



Library Strategy

All member briefing

10 December 2025

- Revised opening hours following staffing restructure went live in September to deliver saving - reduces our opening hours to average levels
- Comes after a decade of falling footfall: Haringey library visitor numbers have fallen from 2m+ in 2011/12 to around 840,000 in 2024/25 (but a 20,000 increase since 2023/24)
- Highest demographic in library users are children under 12, and then 12-16 year olds; smallest is over 75s and next smallest is 17-21 year olds – how can we retain young people?
- Usage is also changing: borrowing of e-books / audio books has gone up from c600 per month in April 2019 to 6,200 in March 2025. Now our third highest stock issue after Hornsey & Wood Green.
- Strategy is intended to respond to these changes and challenges and to focus on growth and sustainability into the future – the service must change to meet changing needs – do nothing is not an option.



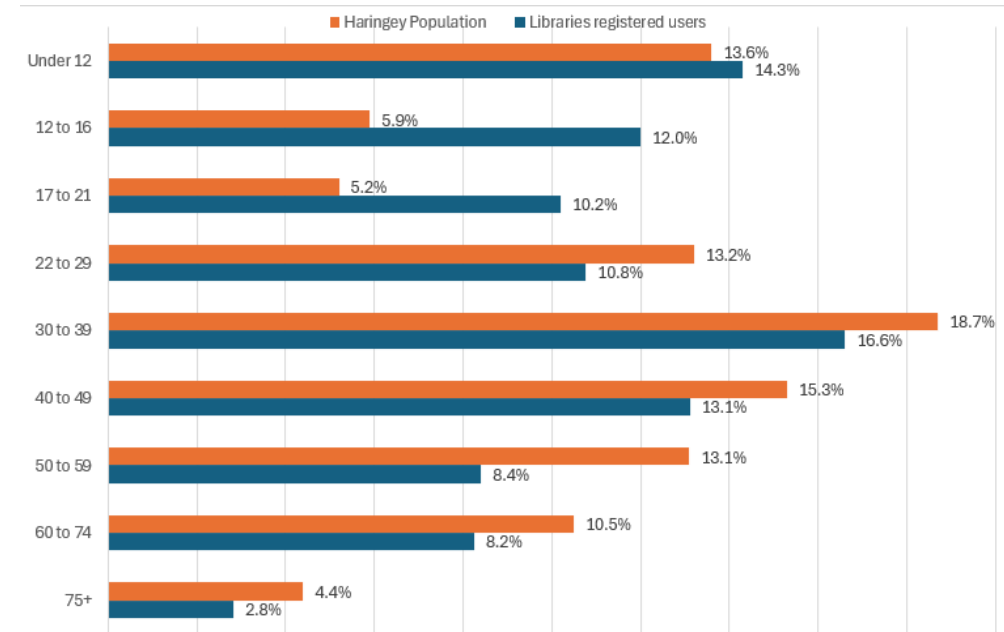
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Engagement and Consultation Overview in 2025

Following the Budget consultation 2023/24 and Operating Hours consultation in 2024 (supported by Needs Assessment data analysis and an Equality Impact Assessment), a comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation was undertaken during 2025 to inform the development of the Library Strategy.

This included in-person sessions, targeted outreach, co-design workshops, and digital engagement.

In-Person Engagement

- Engagement took place in eight libraries during May–June 2025 (Muswell Hill was closed during this period).
- Additional sessions were held in Hornsey and Coombes Croft Libraries in October 2025 to support individual library plans.
- During June-July targeted engagement took place with young people. 6 schools visited (Alexandra Park Primary, Alexandra Park Secondary Noel Park Primary, Greig City Academy, and Highgate Wood School (after school book club and a year 7 group), a Youth Panel discussion and conversations with young people using Hornsey Library study space and Wood Green library.

Engagement and Consultation Overview in 2025 (cont.)

Co-Design Process

Two workshops were held in March and April 2025 with Friends of Libraries to scope the appetite for joining a co-design steering group.

Friends of Libraries for all libraries were invited to put forward members to the co-design steering group. The opportunity to join the steering group was also promoted through in-person engagement in libraries and online. 17 people were invited to the steering group sessions including Friends of Libraries, councillors, residents and officers.

The steering group met three times between June and August 2025 to:

- Agree proposed strategy principles
- Develop survey questions for Commonplace
- Contribute to strategic priorities based on public feedback

Engagement and Consultation Overview in 2025 (cont.)

Digital Engagement

Hard copy surveys were available as print on demand in libraries. Digital Engagement was delivered via the Commonplace platform <https://haringeylibraries.commonplace.is/>

- Shaping the Strategy: 280 responses
- Library Visitors: 286 responses
- Non-Users: 67 responses
- Technology in Libraries: 156 responses
- Draft Library Strategy: 52 responses

Total contributions in 2025: 841 from 428 respondents (for comparison, during 2024, there were 1362 responses to the operating hours consultation).

Formal Consultation on the draft Library Strategy

- The draft Library Strategy consultation ran from 24 September to 4 November 2025, receiving 53 responses (52 online, 1 via email).

Engagement and Consultation Overview in 2025 (cont.)

Communications

The draft Library Strategy consultation was communicated to the public via:

- Haringey People Extra newsletter
- Other newsletters e.g. Homezone
- Haringey Council social media channels (X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor)
- Digital screens on High Streets, council offices and libraries
- Friends of Libraries communications channels

Direct emails were sent out from Commonplace as follows:

- 6052 Commonplace subscribers subscribed to all new Commonplace project notifications were emailed about the 3 surveys launched in July.
- 1065 Commonplace subscribers subscribed to updates about library project notifications were emailed about the Technology in Libraries survey launched in August
- 1405 Commonplace subscribers subscribed to updates about library project notifications were emailed about the draft Library Strategy launched in September.

