would appreciate inclusive digital support, including help sessions and accessibility tools.

Children, Young People and Families

- Libraries are seen as safe and enriching spaces for young people.
- Strong support for children's activities, story time, and family-friendly programming.
- Youth feedback emphasised the need for co-designed spaces, study zones, and creative tech access.

Collections and Innovation

- Desire for diverse and evolving collections, including digital formats and books for underrepresented groups, including pre-teens.
- Interest in "library of things" and sustainability-focused resources.

Draft Library Strategy: Resident Feedback

To be updated with the results of the public consultation Sep-Oct 2025

How Haringey's Arts and Culture Strategy (2024 –2028) has informed the development of this Library Strategy

Our Draft Library Strategy does not sit in isolation. The guiding principles of our Arts and Culture Strategy, listed below, have also played a key role in informing the development of our Library Strategy, its vision and its key priorities:

- Access
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Growth
- Life-Long Learning
- Visibility & Representation

Haringey's Arts and Culture Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2024.

DRAFT

Our Vision

Our Vision is for Haringey's libraries to be welcoming, inclusive, and trusted spaces at the very heart of our borough - free to access and open to all.

As vital community and cultural hubs, they will reflect the diversity of our borough and be shaped by the people who use them.

Our libraries will support reading, learning, creativity, and wellbeing – providing services, events and activities that inform, enrich, inspire and connect our communities.

Our Priorities in Detail

Priority 1: Upholding Equity

Goal

Our goal is to promote equity, by ensuring that all our libraries are inclusive, welcoming spaces, that everyone—regardless of background, identity, or circumstance—can access and benefit from.

Overview

Over the last five years, we have invested over £4.9 million in refurbishing and restoring our nine libraries, so that they can continue to play a role as cherished community assets, and as friendly, welcoming and accessible spaces for all.

Libraries are not only about books and reading. They can also act as a social place, a safe space, a warm space in winter, or a cool space in summer, a place to study, to learn, to create, to access computers, printing and free Wi-fi, or as a quiet place to sit and simply be.

We will continue to develop our libraries as vital community hubs, that serve the changing needs of our communities and help create a greater sense of connection and belonging. This will entail looking at our communities holistically, both across the borough, and within each locality, ensuring that the services we provide respond to local needs and priorities.

Our libraries will work in partnership with other council services and organisations to tackle social care challenges, promote health and wellbeing, and provide opportunities for people to access advice, support, books, and activities that improve quality of life. We want our libraries to reflect the diversity and cultural richness of our borough, and above all, to be safe places, where everyone feels included and that they belong, without fear or judgement.

We recognise the need to deliver targeted support to promote digital inclusivity, through providing access to technology and skills support for members of our community. We need to address the needs and potential barriers for different users, including those with language barriers, neurodivergent users, older adults, and non-digital users.

DRAFT

We will seek to use the opportunities afforded by our year as London Borough of Culture 2027, to further amplify the role of libraries as key cultural hubs, that inspire and engage.

Our libraries will continue to support the vision of Haringey 2035, *'to be a place where everyone can belong and thrive.'*

To achieve these aims we will:

- listen to our library users to shape services around their needs and aspirations.
- use data to adopt a borough-wide and local approach to reflect diverse community priorities.
- work in partnership with health, social care, and voluntary sectors to provide integrated support.
- champion inclusivity and belonging through programmed events and campaigns.
- maximise cultural opportunities to position libraries as creative and cultural hubs.
- conduct regular accessibility audits of all library buildings and services to ensure compliance with equality standards.
- deliver staff training on inclusive customer service, cultural competency, and safeguarding vulnerable users, and support for both visible and hidden disabilities.
- expand outreach programmes targeting residents in the most deprived wards, including pop-up libraries and mobile services.
- promote and enhance the Home Library Service to reach more residents with mobility, health, or caregiving barriers.
- co-design services and programmes with community representatives from protected groups to ensure relevance and inclusivity.
- monitor and report on equity-related KPIs quarterly to inform service improvements and accountability.

