

DECISION NOTICE OF THE Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Monday, 8th December, 2025

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Cabinet member Signing held on Monday, 8 December 2025.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Richard Plummer Committees Manager.

6. VARIATION OF LIBRARIES OPERATING HOURS - CONFIRMATION

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE FOR THIS ITEM:

None

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member Culture and Leisure:

1. Confirmed approval to implement the variation to libraries' operating hours originally approved by Cabinet on 10 December 2024, following the conclusion of staff consultation and the development and testing of a revised staffing structure.

Reasons for decision

The council had a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for those who lived, worked or studied in the borough. The duty was supplemented by government guidance, which although not statutory, still had to be taken into account. The guidance advised that changes to library services should be based on strategic plans and consideration of alternative delivery models, and on careful assessment of needs and consideration of impacts and mitigations. This was all carried out to inform the original decision taken by Cabinet in December 2024.

To address how it would continue to deliver the library service in the context of both this duty and the council's challenging financial position, officers undertook a detailed Needs Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment to inform the proposal agreed by Cabinet in December 2024. The public consultation that was carried out between August and October 2024 provided vital feedback on how consultees used the libraries and what they most valued about them. Following that consultation, Cabinet adopted Option 3, which mitigated the impact of reducing library hours, specifically including the impact on those with protected characteristics.

The changes approved in Option 3 included maintaining lunchtime opening to enable continuous access to all library services without midday interruptions. For this to be possible, the library service had to increase existing lone-working practices, and this

was a particular focus of the consultation with staff and Trade Unions. Advice was also sought from the Council's Health & Safety team and a number of measures were implemented, including staff training, provision of lone-working devices and coverage of all libraries with CCTV, to ensure staff and customer safety. Lessons were also drawn from other boroughs with experience of significantly more lone working than was proposed to be implemented in Haringey.

Library staff were engaged throughout the development of the proposals and formal staff consultation took place, with the final proposed staffing structure incorporating changes to individual job titles, roles and reporting arrangements, based on staff and trade union feedback. However, the operating hours and other arrangements set out in Option 3 in the Cabinet report in December 2024 remained unchanged.

The proposals did not therefore need to return to Cabinet for further consideration, and following a 'soft' go-live on 29 September 2025 and a transitional arrangement between then and now, to ensure there were no unforeseen issues or problems, this report requested that the Cabinet member confirmed the original decision as set out at recommendation 3.1.5 in the December report. The service then confirmed the revised staffing structure in the Council workforce and payroll system, approved formally by officers under their delegated authority subject to this decision.

Alternative options considered

Take no action – The new structure and opening hours were required to deliver the library service savings, so not taking the decision was not an option and was discounted.

Alternative proposals – Some alternatives were put forward during the staff consultation and these were considered in full. Where these could be incorporated while still maintaining the hours and overall financial envelope agreed in the December 2024 Cabinet report, these were adopted, such as retention of the Library Development function and Home Library Service. Others, such as concerns over lone working, were considered carefully and mitigations to identified risks were found.