Libraries enjoy strong community support

- Libraries are seen as vital for education, digital access, social connection, and community wellbeing.
- Libraries play a vital role as free warm, safe, and inclusive spaces, especially for children, older people, and those without internet access at home.
- Lack of support for self-service and volunteer delivery models
- Fear of libraries being closed or declining service

Libraries Usage & Perceptions

- Many CYP have used libraries in the past.
- Hornsey is most used.*
- They see libraries as space for studying and revision, reading and borrowing books & using a computer.
- They had mixed associations - quiet, comfortable, colourful, big, silent, studying, working, boring.

Dream Library Features

- Comfort & Design - *cosy spaces, bean bags, hammocks, colourful relaxing zones & privacy*
- Digital - *better computers, laptops, printers, Bluetooth enable computers.*
- Resources - *more YA book genres, better organised, full series of popular books, exam section***
- Social - *music, gaming sessions, opportunities to socialise.*

Adults

1. Libraries as Inclusive Community Hubs
2. Youth-Centric Design, Engagement and Programming
3. Flexible, Welcoming, and Accessible Spaces for All Ages
4. Diverse and Evolving Collections
5. Digital Inclusion and Innovation
6. Strategic Partnerships and Outreach

- Financial context locally/nationally
- Implementation of new hours (September 2025)
- Slightly different tenor of engagement – a greater understanding of the council's challenges
- Use of volunteers has been proposed by some in recent engagements

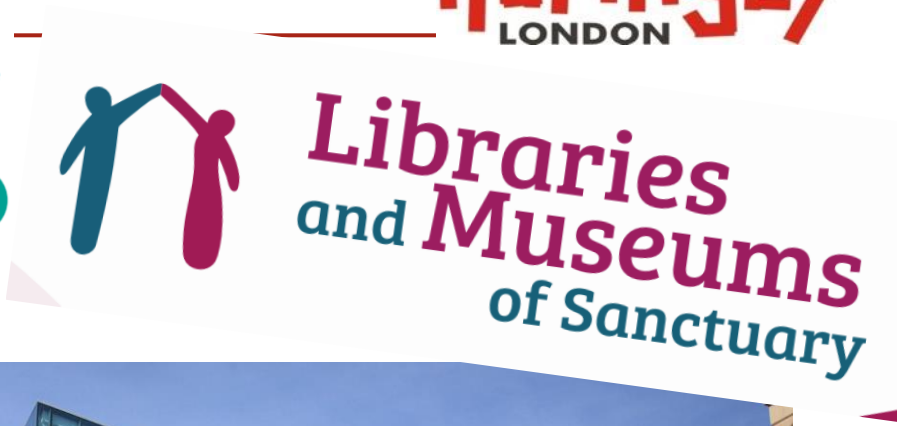
- Separately, we also now have **Haringey 2035 the Borough Vision: making Haringey a place where everyone can belong and thrive**
 - Call to Action 2: thriving places
 - Call to Action 3: supporting children & young people

- Contributing to Borough Vision including through supporting greener choices e.g. recycling facilities which support greener choices (recycling textiles, batteries, etc)
- Requesting new books or books available in other libraries (Consortium)
- Fundamental offer around digital inclusion
- Pianos in every library
- New podcast/recording studio in three libraries
- Some 'out of hours' additionality eg Library Lates and cultural events
- Some use of volunteers to support activities eg story time sessions

- Wider use of volunteers to extend the offer
- Charging for some facilities eg no charge for computer use which some libraries do
- Food and drink offer
- Library of Things

What do other libraries do?

Newham library teams run their participatory budgeting & community outreach activities



Merton Libraries have ACE NPO Status and run music jam sessions to tackle loneliness & isolation



Chester Storyhouse is a library, theatre, cinema and independent arts & community centre



Newcastle City Library is a six-storey building housing a 185 seat performance space, a viewing platform, public art, cafe, exhibition area

Inspirational buildings and shared spaces

- The six guiding principles of our [Arts and Culture Strategy](#) :
Access, Collaboration, Equity, Growth, Life-long Learning, Visibility and Representation, have informed the six priorities of the Draft Library Strategy.
- Our Commonplace survey invited respondents to consider how these core principles should inform our Library Strategy.
- To achieve our vision for Haringey Libraries we have identified six priorities for our Draft Library Strategy, designed to meet the evolving needs of our library users
- The six priorities will guide all nine libraries
- In addition to the overarching Library Strategy, we are creating separate custom development plans for each individual library, co-produced with each Friends Group

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.

Priority 1: Upholding Equity

Our goal is to promote equity, by ensuring that all our libraries are inclusive, welcoming spaces.

Priority 2: Improving Access

Our goal is to make our libraries more accessible, by transforming our digital and IT provision and through better communication of what libraries have to offer.

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.

Priority 4: Supporting Growth

Our goal is to establish a sustainable and affordable service, that enhances library usage and increases earned income.

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 and introducing specific services for teenagers.

Priority 6: Promoting Visibility and Representation

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.

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

Successful implementation of our Library Strategy will make a significant contribution towards achieving the 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.

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

- We are committed to being transparent about progress towards our vision and goals
- We will report annually and are developing a suite of new Key Performance Indicators to measure progress



- Discussion at Scrutiny Panel 16 December 2025
- Final Strategy to Cabinet 20 January 2026
- A new library campaign to begin in the New Year, following Library of the Month campaign
- Continue to work on individual Library Development Plans with Friends Groups