Outcomes

- Libraries are safe, accessible spaces for all protected groups.
- Services reflect the diversity and needs of Haringey's communities.
- Residents experience a strong sense of belonging and inclusion when using library services.
- Increased engagement from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups across the borough.
- Libraries contribute to improve health and wellbeing through targeted programmes and partnerships.
- Communities benefit from integrated services, delivered in collaboration with health, social care, and voluntary sector partners.
- Libraries act as cultural anchors, fostering creativity and participation, particularly during and post London Borough of Culture 2027.
- Digital inclusion is strengthened through access to technology and skills support.
- Libraries are recognised as trusted community hubs that reduce isolation and strengthen social connections.

DRAFT

Priority 2: Improving Access

Goal

Our goal is to make our libraries more accessible, by transforming our digital and IT provision, through better communication of what libraries have to offer, and by supporting people who face barriers to getting online.

Overview

Access and Equity are close cousins. By improving access, we will ensure that all the things our libraries and library service offer, reach more people, and benefit those who live, work and study in Haringey.

Good communication is essential to signalling to our residents the many positive benefits of our library service. One opportunity towards improving visibility and access, is to shape the communication of our library offer to specific target groups, for example - 'What our libraries have to offer pending mothers and fathers', or 'How libraries can support Early Years development', students studying, business development etc.

Improving physical signage, layout, and first impressions, as well as having a strong customer-facing service, supported by welcoming and committed staff, all help to make our libraries inclusive, friendly and accessible spaces.

New library opening hours will start at the end of September 2025. While a full library service can only be offered during certain hours, due to budget constraints, we're keen to support keeping libraries open for longer, by hosting events and activities with the help of Library Friends and volunteers. These ideas will be led by local Library Friends and other library users and considered individually as part of each library's Development Plan.

We live in a digital world. Expectations of digital infrastructure are ever greater. Library users expect good Wi-Fi and connectivity and up-to-date IT systems and equipment. Strengthening our digital offer can open up new vistas and new types of engagement for library users, and plans are in place to do so.

We recognise that for some users there are barriers to feeling confident in the digital realm. Some library users will need support with library cards, with online systems, with using our Haringey Library App, or with accessing online customer surveys via Commonplace. We will ensure our staff are ready to support where needed and will offer targeted programmes to promote digital literacy and support people who face barriers to getting online.

A new Community Librarian role in each library, will act as a trusted point of contact for the public, and as local connectors, who build relationships and help increase engagement.

To achieve these aims, we will:

- create a communications plan to ensure libraries make better use of our communication channels, to promote library services and events.
- strengthen digital access with reliable Wi-Fi, enhanced online services, and the Haringey Library App.

DRAFT

- reduce digital exclusion through skills workshops, one-to-one support, and targeted outreach.
- deploy Community Librarians as trusted local connectors to build relationships and increase engagement.
- leverage cultural opportunities such as London Borough of Culture 2027 to attract new audiences.

Outcomes

- more residents know about and use our library services.
- digital exclusion is reduced through targeted support and access.
- libraries strengthen community engagement and reduce isolation.
- residents feel a sense of belonging and connection in libraries.
- libraries reflect the diversity and needs of Haringey's communities.

DRAFT

Priority 3: Encouraging Collaboration

Goal

Our goal is for library staff to work in partnership with local communities, Library Friends, local businesses and library users, to design and deliver events and activities. By working together, we can improve our library service and increase public engagement.

Overview

Libraries are unique spaces that fulfil a wide range of needs for diverse communities. Nationally, public libraries have experienced a sustained decline in usage since pre-Covid levels, despite their enduring cultural and social value. This trend is reflected in Haringey, where overall visits remain below pre-pandemic figures. However, there are encouraging signs of recovery as Haringey libraries welcomed 20,000 more residents in 2024–2025 compared to the previous year, indicating a growing local re-engagement with library services.

Our belief is that collaboration between various stakeholders is fundamental to realising the fullest potential of each of our nine libraries. The Library Service is committed to working collaboratively with Friends and other community groups, local businesses and library users, to enhance and enrich the library offer and help increase engagement.

Expanding our library offer is also about empowering our communities to play an even more active and imaginative role in shaping what happens in our libraries. This could be in any number of ways, including growing the range of activities taking place, such as community events, film screenings, talks, book clubs, knowledge and skills exchange, sewing/crafting clubs and music activities.

This collaborative way of working aims to better connect libraries with our communities, increase library usage, and enrich the library service, with more community-driven events and initiatives.

To achieve these aims:

- each library will have a Community Librarian, who will be the first point of contact for collaborative engagement with library users and other stakeholders.
- Library Friends and library staff will work together to develop bespoke plans for each library that build on the uniqueness of each library, identifying new possibilities, pilot projects and proposed outcomes, that will be prioritized in a co-authored Development Plan.
- we will foster partnerships with Council services, community groups, local businesses, and organisations to co-create events and activities.
- we will expand the range of community-driven activities, such as talks, clubs, workshops, cultural events and pilot new projects and initiatives based on local interests, needs and feedback.
- we will embed the ‘Encouraging Collaboration’ priority across all strategic priorities, positioning libraries as key enablers and connectors for community, council, and stakeholder ambitions, in ‘Improving Access, Upholding Equity, Supporting Growth, Embedding Lifelong Learning, and Promoting Visibility and Representation’.

DRAFT

Outcomes

- Libraries are hubs for co-delivered services and community-led initiatives.
- Each library delivers programmes and activities tailored to local needs and interests.
- Increased collaboration leads to a wider range of events, clubs, initiatives and opportunities.
- Stronger partnerships with community groups, businesses, and council services.
- Greater public engagement and higher library usage.
- New pilot projects and innovations emerge from local feedback and collaboration.
- Library users feel a greater sense of ownership and connection to their local library.
- Libraries continue to embed itself at the heart of the community, by adapting to changing needs, interests, and aspirations.
- Libraries function as dynamic enablers and connectors, driving progress across all strategic priorities by embedding collaboration at the core of the service and community role.

DRAFT

Priority 4: Supporting Growth

Goal

Our goal is to establish a sustainable and affordable service, that enhances library usage and increases earned income. Our libraries will fuel personal, social, and economic growth, through initiatives that support well-being, life chances, skills development and pathways into work.

Overview

Research published by the BBC in March 2025, found that '190 libraries across the UK have shut in the past five years, 20 of them in London alone', reflecting the enormous pressure on local authority finances.

In the context of ever-increasing financial pressures on local authorities, libraries will need to broaden the range and types of services provided in them and it's important to do everything we can to make sure our libraries are able to develop a strong and resilient model for the future. Part of the way forward will be in recognising the opportunity for growth, fuelled by acting upon unmet needs and yet to be realised potential.

We will continue to nurture partnerships with local businesses and cultural organisations that can help amplify and enrich our library programme and offer. We will also work closely with community organisations, Library Friends Groups and other stakeholders, to help enrich our programme of activities and events.

At the same time, we will also seek to grow our commercial income, through stronger marketing of our hireable spaces, and adopting a more entrepreneurial and outward-facing approach. A strong theme in the engagement was around provision of cafe facilities in libraries; we are about to tender for local providers to join a framework to operate cafes or food / coffee carts in council-owned locations and will seek to offer an opportunity for this in at least one of our libraries.

Given the importance of libraries in education, we will strengthen partnerships with local schools to support literacy, learning, and creativity—helping children and young people thrive in and beyond the classroom. As free and accessible spaces, libraries also offer a trusted setting for health and wellbeing initiatives, such as health clinics, which we will continue to deliver in collaboration with community partners.

In alignment with Haringey's Arts and Culture Strategy, we are keen to empower our residents to play a more active role in shaping a rich programme of events in our libraries, whilst also ensuring that the youth voice is integral to the process of decision-making and planning.

Our Libraries already play a key role to play in supporting pathways into employment, through key partnerships with organisations who deliver employment skills programmes. We will continue to support and amplify this work.

DRAFT

Our libraries play a vital role in supporting pathways into employment through strong partnerships with organisations delivering employment skills programmes, and we will continue to amplify this important work. In addition, a planned digital capital investment will modernise our technology and infrastructure, enabling the creation of dynamic spaces such as makerspaces and creative studios. These creative spaces will support activities such as podcasting, video production, digital design, 3D printing and music creation. Together, these enhancements will enable the delivery of digital skills programmes led by trained staff and community partners, fostering growth, enhancing the library experience, and advancing digital inclusion and economic opportunity.

We will seek to capitalise on the energy and opportunity that comes with our year as London Borough of Culture 2027, and use this to amplify the importance and presence of libraries as vibrant cultural hubs, that sit at the heart of our communities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- work with cultural, business and community partners and external stakeholders to amplify and enhance the library offer.
- grow existing partnerships with organisations to deliver employment skills programmes.
- strengthen marketing and research to increase commercial income.
- host more well-being initiatives in our libraries, such as health clinics.
- continue to offer our digital skills programme with support from external partners.
  work with key partners to support pathways into employment and enterprise.
- expand our business support offer.
- Drive innovation through digital investment and the creation of makerspaces and creative studios.

Outcomes

- Libraries contribute to economic and personal development.
- Services are financially sustainable and efficient.
- Residents gain digital and creative skills for employment and enterprise.
- Modernised spaces foster innovation and community engagement.

DRAFT

Priority 5: Embedding Lifelong Learning

Goal

Our goal is to promote a love of reading and learning at every stage of life, by enhancing our Early Years provision, introducing specific services for teenagers, and encouraging learning and engagement for children and adults, through a wide range of resources, activities, and partnerships.

Overview

Our libraries are there to serve our residents throughout their life, and our goal is to have an offer that underpins the principle of life-long learning. This journey begins in the earliest years.

There is no shortage of evidence to underline the importance of what happens in the first thousand days of a child's life in terms of their development. Being read to is an essential component in a child's healthy social, emotional and cognitive development, but something as seemingly simple as this does not reach every child.

A 2022 Family Survey by the Book Trust revealed that *'95% of families know it's important to read with their child but only 42% of children have a bedtime story'* [1]

The Reading Rights Interim Report from Spring 2025 states that: '*Every child should have the best start in life. Every child should have the opportunity to hear stories and experience books in their early years. As things stand, this is a privilege: a privilege shared by fewer and fewer children.*' [2]

Young children and families are already the biggest users of our libraries. Our aim is to strengthen further our Early Years offer, by seeking to adopt a multi-agency approach, across the council, that helps to ensure that early childhood reading and storytelling is part of everyday life for every family in the borough.

We will draw on examples of best practice, such as those in Birmingham, where shared reading is embedded in the multi-agency early years provision delivered through children's centres, family hubs, libraries and health visitors. Or, as in Barnsley, where health visitors plan to promote the benefits of reading to expectant parents, to help establish positive routines from before the baby's birth through the early years, through the midwifery service.

We want to strengthen our teen offer, to curate themed teen-focussed collections, and display them in ways that are more immediately accessible. To foster lifelong learning, libraries will also deepen partnerships with local schools by encouraging every primary school class to visit their local library at least once a year, with each child receiving a library membership card to encourage ongoing engagement. We will collaborate closely with school librarians to align resources and support and

[1] BookTrust Family Survey 2022 - https://files.booktrust.org.uk/docs/documents/Booktrust-Reading-Together-Summary.pdf?v=1742481563

[2] The Reading Rights Interim Report (March 2025) - https://files.booktrust.org.uk/docs/documents/Reading-Rights-Interim-Report-Spring-2025-low-res-b.pdf.pdf?v=1748341180

provide dedicated study spaces to foster independent learning. These service provisions will nurture a love of reading and learning from an early age, support children's educational journeys, and build lasting connections with the library.

Our Library Friends Groups are amongst our most active and engaged library users. We will continue to work closely with them and other community groups to shape a library programme that meets the needs of all our users.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Raise awareness of libraries' role in Early Years development and lifelong learning.
  - promote reading into everyday life, starting from pregnancy.
  - partner with health and Early Years services to promote shared reading.
  - expand 'Rhymetime' and 'Storytime' with sensory and multilingual elements.
  - promote books from birth packs with health services.
  - establish an Early Years & Families Advisory Forum to ensure the library offer is shaped around the developmental needs of young children and informed by family perspectives.
  - encourage every primary school class to visit the library annually, with each child receiving a library membership card.
  - inspire a love of reading and learning from an early age.
- Create a relevant, engaging library experience for teens.
  - curate themed collections that reflect the specific interests of teen library users, e.g. identity, wellbeing, careers, Manga.
  - establish a Teen Advisory Forum to co-design and shape the teenage offer, ensuring it reflects young people's interest, needs, and lived experiences.
- Launch a campaign across the borough and other council services.
  - run outreach events and pop-up libraries.
  - co-create programmes with key stakeholders and services such as schools, nurseries, Library Friends and local community groups.
- Support lifelong learning for adults.
  - promote libraries as a hub for adult learning, skills development, and personal growth.
  - maintain curated collections and resources supporting adult literacy, digital skills, ESOL, and career development.
  - maintain workshops, reading groups, and digital support sessions tailored to adult learners.
  - partner with local colleges, adult education providers, and employment services to expand opportunities.
  - encourage volunteering and peer-led learning to build confidence and community connections.
- Recognise and value community contributions through annual events and ongoing collaboration.

Outcomes

- Libraries support educational attainment and personal development.

DRAFT

- We will have established a strong Early Years offer that supports child development and parental bonding.
- Reaching families who may not otherwise access books or stories.
- Strengthened community ownership of library services.
- Adults are empowered to pursue lifelong learning, improve skills, and enhance employability.
- Residents benefit from inclusive programmes that foster confidence, digital literacy, and social connection at every stage of life.
- Children and young people are inspired to read and learn, with increased school engagement, access to study spaces, and a more accessible teen offer.

DRAFT

Priority 6: Promoting Visibility and Representation

Goal

Our goal is for our libraries to celebrate the cultural richness of Haringey and its many communities. We will achieve this by maintaining diverse and evolving library collections and building on our programme of events and activities that reflect the voices and experiences of the people who make up our borough.

Overview

'Haringey is the world in one borough. A place of creativity, personality, radicalism, diversity and community.'
The Haringey Deal

Haringey is a borough rich with cultural diversity and contrasts, where over 180 different languages are spoken, within large diasporic communities. It is important that all our communities can see themselves represented in Haringey's cultural and creative offer and be actively involved in decision-making. This helps to create a sense of belonging.

Our Library collections need to remain up-to-date and relevant. Similarly, the events and activities we promote in our libraries also need to reflect the diversity of the residents in our borough. One of the ways we can achieve this is by working more closely with our library users, Friends Groups and other interested stakeholders to better understand the needs and opportunities, and diversify our offer accordingly.

With the impetus of a new Library Strategy and with our London Borough of Culture 2027 year on the horizon, we will seek to amplify community engagement. We are committed to the ethos of the Haringey Deal, and recognise that '*Haringey's people are a huge asset, with knowledge, expertise and passion.*' We will seek to harness that energy in the way that we develop our library offer.

In parallel to this Library Strategy, Library Friends and users will work in partnership with the Library Service to develop bespoke Development Plans for each individual library. This is an opportunity for our residents to play an active role in shaping the future of our libraries and arrive at a set of shared priorities and actions for their local library.

Across the council, the youth voice is taking an increasingly active role in decision-making and advocacy. Elections for Haringey's Youth Council are taking place in autumn 2025. We will engage youth cohorts in our ongoing planning and decision-making processes, so that they are represented and have a clear stake in the future of our libraries.

To achieve these aims we will:

- regularly update and diversify collections to reflect the cultures, languages, and identities of Haringey's communities.

DRAFT

- co-design events and activities with Library Friends, user groups, the local community, and key stakeholders to ensure programming is relevant and inclusive.
- develop bespoke Development Plans for each library in partnership with Library Friends and local users, reflecting local priorities and community voices.
- regularly engage youth and underrepresented groups to actively shape library service provision through dedicated advisory forums, ensuring their perspectives directly inform planning and provision.
- celebrate cultural heritage and community stories through exhibitions, author talks, and creative workshops that showcase local voices.
- promote multilingual resources and events in the main languages spoken locally, reflecting the borough's diversity.
- amplify community engagement through borough-wide campaigns and partnerships, especially in the lead-up to London Borough of Culture 2027.
- recognise and value community contributions through annual events and ongoing collaboration.

Outcomes

Short Term

- Collections and events better reflect local cultures, languages, and identities.
- Community voices, including youth and underrepresented groups, start shaping library programming through targeted forums and co-design.
- Increased participation and engagement from a broader cross-section of the community.
- Each library operates with a bespoke Development Plan aligned with local priorities and community input.
- More library users are encouraged to become active in their Library Friends Group.

Medium Term

- Local heritage and stories are more visible through exhibitions and creative events.
- Multilingual resources and inclusive events improve accessibility and engagement for all residents.
- Community partnerships and campaigns drive higher attendance and awareness.
- Libraries become recognised spaces for celebrating diversity and fostering social cohesion.

Long Term

- Libraries continue to be recognised as central, inclusive spaces for cultural expression and community connection across the borough.
- Sustained community ownership and ongoing collaboration ensure services evolve with local needs.
- Haringey's diversity is fully represented and valued in all aspects of library provision, including in the active memberships of Friends Groups.

DRAFT

- Libraries contribute to a stronger sense of belonging, pride, and shared identity across the borough.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress against these priorities will be monitored through a newly established annual Libraries Performance Report. This will include performance dashboards, case studies, resident and partner feedback, and recommendations for continuous improvement. Actions relating to these recommendations will be embedded into individual library development plans to ensure accountability and long-term impact.

DRAFT

New Opportunities to be carried forward

A number of key themes and opportunities emerged during the public survey and engagement process. These currently sit outside our main priorities, but they are captured here as items that we are committed to exploring further in the conversations with individual libraries and their custom Development Plans.

Opportunity 1

A Library of Things: A Sustainable, Community-Centred Innovation

What is a Library of Things?

A Library of Things (LoT) is a community-powered initiative that allows residents to borrow useful household items—such as drills, sewing machines, carpet cleaners, and gardening tools—at low cost, rather than purchasing them outright. This model promotes affordability, sustainability, and social connection, aligning with Haringey's goals for inclusive and environmentally conscious community services.

The model has been successfully implemented in 17 London boroughs, including locations such as Crystal Palace, Dalston, and Canada Water. Councils have partnered with LoT to deliver services that are financially sustainable and socially impactful, often using local carbon offset funds or sustainability grants.

As part of our commitment to innovation and sustainability in library services, we are exploring the potential to introduce a Library of Things (LoT) model in Haringey.

Opportunity 2

Business Information Point Centre (BIPC) in partnership with the British Library

In partnership with the British Library, the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) is a national network that supports individuals to start, protect, and grow their businesses. It provides free access to expert advice, intellectual property guidance, and specialist resources. In Haringey, the BIPC will offer premium business databases, one-to-one support, and programmes such as *Kickstart Your Business*, alongside workshops and networking opportunities.

This initiative builds on the success of the Start-ups in London Libraries (SiLL) programme (2018–2021), in which Haringey participated as one of ten London boroughs. The SiLL initiative engaged diverse communities, delivered over 30 hours of free workshops and tailored support, and helped create new businesses with a strong focus on inclusion.

Haringey SiLL Highlights:

- 386 clients registered in Haringey — the highest among all participating boroughs.

DRAFT

- 92 aspiring entrepreneurs supported — individuals who received 12+ hours of support to become enterprise-ready.
- 69% of clients were women (target: 55%).
- 53% of clients were from BAME backgrounds (target: 35%).
- 27% of clients were self-employed, above the project average.
- Most popular sectors: Creative/Media/Publishing (19%) and Retail/Wholesale/Transport.
- High engagement: 82% feedback return rate from attendees.

There is an opportunity to embed and expand BIPC services through individual library development plans, making libraries key hubs for entrepreneurship and innovation, and to strengthen partnerships with local business networks, cultural organisations, and education providers to deliver sector-specific programmes.

Opportunity 3

London Borough of Culture 2027

Haringey is on a journey to embed culture and creativity across the council and weave it through everything we do, thereby helping to put culture and creativity right at the heart of our communities, not least, in our libraries.

Haringey's successful bid to become London Borough of Culture 2027 is a golden opportunity to showcase our existing and hidden creative talents, to build on our rich history and diverse heritage, to inspire creativity across the borough, and to deliver long-term change and development for Haringey.

We will work closely with our communities and stakeholders to deliver a vibrant year of culture that meets the needs and aspirations of our communities and enriches lives across all 21 wards of our borough. We will capitalise on the energy and opportunity that comes with our year as London Borough of Culture 2027, and use this to amplify the importance and presence of libraries as vibrant cultural hubs, that sit at the heart of our communities. Our London Borough of Culture year will run from April 2027 until March 2028, allowing us to take advantage of the spotlight that will shine on the borough as we prepare to welcome football fans from across Europe and the world as the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium serves as one of the host venues for UEFA Euro 2028 in June and July.

DRAFT

What we want our libraries to look like in 5 years' time

By the end of 2030, we want Haringey libraries to be vibrant community and cultural hotspots:

- Our libraries will be widely recognised as inclusive, friendly and welcoming spaces, that meet the needs and aspirations of our communities.
- More residents will have greater awareness of the full range of services and benefits that libraries offer.
- Our Libraries will be established as vibrant cultural anchors and community hubs that foster creativity, participation, and a greater sense of connection and belonging – a lasting legacy of London Borough of Culture 2027.
- Digital exclusion will affect significantly fewer of our residents, while a stronger digital infrastructure will deliver a much-improved service for our library users.
- Through stronger collaboration between the library service and its users, library usage will have increased, and the experience of library users will be enriched, with more community-driven events and initiatives.
- Our library service will be robust and sustainable, with a stronger set of external stakeholders and commercial partners, that help our libraries remain fit for the future, and better able to support well-being, life chances, skills development, and pathways into work.
- Through establishing a multi-disciplinary and multi-service approach, our libraries will be an exemplar of the notion of life-long learning, with reading at the heart of the journey from the very first years of a child's life, through to adulthood and into older age.

Our libraries will truly reflect the rich cultural diversity of our borough, as welcoming spaces where anyone can feel a sense of connection and belonging.

Successful implementation of our Library Strategy will make a significant contribution towards achieving vision of Haringey 2035 - to be *a place where all our residents have the opportunity to thrive and enjoy the best possible version of their life …a place where people can put down roots and feel they really belong."*

We want everyone in our borough to be proud of our libraries and to take full advantage of all that they have to offer.

*****

DRAFT